

A person in a dark hoodie stands in a vast field of tall grass, looking towards the horizon under a dramatic sunset sky with wispy clouds. The scene is captured in a wide-angle shot, emphasizing the vastness of the landscape.

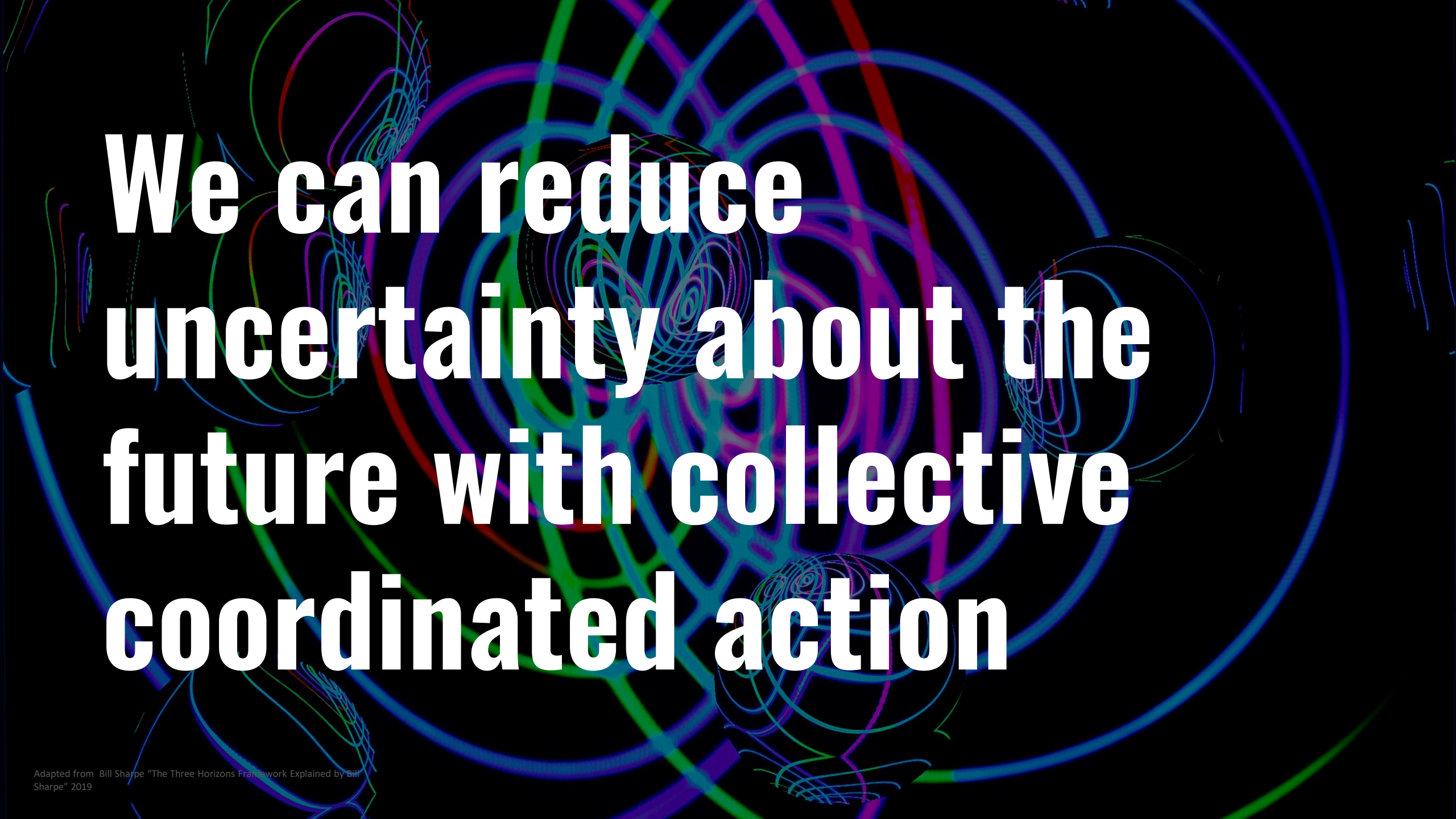
Bill Sharpe's

three horizons

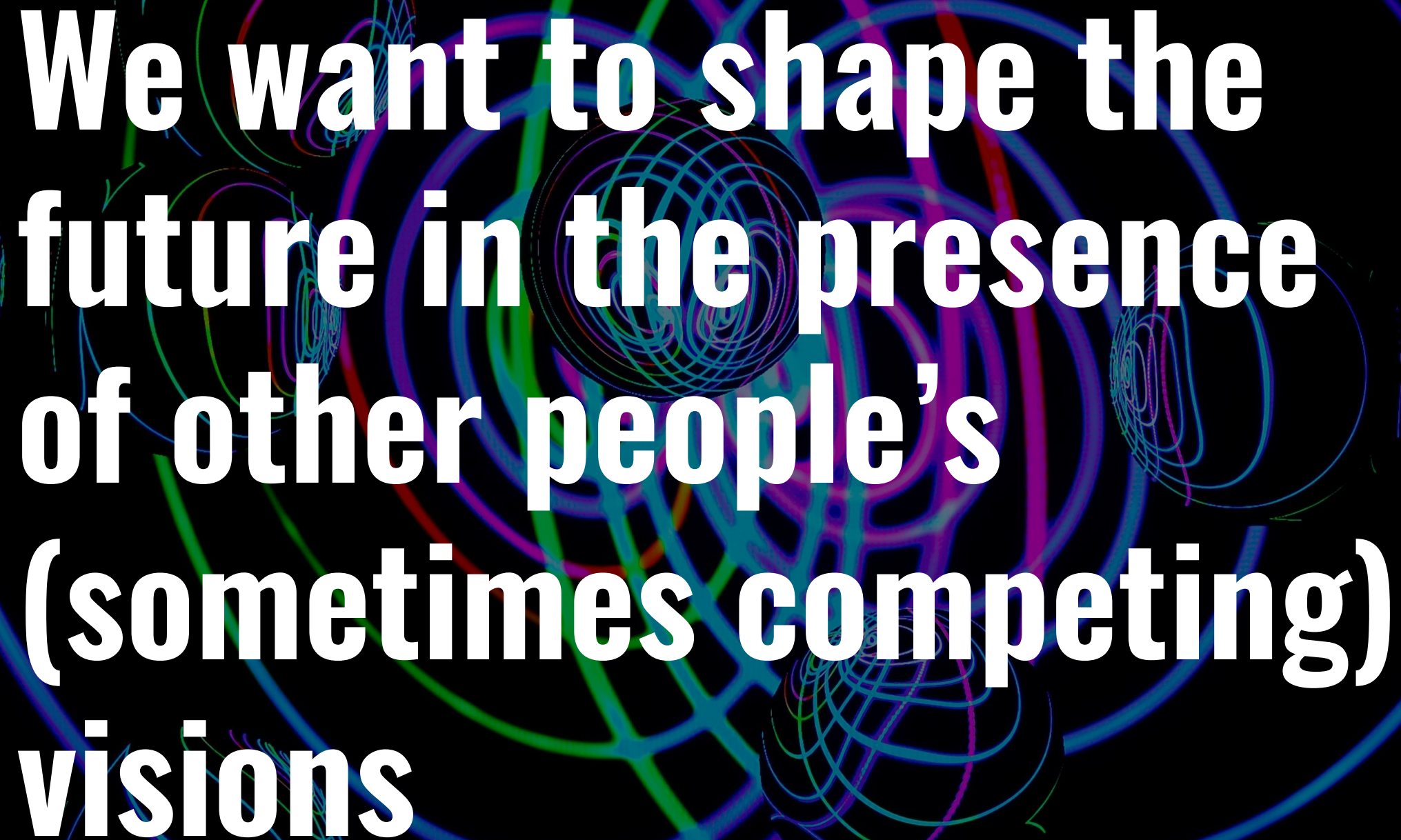
perspectives and strategies for the future

The background is a dark blue field filled with vibrant, multi-colored lines in shades of green, purple, cyan, and red. These lines form complex, swirling patterns and several spherical structures that resemble tangled threads or fiber-optic bundles. The overall effect is one of dynamic, chaotic energy.

**The future is unknown,
yet we must act on it**



**We can reduce
uncertainty about the
future with collective
coordinated action**

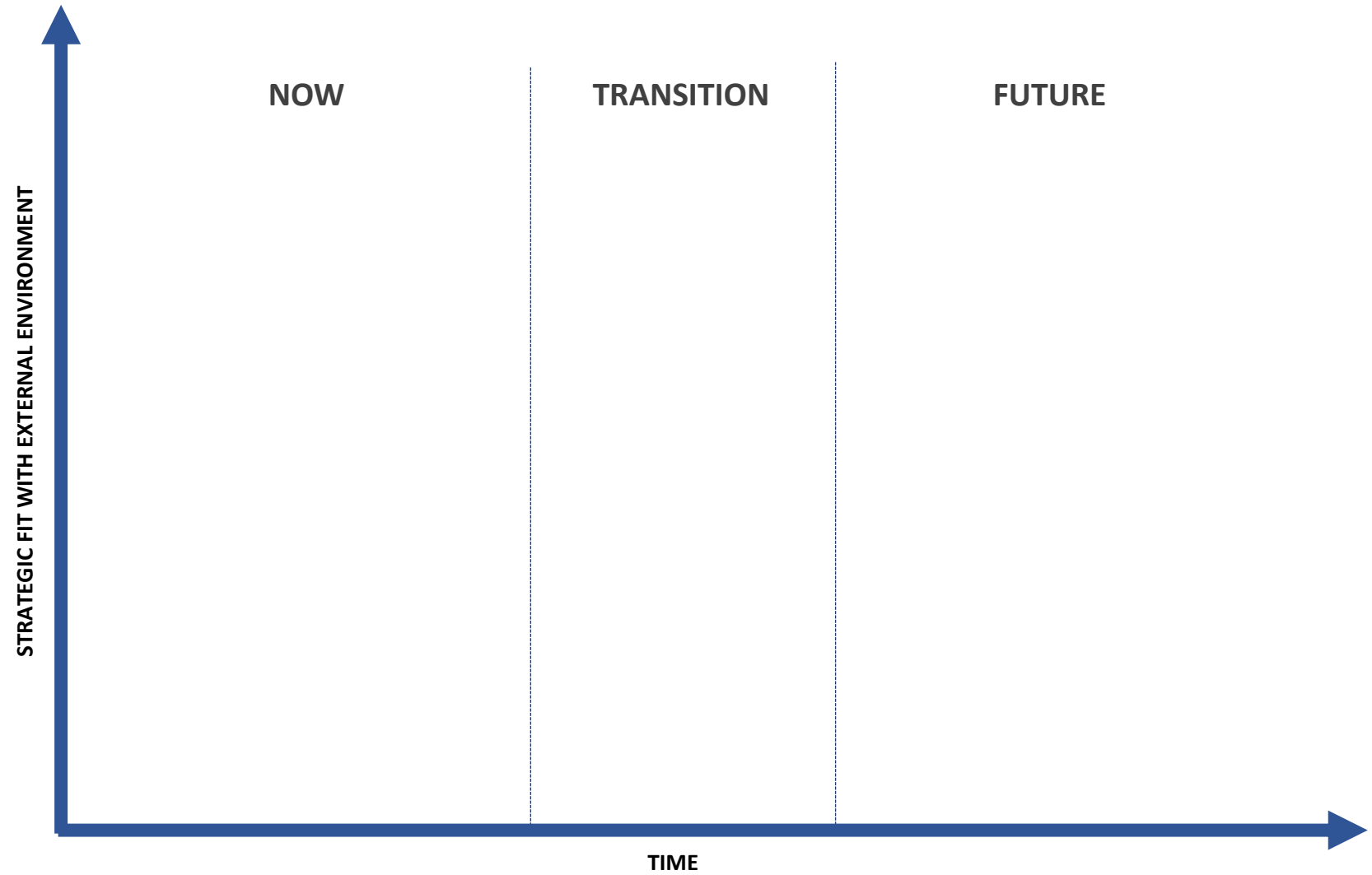
The background features a complex, abstract pattern of overlapping, multi-colored lines (blue, green, purple, red) that swirl and intersect to form a series of interconnected, glowing spheres or orbits. The overall effect is dynamic and futuristic, set against a dark, almost black background.

**We want to shape the
future in the presence
of other people's
(sometimes competing)
visions**

Framework

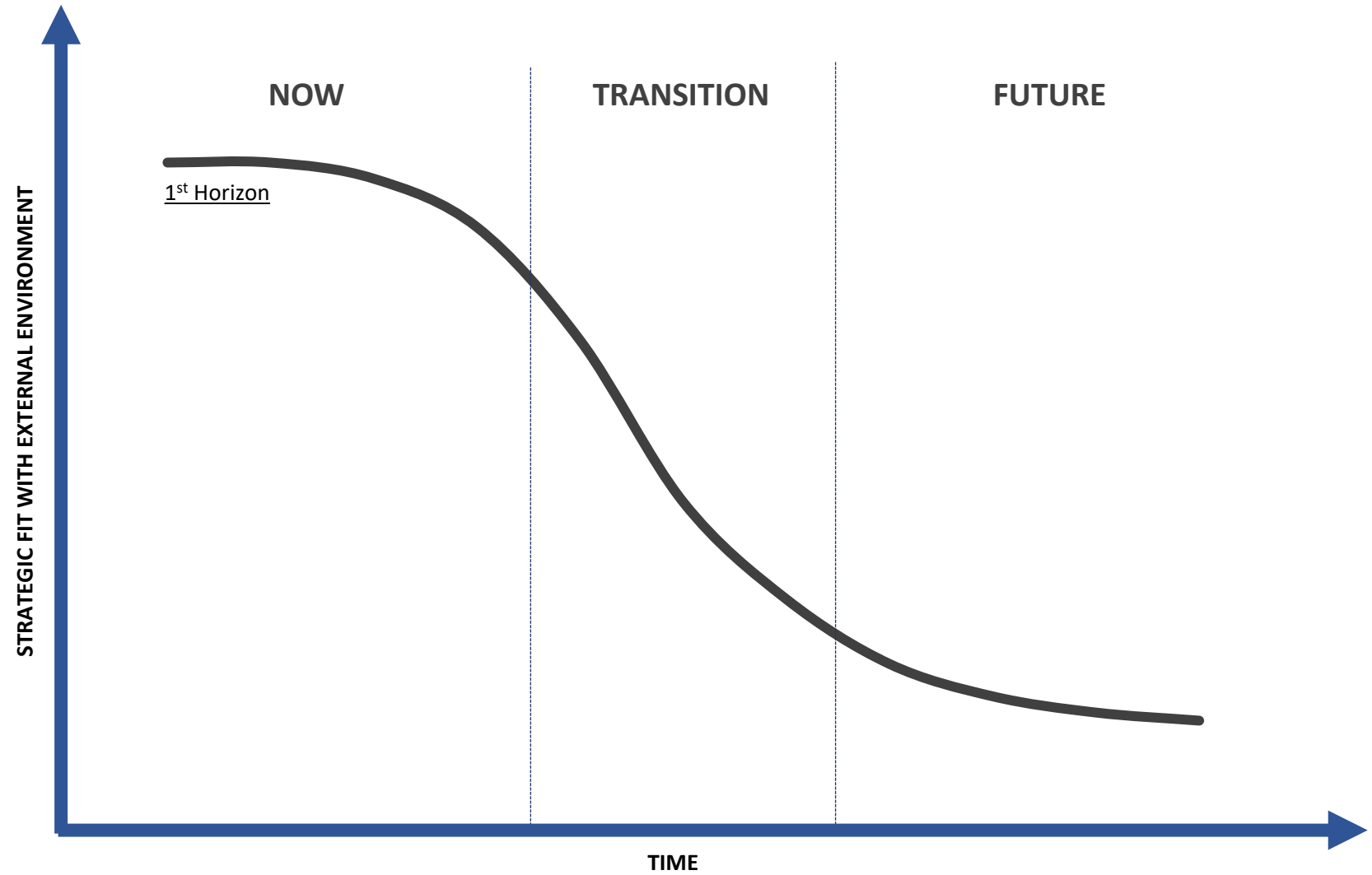
How well something fits the world.
How present it is in the world.

Fit vs. Time



1st Horizon

Current prevailing system.
Assumes “business as usual” will sustain, but actually loses relevance with the changing world over time.

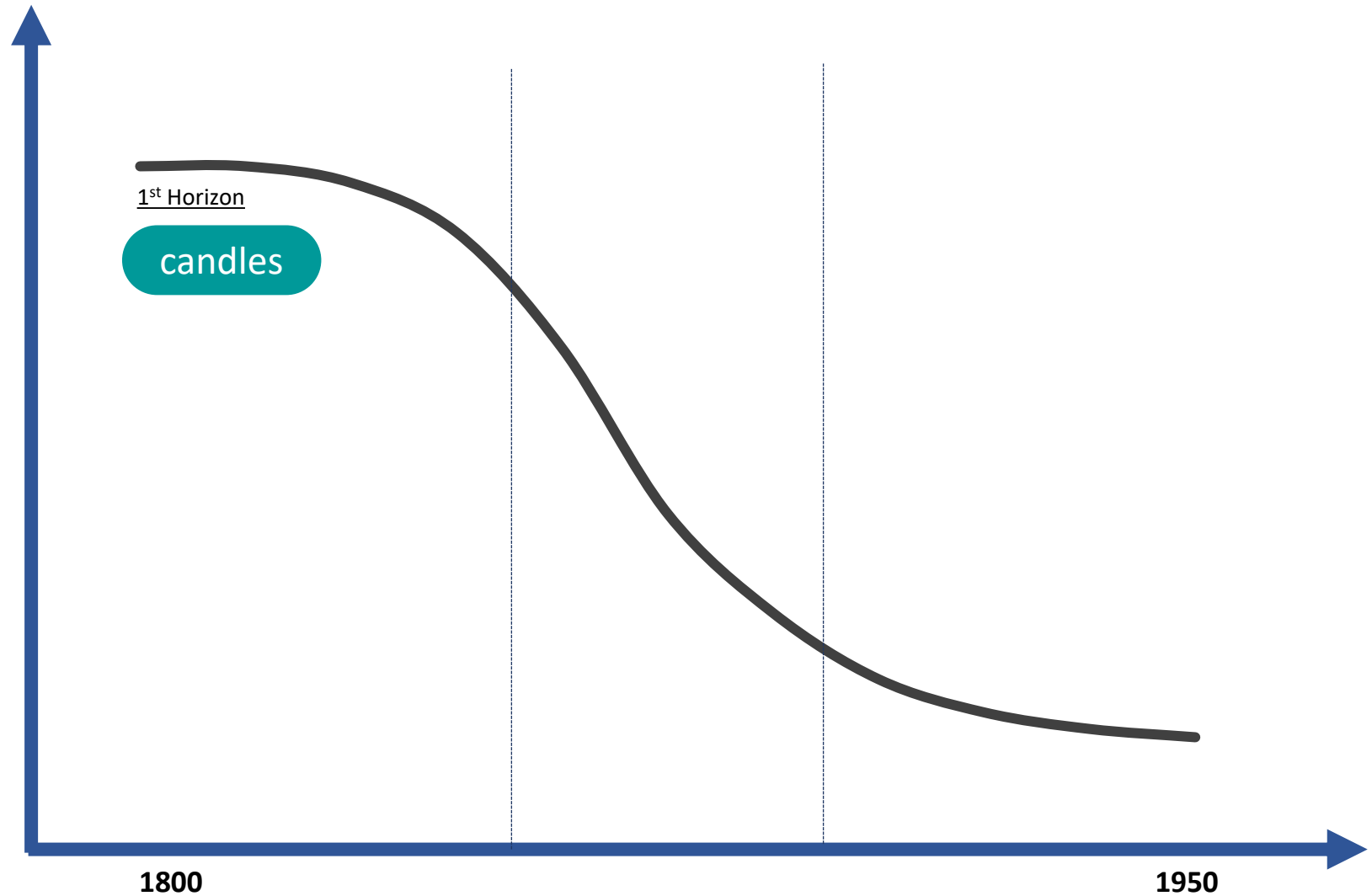


1st Horizon

The dominant system

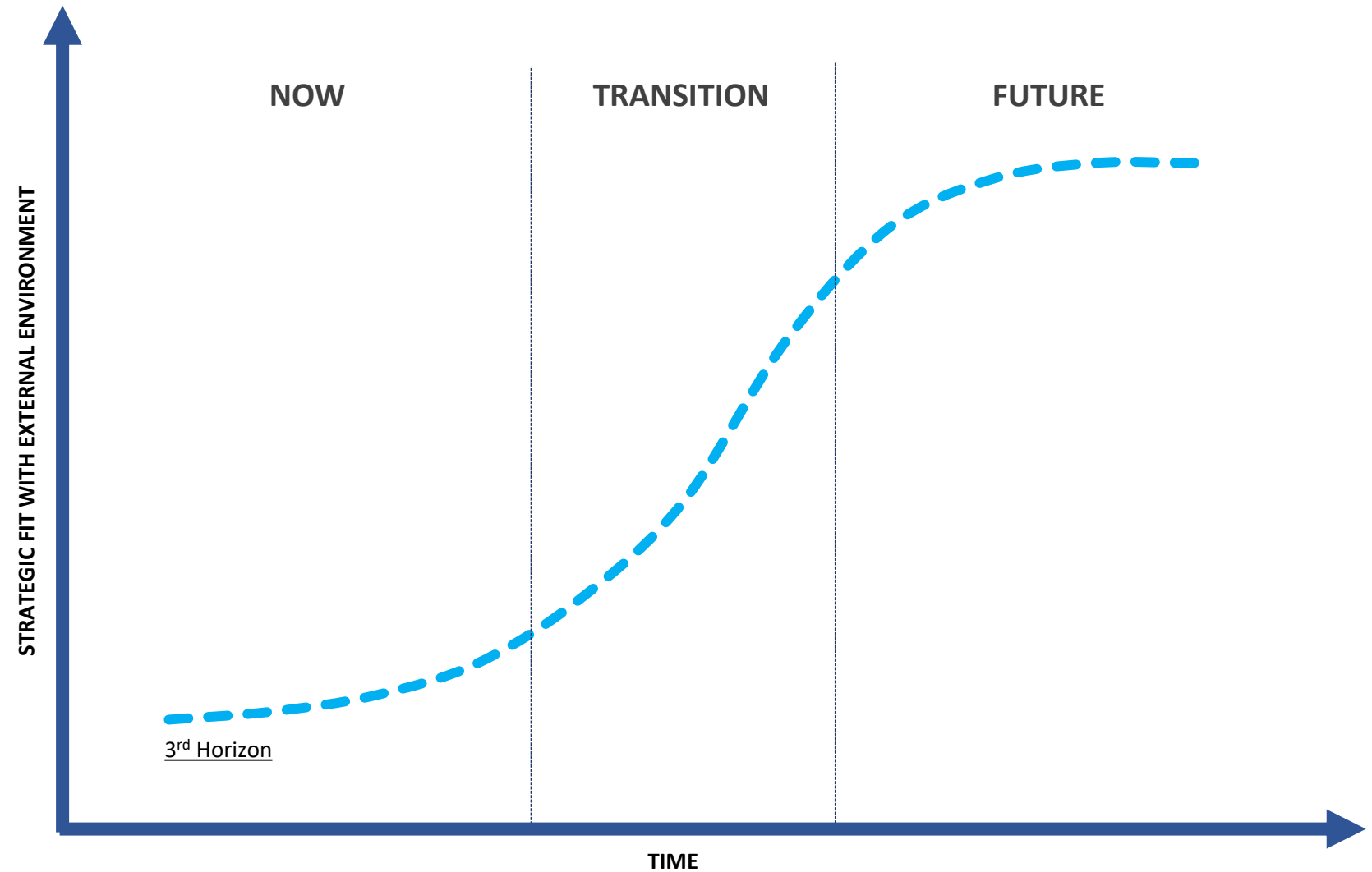
Have been around for over 5000 years. Used for function. Relatively expensive per lumen-hour, limited lighting.

Industrial revolution shaped a new world in which candles were less fit for purpose – factories, large cities, skyscrapers, automobiles.



3rd Horizon

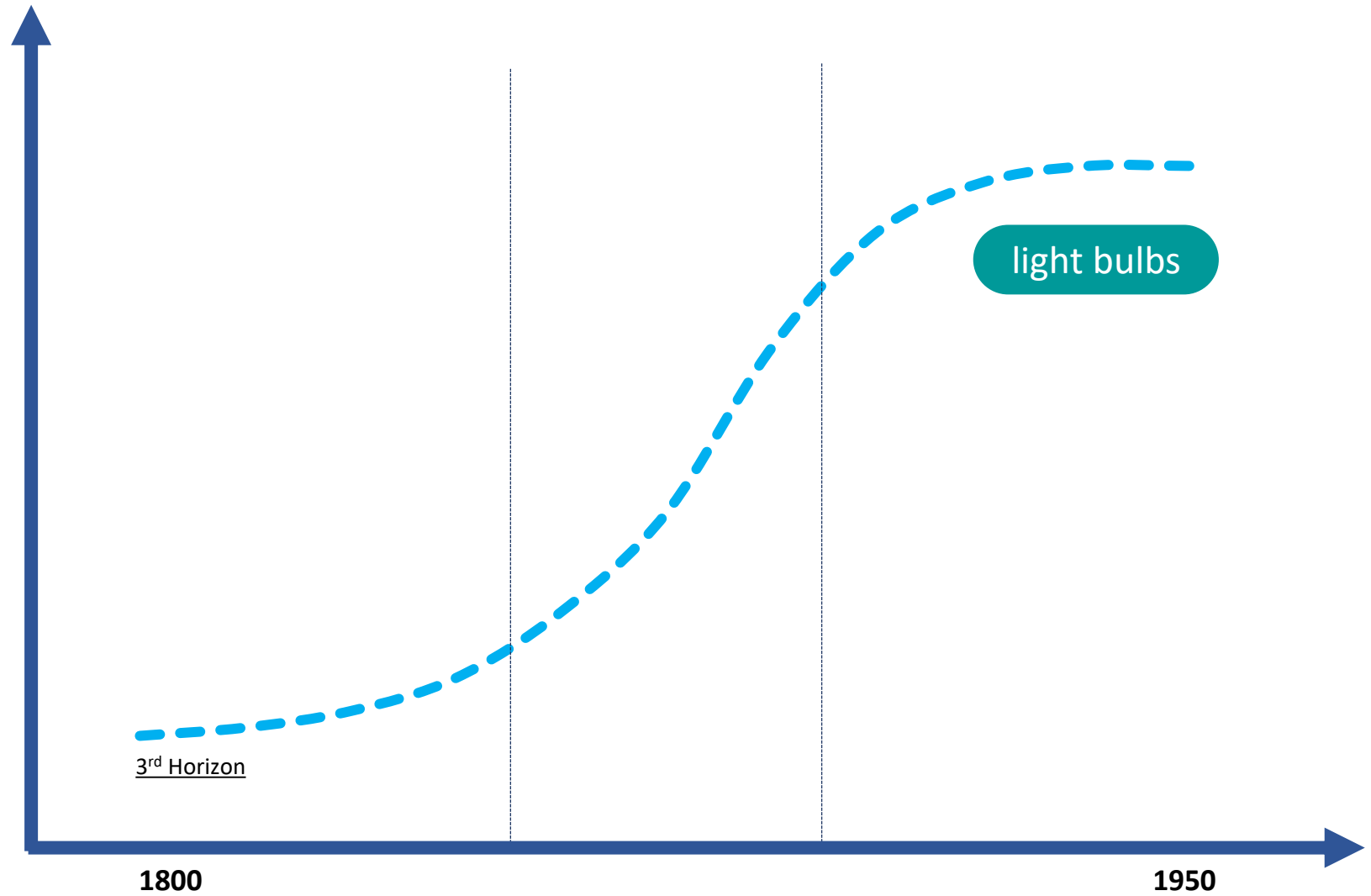
Marginal ideas in response to dynamic environment that exist in the world today. Eventually overtakes the old system and becomes the new normal.



3rd Horizon

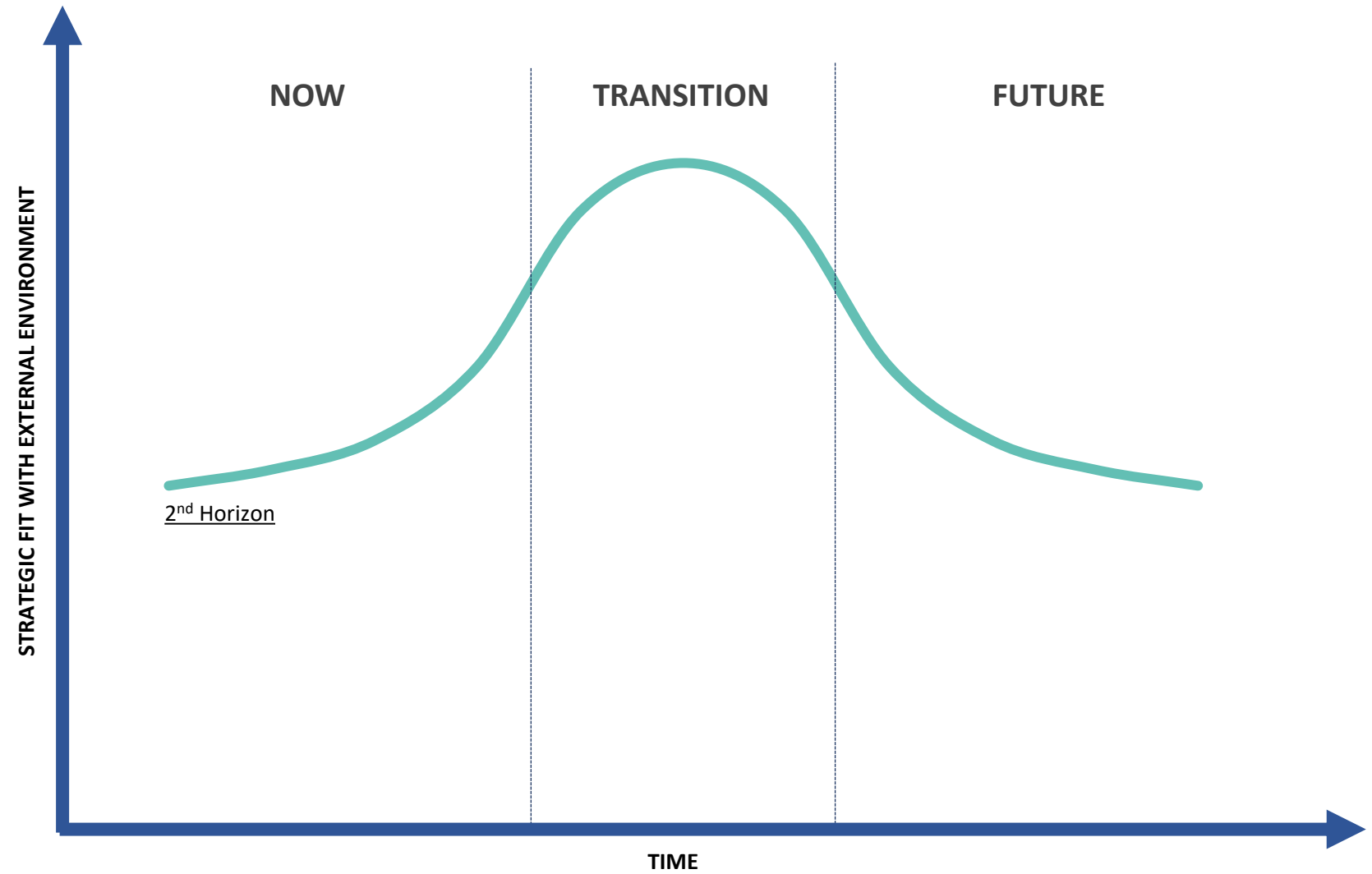
A vision for electric light

Transformative. Changed the design of buildings, the length of workday, lifestyles, and human behavior.



2nd Horizon

Unstable transition and competing alternative paths. A temporary period between two dominant systems.



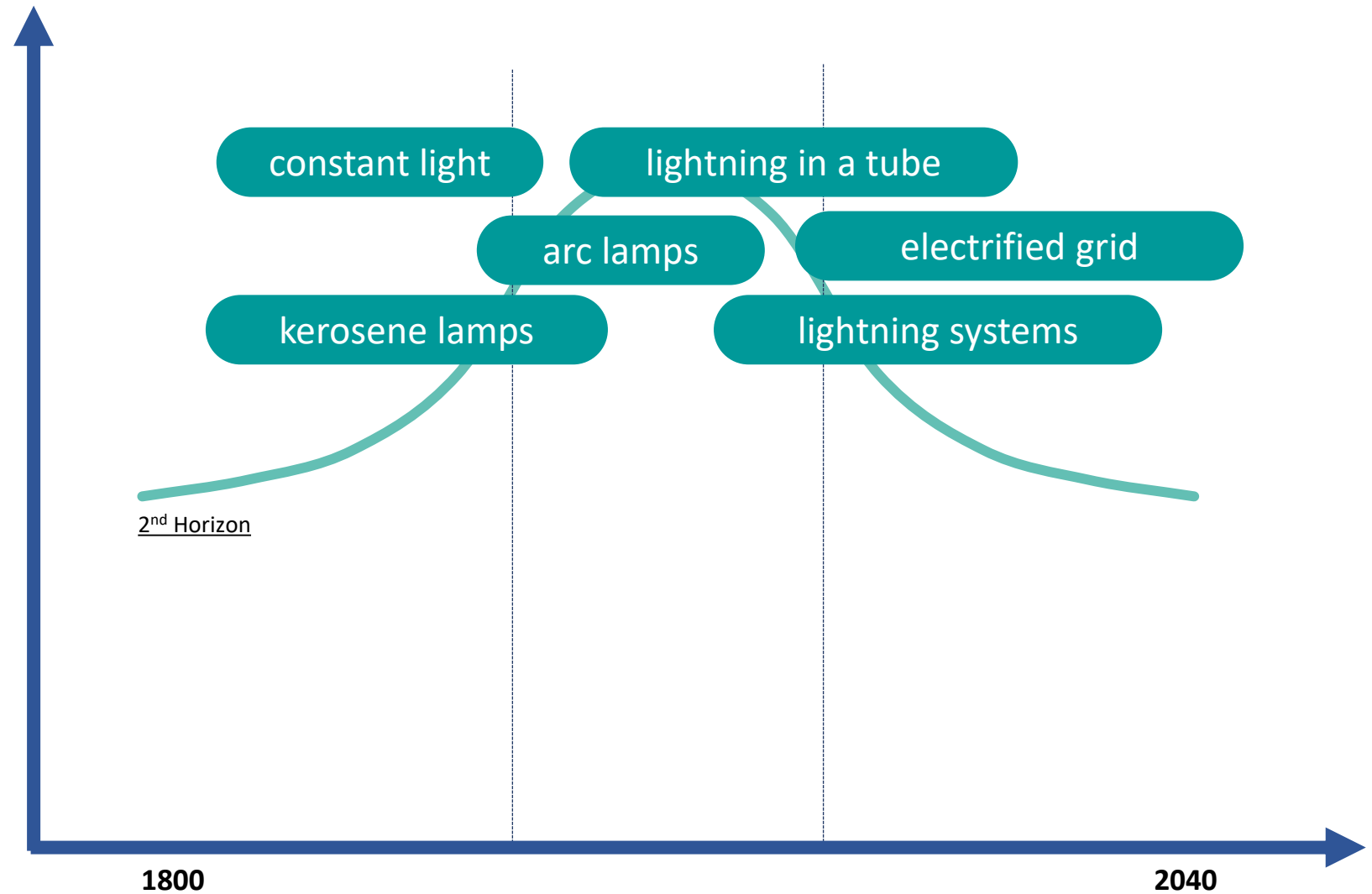
2nd Horizon

No single inventor

Series of prototypes and experiments, incremental innovation.

Arc lamps, kerosene lamps, filament experiments.

Commercialization and mass adoption beginning in 1920s.



“Before I got through, I tested no fewer than 6,000 vegetable growths, and ransacked the world for the most suitable filament material.”

2nd Horizon

No single inventor

Series of practical experiments, incremental innovation.

Arc lamp, kerosene lamp filament experiments.

Commercial adoption of lighting in 1920s.

1800

2040

“The electric light has caused me the greatest amount of study and has required the most elaborate experiments. I was never myself discouraged, or inclined to be hopeless of success. I cannot say the same for all my associates.”

constant light

lightning in a tube

2nd Horizon

refined grid

kerosene lamps

lightning systems

No Horizon

Series of prototypes and experiments, incremental innovation

Arc lamps, kerosene lamps, filament experiments.

Commercial adoption beginning in 1920s.

1800

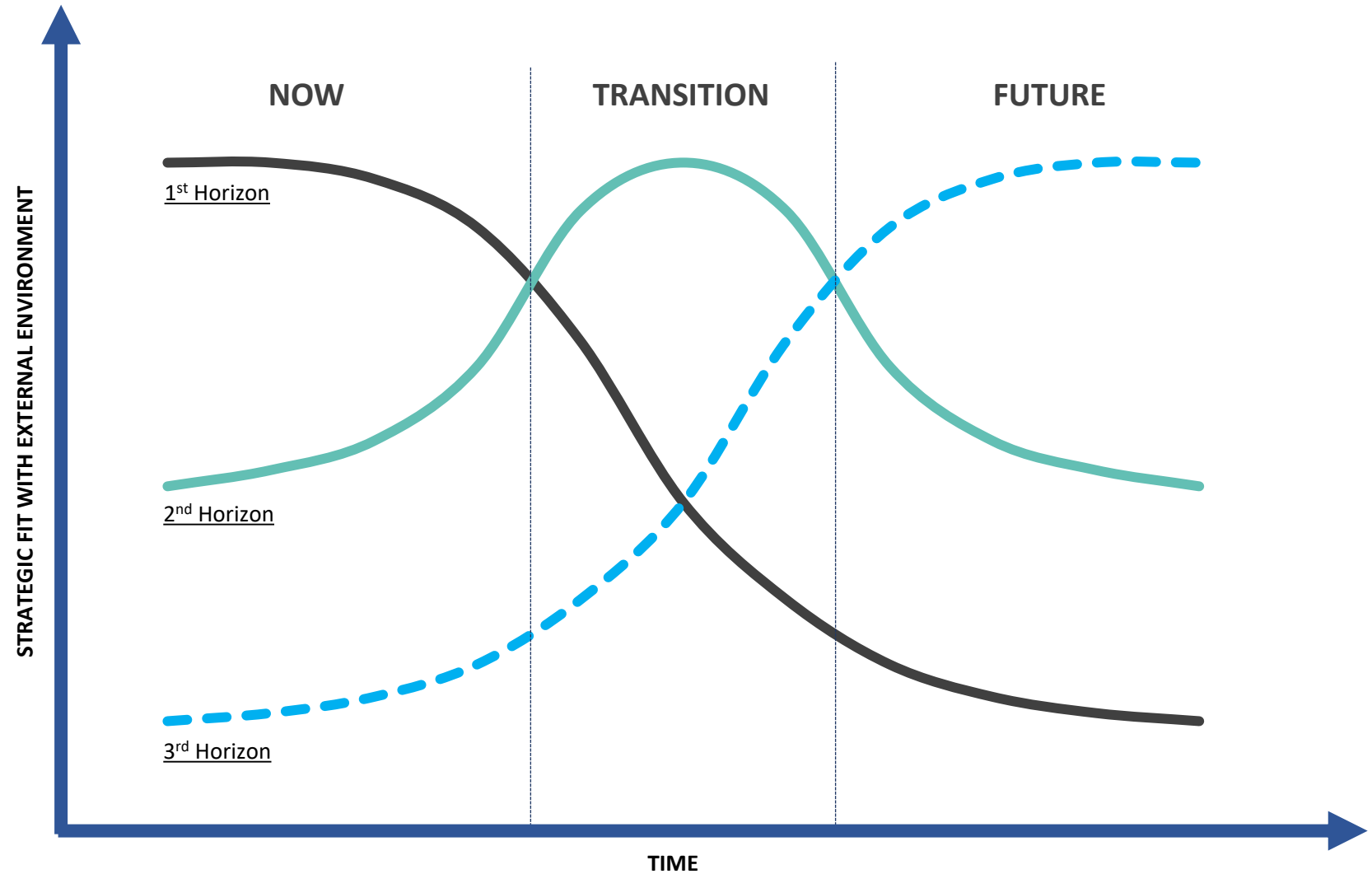
2040

3 Horizons

Three conditions of the same system over time against level of prevalence

Recognize that multiple timeframes exist simultaneously

Recognize that no solution is forever

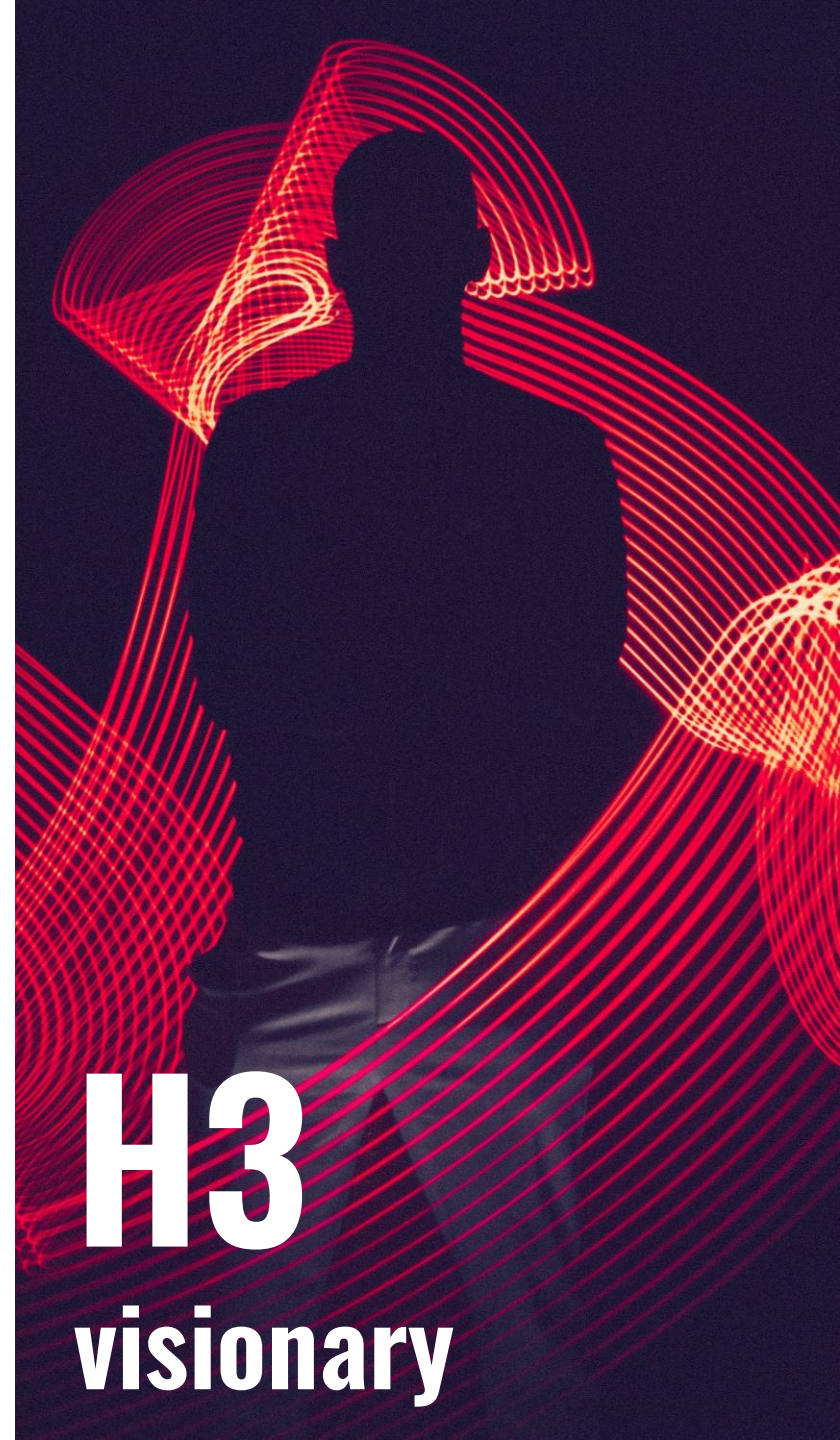




H1
manager



H2
entrepreneur



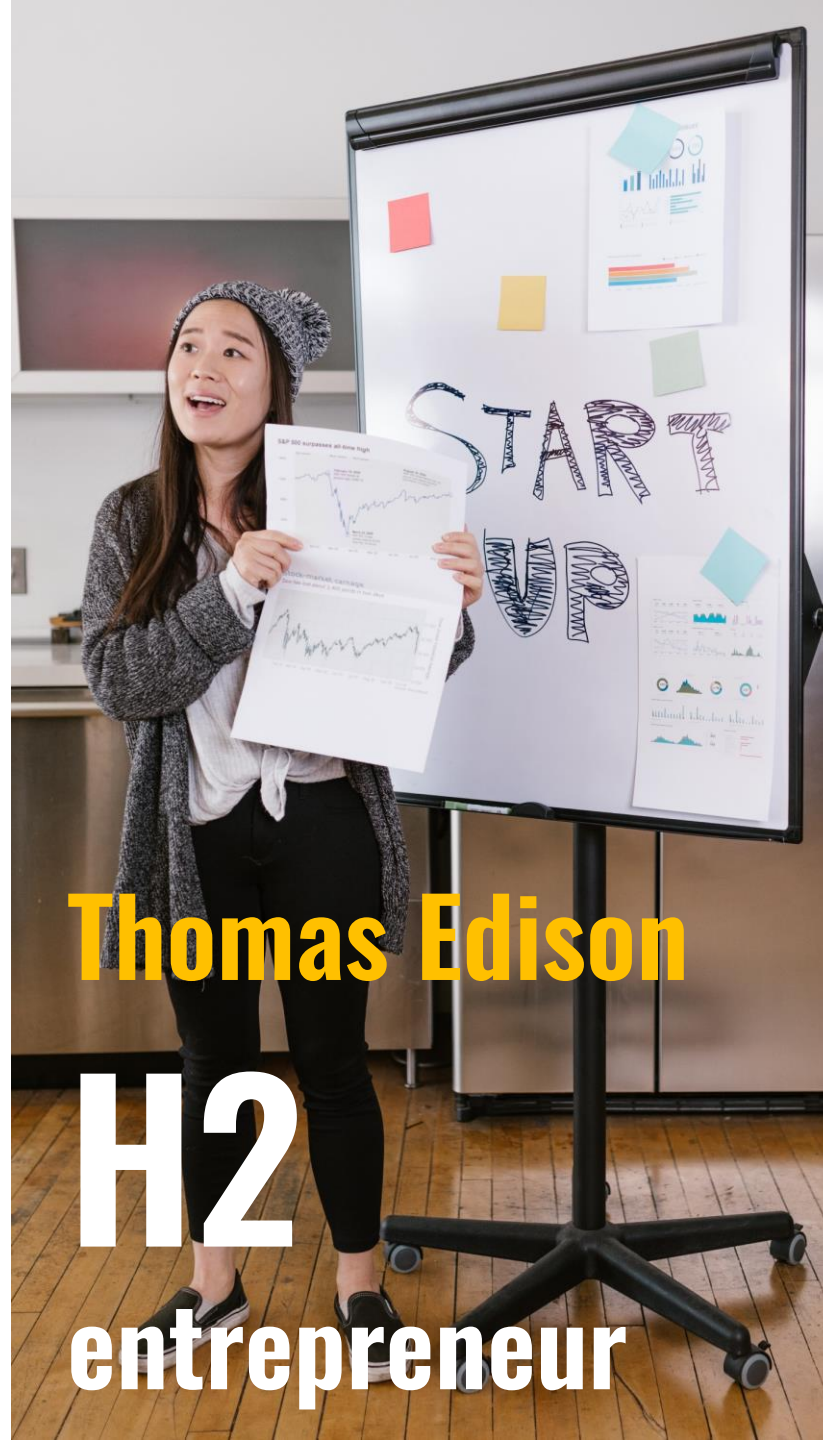
H3
visionary



Candlemakers

H1

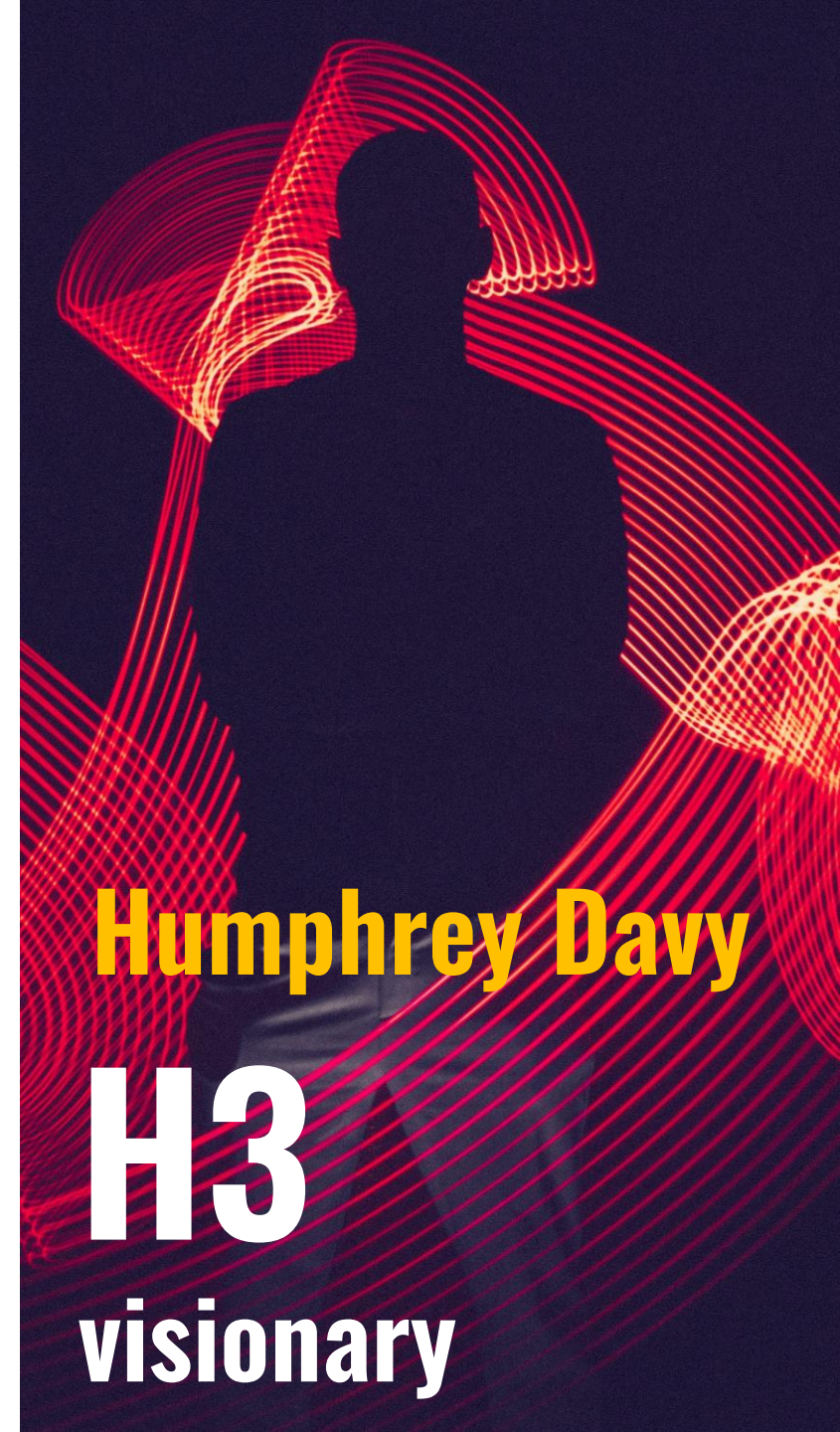
manager



Thomas Edison

H2

entrepreneur



Humphrey Davy

H3

visionary



**dinosaur,
obstructive,
not with it**

H1
manager



**risky,
compromise,
sell out**

H2
entrepreneur



**irrelevant,
impractical,
unrealistic**

H3
visionary

A hand holding a magnifying glass over a road at sunset. The magnifying glass shows a close-up of the road with cars and a utility pole. The background is a blurred sunset over a city.

Flex your perspective.



**support,
heritage,
legacy**

**H1
manager**



**ideas,
innovation,
allyship**

**H2
entrepreneur**



**hope,
inspiration,
aspiration**

**H3
visionary**

A single lit candle is centered in the upper half of the frame. The flame is bright yellow and orange, with a dark tip. The candle itself is a warm, glowing orange color. The background is solid black, making the candle and its light stand out prominently.

No more candles, right?

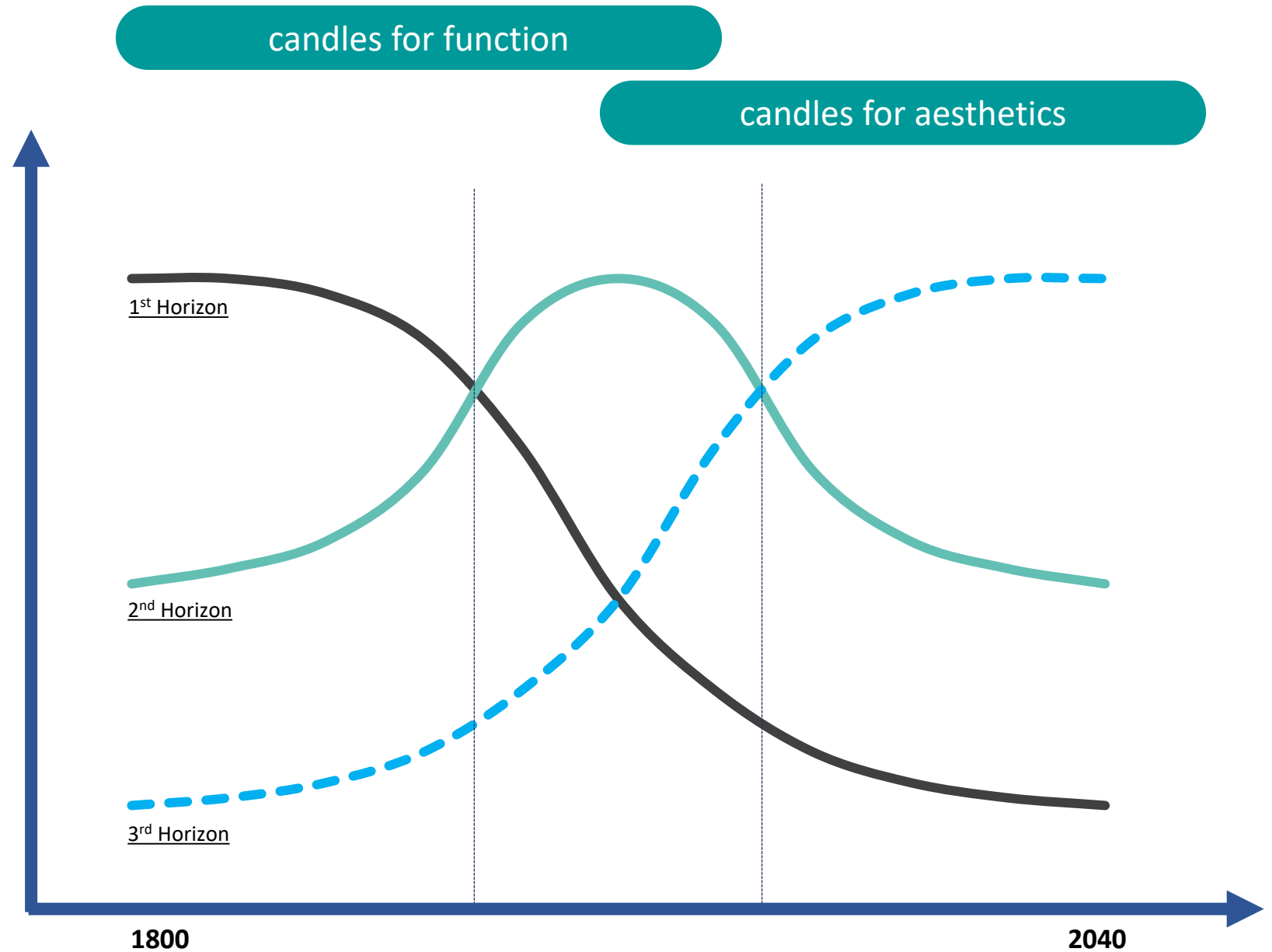
Transforming

Many industries experience a collapse followed by a transformation.

Candles transformed their purpose from function to aesthetics.

Renaissance of candle development, new waxes and manufacturing techniques.

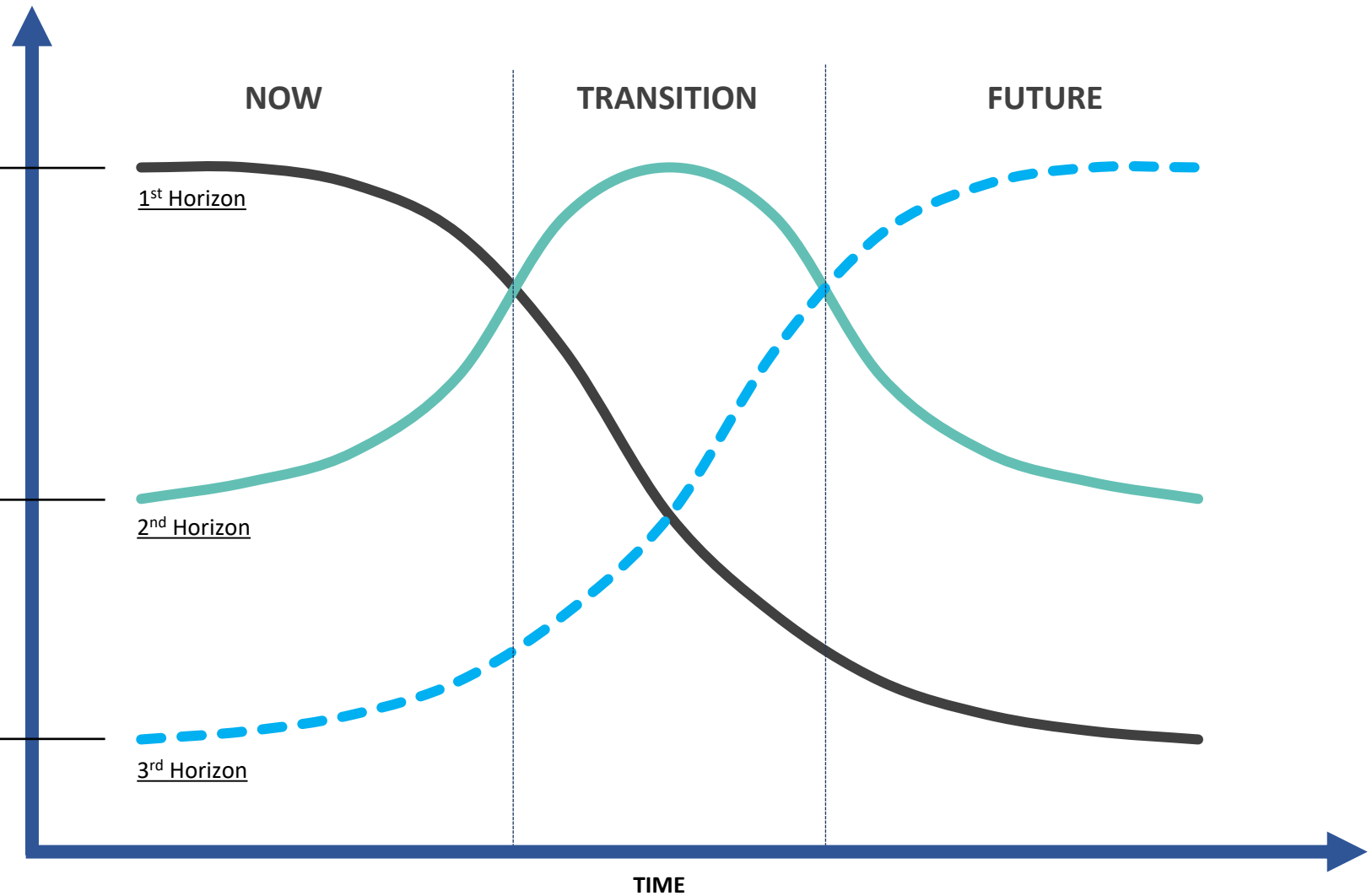
Projected global market cap of \$13.5 billion in 2028.



H1 – “is” Critique and understand the present.

H2 – “how” Form strategy to achieve goals.

H3 – “should” Develop preferred futures. Desire for change.



Strategic Questions

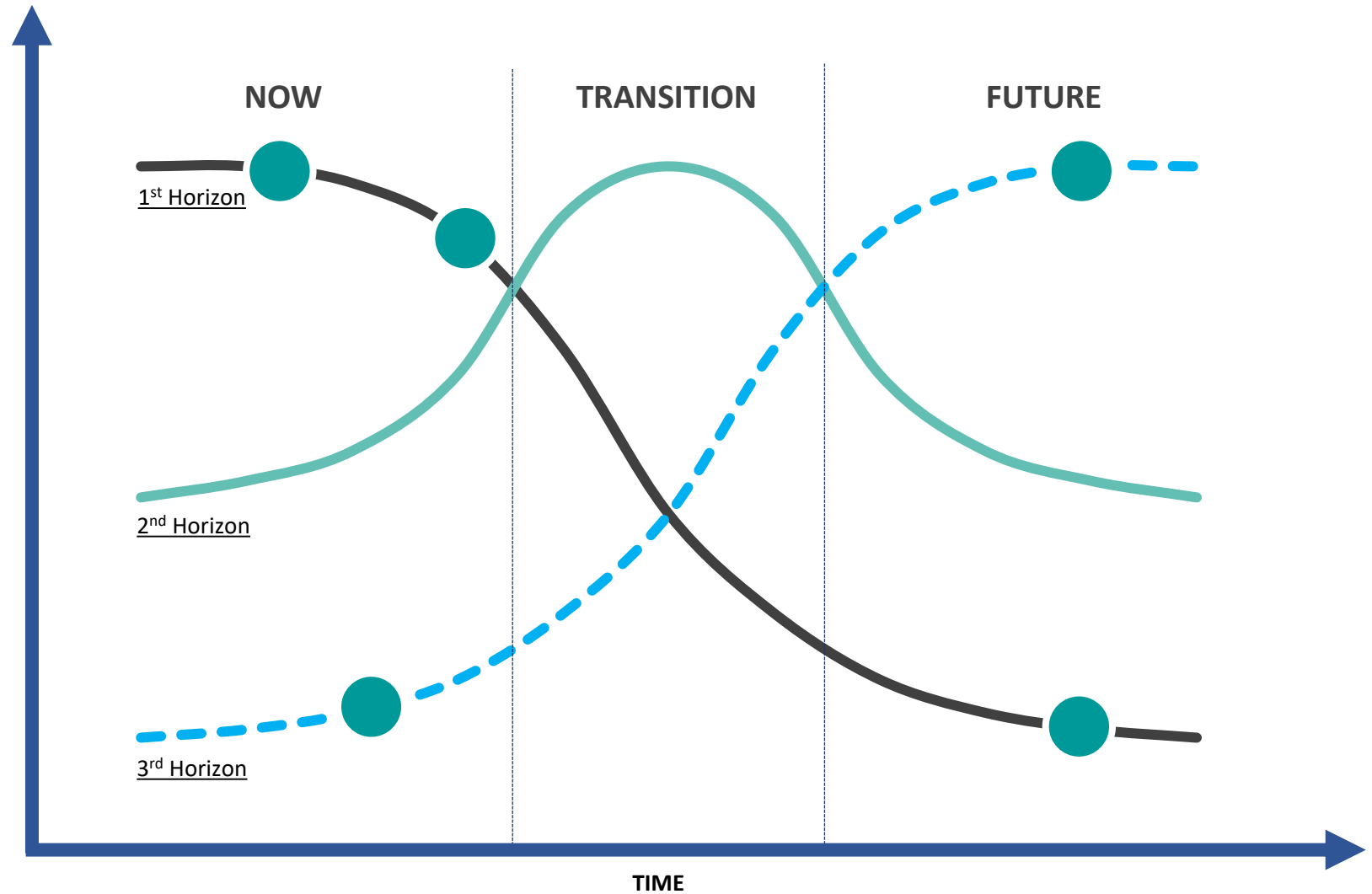
What is business as usual and how did we get here?

Why is it not fit for purpose anymore?

What's worth keeping?

What is the future we want?

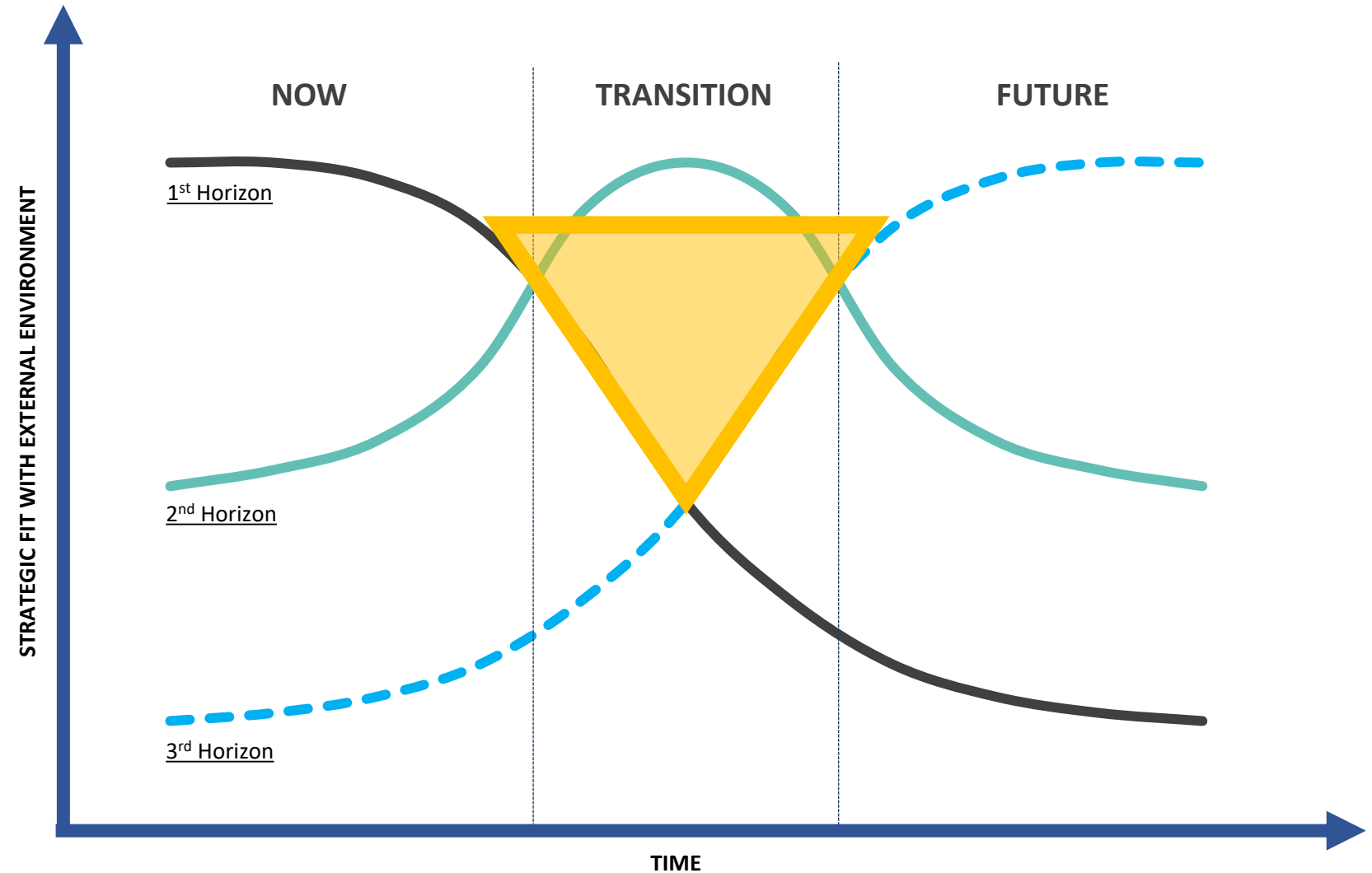
What signals are present today?



Triangle of Choice

The area of greatest uncertainty is also the area of greatest freedom and value.

Requires understanding values and assumptions of H1 and H3 (some work to maintain H1, others work to accelerate change) and defining what the solution space is



“Transformation happens as the emergent result of everything going on in the world — there is always an emerging third horizon at every scale of life from the individual to the planet and beyond.

Some things will be the result of conscious intent, others will surprise us for good or ill. The way we live now was once the third horizon, partly imagined and intended, largely unknown.

Future consciousness will not bring the future under control, but allows us to develop our capacity for transformational response to its possibilities.”

– Bill Sharpe