Rountable Take-A-Aways

The April Roundtable meeting was devoted to the topic of Portfolio Management. Spokespersons for each organization summarized what they are doing to prioritize projects and allocate resources. The discussion emphasized the critical importance to the resource allocation issue of the precursor trend assessment activity. It was decided to follow up the discussion at the June meeting, which was accordingly dedicated to the issue of trend assessment as an input to strategic planning. Pat Aussen, Vice President, Strategy, of AT&T, and Larry Ostuni, Chief of the Simulation and Analysis division at ARDEC, agreed to serve as facilitators.

Gary Lynn of the faculty kicked off the June meeting with a summary of his research findings on the forecasting of markets for high and low technology businesses. His research indicates that high technology businesses had more successes with market forecasting when they used qualitative and internally focused tools (judgment), whereas low technology businesses were more successful using more quantitative tools (data driven) and external customer inputs.

Rountable (continued)

Other "takeaways" from the meeting include the following:

- AT&T predicts trends using scenario development methodology. The trends are evolved and refined over time. Trends are used to generate business scenarios. They provide a useful framework for executives to execute and track alternative business plans. The validity of trend scenarios can be determined by comparing intermediate milestones against actual environmental developments over time. Continuous learning is the most valuable product of doing trend assessments

- Lucent does 10-year Technology Roadmapping. It is clear to all that more than technological forecasting is required. Socioeconomic trend forecasting (the evolution of people's habits and culture) and how these trends impact products is even more important.

- ARDEC recommends using an Opportunity Grid to define a continuous cycle for strategic planning and other long range planning activities (e.g. organization).