

Scenario Planning FAQ:

Your Top Scenario Planning Questions, Answered

In [Planview's 2025 Strategy Execution Benchmark](#), 87% of strategy execution leaders rate themselves highly effective at scenario planning – yet most still struggle to translate that confidence into a systematic advantage.

Scenario planning isn't reserved for the most advanced organizations. Any team can start now, with the data they already have, to make decisions based on trade-offs instead of instinct. A rough scenario beats no scenario – and done systematically, it can improve ROI by 25–70% over reactive approaches.



? WE ALREADY PRIORITIZE PROJECTS. WHY DO WE ALSO NEED SCENARIO PLANNING?

Prioritization answers “which initiatives should we fund?” Scenario planning answers “which combination holds up when conditions change?” A prioritized list built on a single assumed future becomes a liability the moment a budget shifts, a market moves, or a competitor acts.

? IS THIS SOMETHING ONLY ADVANCED ORGANIZATIONS – OR DEDICATED ANALYSTS – CAN DO?

The barrier has dropped significantly. The most important step isn't technical – it's structural: agree on what “value” means before building a single scenario and frame each one around a specific question rather than open-ended exploration. Rough scenarios built on available data surface dependencies and conflicts that a static plan never will, and that's enough to begin.

? WE DON'T HAVE CLEAN, UNIFIED DATA. SHOULD WE WAIT UNTIL WE DO?

No. The biggest risk isn't imperfect data. It's having no scenarios at all. Set a minimum viable data bar, build your first scenario against it, and improve incrementally. Waiting for a perfect data foundation is one of the most consistent reasons organizations stay at the earliest stage of maturity longer than they need to.

? HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT FROM THE WHAT-IF ANALYSIS WE ALREADY RUN IN SPREADSHEETS?

Spreadsheet what-if analysis models one variable at a time on data that goes stale the moment it's saved. When a scenario needs to activate – a budget cut, a regulatory change, a new strategic priority – it requires a full manual rebuild to reflect current reality. Systematic scenario planning keeps analysis built on live data, multiple futures visible side by side, and the selected scenario connected directly to portfolio action without starting over.

? WHAT DOES GETTING STARTED ACTUALLY LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

Three things define a working practice: shared criteria for what “value” means, a specific question each scenario is designed to answer (not “let's see what happens”), and a direct connection between the scenario conclusion and an actual portfolio decision. Start with one scenario built around one pressing question – a budget constraint, a potential initiative cut, a strategic assumption under pressure. That first exercise typically reveals more about portfolio trade-offs than the last annual planning cycle did.

? HOW DO WE KNOW WHERE WE ARE IN OUR MATURITY – AND WHETHER WE'RE READY FOR MORE?

The clearest signal is what happens when conditions change. If your team rebuilds analysis from scratch every time a priority shifts, you're early-stage. If you have scenarios but leadership doesn't use them to make decisions, you're mid-stage. Knowing where you actually stand is the most useful starting point for what comes next.



Find out where you stand.
Take the Scenario Planning Maturity Assessment and get a personalized snapshot of where you stand and what to do next:

[TAKE THE ASSESSMENT](#)



See what it looks like in action.
Explore how live data and AI-generated scenarios connect directly to portfolio decisions:

[EXPLORE THE PLATFORM](#)