
Module

Archeologists of the Future

What It Is

This tool is a variation of the **Future State Scenarios / Design Challenges** tool. It is a good idea to review that tool for additional information.

This version invites participants to project themselves into a desired future, look around, and bring back an artifact (which the teams draws or creates) that captures the essence of that future time.

The future is rational only in hindsight.

–MG Taylor Axiom

The tool was originally created for use in “SWAT Team for Peace” DesignSession that brought together Israeli and Palestinian negotiators to look for common ground.

What to Use It For

- Stretching a group’s sense of what is possible
- Helping the possibility of a positive outcome to a difficult situation come alive for participants

How It Works

- Step 1. The assignment typically has two parts:
- a. An introductory paragraph setting up the scenario of time travel into the future to collect and bring back representative artifacts.
 - b. A short list of questions to guide the group’s dialogue and direct the creation of the artifacts.
- Step 2. Conduct the exercise as you would any breakout module.

Example

Archeologists of the Future 2038

The future is rational only in hindsight.

– DesignShop Axiom

Scenario

For centuries, anthropologists of the past have dug into the soil of the Middle East to understand the artifacts of the past and from them, to understand as best they could the cultures that created them.

You are archeologists of the Future!

You have the miraculous ability to travel twenty years forward in time to October 2038 and travel all throughout the region. What you find there is a land of peace, justice,

and prosperity — a land of wonders that is truly worthy of your grandchildren.

You are able to return to **this** time with stories of what you have found and **three physical artifacts** that capture the essence of what you have experienced.

What are they?

Process

1. Identify a facilitator to keep the process moving and to balance participation from all team members and a scribe to record group answers on the WorkWalls.
2. Conduct a dialogue to answer the following questions:
 - Brainstorm a list of the **main elements** that characterize this wonderful new world you have discovered.
 - Identify **three artifacts** that capture the essence of this world. They can be photographs, physical objects, or anything else that will help those of us in **this** day and age understand the transformation that has occurred.
 - Use one piece of flipchart paper for each artifact **and create it** to bring back with you for your report out.
 - Be prepared to **tell a story** about each artifact that will make the scenes you have witnessed in the year 2038 come alive for us.

Timing

Approximately 60-75 minutes for the exercise and 7-10 minutes for each group to report out.

Keep in Mind

- Spend time in your introduction of this module establishing the reality that unexpected and wonderful events actually do occur to move humanity forward in positive ways. Consider sharing stories like the fall of the Berlin Wall, the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa, even unanticipated inventions like the smartphone. Open up a “possibility space” in the minds and hearts of participants.
- In the dialogue following each individual team report or when all the reports are concluded, review and record the common elements of all the artifacts and their differences.