Daily Scenario Planning: The How-To

Most strategies fail not from weak analysis, but from avoiding a choice under uncertainty. The fix isn't a bigger annual plan — it's **scenario agility as an operating capability**: a short loop you run every day, so the plan flexes before the market forces it to.

DAILY · 15 MIN
Run one scenario through the loop. One decision, one page.

WEEKLY · 30 MIN
Review signals & triggers. Anything crossed a threshold? Pivot or hold.

MONTHLY · 60 MIN
Refresh assumptions and retire scenarios the evidence has settled.

THE DAILY LOOP — 5 STEPS

1. **Frame the decision, not the topic**
Name the decision that must be made and the cost of not deciding. Set guardrails up front — budget ceilings, regulatory immovables, values, time horizon. *"What decision does today's scenario support?"*

2. **Surface assumptions & uncertainties**
List what you're assuming and what could break it. Rank by impact × uncertainty; work the top one or two first. Uncertainty should shape options — not get assessed after them. *"What would have to be true for this to work?"*

3. **Sketch 2–3 distinct options**
Real paths, not a wish list. Each option completes the sentence *"If we believed X, we would do Y."* Ground each in stakeholders, internal data, and external signals.

4. **Stress-test before the market does**
Run a quick PESTLE-plus-capability scan per option, then hunt second-order effects: who loses, what breaks, what incentives get created, what's irreversible. Separate **no-regret moves** from **big bets**.

5. **Commit, own, and watch the signals**
Choose what you're committing to vs. testing. Assign an owner and first 30/60/90-day actions. Define the leading indicators and early-warning signals that would trigger a pivot. *"What would make us change course — and how would we know early?"*

STANDING ON PROVEN GROUND

This loop compresses **Playing to Win** (Roger Martin: where to play, how to win), **Shell/Schwartz scenario planning** (critical uncertainties, robust vs. fragile strategies), and **WWHTBT** (what-would-have-to-be-true stress-testing) into a repeatable daily practice.

ASK BETTER QUESTIONS, FASTER

Scenario agility means the business can pressure-test the plan on demand. These aren't finance-only questions — they're enterprise performance questions:

- What if sales cycles extend by 20 days?
- What if win rate drops 3 points in one region?
- What if we shift investment from events to partner co-marketing?
- What if expansion underperforms but new logo accelerates?
- What if we delay hiring but protect pipeline generation?
- What if AI lifts productivity — but only in specific teams?

THE FOUNDATION: YOU CAN'T HAVE SCENARIO AGILITY IF…

- Planning depends on manually stitching together disconnected files
- Every function runs on different assumptions
- The business only trusts the numbers once a month

The best planning environments are becoming **simulation environments** — leadership tests assumptions before the market tests them in real life. AI accelerates this: generating scenarios, mapping dependencies, spotting anomalies, speeding the modeling. But only on a connected foundation.

*The strategic question is no longer **"Do we have a plan?"** It's **"How quickly can we understand the impact when the plan changes?"** Speed now matters almost as much as accuracy.*