

**Strategic Thinking Café Overview**

The Strategic Thinking Café is a short blended learning experience oriented around the concepts and skills found in the Harvard ManageMentor Strategic Thinking topic. The Strategic Thinking topic will help managers:

* Spot trends that affect your organization
* Challenge any biases and assumptions that prevent you from identifying new possibilities
* Practice anticipating opportunities and threats

The learning experience has three components:

*60 to 90 minutes 60 minutes Ongoing*

Part 1: Pre-work (self-paced, individual)

Before the live Café session, participants are expected to complete the following assignments:

* Review the following online lessons from the Harvard ManageMentor Strategic Thinking topic:
  + Understand the Big Picture
  + Explore Key Trends
  + Challenge Your Assumptions
  + Anticipate Opportunities and Threats
* Complete the online assessment from the Harvard ManageMentor Strategic Thinking topic
* Complete the tool “Strategic Thinking Self-Assessment” from the Harvard ManageMentor Strategic Thinking topic

Part 2: Café session (live, group)

The Café session represents the core element of the learning experience. The session provides an opportunity for managers to:

* Exchange ideas and questions with others
* Discuss the context of how concepts and skills apply in the workplace
* Practice and begin application of those concepts and skills
* Build momentum and support for applying the concepts and skills in the workplace

The Café session focuses specifically on the following concepts and tasks from the Strategic Thinking topic:

* Develop your strategic thinking skills
* Challenge your perspectives
* Evaluate opportunities and threats

Facilitating the Café session as outlined should take approximately 60 minutes. If the facilitator prefers a shorter session or wishes to spend more time on a specific concept or activity, he or she may want to cover only those concepts and activities that are most relevant to the group.

| SECTION | ACTIVITY | TIME |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Introduction** | Show icebreaker question while participants are arriving to the session (WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR EVERYONE IN OUR ORGANIZATION TO PRACTICE STRATEGIC THINKING?)   * Introduce facilitators. * Review tips for using technology during the session. * Debrief icebreaker question. * Set context: You don’t have to be upper-level management to devote time to strategic thinking. Strategic thinking skills are a must-have for everyone in an organization. By thinking big, looking toward the future, and identifying new threats and opportunities, you can position yourself, your team, and our company for long-term success. * Review session objectives. | 8 minutes |
| **Skill focus: Develop your strategic thinking skills** | * Debrief the tool “Strategic Thinking Self-Assessment” from the online Harvard ManageMentor Strategic Thinking topic. Participants:   + Discuss any group trends   + Discuss the importance of strategic thinking as a daily practice * Facilitate practice activity: Complete a “What would you do?” scenario on fitting strategic thinking into a busy schedule.   + Learners provide recommendations on how to fit strategic thinking into the character’s day. | 16 minutes |
| **Skill focus: Challenge your perspectives** | * Facilitate practice activity: Complete a “What would you do?” practice scenario on overcoming bias. Participants:   + Share perspectives on how to overcome bias in the statement presented   + Describe ways to challenge biases and question assumptions   Review key recommendations from the Harvard ManageMentor topic on how to prevent bias from limiting your perspective.  Facilitate practice activity: Complete a “What would you do?” practice scenario on challenging perspectives. Participants:   * + Identify the assumptions being made by the character in this scenario   + Talk about how to challenge those assumptions and identify other options | 16 minutes |
| **Skill focus: Evaluate opportunities and threats** | * Discussion question: How often do you think about future opportunities and threats the company might encounter? * Discussion question: How can we hone our ability to anticipate future opportunities and threats? * Facilitate practice activity: Complete a practice scenario on thinking creatively when faced with an opportunity or threat.   + Share creative ideas for taking advantage of the opportunity presented   + Discuss any potential challenges this scenario might present and how to prepare for them * Reflection question: What situations or decisions are you involved in right now that would benefit from challenging your perspective? Or looking for opportunities and threats? | 16 minutes |
| **Applying what you’ve learned** | * Review session objectives and skill areas discussed. * Review directions for completing the On-the-Job section of the online Harvard ManageMentor topic, including the action plan. * Close the session. | 4 minutes |

Part 3: Application (self-paced, individual)

After the live Café session, participants are expected to complete the following assignments:

* Complete the online On-the-Job section in the Harvard ManageMentor Strategic Thinking topic. The section provides learners with an opportunity to choose a skill to focus on and create an action plan for applying and developing the skill.
* Execute their action plan over a specified timeframe (e.g., 60 or 90 days).
* After the specified timeframe (e.g., 60 or 90 days), access the online On-the-Job section in the Harvard ManageMentor Strategic Thinking topic to update the action plan and reflect on the experience.