

Session 5

POSITIONING TO PROSPER

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Are you ready for the structural changes that will ripple through the universities sector by 2020 as a result of the lifting enrolment caps, rising food and fuel costs, a doubling of energy prices, the NBN roll-out or the growing middle class in Asia?

For many organisations, the answer would be ‘no’. And yet the ability to stay afloat amidst ever-accelerating change seems dependent on an organisation’s resilience and ability to leverage trends. Even business models that have brought success in the past may simply become a liability amidst unprecedented changes. So how can today’s tertiary education sector position itself for success in the future?

To answer this question, this session will provide a 360° perspective on the trends shaping the operating environment of tomorrow and demonstrate how these trends can be leveraged for success.

Historically, access to knowledge was privileged and Universities were the ‘Keepers of the Book’. There could be no competition, and this, understandably, gave Universities both freedom and authority over their operation. Today, any information – even the classified kind – can be accessed at a click of a mouse, and for free or at a cost that is insignificant when compared to tertiary education fees. With rapid increase in technological capacity, students will shortly be enjoying holographic participation in the best lectures regardless of where in the world they are held. Real-time and debt pressures could drive part-time and mature enrolment. And social networks provide a quicker and more targeted alternative to building one’s networks.

Whether we endorse it or not, today’s Universities have strong competition, and not only from other Universities (which will hold increasingly true once the caps are lifted in 2012). Competition is coming also from an increasing number of new providers of learning, experience, collaboration and networking. We need to be increasingly able to articulate, in a compelling way, why students need to enrol in our tertiary education institution.

While incredibly challenging – as many Universities don’t have a business plan, let alone a marketing strategy – this is also empowering because a range of strong value propositions can emerge, targeting unique segments of the population.

This session will explore this through a 360° perspective on the trends shaping Universities’ operating environment, with the aim of providing insight into the following questions:
Where might the key risks to your University’s future come from?

- What emerging trends present opportunities to enhance market presence, re-engage with different student segments, co-create value, improve staff attraction and retention, and increase financial self-sufficiency and decrease operating costs?
- How can University facilities respond to the compounding challenges from technology, new ways of learning and financial pressures?
- How are Universities around the world re-defining their value proposition?

Presenters Biography

Nick Bruse is one of the lead Strategists at Thinc Beyond. A charismatic and thought provoking speaker, he has over 12 years of experience across multiple industries in business development, venture creation, innovation development and sustainability. Nick's experience brings a diverse perspective to the challenges faced by the education sector.

Thinc Beyond, a business within the Thinc Group, provides strategic consulting services to enable future-proofing of organisations against emerging trends to deliver financial, social and environmental prosperity. Specialising in the applied impact of global trends, Nick and his team merge strategic advisory and facilitation approaches and work with management teams to understand both the long-term drivers of change and the short term pressures, and to design resilient organisational models that future proof their organisations. Thinc Beyond's current educational clients include La Trobe University and University of Adelaide.