

On the practice of scenario planning

Chapter 15

34 min read

One difficulty that people face with the Phoenix scenario outlined in the previous chapters is the question of role. It's not unusual to look at the scenario and its corresponding plays such as *"pig in a poke"* and ask what happens to the people? A common retort is *"leadership is all about people and the leader should sacrifice themselves for their people"*. It's a noble idea.

As difficult as it is, you have to remember that in the scenario you are an executive of the conglomerate and your focus is on maximising its advantage. The game is somewhat different if you're the CEO of the subsidiary. That which brings maximum advantage for one perspective is not necessarily that which brings the maximum benefit for another. There are often many competing interest and many maxima in a single landscape. Whilst the game itself is rarely zero sum (i.e. if I win then you lose or vice versa) as both competitors can often benefit through collaboration, your focus should be on maximising your advantage. The pursuit of such will result in conflict whether it's with your competitors or the conflict between the shareholders desire for profit versus the consumers desire for lower product cost. There is always some other trade off if you look hard enough.

When you examine a map, you need to go beyond just the landscape, the why of movement (i.e. this choice over that), the why of purpose