

## TRENDS OUTLINE

*We used to do SWOT analyses every few years, but they rarely seemed of real use. The breakdown of the Trends Outline, as simple as it looks, got us focused fast. It made us realize we had to do more than just list the issues: we had to make big bet on the few things that could radically transform us.*

### Introduction

The Trends Outline is an alternative to the SWOT analysis: it deals with opportunities and threats in a structured, sensible way (see the Competitor Grid for strengths and weaknesses). It takes courage to look squarely at the big forces that might make everyone uncomfortable. But of course, it's better to get ahead of trends than have them drown you.

**MARKET**  
**LABOR**  
**TECHNOLOGY**  
**REGULATIONS**  
**INDUSTRY**  
**MACROECONOMICS**

*See next page for ideas.*

### Benefits

The Center's tools minimize omissions, improve communications and foster collaboration. The **Trends Outline**:

- Helps the everyone, including the Board focus on the biggest issues
- Ensures your overall plan isn't just reacting to today's problems and markets
- Shows everyone how they connect—and matter to—the world at large

<b>Difficulty</b>	Easy
<b>Estimated time required</b>	2-4 hours
<b>Special skills</b>	None

### Instructions

Share one or two provocative articles about the future of your industry (industry associations are often a good source).

1. Brainstorm all the trends that might substantially affect you.
2. Choose those with reasonable probabilities and ignore those of remote possibility.
3. Research the ones that seem most substantial.
4. Then highlight those you feel you must respond to—and then respond to them!
5. Consider assigning someone to be your futurist.

Contact the Center for assistance: [info@theindex.net](mailto:info@theindex.net)

### Make It Better

Member should share ideas for improving any of the Center's tools and how they're taught and formatted. It's also great to suggest new applications or brand-new tools.

## **TRENDS IDEAS** (partial)

This is just a seed list. See The GMs Index for other ideas.

### **MARKET**

- Demographics of prospects and of customers
- Psychographics (behaviors by cohort)

### **LABOR**

- Demographics of employees and of recruits
- Psychographics (behaviors by cohort)

### **TECHNOLOGY**

- Production technology
- Communications technology
- Information systems

### **REGULATIONS**

- Local, state, federal
- International trade
- Regulations affecting customers

### **INDUSTRY**

- Competitor concentration (mergers and acquisitions)
- Vertical integration or disintermediation
- Operations techniques

### **MACROECONOMICS**

- Inflation
- Recession risks
- Political risks
- Cost of and access to capital