

## Teamwork + Structure = Success

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"It ain't what you don't know that gets you in trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so." This statement, often attributed to Mark Twain, has been written on the wall in my office for the past four years. Around that time, Schreiber Foods had implemented a new organizational structure to support a recently developed, long-term growth strategy. Along with my teammates, I had the opportunity to take on new challenges and learn new skills to deliver growth for our company and impact to our communities. At that point, I felt like I had a lot of things figured out in life. Little did I know, when I wrote those words on the wall, the volume of change I was about to face: a pandemic, supply chain shortages, inflation, and more.

Still, the new organizational structure brought many new disciplines into our work. Today we have disciplines focused on Strategy, Market Insights, Innovation, Digital Transformation, Corporate Venture Capital, and others. Each discipline was created to lead our organization toward sustainable growth and impact in a rapidly changing world. Each is enabled by teams of talented individuals with the expertise and passion to translate today's information into something we can leverage successfully in the future.

My formal introduction to Strategic Foresight was in 2020 through participation in the Envision workshop facilitated by Garry Golden. The concepts were simple to grasp and the tools easy to use. In many ways, the training helped me organize and formalize work that was already happening within our company. For example, the concept of scanning for signals had been embedded into several areas of our business for some time already. The Foresight training's emphasis on storytelling, though, was a real catalyst in bringing the future *to life* for other key stakeholders in our company. I have seen the positive impacts of effective storytelling in our leadership meetings, watching thought leaders from across our company connect us with signals about artificial intelligence, precision fermentation, product innovation and more. Schreiber has recently launched a Corporate Venture Capital team to achieve several critical objectives. That team has given us closer access to the founders of start-up companies focused on emerging technologies, and that relationship offers us a whole new horizon to consider as we scan for signals of change and disruption.

As I've focused on "futuring" over the past several years, I've recognized the value of organizational structure. The horizon is huge, and the signals often refuse to be connected until a deeper understanding is achieved. A proper structure helps with that. It enables the work of strategic foresight to be spread across an organization and into the hands of individuals and teams that have the expertise to understand the signals, tell the story they provide, and so connect the work with others. That process not only allows the organization to scan a larger portion of the horizon, but it also creates stronger organizational buy-in, making it more likely we'll take *action* on the basis of the trends we're seeing.

As Mark Twain would probably tell us today, the pace of change in the world will never be slower than it is today. We must resist the temptation to believe we have it all figured out. Rather, we must *embrace* change by perfecting our futuring skills: looking forward in order to find the signals that are shaping change, and *connecting* to change *before* it impacts us.