



*Brindando inteligencia de calidad a decisores*

# EL ANÁLISIS ACCIONABLE



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Máster Interuniversitario en

**Analista  
de Inteligencia**



*Fulton Armstrong*

*American University*

*Syracuse University*

*Washington, DC*

AGENDA	9	10
	16	17

EL DECISOR Y EL ANÁLISIS ACCIONABLE

¿Qué necesita el decisor?

¿Cómo se lo preparamos?

¿Qué es tradecraft (“arte de oficio”)?

¿Qué modelos, técnicas usamos?

¿Qué son escenarios y escenarios alternativos?

¿Cómo garantizamos calidad?

COMUNICACIÓN DEL ANÁLISIS ACCIONABLE

¿Cómo transmitimos el análisis al decisor?

¿Cómo es un informe eficaz?

¿Cuáles son las diferencias entre los escritos y los orales?

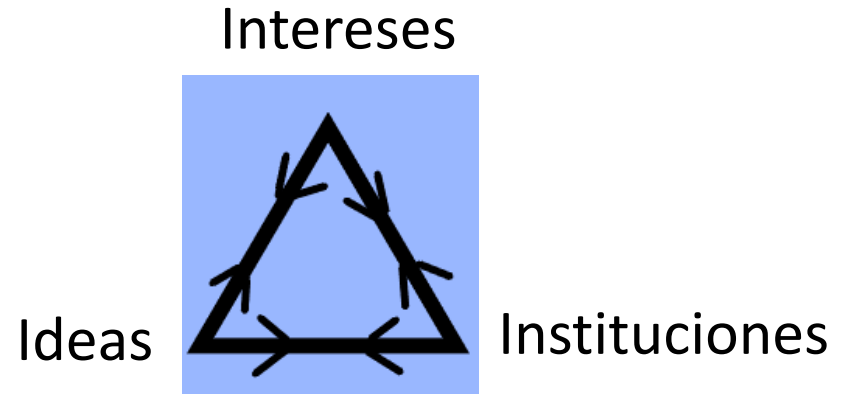
¿Cómo los preparamos?

¿Cómo mantenemos el enfoque requerido?

# DRIVERS -- IMPULSORES

¿Qué son factores “impulsores” ... en la VIDA PERSONAL?

Prestando del esquema de las “3-i” ...

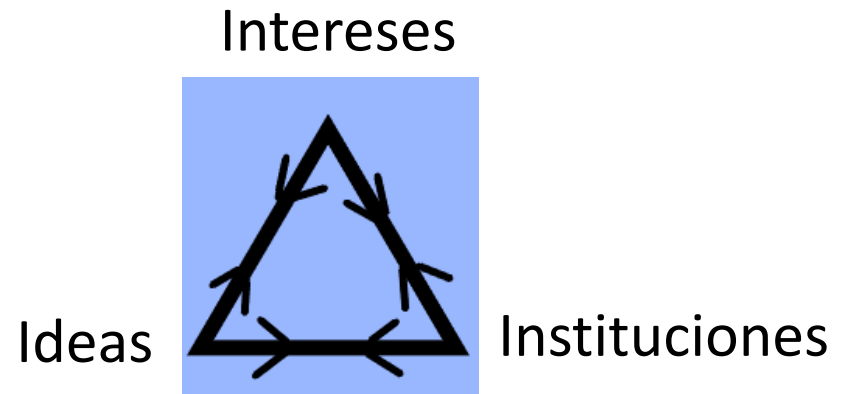


	Intereses	Ideas	Instituciones*
drivers	Trabajo	Educación	Padres
	Amor	Valores religiosos	Novio/a, esposo/a
	Familia	Pensamiento político	Compañeros
	Hogar	Ideología	Entidades políticas
	Transporte	Expectativas impuestas	
	Diversión		
	Comida		

## DRIVERS -- IMPULSORES

¿Qué son factores “impulsores” ... en CONTEXTO NACIONAL?

Prestando del esquema de las “3-i” ...



	Intereses	Ideas	Instituciones*
drivers	Poder/influencia	Identidad/auto-definición	Liderazgo
	Necesidades	Nacionalismo	Capacidad/limitaciones
	Deseos/ambiciones	Historia	Estructuras económicas
	Riqueza	Conceptos/lógica	Intermediación
	Rendimiento económico	Valores	Inclusión
		Ideología	Topografía/geografía
			Clima

\* incluye medio ambiente

# EXERCISE

## Drivers

Identify and write down the multiple drivers of two of the following phenomena – one from each column. Assign each driver a strategic depth and importance.

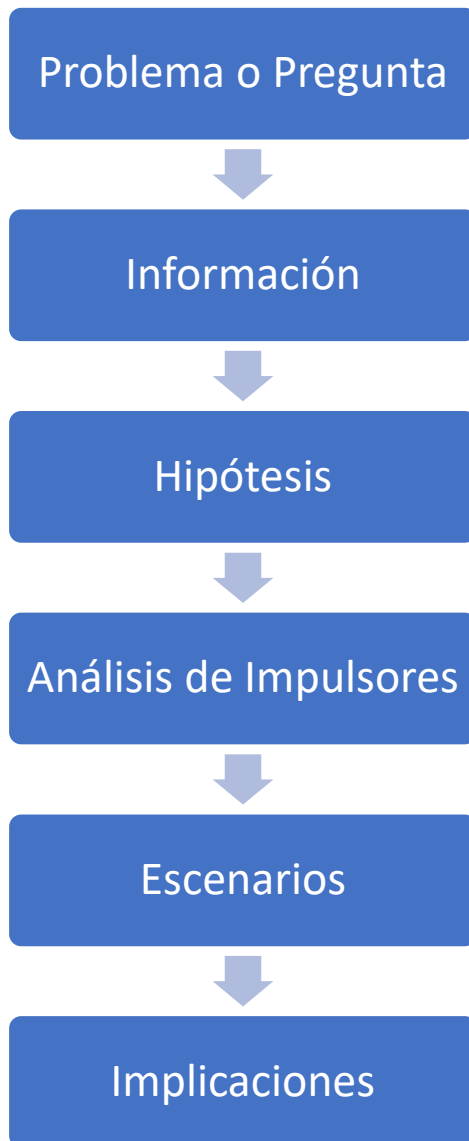
Collapse of the Soviet Union (1990) Iraq War (2003) al Qaeda attacks on the U.S. (2001) Tensions within the EU (current) War in Ukraine (current)	The impact of COVID Global Warming Low energy prices Rise in nationalism China's pressure on Taiwan
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DRIVERS of issue 1 ( <i>from left column</i> )	Importance
1.	• •
2.	• •
3.	• •
4.	• •

DRIVERS of issue 2 ( <i>from right column</i> )	Importance
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

# Tradecraft Model

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## Definición del problema o la pregunta

- En palabras neutrales
- En vista de los intereses amplios de la entidad

## Integridad de información

- Compilación
- Investigación/recolección
- Evaluación/validación
- Contextualización

## Exploración de posible(s) explicación(es)

- Identificar posibles faltas en información
- Lanzar proceso científico de probar/invalidar posibilidades
- Jerarquización

## Análisis de impulsores

- Identificación
- Jerarquización
- Evolución
- Interrelación dinámica

## Conclusiones con tres (o más) elementos

1. Más probable (impulsores como son)
2. Menos probable (impulsores cambian)
3. “Wildcards” u otro resultado de brainstorming

## Discusión de consecuencias para entidad

1. Corto y largo plazo
2. Intereses

# ¿Qué es el arte del oficio analítico?

¿Cómo sirve al decisor y sus intereses? ¿Cómo nos sirve a nosotros analistas y nuestros intereses? ¿Cómo hace que nuestro trabajo sea más fácil (y más divertido)?

1. Es el proceso CONSCIENTE y DELIBERADO de evaluar y transformar la información cruda para producir descripciones, explicaciones, y conclusiones para nuestros decisores –

- libre de prejuicios (ni nuestros ni del decisor)
- libre de manipulación (ni de la agencia productora, ni de las fuentes, ni de las sub-fuentes)
- libre (lo más posible) de nuestras limitaciones intelectuales (como pensamiento lineal).

2. Nos PERMITE mirar al decisor ojo a ojo y decirle:

He examinado y evaluado toda la información a mi alcance, y mi juicio es que \_\_\_\_\_ está ocurriendo; que es impulsado por \_\_\_\_\_ y \_\_\_\_\_; que está experimentando \_\_\_\_\_ tendencia(s); que parece resultar en \_\_\_\_\_ escenario(s); con \_\_\_\_\_ y \_\_\_\_\_ consecuencias e implicaciones para nosotros. También asesoro como posible, aunque menos probable, que \_\_\_\_\_ ocurriría si \_\_\_\_\_ impulsor cambie de \_\_\_\_\_ manera, que tendría \_\_\_\_\_ consecuencias.

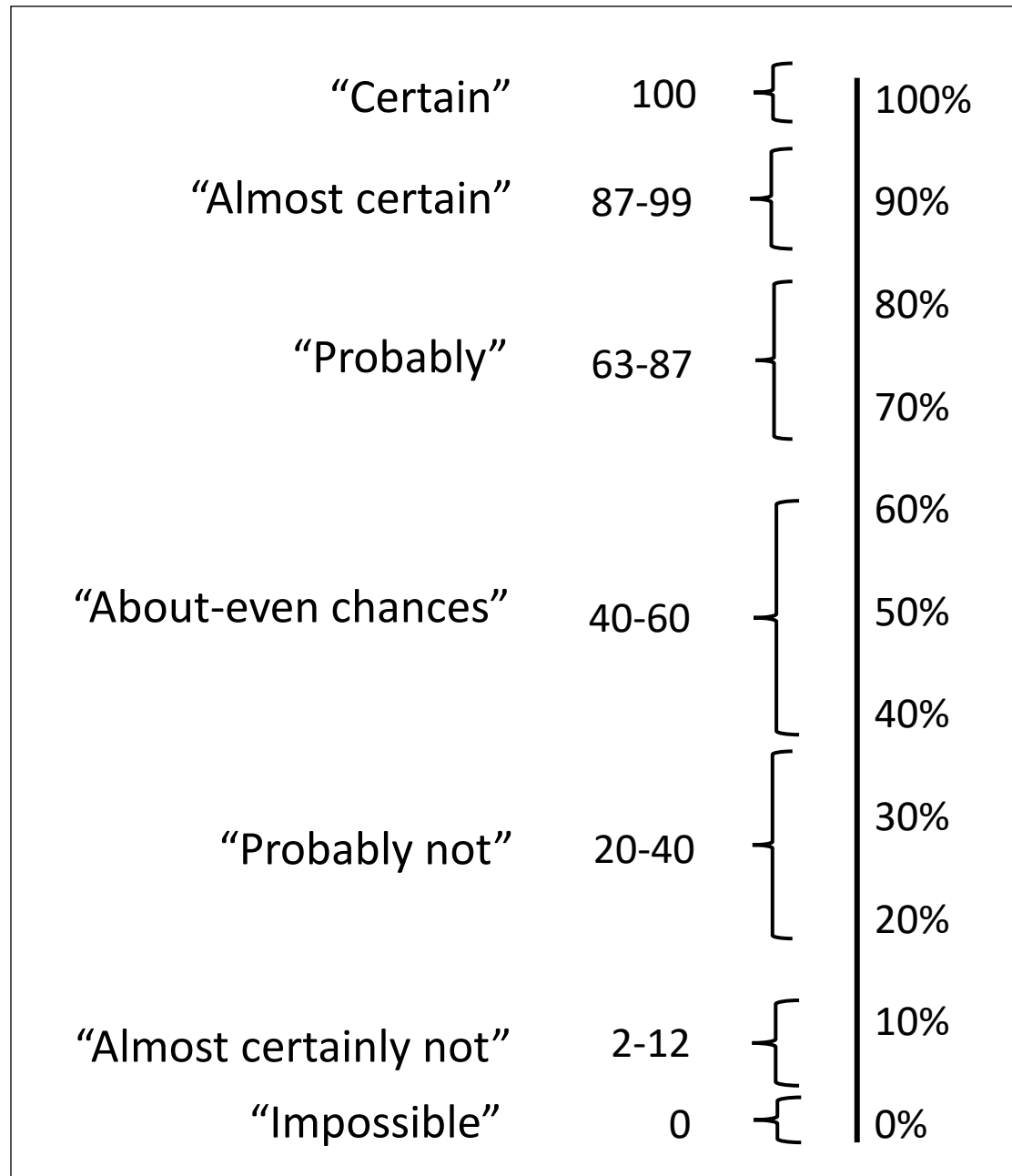
3. El arte del oficio también es HUMILDAD ESTRUCTURADA – la voluntad de conceder que

- cualquier asunto que merece nuestro análisis es asunto difícil
- nuestra información en raras veces (o nunca) es suficientemente buena
- nuestra especulación es “informada” por nuestra pericia, pero siempre debemos ser cautelosos en nuestra confianza
- si el escenario “probable” no se realiza, también ofrecemos escenarios alternativos

# ¿Qué probabilidad hay?

*“Es arte, no ciencia.”*

Source:  
Informal CIA Working Paper

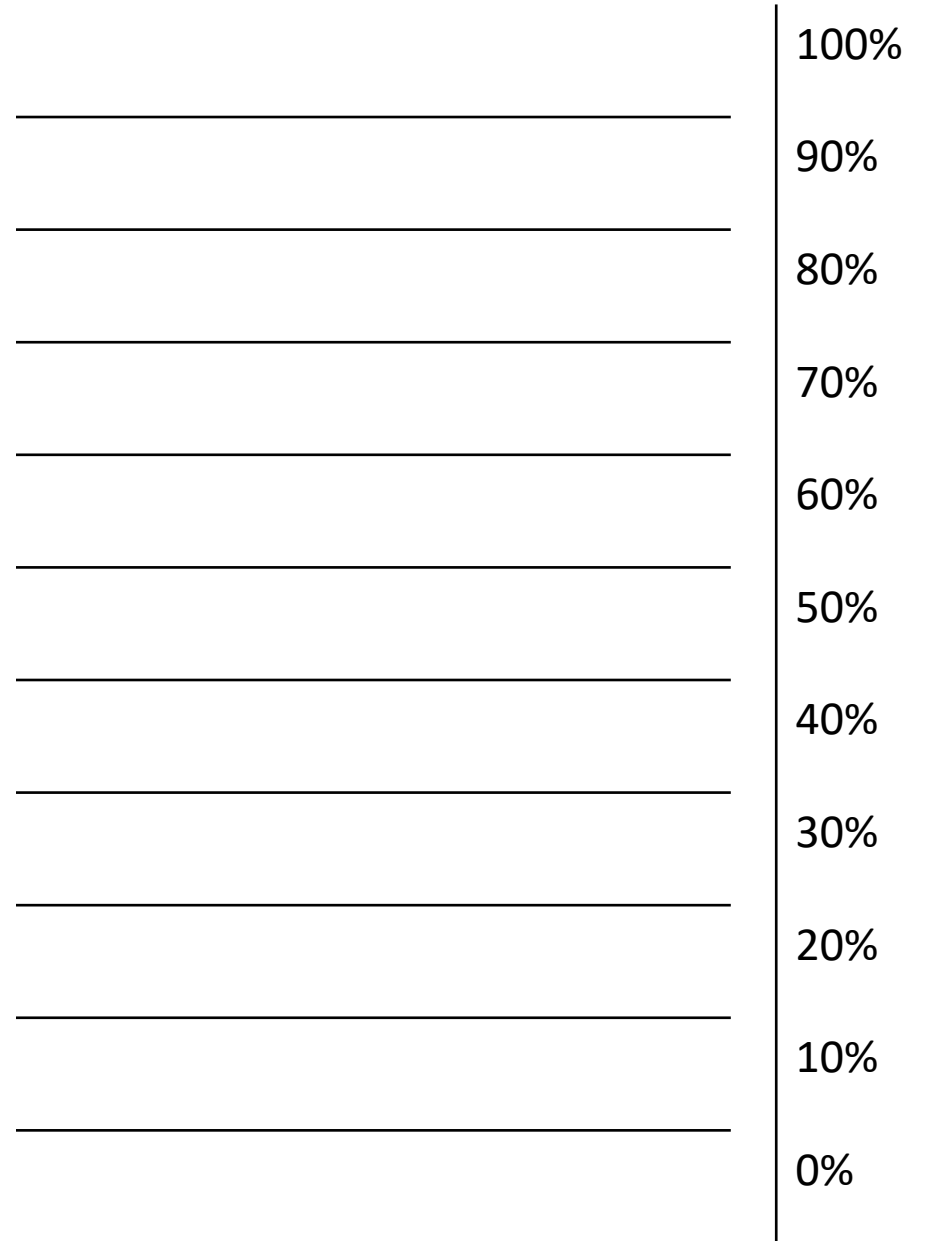


# ¿Qué probabilidad hay?

¿Qué escala y qué palabras en español usarías tú?

“Certain”	100	{	100%
“Almost certain”	87-99	{	90%
“Probably”	63-87	{	80%
		{	70%
“About-even chances”	40-60	{	60%
		{	50%
		{	40%
“Probably not”	20-40	{	30%
		{	20%
“Almost certainly not”	2-12	{	10%
“Impossible”	0	{	0%

Source: Informal CIA Working Paper



Building Analysis

**Thesis**

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**Framing**

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**Drivers & Trends**

Driver

Trend

Driver 1:

Driver	Trend

Driver 2:


Driver 3:


Driver 4:


**Scenarios**

Scenario 1:

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# “TORMENTA DE IDEAS”

**Propósito:** Asegurar que el análisis considere toda la información y las interpretaciones relevantes.

**Definición:** Proceso de liberarnos de la línea establecida -- evadiendo el pensamiento lineal y fortaleciendo nuestra confianza en el análisis.

**Sugerencias:**

Líder coetáneo

Sin juzgar en ningún aspecto

Cantidad más que calidad

No defender

Seguir sin parar

Estructura ligera, ágil

Todos hablan

Mantener la discusión divertida



# BRAINSTORMING

Purpose: Ensure analysis considers all relevant information and interpretations

Definition: Process of liberating ourselves from established line, avoiding linear thinking, and building confidence in the completeness of our analysis.

## Basic Guidelines:

Have a neutral peer leader	Allow no judging
Stress quantity over quality	Allow no defending
Keep the ball moving	Keep a loose structure
Ensure everyone talks	Keep it light

## Techniques and Tips

- Ask participants to write notes *before* talking starts – to avoid “anchoring bias.”
- Cast the question with a *different* actor – e.g., “What would X do?”
- Have participants write and talk quickly – without filtering.
- Stress that participants should not judge their own or others’ ideas – just keep moving.
- Ask them to consider something funny – e.g., substituting animals for people.
- Try “starbursting” – i.e., thinking of rapid-fire questions about the topic.

**Building Analysis**

**Thesis** Efforts to discourage Central American migrants from trying to enter the United States have failed to reduce the flow and, by ignoring the reasons for people’s displacement, are actually fueling pressures for them to leave their homeland.

**Framing** Estimated 1 million people apprehended in U.S. at or near Mexico border in 2019. Dramatic change in composition. In 2008, 90 percent were Mexicans. Now Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Salvadorans represented nearly three-quarters, with two-thirds composed of families or unaccompanied children. Trump Administration increasing arrests, returns, refusals – hoping to show “door is closed.” Numbers entering U.S. going down, but departures from homeland remaining steady.

<b>Drivers &amp; Trends</b>	<b>Driver</b>	<b>Trend</b>
Driver 1:	Pull factor: people think they can safely arrive in U.S., get jobs, and make a better living than they can at home.	Obama and Trump policies – including mass deportations – have sent a clear signal. This driver has become less strong.
Driver 2:	Corruption undermines everything in “sending” countries – undermining even positive programs in security, economy, education, medical, etc.	Despite internationally sponsored efforts, corruption remains extremely corrosive. Governments are tied up in scandals, undermining vigilance and clearing way for my corruption.
Driver 3:	Violence, extortion, rape, and insecurity have presented families with an existential challenge. People feel unsafe in own communities.	While violence ebbs and flows, over years it has become much worse – because of gang power struggles, lack of police, and people’s sense of isolation.
Driver 4:	Gangs are invading families – stealing away youth – because families have been weakened by economic decline and inability to adapt to role of women. Youth are desperate and vulnerable.	Worsening economic conditions – including lack of opportunity – favors gang influence. Gangs are increasingly filling the void left by weak government presence -- even providing social services.

**Scenarios**  
 Scenario 1: The “push factors” continue to produce growing number of people desperate enough to leave their countries – despite risks. Trafficking will increase, and ever-more creative means will be attempted to move migrants northward. “Northern Triangle” governments show little/no ability or desire to stop the flow; corruption is too deep.

Scenario 2:

Although less likely, stories of tragic consequences for migrants trying to reach/enter the U.S. could deter their departure – leaving them in place with ever-increasing levels of dissatisfaction. Popular suffering seems unlikely to shake up governments, to make them begin caring, and humanitarian crisis will be increasingly likely.

**Wild Cards**

Wild card 1: Another hurricane or earthquake *could* further devastate vulnerable communities, driving even more desperation and attempts to lead.

Wild card 2: Political tensions *could* spark such violence that popular movements convince governments to get serious about rooting out corruption and ensuring that international and national aid reaches the most needy – thereby reducing suffering and “push factors.”

**Implications**

Implication 1: Based on the more likely scenario, would expect more migration – in quantity and in desperation – as people give up all hope and turn their fate over to alien-smugglers. Elites apparently feel little/no incentive to improve governance and pay for the institutions – and anticorruption efforts – necessary to address the underlying drivers.

Implication 2: Surging “push factors” are likely to fuel internal tensions – between people and government; among political parties; etc. – and between countries. Central Americans passing through Mexico, for ex., have already caused stresses there. The same will happen between Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

Implication 3: Youths in affected societies are growing up with education deficits and, in many cases, psychological issues that will further complicate solutions and progress in the future. Malnutrition condemns many children to a life with poor health, without necessary skills, and little chance of becoming contributing members of society.

**Other Points**

Mexico has played an enforcing role – stopping many migrants – but has not provided leadership in long-term problems, such as growing the economies.

Class and racial divisions have long contributed to inequality and, often, neglectful attitudes toward expanses of affected countries.

Anti-immigrant sentiment among some sectors in the United States apparently does not deter new arrivals.

Migrants from Central America generally become good, contributing members of U.S. society. Insofar as parents’ own education permits, they encourage children to study hard.

Although U.S. political debate does not reflect it, most studies show that the U.S. benefits greatly from the low-cost, effective labor of Central American migrants.

## WHAT IS GOOD ANALYSIS?

Good analysis evaluates and transforms raw data into descriptions, explanations, and judgments (or conclusions) that help decisionmakers take action.

It gives readers the who, what, when, where, how, why, and *so what* of the issue – providing an accurate snapshot of what is known (and not known) and assessments of

- what’s causing or driving the situation – the “drivers”
- the importance of and trends within each driver
- potential outcomes, with some estimation of probability
- possible “wild cards,” if any
- the implications for readers’ interests

*Just as a good doctor goes beyond treating the symptoms of a disease, a good analyst knows that effective, strategic policy depends first and foremost on understanding the causes of the problem.*

The model works best when the analyst ...

- Examines the quality of all information, including the strengths and weaknesses of various sources
- Remains aware of the differences between an analytical judgment and an opinion
- Controls biases
- Identifies assumptions and channels them into the richness of the product
- Develops hypotheses and, like a scientist, tests them rigorously
- Remains open to new information and new possibilities (while still being able to make judgments)

### Analytical Model

- Identify drivers
- Identify trends
- Weight drivers and interaction within trends
- Identify scenarios
- Identify wildcards
- Assess implications

### Double-value

- Transparency of analysis empowers policymaker
- Drivers are at the heart of good policymaking

*Good analysis educates ... is transparent ... is policy-relevant ... is dynamic.*

# HOW TO WRITE ANALYSIS

Writing analysis, like any writing, is a personal process. With experience, each writer discovers the best way that he/she prepares, drafts, and hones analysis. Nonetheless, there are seven basic steps to all analytic writing.

1. **ASSESS** what your reader needs.

Put yourself in your reader's shoes.

Think of the scope of the topic and key questions to answer.

Determine what the reader *really* needs – not just what is requested. Don't pander.

2. **GATHER** your information, **ABSORB** it, and **CHALLENGE** it.

Take only the level of notes that you need to establish landmarks in your data.

Don't build your information linearly; build it more like a Christmas tree.

Critique your sources as you read; ask how they're influencing you.

Mark questionable information.

Make note of information gaps.

3. **LOOK FOR PATTERNS** in your information.

Find common points and parallels in your data.

Ask again if your sources lean one way or other.

Identify gaps again.

4. Formulate your **HYPOTHESIS** and build your **ARGUMENTS**.

Draft your thesis sentence.

Write sentences capturing your main points.

Marshal facts to support your arguments.

Start building your paragraphs. (Tick formats work well.) Keep them soft, non-linear.

5. **TEST** and **BUILD** the bond between your hypothesis, arguments, and facts.

Ask yourself honestly if your thesis holds up.

Reorder data and make adjustments for maximum strength.

Go gather more information to test and strengthen your case.

Adjust, adjust, adjust.

6. Focus on **LANGUAGE** and **STRUCTURE**

Polish the thesis sentence and check it for consistency with arguments and facts.

Check the structure of sentences and paragraphs.

Edit, edit, edit.

7. Take a **BREATH** and **REPEAT** steps 4 and 5 until you're happy.

### Basic, Simple Structure

- Grab attention and give BLUF
- Identify drivers – explaining what's happening and why
- Say where things are headed
- Name "wildcards" if meaningful
- Hit the reader between the eyes with the implications

## QUIZ

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

True or False or “Not confident of my answer”

T, F, NC

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Good analysis is often just common sense, but it is common sense that has been validated through a thoroughly conscious process.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The purpose of analysis is to help decisionmakers make decisions without showing a preference for one option or other.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The model on the analytical worksheet can be applied to the topic of my TFM.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Not all elements of the model have to be included in the written and oral products you give policymakers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Drivers and indicators are essentially the same thing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The people who make decisions are our bosses, so we should avoid giving them analysis that they will find contrary to their wishes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. We should respect decisionmakers’ interest in making themselves look good in public.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. If we’re not comfortable with a question from a decisionmaker, we should suggest a rephrasing that we can be comfortable with.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The vast majority of issues worth analyzing can be approached the same way.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Linear thinking is preferable in analytical products.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Brainstorming is helpful only when discussing scenarios.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Once you have identified the drivers of a situation, it is not appropriate to change them as you develop your scenarios.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Validating information – determining “real” and “fake” – is one of the first key steps of an analytical project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. The implications of scenarios tell decisionmakers why they should care, and the probabilities of scenarios communicate the urgency of the issue.



## Structure of a Simple-form Analytic Article

*Main, Basic Elements to Satisfy Your Audience's Needs*

Reader's Needs		Structural Element	
• Clear, meaningful summary	➔	Thesis – BLUF	One sentence or short paragraph
• Enough facts to understand phenomenon	➔	Factual snapshot, validation	Perhaps one quarter of paper
• Grasp of why and how it's happening	➔	Drivers and trends	Perhaps one half of paper
• Idea of what will happen and what else could happen	➔	Scenarios, Alternatives, and "Wild Cards"	} Perhaps one quarter
• Why it's important	➔	Implications	



## PLANNING AN INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

Analysts: \_\_\_\_\_ Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Decisionmakers: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

.....

B.L.U.F.	
Minute 1:	
Minute 2:	



Minute 3:


Minute 4:


Minute 5:


Analista(s):

\_\_\_\_\_

¿Qué necesitan nuestros decisores?

Nuestro decisor es ...

\_\_\_\_\_

Nuestro tema

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

¿Qué información/análisis necesita nuestro decisor?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

¿Qué son los intereses de nuestro decisor?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

¿Qué opciones tiene nuestro decisor sobre nuestro tema?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

¿Cuánta información tenemos, y cómo es su calidad?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Intelligence Briefing

Tema: \_\_\_\_\_ Analistas: \_\_\_\_\_

0

juicios  
principales

	impulsores	corrientes/ tendencias
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

escenarios

Más probable:

Menos probable:

comodines

implicaciones

1.

2.

3.

## Written Briefing

Title:

Analysts:

Thesis:

Paragraph framing  
basic information  
reader needs:

Paragraphs (two or  
more) on drivers and  
trends:

Paragraph on  
principal scenario  
(with probability):

Paragraph(s) on  
alternative  
scenario(s):

Paragraph (if  
necessary) on wild  
cards:

Paragraph(s) on implications of the principal scenario:	
Paragraph(s) on implications of alternative scenario(s):	
Conclusion (if desired):	