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The origins and evolution of scenario techniques in long range business planning

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Abstract

Scenario Planning has been around for more than 30 years and during this period a multitude of techniques and methodologies have developed, resulting in what has been described as a "methodological chaos"™ which is unlikely to disappear in the near future (A. Martelli, Scenario building and scenario planning: state of the art and prospects of evolution, Futures Research Quarterly Summer (2001)). This is reflected in the fact that literature reveals an abundance of different and at times contradictory definitions, characteristics, principles and methodological ideas about scenarios. It has been suggested that a pressing need for the future of scenarios is amongst other things, to resolve the confusion over "the definitions and methods of scenarios"™. This paper makes a beginning at this need by tracing the origins and growth of scenarios and the subsequent evolution of the various methodologies; a classification of the methodologies into three main schools of techniques is given and the salient features of

these schools are compared and contrasted.



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