Structured Thinking:

Structured Thinking Tools Improve Research Outcomes: A Data-Based Analysis

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What is Structured Thinking?

- It's a clear, organized way of solving problems.
- It means breaking down a big or messy issue into smaller, manageable parts.
- It promotes thinking through each step logically & focusing on what really matters to find a solution.

V - Volatility
U – Uncertainty
C – Complexity
A – Ambiguity

Structured Thinking →

F – Filter the Noise
O – Organize your Thoughts
C – Clarify Assumptions
U – Unpack Complexity
S – Simplify for Action

Awareness is Limited Among Researchers

Numerous academic programs emphasize specialized knowledge and research methods but often **lack structured thinking frameworks.** Researchers may view these tools as corporate, irrelevant, or overly strict. Time constraints and habits make structured thinking tools a nice to have.

Structured Thinking Adapts Throughout The Project Lifecycle

Planning

- MECE
- SWOT
- SOAR
- Assumption Mapping

Execution

- Logic Trees
- Issue Trees

Parsing Conclusions

- Strategic Foresight Including Scenario Planning
- Structured Narratives

Structured Thinking In Action!

Scientists are often trained in experimental design and are accustomed to framing a problem and isolating variables to test. The opportunity exists to extend this thinking process throughout the project lifecycle and through results to enhance the efficacy of science communication. This style of working is common in corporate strategy teams and has the potential to be leveraged more readily in science.

Project Phase: Planning
Task: Determine Project Objective
Structured Thinking Approach: SOAR

Soar 2x2

	Scope	
Timeframe	Strength	Opportunities
	Aspirations	Results

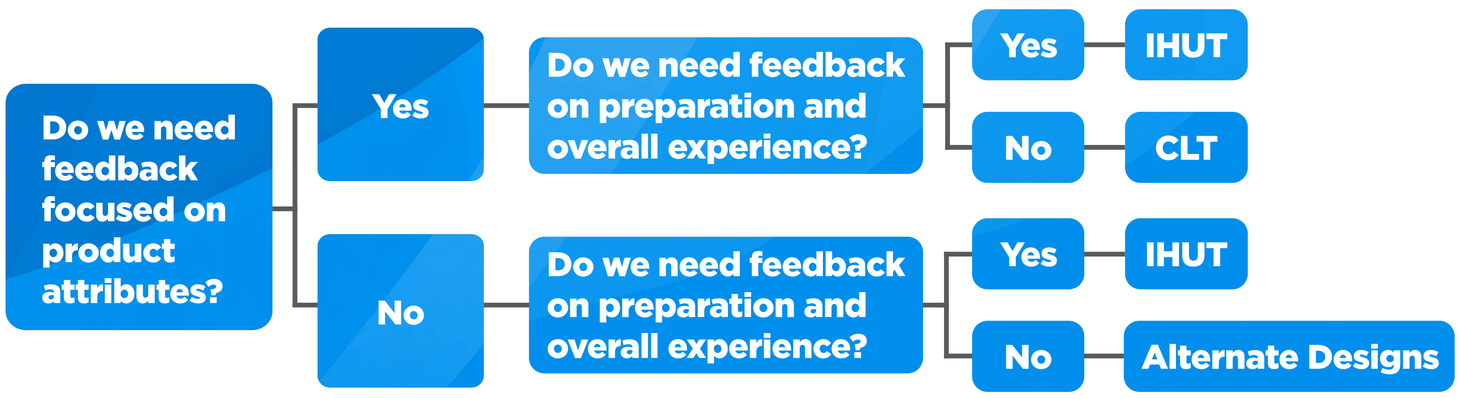
2x2 Factorial Design

	Low Salt	High Salt
Low Flavor	Low x Low	Low x High
High Flavor	Low x High	High x High

Many structured thinking tools mirror experimental designs. Take this example of SOAR and a 2x2 Factorial Design.

Strategic planning tools such as SOAR can be used to stage project objectives. Tools such as SWOT and SOAR utilize a 2x2, which may be familiar to researchers through experience with designed experimentation.

Project Phase: Execution
Task: Finalize Research Methodology
Structured Thinking Approach: Decision Trees



Project Phase: Parsing Conclusions
Task: R&D Externalization Strategies under VUCA conditions
Structured Thinking Approach: Structured Narratives (SCQA)

Structured Thinking Narratives (SCQA)

Situation: Our S&T Externalization Strategy has traditionally relied on stable regulatory frameworks across key markets.

Complication: However, recent regulatory changes introduced by global authorities are creating new compliance risks & operational uncertainties.

Question: How can we evaluate our externalization strategy to maintain business continuity & compliance in this evolving landscape?

Answer: By partnering early with Regulatory and Scientific Affairs and embedding scenario-based planning, we can proactively align our innovation pipeline with emerging compliance expectations.

How Might We Drive More Impactful Research?

- If your seeking clarity of research objectives.
- An enhanced way to communicate insights.
- Greater confidence in research conclusions.
- Increased efficiency when synthesizing data. & More!

Give Yourself The Gift of Structured Thinking For:

- ✓ Faster decision-making!
- ✓ Enhanced Collaboration
- ✓ Greater Insights & Innovation

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