



The ZDM Group LLC

# Performance by Design

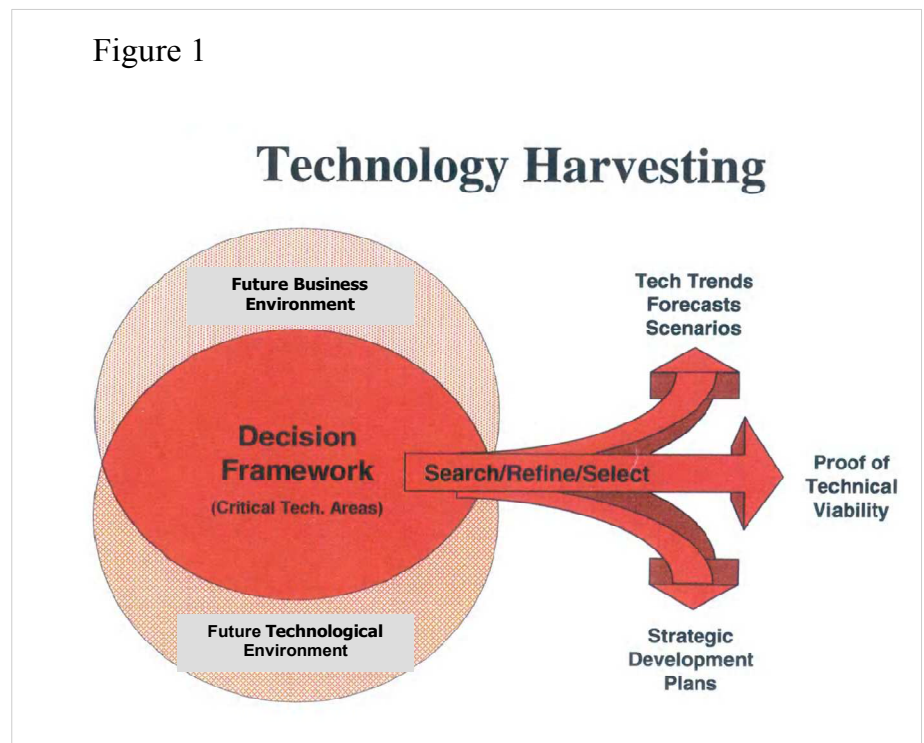
## Staying Ahead of the Game with the Technology Harvesting Process

### Energy, Edge, Execute and Energize

Jack Welch has written a business bible, *Winning*. The four words that capture Welch's message for achieving outstanding results are, Energy, Edge, Execute and Energize. A leader must bring the energy, discover the edge, execute the plan and energize his people. What is edge? It means staying ahead of the game, thinking broadly and creatively, paying attention to what is working and what is not. It is doing more than lip service to the word, proactive. Harvesting Technology is one way to get the edge.

"Technology Harvesting Process" (THP) is a disciplined approach to creating long term and sustainable competitive advantage. THP facilitates the identification of leading edge Manufacturing technologies to meet future business needs.

Figure 1



## Secure senior management support

Senior management sponsorship is essential to provide the resources and support necessary to succeed with THP. Key stakeholder involvement throughout THP is critical. Internal or external customers must pull technologies through the system to make it to the market. The goal is that potential users will be beating down the door for the benefits of the new technology. If stakeholders are not advocating for the technology, it will not see the light of day.

## Align the business imperative with THP

Answering the following questions should help guide senior management decision to support THP:

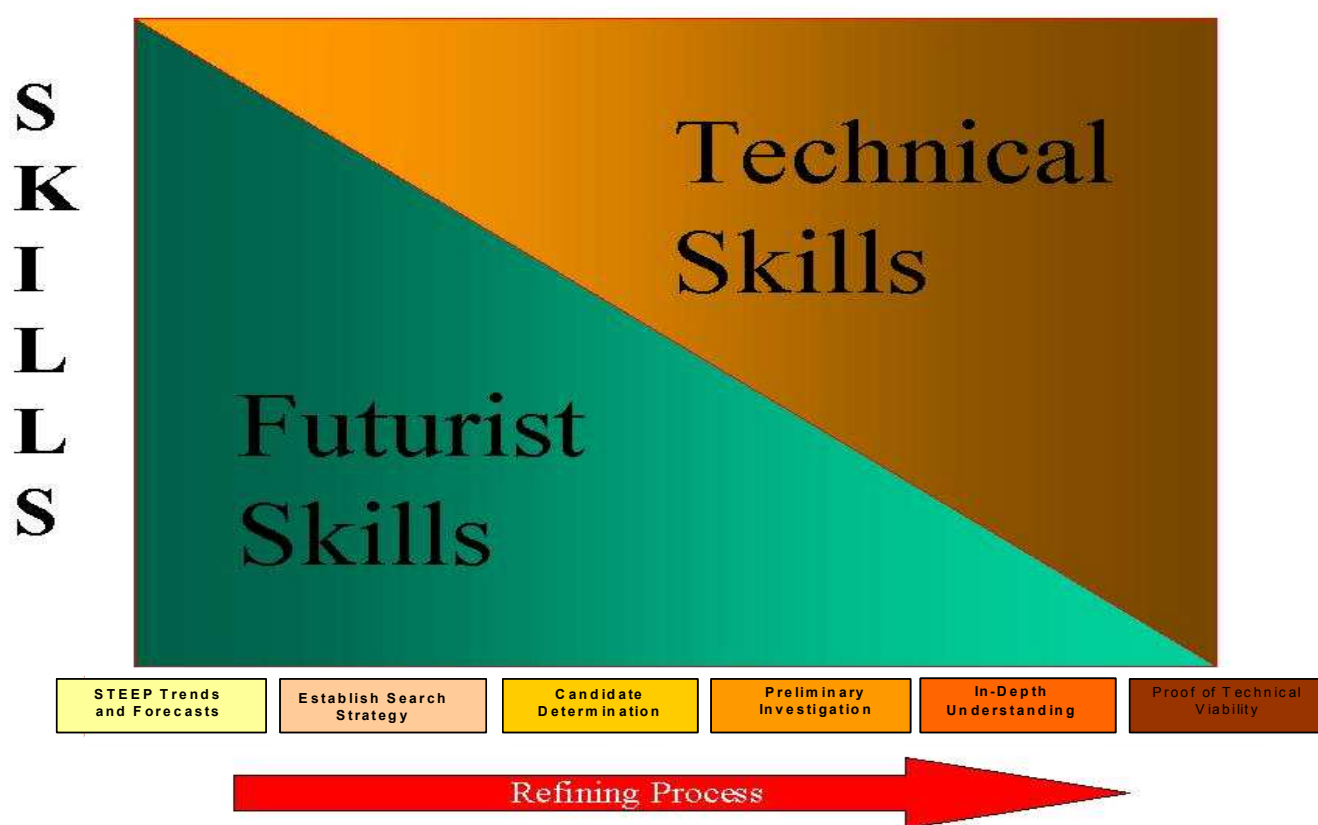
1. Does the organization want to lead the industry in growth and reputation? THP is for those who choose to define the future, not follow it. Fast followers need not apply. Licensing may be an option if the developing company owns the IP and chooses to share.
2. Does the organization choose to anticipate and mitigate future conditions that could have a significant negative impact on their business? It's necessary to develop several scenarios based on trends and forecasts to hedge one's bet against the worst case, win in the most likely case, and make a killing in the best case. It may be challenging to predict what will happen in the future but what you don't know can hurt you. It is important to anticipate what the future can bring to avoid being blindsided by the unexpected.
3. What is the desired mix of your portfolio of development projects? Your development portfolio is a mix of low risk, shorter term, lower impact projects to higher risk, longer term, high impact projects. Every company has to decide what level of risk their business is willing to take. No one wants to lose and we are not all high rollers. Before you can decide how to use THP you have to decide whether you want to take the big risk to hit the jackpot, or prefer smaller risks and play for smaller stakes. The mix of technologies you harvest will reflect your risk decisions.

### Getting Started!

1. Secure senior management support
2. Align the business imperative with THP
3. Choose the right team members
4. Assess trends in your business and technical environment to identify critical technology areas
5. Establish the search and data analysis strategies
6. Choose the right few projects
7. Start developing

## Choose the right team members

Technology harvesters are a special breed. THP team members must bring the requisite talent, knowledge and skills. As the process progresses the skills change from futurist to data mining to technical development. Choosing the correct team leadership is critical to success. Leaders must be talented and protect the team from daily business pressures while instilling a sense of urgency.



## Assess trends in your business and technical environment

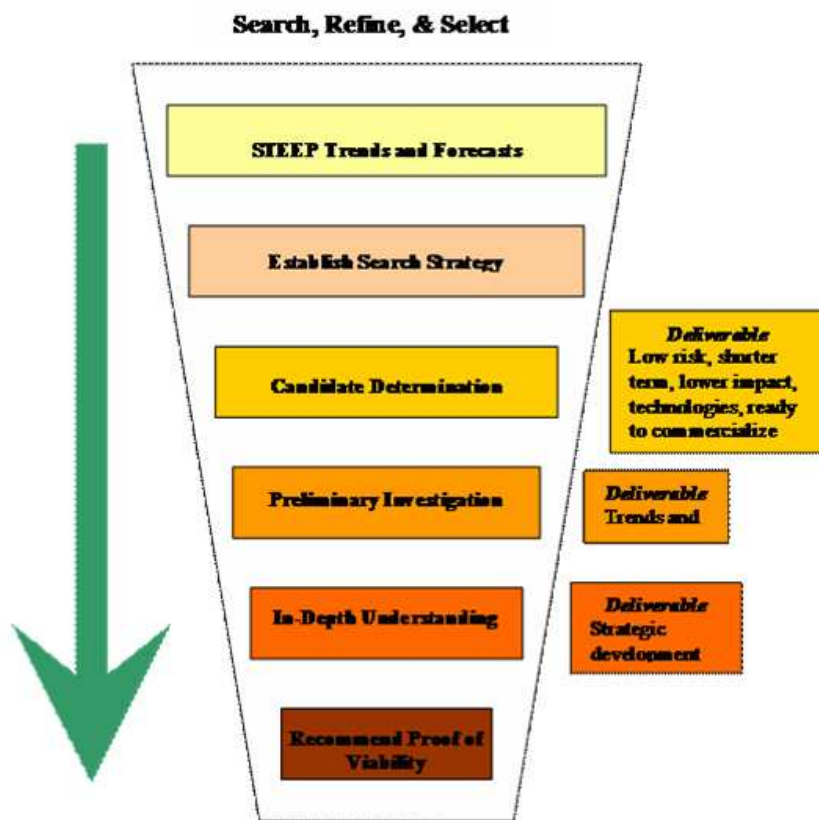
Once you have obtained senior management support, decided on your desired project mix and chosen the THP team, it's time to get started assessing the current business environment's trends and forecasts to predict future requirements. You take a parallel approach to the technology environment.

## Establish the search and data analysis strategies

These overlapping plans combine to establish the “Decision Framework” (DF) and “Critical Technology Areas” (CTAs) that drive the process. Using the CTAs and DF, the process proceeds to search for technologies and refines these to a few to take to “Proof of Technical Viability”.

## Now start developing

If the technology proves to be viable, the next step is to feed it into the development/commercialization pipeline.



Additional deliverables of THP include technical trends, forecasts and scenarios, as well as strategic development plans and short term, tactical technologies that can be implemented quickly. If you choose to pursue THP, this is best done initially with the guidance of an expert.

We all are not Jack Welch or work in organizations with the clout and leverage of GE. But none of us, no matter how large or small our organization, can afford NOT to discover our business edge. THP is one way to get the edge. Its discipline and methods can lead to rich rewards and to the competitive advantage we need to propel and sustain our business, to stay ahead of the game.

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The ZDM Group, LLC  
1005 Golf Estates Drive  
Woodstock, GA, 30189, USA



## Statistically Sound Decision Making

Phone: +1(770)592-0816  
Fax: +1(770)928-9643  
E-mail: newsletter@thezdmgroup.com