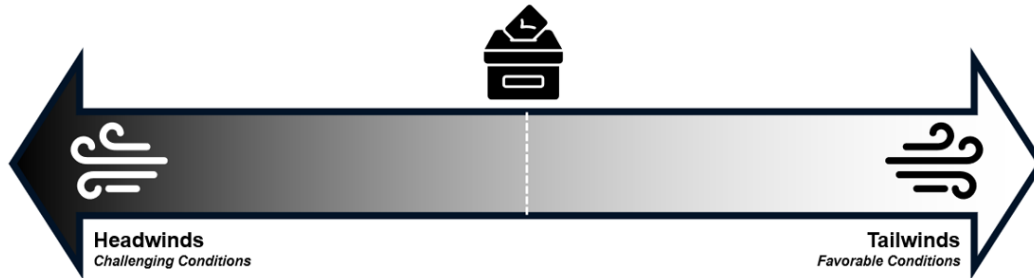


Facilitation Guide | Breakout #4: State Strategy Labs: Headwinds and Tailwinds

65 minutes

Facilitation Approach: Adaptive Scenario Spectrum

Through structured movement of ideas along a visual spectrum and guided reflection, this method helps participants distinguish adaptive strategies (which change depending on conditions) from resilient strategies (which hold across scenarios).



Purpose


Examine how long-term priorities and “essential moves” may need to shift depending on how the 2026 cycle unfolds. Will the outcomes create challenging conditions (headwinds), momentum (tailwinds), or something in between. Groups will discuss which strategies are resilient across scenarios, which may need adaptation, and where alignment or collaboration could strengthen outcomes.

Breakout Goals

- Map essential moves along the headwinds-to-tailwinds spectrum and assess how conditions might alter or stress each strategy.
- Distinguish adaptive and resilient strategies, identifying which moves change based on conditions and which must hold across scenarios.
- Surface potential opportunities for alignment and collaboration across organizations based on shared needs, challenges, or strategic pathways.

Materials

- Breakout #4 Participant Discussion Guide (*Also included at the end of this document for reference.*)
- Large Scenario Spectrum chart (printed on poster paper)
- Scenario Spectrum Handout
- 4x6 sticky notes with *Essential Moves* (from Breakout #3)
- 3x3 sticky notes in two colors (one for adaptive strategies, one for resilient strategies)

Facilitation Flow	Facilitation Notes
Overview (Full-group) 5 minutes <i>Provide an overview and instructions to entire group before breakouts</i>	Display and explain the spectrum to the full group before breakout and provide an overview of the activity <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headwinds (Challenging conditions) – setbacks or unexpected losses, lower engagement/turnout, narrative/misinformation challenges, resource constraints, slower movement in pipeline

- **Tailwinds (Favorable conditions)** – accelerated wins, strong alignment/collaboration, increased funding/capacity, opportunities emerging sooner

Breakout Groups will have 55 minutes to discuss, and then everyone will return for full-group reflection

Breakout Groups 55 minutes

Discussing how essential moves shift under different conditions and what remains resilient.

[Links to important documents for easy facilitator access]

Facilitation Note(s): Notetaking not required for Parts 1-3 of this breakout

Part 1: Grounding in Essential Moves 5 minutes

The group should briefly share the Essential Moves for 2028 and beyond that were discussed in their Breakout #3 groups. These moves will anchor the conversation for this breakout.

Facilitation Note(s):

- This should be brief. The goal is to quickly identify what had been previously discussed and not re-process new Moves.
- Capture 3-5 moves on sticky notes to map on the spectrum. (Limiting Essential Moves supports the deeper discussion described in the protocol.)

Part 2: Initial Placement of Essential Moves on the Spectrum 5 minutes

Begin by asking participants where each Essential Move should be placed on the spectrum based on their intuition/gut.

Facilitation Note(s):

- Sticky notes should be placed somewhere within the spectrum not at the poles.
- As the group discusses how each Essential Move plays out under headwinds and tailwinds, the sticky notes may slide LEFT or RIGHT based on emerging insights.

Part 3: Scenario Discussion and Movement 15 minutes

The group discusses how each Essential Move behaves under headwinds, tailwinds, and mixed conditions, moving notes left or right on spectrum as needed.

Facilitation Note(s):

- Please **note the recommended times for each part** of the conversation as some have been given more time than others.
- While all identified breakout questions are relevant to the discussion, if facilitators need to prioritize questions for time constraints, **the most essential questions have been bolded** throughout the rest of the protocol.

Headwinds Prompts (Challenging Outcomes)

For each Essential Move...

- ***If conditions look more like headwinds, what becomes harder or more fragile?***

- *What would we need to protect or stabilize?*
- *What pivots or supports might be required?*
- *What risks appear under challenging conditions?*

Facilitation Note(s): Move sticky notes left on spectrum as challenges increase

Tailwinds Prompts (Favorable Outcomes)

For each Essential Move...

- ***If conditions resemble tailwinds, where does this Move gain momentum?***
- *What becomes easier or more possible?*
- *What might be accelerated?*
- *What risks could come from moving too quickly?*

Facilitation Note(s): Move sticky notes right on spectrum as challenges increase

Across-the-Spectrum (Varying Outcomes)

For each Essential Move...

- *How does this Move shift in mid-range conditions?*
- *What early indicators would tell us we need to adjust?*
- *Is this a Move that stays mostly in the middle depending on context?*

Facilitation Note(s): The group should review the spectrum overall. Inquire if there are any final adjustments to sticky notes before moving on to discussing adaptive and resilient strategies.

Part 4: Identifying Adaptive and Resilient Strategies

20 minutes

Having explored how the Essential Moves may play out under different 2026 conditions, the group will now engage in meaning-making by looking at ways these moves may need to pivot or hold steady by identifying the Adaptive and Resilient strategies that support the longer-term 2028 and beyond vision.

Facilitation Note(s):

- Facilitators should capture adaptive strategies, resilient strategies, key signals/indicators in the notetaking document.
- During the full-group reflection at the end, individuals will be invited to share one resilient strategy, adaptive, strategy, and alignment opportunity.
- **Notetaking for Part 4 should focus responses to the bolded questions.**

Adaptive Strategies Discussion Prompts (Outcome-dependent Strategies)

- ***Which Essential Moves require different approaches in headwinds vs. tailwinds?***
- *What adjustments/pivots strengthen these Essential Moves under challenging conditions?*
- *What should accelerate or shift if conditions are favorable?*

Resilient Strategies Discussion Prompts (Hold Across Scenarios)

- ***Which approaches remain essential no matter what?***

- *What foundational practices or capacities must be protected regardless of headwinds?*
- *What elements of these Essential Moves are “non-negotiable” for success in 2028 and beyond?*

“Watch-Fors” Discussion Prompts

- *What early indicators would tell us conditions are shifting toward headwinds or tailwinds?*
- ***What would signal the need to pivot, pause, or accelerate?***

Part 5: Alignment and Collaboration Opportunities

10 minutes

Now that groups have identified how their Essential Moves shift or hold across the spectrum, the final part of the breakout will explore alignment and collaborative opportunities. turn toward collective action and alignment.

Facilitation Note(s): Notetaking should capture priority alignment opportunities, any shared needs or resources named.

- ***Where do our strategies naturally align across organizations in this group?***
- *What shared challenges or gaps did we notice that could be addressed together?*
- *What coordination or collaboration could reduce risk or accelerate progress?*
- *What shared tools, resources, data, or narrative strategies would strengthen our work?*
- *What support or capacity-building could benefit multiple organizations?*

Facilitator should remind participants they can add anything to the “We Need / We Can Offer / Tools” charts on wall.

**Full-Group Debrief/
Reflections**

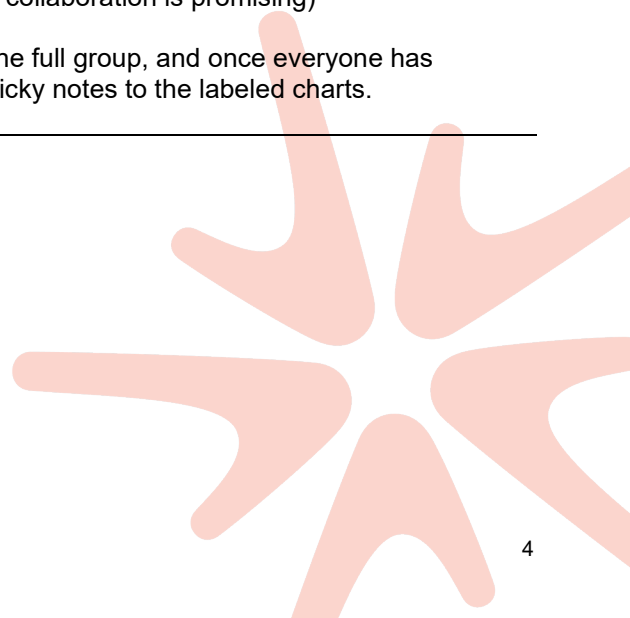
5 minutes

Share individual and small group insights and takeaways with the entire group

Ask participants to grab three sticky notes and write one of the following that resonated from their breakout discussion on each:

- One Resilient Strategy (what holds across conditions)
- One Adaptive Strategy (what adjusts under headwinds/tailwinds)
- One Alignment Opportunity (where collaboration is promising)

Invite the group to share thoughts with the full group, and once everyone has reflected, ask participants to add their sticky notes to the labeled charts.



BREAKOUT #4 | State Strategy Labs

Discussion Guide

Purpose

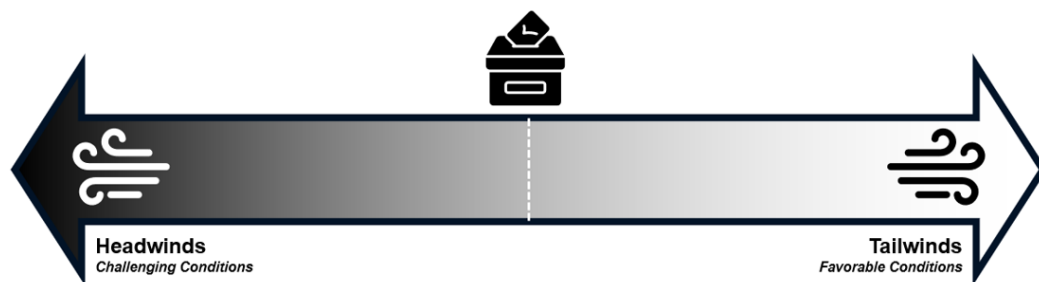
Examine how long-term priorities and “essential moves” may need to shift depending on how the 2026 cycle unfolds. Will the outcomes create challenging conditions (headwinds), momentum (tailwinds), or something in between? Groups will discuss which strategies are resilient across scenarios, which may need adaptation, and where alignment or collaboration could strengthen outcomes.

Part 1: Grounding In Essential Moves

Briefly share with the group the Essential Moves for 2028 and beyond that were discussed in the previous breakout discussion.

Part 2: Placing Essential Moves on the Spectrum

Identify where each Essential Move plays out under headwinds and tailwinds and place the Essential Move on the spectrum.



Part 3: Scenario Discussion

Headwinds Prompts (Challenging Outcomes)

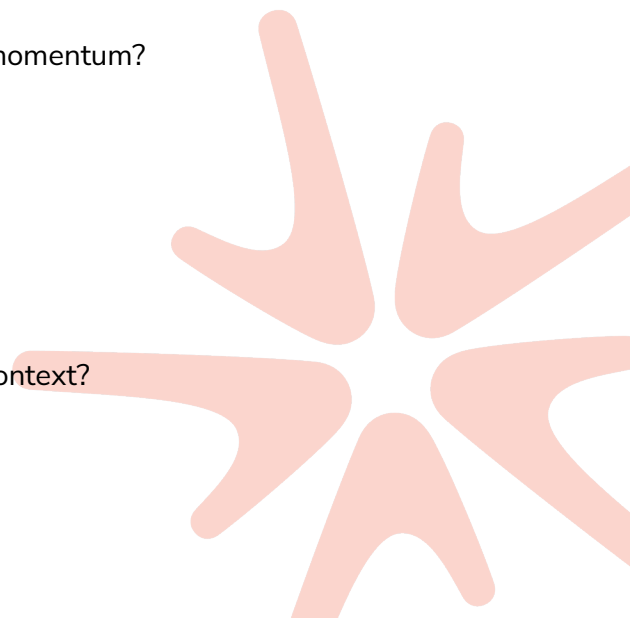
- If conditions look more like headwinds, what becomes harder or more fragile?
- What would we need to protect or stabilize?
- What pivots or supports might be required?
- What risks appear under challenging conditions?

Tailwinds Prompts (Favorable Outcomes)

- If conditions resemble tailwinds, where does this Move gain momentum?
- What becomes easier or more possible?
- What might be accelerated?
- What risks could come from moving too quickly?

Across-the-Spectrum (Varying Outcomes)

- How does this Move shift in mid-range conditions?
- What early indicators would tell us we need to adjust?
- Is this a Move that stays mostly in the middle depending on context?



Part 4: Identifying Adaptive and Resilient Strategies

Adaptive Strategies Discussion Prompts (Outcome-dependent Strategies)

- Which Essential Moves require different approaches in headwinds vs. tailwinds?
- What adjustments/pivots strengthen these Essential Moves under challenging conditions?
- What should accelerate or shift if conditions are favorable?

Resilient Strategies Discussion Prompts (Hold Across Scenarios)

- Which approaches remain essential no matter what?
- What foundational practices or capacities must be protected regardless of headwinds?
- What elements of these Essential Moves are “non-negotiable” for success in 2028 and beyond?

“Watch-Fors” Discussion Prompts

- What early indicators would tell us conditions are shifting toward headwinds or tailwinds?
- What would signal the need to pivot, pause, or accelerate?

Part 5: Alignment and Collaboration Opportunities

- Where do our strategies naturally align across organizations in this group?
- What shared challenges or gaps did we notice that could be addressed together?
- What coordination or collaboration could reduce risk or accelerate progress?
- What shared tools, resources, data, or narrative strategies would strengthen our work?
- What support or capacity-building could benefit multiple organizations?

Individual Reflection

Reflect on your group’s discussion. What insights/ideas are relevant and important for you and your organization’s work for 2028 and beyond?

