

# Appendix E

## Turn the Curve Exercise #1 for Population Well-being

**Purpose:** To provide hands-on experience with results-based decision making at the **population** level. Small groups work on actually “turning the curve” on an indicator of child, adult, family or community well-being. Groups are capable of doing this exercise with little or no advance training in RBA concepts.

### Setting up the Exercise

1. Prepare the history part of 3 or more population indicator baselines in advance, or gather the data that will allow the groups to do this. Baseline graphs should allow space on the x axis for forecasting at least 3 years from the present year. If data is not available (or only one point of data is available), the groups can use the technique in Appendix F, “Creating baselines from group knowledge” to create a working version of a baseline. Generally, groups choose which indicator curve they want to work on. In some cases you may want to pre-assign indicators to specific tables or have all the groups work on the same indicator.
2. Give each person a copy of the one-page instruction sheet with time limits for each step, and the group report format. These are shown on page 164, and also appear near the end of the RBA 101 workshop workbook.
3. Participants are asked to work in groups of 4, 5 or 6. You can pre-assign people to groups or let people self select who they want to work with. **For the Population Turn the Curve exercise, it is best if members of the group represent a wide range of perspectives.** There is a natural tendency for people to work with others they know and you may want to discourage this.
4. With a large group you can quickly assemble people into groups using an interesting technique derived from chaos and complexity theory. Announce that “each person is responsible for finding 4 or 5 other people to work with.” In just a few minutes most people have formed into a group of the right size, and you can help those who are not in a group find a place. It is important to discourage groups of 8 or more. With groups of this size, some participants will dominate the discussion while others hang back and don’t participate. Break these groups up into smaller groups.

### Running the Exercise

1. **Starting points** (5 minutes): Each group picks a timekeeper, a reporter, and a geographic area. (Population Accountability is always about a whole population in a geographic area). The reporter will take notes on a regular piece of paper. These notes will be used to produce the group’s one-page report on flipchart paper. Each person in the group is asked to wear two hats. The first hat is the hat they wear in their everyday work life. The second hat is the hat of a partner who is not otherwise represented in the group.
2. **Baseline** (10 minutes): Each group picks one of the prepared baselines or constructs a baseline using provided data. If no data is available, the group can construct the history part of the baseline from group knowledge, as noted above. The group agrees on a forecast of where this line is headed if we don’t do something “more or different from what we are doing now.” This is a crucial step in the exercise, and you should check in with each group, as time permits, to see that this is done correctly. Make sure the groups do **not** plot the

forecast of where they **want** to go. (If you're not careful, this can become a promise. And anything better than baseline will be progress.) Visit tables starting about 10 minutes into the exercise and ask "Can I see your baseline forecast?" With the forecast established, the group asks if this forecasted future is "OK." If the forecast is OK, then the group should pick a different baseline to work on. People should work on indicators where there is room for improvement.

3. **Story behind the baseline** (15 minutes): Consider the causes and forces at work. Why does this picture look the way it does? What accounts for the history? Explain the reasoning behind the forecast. (If only 70% of people are successful, who are the 30% who are not, and why?) Keep a list of questions about causes. These questions are the first part of your Information and Research Agenda. Dig deep for causes. Ask "Why?" five times. Don't settle for easy rhetorical answers.
4. **What works?** (What would it take?) (15 minutes): Consider what could work to do better. There are two natural pointers to action. Each cause is a pointer to actions that address that cause, and each partner has something to contribute. Go around the table twice and ask each person what they could contribute wearing each of their two hats. There is only one rule: At least one of the ideas must be a no-cost or low-cost idea. "Sharp edges" means ideas that are specific enough that they can actually be implemented. Keep a list of questions about what works. This is the second part of the Information and Research Agenda.
5. **Report** (10 minutes): Prepare a report on a **single** piece of flipchart paper, using the format shown below. Groups should not get the flipchart paper until the last 10 minutes of the exercise when they are ready to prepare the group's report.

### Debriefing the Exercise

1. **Presentations:** You have several options about how the groups report out. 1) The "traditional" method is to have someone from each group come to the front of the room and present to the larger group. People hate this. Don't do this unless you have only two or three groups. 2) Gallery Walk: Have groups post their one page reports on the wall. One person from the group then stays with the report to explain the work, while everyone else tours the work of all the other groups. 3) Modified Gallery Walk: Same as 2) but people are told to visit **ONLY ONE** report on the wall. With this technique, large groups can get through the report out process in 10 minutes or less.
2. **Questions:** At the end of the exercise and presentations, ask the group: What did you learn from this exercise? How was this experience different from other processes you've worked with in the past? What worked and what didn't? How many people think that a lay audience would understand the one page reports you produced? How many people think they could lead this exercise with a small group? You can also ask the group about the elements of the exercise. Why did we ask for the Forecast? (A forecast that is "not OK" generates a sense of urgency about taking action.) Why did we ask for the Story behind the baseline? (The story is the diagnostic step in the process. The diagnosis of causes points to solutions.) Why did we ask for the No-cost and Low-cost ideas? (It gets us quick wins. We usually don't have new money to work with.) Why did we ask for the Crazy idea? (It gives people permission to be creative and have fun. Remember fun!)

Population Turn the Curve Exercise

**5 min: Starting Points**

- Timekeeper and reporter
- Geographic area
- Two hats (yours plus partner's)

**10 min: Baseline**

- Choose an indicator.
- Create a baseline with history and forecast (+2-3 yrs)
- Forecast - OK or not OK?

**15 min: Story behind the baseline**

- Causes and forces at work → Causes & partners point to action.
- Information & research agenda - causes

**15 min: What works? (What would it take?)**

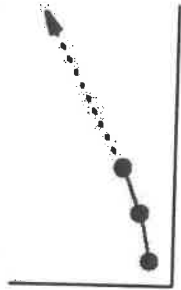
- What could work to do better?
- Each partner's contribution →
- No-cost / low-cost ideas
- Information & research agenda - solutions

**10 min: Report** Convert notes to one-page report.

**Population Turn the Curve Report**

Result: \_\_\_\_\_

Indicator baseline



Story behind the baseline

• \_\_\_\_\_ (List as many as needed)

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

Partners

• \_\_\_\_\_ (List as many as needed)

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

Three best ideas - what works

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_ No-cost / low-cost

• \_\_\_\_\_ Off the wall

**Sharp edges**

## Turn the Curve Exercise #2 for Program Performance

**Purpose:** To provide hands-on experience with results-based decision making at the program performance level. Small groups work on actually “turning the curve” on a performance measure for a program. (For participants in the E.U., Australia and New Zealand, substitute the word “service” for “program.”) Groups are capable of doing this exercise with little or no advance training in RBA concepts.

### Setting up the Exercise

1. If possible, participants should bring data for one or more measures. If participants did not bring data (the more usual case) then show the groups how to use the method in Appendix F, Exercise #3 to construct a working baseline.
2. Give each person a copy of the one-page instruction sheet with time limits for each step and the group report format. These are shown on page 167 and also appear near the end of the RBA 101 workshop workbook.
3. Participants are asked to work in groups of 4, 5 or 6. **For the performance turn the curve exercise it is best for people to work with others from the same service or same organization.** This may sometimes mean groups as small as 3, or even 2.
4. With a large group you can quickly assemble people into groups using an interesting technique derived from chaos and complexity theory. Announce that “each person is responsible for finding 4 or 5 other people to work with.” In just a few minutes most people have formed into a group of the right size, and you can help those who are not in a group find a place. It is important to discourage groups of 8 or more. With groups of this size, some participants will dominate the discussion while others hang back and don’t participate. Break these groups up into smaller groups.

### Running the Exercise

1. **Starting points** (5 minutes): Each group picks a timekeeper and a reporter, and a program to work on. The reporter will take notes on a regular piece of paper. These notes will be used to produce the group’s one-page report on flipchart paper. Each person in the group is asked to wear two hats. The first hat is the hat they wear in their everyday work life. The second hat is the hat of a partner who is not otherwise represented at the table.
2. **Baseline** (10 minutes): Each group picks one performance measure from the measures for *How well did we do it? or Is anyone better off?* The group constructs a baseline using actual data if possible. If real data is not available, the group can construct a working version of a baseline using the method noted above. The group agrees on a forecast of where this line is headed if we don’t do something “more or different from what we are doing now.” This is a crucial step in the exercise, and you should check in with each group, as time permits, to see that this is done correctly. Make sure the groups do **not** plot a forecast of where they **want** to go. (If you’re not careful, this can become a promise. And anything better than baseline is progress.) Visit tables starting about 10 minutes into the exercise and ask “Can I see the baseline forecast?” With the forecast established, the group asks if this forecasted future is “OK.” If the forecast is OK, then the group should pick a different baseline to work on. People should work on performance measures where there is room for improvement.
3. **Story behind the baseline** (15 minutes): Consider the causes and forces at work. Why does this picture look the way it does? What accounts for the history? Explain the reason-

ing behind the forecast. (If only 70% of customers are successful, who are the 30% who are not, and why?) Keep a list of questions about causes. These questions are the first part of your Information and Research Agenda. Dig deep for causes. Ask "Why?" five times. Don't settle for easy rhetorical answers.

4. **What works? (What would it take?) (15 minutes):** Consider what could work to do better. There are two natural pointers to action. Each cause is a pointer to actions that address that cause and each partner has something to contribute. Go around the table twice and ask each person what they could contribute wearing each of their two hats. There is only one rule: At least one of the ideas must be a no-cost or low-cost idea. Keep a list of questions about what works. This is the second part of the Information and Research Agenda. "Sharp edges" means that the ideas are specific enough that they can actually be implemented.
5. **Report (10 minutes):** Prepare a report on a single piece of flipchart paper, using the format shown below. Groups should not get the flipchart paper until the last 10 minutes of the exercise when they are ready to prepare the group's report.

### Debriefing the Exercise

1. **Presentations:** You have several options about how the groups report out. 1) The "traditional" method is to have someone from each group come to the front of the room and present to the larger group. People hate this. Don't do this unless you have only two or three groups. 2) Gallery Walk: Have groups post their one page reports on the wall. One person from the group then stays with the report to explain the work, while everyone else tours the work of all the other groups. 3) Modified Gallery Walk: Same as 2) but people are told to visit ONLY ONE report on the wall. With this technique, large groups can get through the report out process in 10 minutes or less.
2. **Questions:** At the end of the exercise and presentations, ask the group: What did you learn from this exercise? How was this experience different from other processes you've worked with in the past? What worked and what didn't? How many people think that a lay audience would understand the one page reports you produced? How many people think they could lead this exercise with a small group? You can also ask the group about the elements of the exercise. Why did we ask for the Forecast? (A forecast that is "not OK" generates a sense of urgency about taking action.) Why did we ask for the Story behind the baseline? (The story is the diagnostic step in the process. The diagnosis of causes points to solutions.) Why did we ask for the No-cost and Low-cost ideas? (It gets us quick wins. We usually don't have new money to work with.) Why did we ask for the Crazy idea? (It gives people permission to be creative and have fun. Remember fun!)

**Performance Turn the Curve Report**

Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Performance measure baseline

Story behind the baseline

• \_\_\_\_\_ (List as many as needed)  
 • \_\_\_\_\_  
 • \_\_\_\_\_

Partners

• \_\_\_\_\_ (List as many as needed)  
 • \_\_\_\_\_  
 • \_\_\_\_\_

Three best ideas - what works

• \_\_\_\_\_  
 • \_\_\_\_\_  
 • \_\_\_\_\_

**Sharp edges**

• \_\_\_\_\_  
 • \_\_\_\_\_  
 • \_\_\_\_\_

**Performance Turn the Curve Exercise**

**5 min: Starting Points**

- Timekeeper and reporter
- Identify a program to work on.
- Two hats (yours plus partner's)

**10 min: Baseline**

- Choose a lower right quadrant measure.
- Create a baseline with history and forecast (+2 - 3 yrs)
- Forecast - OK or not OK?

**15 min: Story behind the baseline**

- Causes and forces at work →
- Information & research agenda - causes

Causes & partners point to action.

**15 min: What works? (What would it take?)**

- What could work to do better? →
- Each partner's contribution →
- No-cost / low-cost ideas
- Information & research agenda - solutions

**10 min: Report** Convert notes to one-page report.