

## Book Review

December 2014

### ***The Art of the Long View, Planning for the Future in an Uncertain World***

Peter Schwartz, Currency Doubleday, 1991.

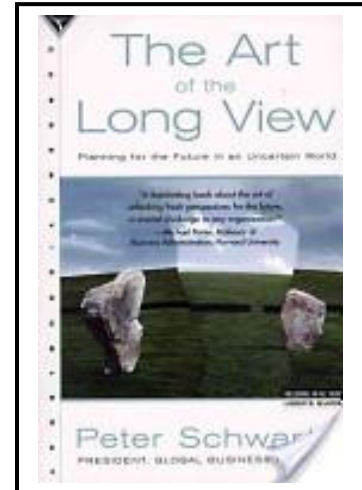
Summary  
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Implications

#### Summary

Peter Schwartz has written a book that benefits every futurist. The subtitle, “Planning for the Future in an Uncertain World” describes the value added by his description of scenario planning. As he describes it, his colleagues predicted the 1971 oil crisis; and he predicted the fall of the Soviet Union; both using scenario planning.

Mr. Schwartz not only takes “the long view”, he takes the holistic view. His writing is a series of stories, he believes strongly in the power of storytelling that discusses some of the technical aspects of scenario planning, but they go on to viscerally illustrate the mindset that is necessary for scenario planning through his thoughtful mining of ideas from anthropology, fiction writing, history, geo-politics, music and other diverse fields available to an intellectually active mind.

When I first read *The Art of the Long View* in 1995, it offered a new way of approaching the future that was both useful and interesting. He also re-introduced me to the idea of a personal reading list. George Washington, Theodore Roosevelt and George Patton all aggressively gave themselves personal reading assignments that were wide-ranging in the subject matter. Mr. Schwartz recommended [page 87] a few books, the science page of the *New York Times* and several magazines; all directed at identifying nascent ideas that might blossom into impactful forces in the world. This list is his selection in 1991; it may be different today – the point is to have a series of information sources that give you a glimpse around the corner.



**YouTube:** In addition to the reviews cited below, check out: Turning plans into results, Peter Schwartz, Salesforce.com. Sustainability Innovation Summit 2013

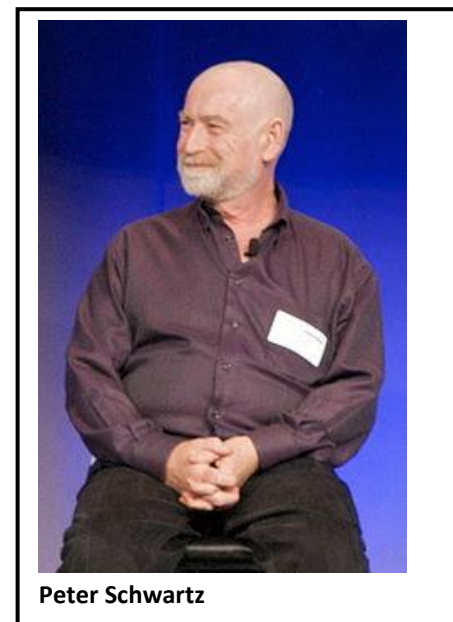
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rA5t1hPaVr4>

#### Published Reviews

##### Google Books

Peter Schwartz

Currency Doubleday, 1996 - Business & Economics - 272 pages  
23 Reviews



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“What increasingly affects all of us, whether professional planners or individuals preparing for a better future, is not the tangibles of life—bottom-line numbers, for instance—but the intangibles: our hopes and fears, our beliefs and dreams. Only stories—scenarios—and our ability to visualize different kinds of futures adequately capture these intangibles.

“In *The Art of the Long View*, now for the first time in paperback and with the addition of an all-new User's Guide, Peter Schwartz outlines the "scenario" approach, giving you the tools for developing a strategic vision within your business.

“Schwartz describes the new techniques, originally developed within Royal/Dutch Shell, based on many of his firsthand scenario exercises with the world's leading institutions and companies, including the White House, EPA, BellSouth, PG&E, and the International Stock Exchange.”

[http://books.google.com/books/about/The\\_Art\\_of\\_the\\_Long\\_View.html?id=flltwg777hsC](http://books.google.com/books/about/The_Art_of_the_Long_View.html?id=flltwg777hsC)  
[http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/247891.The\\_Art\\_of\\_the\\_Long\\_View](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/247891.The_Art_of_the_Long_View)

### Implications for the American City [Lessons]

Mr. Schwartz reinforces many ideas that are commonly held, but only sporadically practiced.

- “Knowledge is the only kind of wealth that multiplies when you give it away...”
- Asking the right question(s) is critical to getting the right answers.
- What happens if the obvious answer is the right answer?
- The practice of scenario building becomes easier once you accept the *idea* of scenarios.
- A post-scenario plan for success is often lacking.
- Don't marry your data, if it gets outdated, start over.
- His first look is at standard driving forces:
  - Society
  - Technology
  - Economics
  - Politics
  - Environment

From his 1991 perspective, remember the PC was first introduced in that same year, he identifies “driving forces for the next two decades” or the world in 2005. Mr. Schwartz also provides an

**Peter Schwartz** founded the [Global Business Network](#) (GBN) in 1988 in his Berkeley basement with several close friends including [Napier Collyns](#), Jay Ogilvy and [Stewart Brand](#). Schwartz called GBN an “information hunting and gathering company”, and describes it as a high level networking and corporate research agency.<sup>[1]</sup>

In 2001, it was bought by premier strategy consulting firm the [Monitor Group](#), although it continues to operate as a distinct entity. The Monitor Group was acquired by Deloitte in 2013 which elected to shut down GBN.

He left the company in October 2011, to work at [Salesforce.com](#) as Senior Vice President for Global Government Relations and Strategic Planning.

**Source: Wikipedia, August 2014.**

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### **“Appendix: Steps in Scenario Development:**

- “Step One: Identify Focal Issue or Decision,
- “Step Two: Key Forces in the Local Environment,
- “Step Three: Driving Forces,
- “Step Four: Rank by Importance and Uncertainty,
- “Step Five: Selecting Scenario Logics,
- “Step Six: Fleshing Out the Scenarios,
- “Step Seven: Implications,
- “Step Eight: Selection of Leading Indicators and Signposts.”

### **Mr. Schwartz offers “Additional Considerations”:**

1. Beware of three scenarios; more than four may be too many; each scenario must be distinct without overlapping others,
2. Avoid handicapping the outcome; any properly constructed scenario may be the winner,
3. Name each scenario carefully,
4. Select a good scenario development team; people who are from the highest levels of management, people who have a broad range of responsibilities and people who have open minds and creative imaginations,
5. Promote ownership through active participation in the process from the start.

City-building professionals, especially planners and city managers, can benefit from the “scenario” approach. This approach is data driven with well-defined alternative outcomes for city development driven by a monitoring system that fits well within the annual budgeting and planning processes. Once established, the efforts required to monitor and manage become minimal while the benefits are potentially significant.

### **REVIEWER:**

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