

Joel Barker - Biography



Joel Barker was the first person to popularize the concept of paradigm shifts in the corporate world. He began his work in 1975 after spending a year on fellowship meeting and working with visionary thinkers in both North America and Europe.

He discovered that the concept of paradigms, which at that time was sequestered within the scientific discussion, could explain the revolutionary change in all areas of human endeavor. By 1985, he had built the case and corporations and nations were seeking his advice. In 1980, in addition to his work on paradigms, he began to focus on a second crucial component for organizations and individuals: the importance of vision.

Books/Videos

In 1986, he released his first videotape, *Discovering the Future: **The Business of Paradigms***. By 1988, it was the best selling business video in history. In 2001, he updated this film to include contemporary examples and a shortened version. It has been translated into 16 languages and continues to influence people all over the world.

In 1990, he released his second video, ***The Power of Vision***. This became his second best seller and has also been translated into more than a dozen languages. Additional videos include ***Wealth, Innovation, and Diversity***, ***Leadershift***, and his most recent video, ***Innovation at the Verge***.

His book on paradigms, ***Future Edge***, published in 1992, was listed as one of the most influential business books of that year by the prestigious Library Journal. It has been used for over two decades and remains a textbook in college courses today.

In 2005, ***Five Regions of the Future***, written with fellow futurist Scott Erickson offered a bold new way of looking at today's rapidly evolving technologies: as five distinct "ecosystems" that each operates with a distinct set of values, advantages, and disadvantages:

- Super Tech: Bigger, better, more! (e.g., fusion power)
- Limits Tech: Use what you've got (e.g., aerogel insulation)
- Local Tech: Think small, think home (e.g., electric wind turbines)
- Nature Tech: Be one with nature (e.g., organic plastics)
- Human Tech: What lies within us (e.g., stem cells)

Strategic Exploration Tools

In addition to his writings and videos, Joel Barker has developed practical applications of his concepts for exploring the future. Powerful, software-supported tools include the **Implications Wheel**[®] and the **Strategy Matrix**[®]

Joel Barker has worked with organizations, both for profit and not for profit, all over the world as well as with nations, including Singapore, Venezuela, Canada, Mexico, and Peru.

His honors include an honorary Doctorate in Visionary Leadership from St. Mary's University and the Excellence in Education Award given to him by the international education association, Pi Lambda Theta for his part in supporting educational innovation. Formerly director of the Futures Studies Department of the Science Museum of Minnesota from 1974 to 1978. He has spoken to more than 1 million people around the world and his films have been seen by more than 250 million people around the world.