

ASSIGNMENTS WORK LESSON 07-11
Kjaer Academy Online Course Module Two

WORK



Take the time to think before you start and find a suitable space to work in

WORK MODULE TWO

This series of assignments is designed to equip you with the essential skills, knowledge, and analytical tools needed to understand the work of a futurist. Each one builds on the previous and they are all essential to your future work and will inform the PLAY assignments in Module three.

Common for all the exercises is that you can take the work as deep as you like. You can choose to complete them, spending just hours or you can use days or even weeks. The more time you spend and fully engage with the course material and exercises, the more you'll support your learning and build experience to help your futurist work.

All you need to complete the assignments in this module is a piece of paper and a writing tool. However, if you prefer to not work by hand, you can use your apps and tools of choice, or find suitable templates in Miro. You can also download the basic templates from the course page.

“The exercises will help you to think critically and creatively about the work of a futurist.”

All assignments are centred on the learning topics in the module:

07 Types of futurists and the origins of futurology: What kind of futurist are you?

08 The evolution of society: Looking back to look forward – create your own timeline

09 Asking better questions: Develop your own interview framework and discussion guide

10 Anatomy of a Trend: Identify a macro trend and make a 'Postcard from the Future'

11 Working with the 4P model: Apply the 4P framework to the macro trend you have created

The exercises are designed to help you to think critically and creatively about the work of a futurist. We encourage you to approach each subject with an open mind and a willingness to challenge conventional perspectives. If possible, share your work and thoughts with fellow students or indeed, anyone with an interest in the future. Talking about your work is an essential skill for a futurist.

You have now taken the next step towards becoming a futurist



Build experience and skills through deep practice



Find inspiration in the Thinkers and Visionaries through time document

EXERCISE: “What kind of futurist are you?”

OVERVIEW

Consider your futurist heroes and determine who inspire you the most. Reflect on the skills and interests you already have and areas where you would like to acquire more knowledge. Group your admired thinkers into the four main forecasting types: *Social*, *Intuitive*, *Scientific*, and *Wild Card*.

CREATING YOUR RATIONALE

- Review the Influential Thinkers document.
- Create your list of admired futurists and categorise them.
- Use a Miro template for your exploration and further analysis.
- Determine your primary forecasting type but understand the others.
- Make an argument for your chosen futurist type [your perspective will evolve over time].

DEEP DIVE

Inspired by the Feynman technique PDF, develop a ‘concept’ for the futurist category you belong to and explain the: *Who*, *What*, *Why* and *How* of your futurist journey.

“Reflect on the skills and interests you already have and areas where you would like to acquire more knowledge.”

EXAMPLE: The Intuitive Futurist - a brief argument

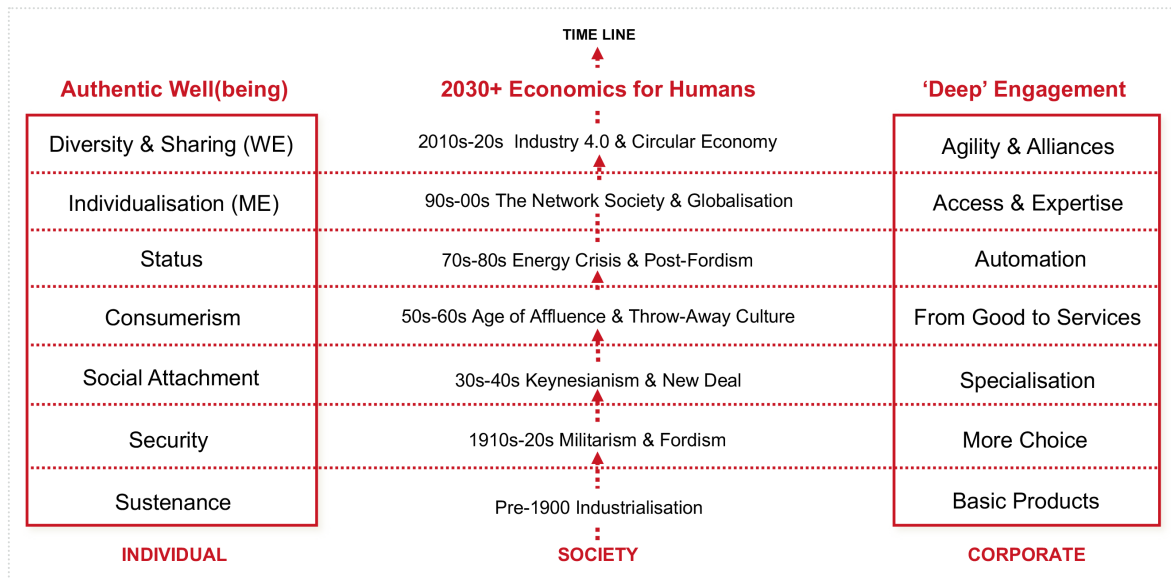
As an Intuitive Futurist, I rely on gut feelings, curiosity, creativity, and pattern recognition to anticipate future trends. Instead of solely relying on data, I embrace weak signals and nonlinear thinking to envision possibilities others might miss.

Intuitive futurists think outside the box, anticipating emerging trends before they become mainstream. Visionaries like Steve Jobs and Jeff Bezos exemplify the power of intuitive foresight in revolutionising industries and transforming our lives by challenging status quo.

While I appreciate data-driven approaches, I'm drawn to the intuitive side of futurology, where curiosity and creativity are crucial. My design background has honed my ability to think laterally and imagine alternate futures, making me well-suited to this forecasting type.

Areas for Improvement: I recognise the importance of balancing intuition with robust data analysis. To enhance my skills, I aim to deepen my knowledge of statistical analysis and various other foresight methods. Additionally, I seek to expand my expertise across diverse fields to enrich my insights and forecasting type.

Conclusion: While I identify as an Intuitive Futurist, I aspire to integrate elements from other fields to adopt a multidimensional foresight approach. By combining intuition with analytical rigour, I aim to navigate complexity confidently and contribute meaningfully to shaping a better future. Articulating my style and recognising areas for growth equips me to embark on my futurist journey with clarity and purpose.



Find inspiration in the Kjaer Global and other timelines shared in the lesson

EXERCISE OVERVIEW: "Looking back to look forward"

To envision what's ahead, futurists look to the past and the present and timelines serve as invaluable tools for exploring various topics. Your task in this assignment is to create your own timeline, whether personal, topical, or societal. You can also choose to map a trend of your own choice, e.g. generative AI or Biohacking. If you need inspiration, then you will find plenty in Kjaer Global's Trend Cards 2035+.

"Focus is about saying no. No, no, no."

Steve Jobs

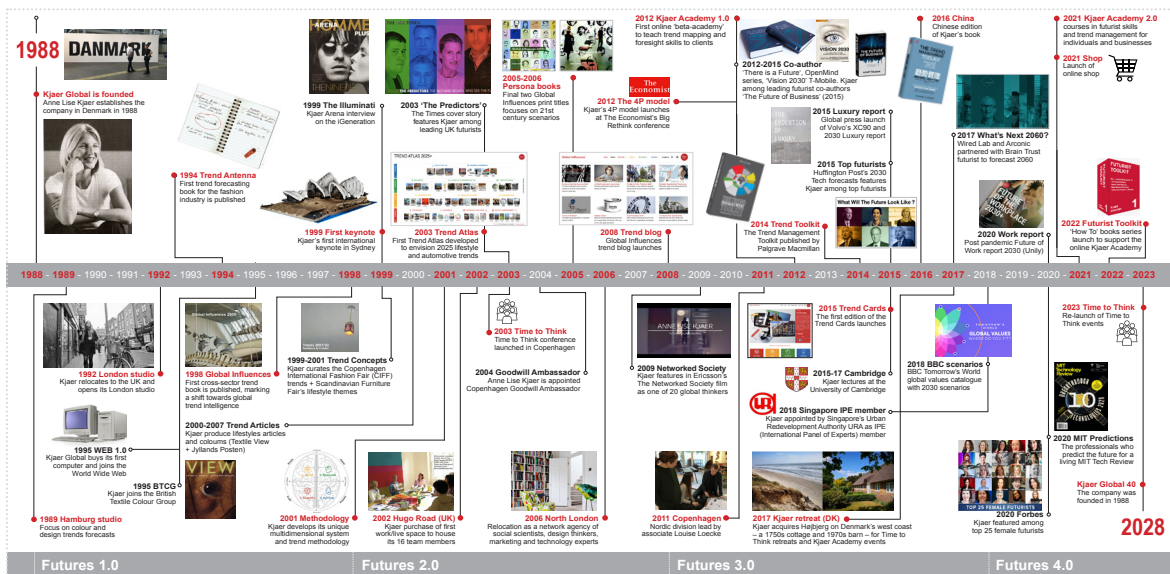
CREATING YOUR OWN TIMELINE

Go as deep as you like. However, timelines offer broad overviews, so avoid excessive detail. Ambitious? Use a miro timeline mind map template. But whether you use days or just hours, these are the steps to consider:

DEEP DIVE

- 1. FRAME:** Define Your Focus. Ask the right questions to establish your foundation.
- 2. IDEATE:** Brainstorm Quickly on your chosen topic. Capture key points on a mind map if needed.
- 3. EXPLORE:** Research Outline and gather information. Expand your material in this phase.
- 4. MAPPING:** Map the material into plot points for the timeline. Keep titles brief; visuals can help.
- 5. SYNTHESISE:** Review and Refine your timeline. Does it tell a coherent story?
- 6. ROADMAP:** Project Forward. Consider future projections. Identify intriguing trajectories.
- 7. ACTION:** Finalise your timeline.

Simplify, clarify, but maintain your style. Remember, focus is key!



Your timeline can be of your organisation, a trend, topic or be a personal timeline



Go beyond the obvious by asking the right questions

“To ask the right question is already half the solution of a problem.”

C.G. Jung

EXERCISE: “Develop your own interview framework and discussion guide”

OVERVIEW

‘Framing’ something is about finding the most inspiring and insightful way to explore. The aim is to enhance your questioning skills. Go as deep as you like. But whether you use days or just hours to complete your guide, these are the practice points to consider:

- **Select a topic, like an industry, sector, or trend.**
- **Expand ideas using your preferred mindmap style miro.**
- **Create a framework using the guide in the lesson.**
- **Craft a discussion guide for your qualitative interviews.**
- **Decide whom to interview and why.**

DEEP DIVE

Learn more about the various interview types, and do practice interviews to compare techniques and outcome.

HOW TO PRACTICE

Each interview type has strengths and weaknesses – choose based on your framework and goals. Below is a brief overview of common types used for qualitative data collection:

Structured Interviews:

- Use set questions in a standard format.
- Ensure consistency and aid response comparison.

Semi-Structured Interviews:

- Provide flexibility with core questions and room for probing.
- Balance standardisation with adaptability to capture nuances.
- Encourage open-ended conversations without preset questions.
- Allow for natural flow and exploration of insights.

Focused Interviews:

- Concentrate on specific themes or topics, with participants chosen accordingly.
- Offer detailed insights into targeted areas of inquiry.

Group Interviews (Focus Groups):

- Engage multiple participants in guided discussions on predetermined topics.
- Stimulate conversation and offer diverse perspectives within a group context.

Qualitative Interviews

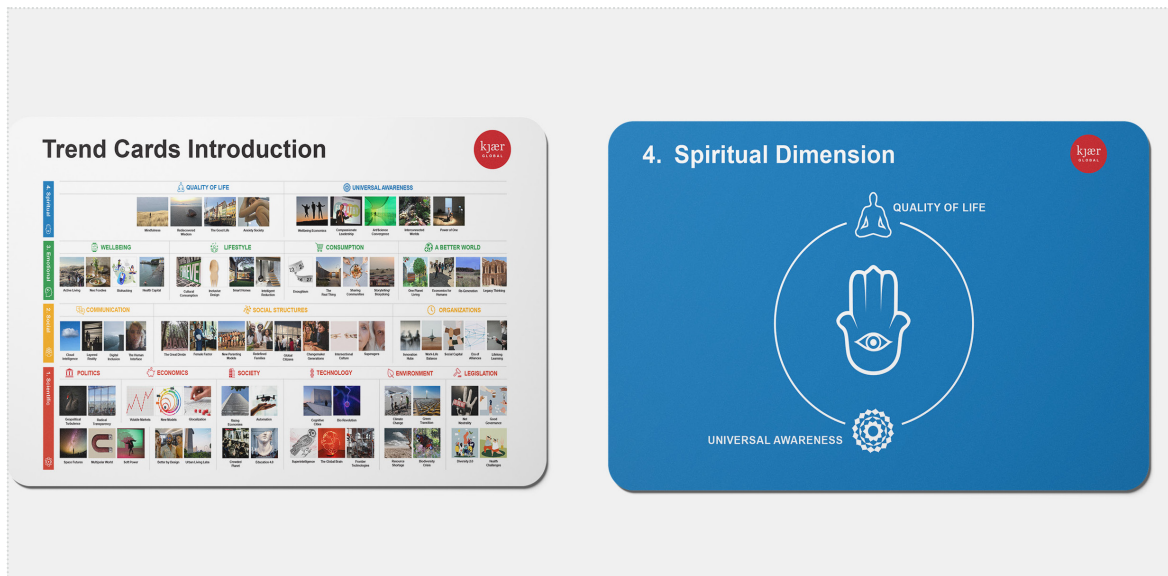
- Gather in-depth, detailed information about people's thoughts, experiences and feelings.
- A qualitative interview can be defined as a conversation with a purpose.
- However, soft qualitative insights is not 'hard' evidence because it is not quantitative data.

Quantitative Interviews

- Often take the form of a questionnaire.
- Numerical data insights, collecting data through structured questions.
- Predefined response options.

“A qualitative interview is a conversation with a purpose”

Robert G. Burgess, Sociologist



The Kjaer Global Trend Cards are snapshots of the future

“Identifying trends is to connect the dots of movement and change. This is also called pattern recognition.”

EXERCISE: “Identify a macro trend and make a ‘Postcard from the Future’

OVERVIEW

Understanding trends are essential in the work of a futurist. Select a topic, and create a framework of inquiry in the same way you developed your interview guide. Make sure you are familiar with the ‘anatomy’ of macro- and micro trends.

DEEP DIVE

Write definitions of the trend concepts in your own words. Download the Futurist Terminology A-Z to get your shorthand to trend concepts and the futurist vocabulary

Remember trends are not:

- a destination but a movement
- subjective observations

HOW TO PRACTICE

- **Research your topic**, including interviews if possible.
- **Analyse and synthesise** your findings into a trend.
- **Create a 'postcard'** of your trend containing the following:
- **Trend title, definition, statistic, expert quote**, mood image and infographic, alongside a brief explanation of why the trend is significant with an example of its future impact.
- **Consider trends as 'from this > to this'** – this is useful when naming the trend.
- **Maintain neutrality** in your trend definitions and descriptions.
- **Don't frame the trend as a question** e.g. 'will climate change the way we eat?'

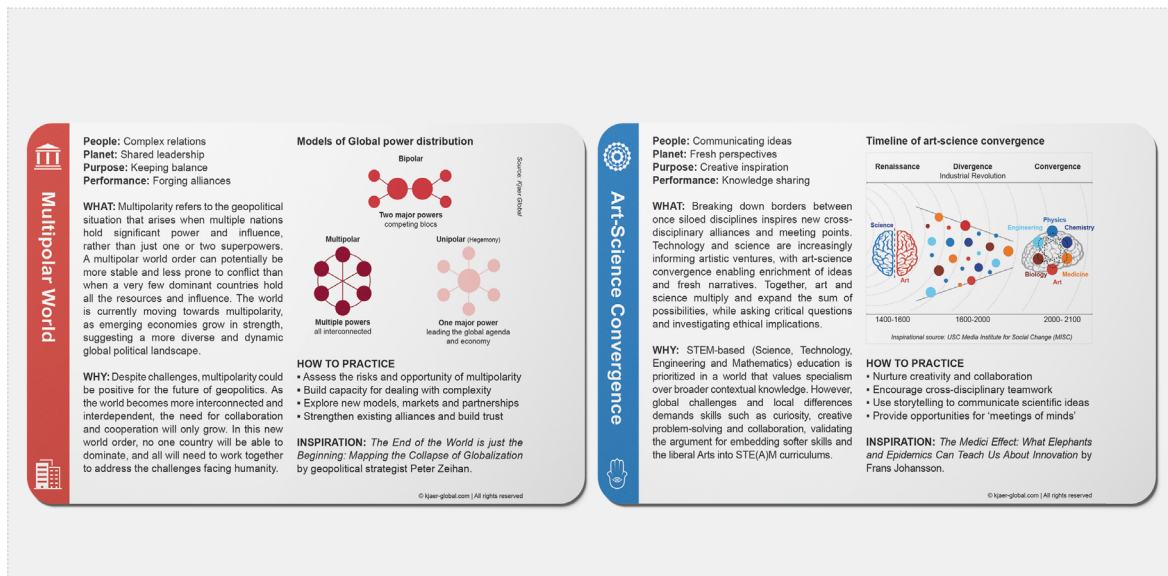
SPOT A TREND

Identifying trends is to connect dots of movement and change. This is also called pattern recognition. Below are some steps to spot trends effectively at this point in your futurist journey.

- **Define scope and objectives:** Establish parameters, as done in the framework exercise.
- **Collect relevant data:** Gather data from primary and secondary sources, using appropriate methods.
- **Organise and analyse data:** Plot recurring signals/themes intuitively, both quantitative/qualitative trends.
- **Contextualise the trend:** Understand the broader social, cultural, and historical context, make a timeline.
- **Interpret trends:** Relate trends to relevant theories or philosophies for deeper understanding.
- **Validate findings:** Substantiate insights with multiple use cases and sources for credibility.
- **Document and communicate results:** Systematically present findings with clear visuals and narratives.
- **Triangulate:** Validate trends or signals with at least three significant and diverse sources.

RECOMMENDATION

Kjaer Global has created a set of Trend Cards, which we call 'Postcards from the Future'. We recommend you get this Futurist Toolkit for inspiration, for future trend management work, to familiarise yourself with the format and for communicating trends.



The Kjaer Global Trend Cards with 4P basic analysis of trend impact

“The 4P model is a holistic framework for exploring the interconnectedness between People, Planet, Purpose and sustainable Performance.”

EXERCISE: “Apply the 4P framework to the macro trend you have created”

OVERVIEW

Working with the 4P framework you will explore the macro trend you created in the previous lesson in depth. In this exercise, take a fresh look at your trend and evaluate it through the lens of *People*, *Planet*, *Purpose*, and *Performance*. Consider each *P* and determine the trend impact accordingly. Go as deep as you like in your analysis but narrow it down to one sentence in the final assessment.

HOW TO PRACTICE

- Use the 'Postcard from the Future' you created in the previous assignment
- Reassess your trend through the lenses of People, Planet, Purpose, and Performance
- What values and impact do you connect with your trend in a 4P context?
- Write a concise argument for the impact, between 20-100 words paragraph for each 'P'
- Then narrow it down to one sentence

EXAMPLE: One sentence analysis of the 'A Better World' trend in the 4P context

People [Inclusive Practices]: This trend fosters a sense of global community, encouraging inclusive practices that improve the quality of life for diverse populations.

Planet [Net Positive]: It promotes a Net Zero economy and practices to protect and restore natural ecosystems, reducing environmental impact.

Purpose [Equitable Goals]: Driven by a vision of a harmonious and equitable world, this trend inspires actions aligned with long-term societal goals.

Performance [Resilient Practices]: Societies and organisations practicing this trend see enhanced resilience and long-term viability, as they align with the growing demand for ethical and sustainable business practices.

DEEP DIVE

To ensure objectivity and avoid bias, engage in open dialogue with peers through the Kjaer Global forum on LinkedIn and other social media groups. Joining other futurist associations can also broaden your perspective and connections.

Notes



Notes





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