

## ■ Frameworks

# Joel Barker's Implications Wheel<sup>®</sup>

In today's dynamic business environment, where the future is anything but certain, unintended consequences happen to everybody and in every organisation... and they almost always cost money to correct.

Any organisation that knows how to anticipate the long-term implications of change will have a HUGE advantage over those who do not.

Critical decision making requires a disciplined commitment to rapid and diligent exploration of the future, combined with the organisational flexibility to act early. The thing that is most disturbing about change is not the immediate consequences, everybody is good at thinking about those. It is the long-term consequences, the *cascade of consequences* that carry the most important implications.

Until recently organisations just 'did the best they could' as they considered the future. Now, for the first time in the UK, they can access a powerful strategic exploration tool called the Implications Wheel<sup>®</sup>. This tool can be applied to potential decisions to discover *in a matter of hours* what the long term implications of any proposed action or event might be. Not just the immediate implications of a decision, but also the 2nd and 3rd order implications - to ensure many opportunities or risks are uncovered.

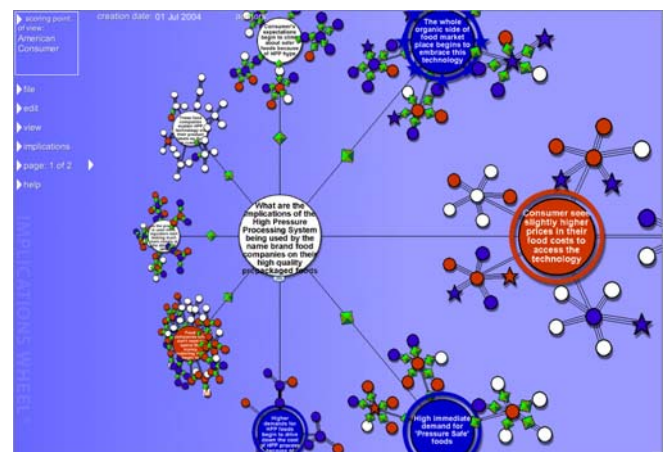
The Implications Wheel<sup>®</sup> is the result of 25 years of applied research and development by Joel A. Barker a leading international business strategist. The technology combines advanced software with collaborative group wisdom to rapidly generate powerful insights into the consequences of any change. It works on such topics as:

- *Innovations* - both for client organisations and their competitors;
- *Emerging trends*;
- *Monitoring and predicting competitor responses*;
- *Changes in policy* - both internal and external;
- *New laws and regulations* at every level of government; and
- *Significant events*.

### How the Implications Wheel<sup>®</sup> works

The Implications Wheel<sup>®</sup> reduces future uncertainty by enabling teams to understand the possible outcomes of a new strategy, decision or change. It uses a methodology that encourages thinking in a non-linear fashion.

It works by focussing on a given action, plan or decision at the heart of the process and working outwards to imagine possible implications of that decision. A large array of potential implications is created by using the wisdom and opinions of the entire team working in a rapid, highly structured and disciplined manner.



This array is then scored for desirability and likelihood from a specified 'scoring point of view'. Finally, a timeframe is proposed on how long it might take for each implication to occur – developing realistic time lines for planning purposes.

The result is an Implications Wheel<sup>®</sup>, a highly visual and graphic representation of the implications of the team's proposed actions or plans for change. An organisation can feel confident that it is far better prepared to make that critical decision and also better equipped to take actions, reduce risk, focus on essentials and optimize results.

### Benefits of the Implications Wheel<sup>®</sup>

**The benefits of The Implications Wheel<sup>®</sup> are profound** and its uses invaluable in creating wide-ranging organisational solutions. Typical uses are:

- *Gaining strategic advantage* through understanding the long term implications of competitor's actions - even before they do;
- *Discovering the long term implications of a new product* or a competitor's new product;
- *Adopting a new process*;
- *Examining an emerging trend* for its positive and negative implications on many parties;
- *Preparing for mergers and acquisitions*. No other tool can identify the crucial components to a successful merger or acquisition as rapidly and transparently;
- *Scoping alliances* through quickly understanding the future implications of organisations working together, prior to detailed implementation;
- *Dramatically improving communications* by showing explicit long term implications and how decision makers will responded to the key issues identified;
- *Speeding up decision making* through early identification of the potential positive and negative consequences that must be dealt with as part of a specific change;
- *Strategic preparation* by engaging multiple diverse points of view to think strategically about issues of significance to the organisation;
- *Uncovering long term implications* of internal policy changes, external policy changes, new laws and regulations;
- *Course-correction* by identifying pathways to correct an underperforming course of action;
- *Research* early in the process for exploration and forecasting; and,
- *As a highly engaging communication tool*. The Implications Wheel<sup>®</sup> has a powerful impact in communicating major points to an audience. It visually illustrates a thorough examination of the long-term implications, demonstrates a balanced thinking process, and highlights the main conclusions to the audience.

### What types of organisations have already benefited from the Implications Wheel<sup>®</sup>?

- *Government Organisations* - for the evaluation of a major policy change;
- *Large corporations* - for the evaluation of strategic options;
- *Small businesses* - for understanding the implications of implementing a new product; and
- *Not-for-profit organisations*. with diverse stakeholder requirements

Strategy consulting, enterprise deployment and training in The Implications Wheel<sup>®</sup> framework is delivered in the United Kingdom and Europe through ServQ Limited.

*Implications Wheel is a registered trademark and the Implications Wheel graphic is a trademark of Joel A. Barker.*