

**HOW TO USE  
FORECASTING,  
PREDICTION &  
ANTICIPATION  
TO PLAN FOR  
SUCCESS**



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**LIVE THE MEDICINE**

# PREDICT CHANGE

**Observing patterns will  
help you anticipate next  
steps and create  
opportunities**

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"The trouble with weather forecasting is that it's right too often for us to ignore it and wrong too often for us to rely on it."  
- Patrick Young

Let's start with the indisputable fact that all information is subject to change. We cannot predict anything with absolute certainty. But what if you had the ability to really predict the future?!?! Imagine the things you could do, the problems you could avoid. Your confidence would skyrocket from being able to anticipate things before they even happen. Certainly, the power to predict is what has made oracles an indispensable part of every civilization on earth, since the dawn of time. From the Chinese to the Danes to the Aztecs and the Yoruba, you will not find a single civilization that has not traditionally practiced some form of divination.

In contemporary business and science circles, people don't openly speak of oracles and divination. Instead, it is more common to talk about "forecasting." As such, statistics, pie charts and graphs have taken the place of bones, shells and crystal balls. But the desired outcome remains unchanged: Get high quality information before your competitors so that you can take the advantage.

When I was a corporate consultant, my biggest client was Walmart. It was during that time that I was introduced to some of the ideas of Sam Walton, the founder of the company. One of his quotes really resonated with me and I never forgot it: "You can't just keep doing what works one time, everything around you is changing. To succeed, stay out in front of change." Today, Walmart remains the industry leader, achieving peak performance in its brick and mortar stores and in online sales, as well. [1]

## **FORECASTING HEALS**

Forecasting does more than create competitive advantage. When done strategically, it empowers and heals people. Stated another way, when people don't know that they are doing and why, it creates anxiety and sets the stage for underperformance. Forecasting clarifies responsibility and priorities and facilitates cooperation. As a healing mechanism, it gets the team thinking about cause and effect —what they can do now to improve future results or avoid some identified risk. In my personal experience, forecasting makes me a better leader and teacher, and it gets everyone on my team involved in helping our group to achieve collective success. [2]

### Patterns of Prediction and Control

In a paper published in the Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, the researchers show that potential entrepreneurs expressed reluctance to start a new venture in scenarios in which they felt uncertain about the options at their disposal, their ability to achieve their goals and the responses of their competitors (McKelvie et al., 2009). Think about it, most people hesitate when they are unclear about what is going to happen next.

Two main strategies to reduce uncertainty stand out in entrepreneurship research— namely prediction-based and control-based strategies. Predictive strategies focus on gathering information to estimate unknowns, whereas control-based strategies aim to shape the environment through proactive behavior. [3]

When we consider the Stages of Change theory, however, we glimpse an interesting intersection between prediction and control. The idea here is that change is a developmental process that unfolds in a consistent, five stage pattern:

- **Pre-contemplation:** People in this stage are not thinking seriously about changing and tend to defend their current behavior patterns
- **Contemplation:** People in this stage are able to consider the possibility of quitting or reducing a behavior but feel ambivalent about taking the next step.
- **Preparation:** People in this stage have usually made a recent attempt to change behavior. They the 'cons' of continuing as outweighing the 'pros' and they are less ambivalent about taking the next step. They are usually taking some small steps towards changing behavior.
- **Action:** People in this stage have actively involved in taking steps to change their using behavior and making great steps towards significant change. Ambivalence is still very likely at this stage. May try several different techniques and are also at greatest risk of relapse.
- **Maintenance:** People in this stage are able to successfully avoid any temptations to return to prior behavior. They have learned to anticipate and handle temptations to use and are able to employ new ways of coping. They can have a temporary slip, but don't tend to see this as failure.



## **THE POWER OF PREDICTION**

Prediction enables you to control your future by anticipating risks and opportunities. And if you engage your team (e.g., your family, coworkers, etc) in the process, you'll find that the people around you are more likely to pay attention to their performance in ways they never did before. Now, for me personally, this is something that is really pertinent to my work in the classroom, as well as within the temple. So, what I am going to share reflects what I have learned until to date, as well as adjustments I will make going forward.

Here's how to optimize prediction:

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Here's how to optimize prediction:

- First, focus on the one thing that determines whether your team is winning or losing. In our temple, we practice a biweekly divination called itadogun. It's a time when I cast Ifa for the community and share predictions about everything, from health to employment to relationships, all according to the message of Ifa. My challenge going forward will be to share the message in a way that relates to the one thing that will reflect how well we're doing as a group. In other words, in order for prediction to work for us, we need a single target that will guide every member's interpretation of the biweekly message. In the classroom, it simply boils down to the targeted average grade. For example, I might forecast that the class will average a B+ and use that prediction every grading period to guide each student's performance. Your own key number could be income, shipments, or any other variable that's critical to your group's success. The real power is to tie an incentive plan to improvements in the key number in order to really drive interest.
- Second, involve individual team members in the prediction process. In the temple, we perform the itadogun together and I usually share the outcomes with the members via email. Recently, I have been assigning an "owner" to each function that will make the itadogun successful. Going forward, however, I am going to take it a step further and delegate responsibility for each line item that affects our key number. That way, everyone can see how the different components affect our overall performance.
- Third, get people together weekly to update the forecast. Historically, we gathered weekly for worship. But going forward, I am going to adjust the format to focus on how well we're doing, relative to our key performance indicators. After all, what could be more important to discuss each week than whether we're winning? Even if the update is simply "no change from last week," it will keep our eyes on the prize. When forecasts do change, however, that's where we can discover real value.

- As the leader, it will be my responsibility to encourage the members to provide a brief explanation of why things have shifted favorably or unfavorably, so that everyone can absorb the lesson, relative to our key performance metrics. This process encourages additional learning. It also gives you a clear idea of who is on top of his or her business and who needs help.
- Fourth, identify "nano practices" that give people single-serving behaviors that begin to form the patchwork of action toward solving a single problem or reaching a single goal. Nano practices can - and should be - easy to remember and convenient to perform. Over time, these repeated small actions become habits that shape our daily lives. Eventually, such practices even shift our core values.

Based on these theories and practices, I have created a model to measure the effectiveness of communications in moving individuals towards behavior change through prediction. The model tracks individual progression from awareness to action. Depending upon the nature of the prediction and its subsequent campaign, the model seeks to frame up your personal and collective goals within a specified period of time. Are you ready to learn more about how you can use prediction and forecasting to support your personal and group planning?



## NEXT STEPS