Adaptive Leadership and Organizations

Lyn Corbett

1

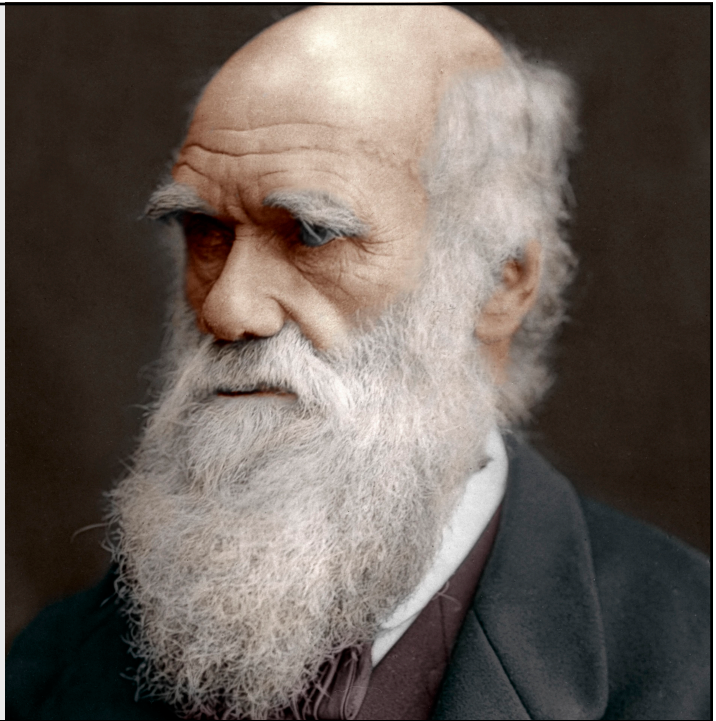## AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. The Adaptive Organization
3. Managing Change
4. Closing and Next Steps

2

It is not the most intellectual of the species that survives; it is not the strongest that survives; but the species that survives is the one that is able to adapt to and to adjust best to the changing environment in which it finds itself.

Charles Darwin - Origin of Species

3

Complex Challenge Myth

Better Execution and Improving Operations Alone will Accomplish Needed Results
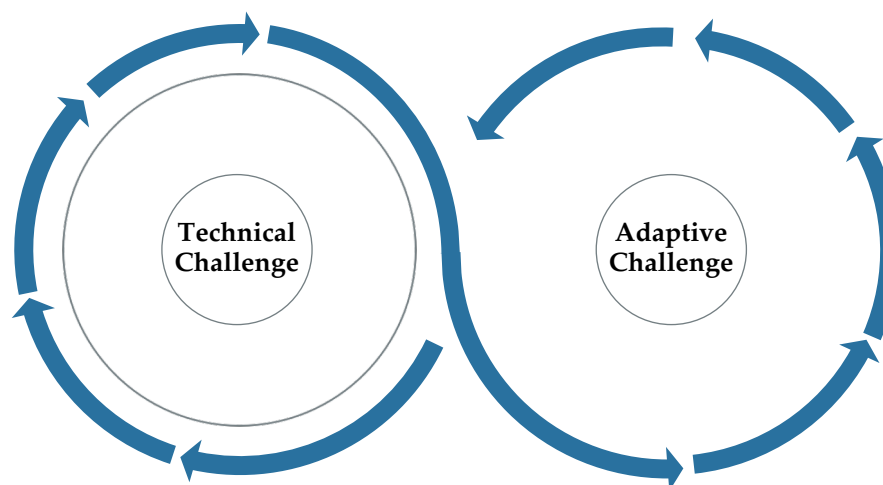
4

Adaptive Capacity

Adaptive Capacity refers to an organization's ability to change:

- in response to changed circumstances—survival—and

- in pursuit of enhanced results—creation.

5

Technical Challenge vs. Adaptive Challenge

Technical Challenge

Adaptive Challenge

TECHNICAL CHALLENGE

1. Easy to identify.

2. Often lend themselves to quick and concrete solutions

3. Often can be solved by an authority or expert

5. People are generally receptive to technical solutions

6. Technical solutions can often be implemented quickly—even by decree

6

Technical Challenge vs. Adaptive Challenge

ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES

1.Difficult to identify and easy to deny.

2.When leaders are solving adaptive challenges, they need to think systemically in order to understand the whole array of actors involved, they need to understand the root causes which will require committing time and energy.

3.Require changes in values, beliefs, roles, relationships, and approaches to how to accomplish goals. People with the problem are the main actors who need to do the work of solving It

4.Require change in numerous places; usually cross organizational boundaries, therefore requires systems thinking.

5.People often resist; Solutions require experiments and new discoveries; they can take a long time to implement and cannot be implemented by decree: "You have to trust each other".

7

The Adaptive Organization

1.Organization Mindset

2. Inquisitiveness - Solicit Solutions

3.Name the Elephant in the Room

4.Innovation

8

Organization Mindset

1. The Mindset goes beyond survival and seeks out opportunities to advance the organization

2. Peter Senge asserts that a learning organization "is continually expanding its capacity to create its future"

3. Organizations that are structured, regimented ,routinized in their thinking become less resilient and less able to adapt

9

Resource Development

MONEY

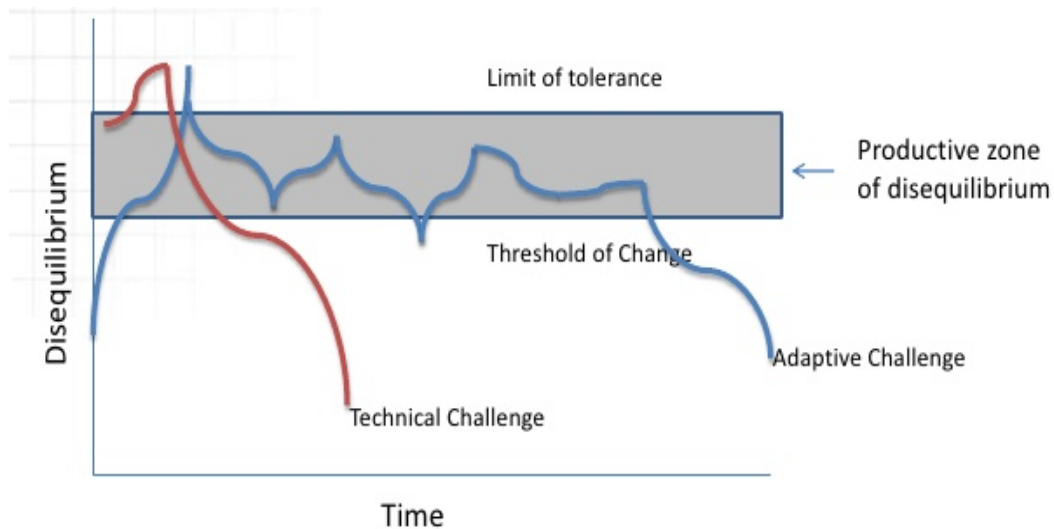SOCIALLY

MARKETING

ANALYSIS

SERVICES

ADVOCACY
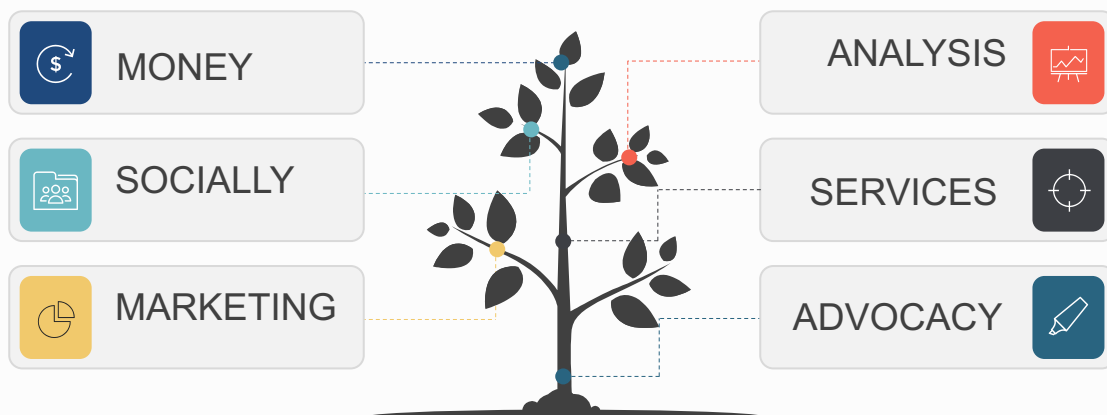
10

Inquisitiveness

1. Creating a "Culture of inquiry" that allows every voice to be heard

2. A culture that values the process of self-evaluation

3. Seek out opportunities to expand influence and reach through interdependent relationships and network structures

11

Adaptive Learning

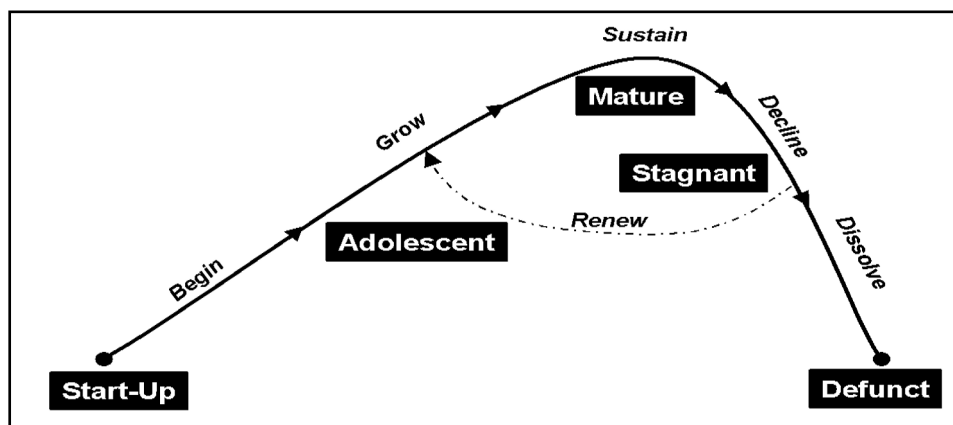Source: Heifetz & Linsky: Leadership on the Line, 2002

12

Name the Elephant in the Room

1. Know your Capacity
   - Strengths
   - Areas of Growth
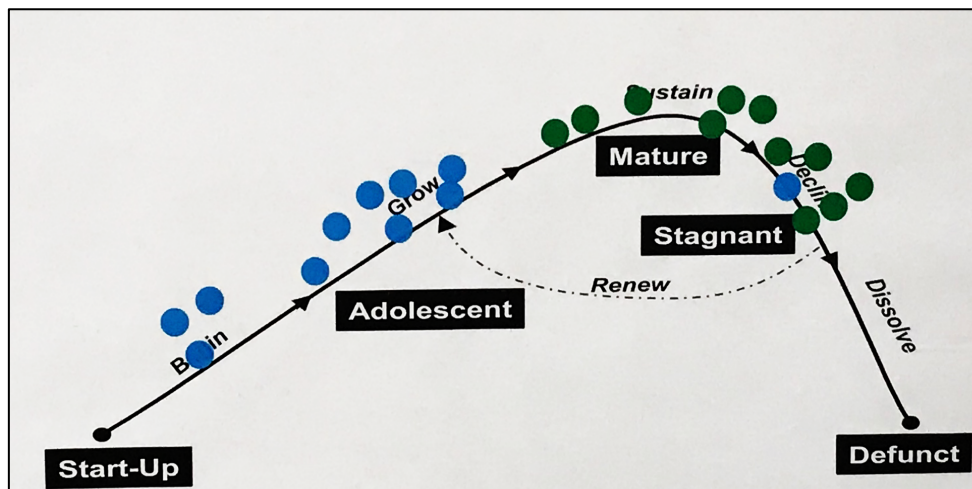   - Staff, volunteer, board
   - Resources
2. Lifecycle Placement

13

Organizational Lifecycles.
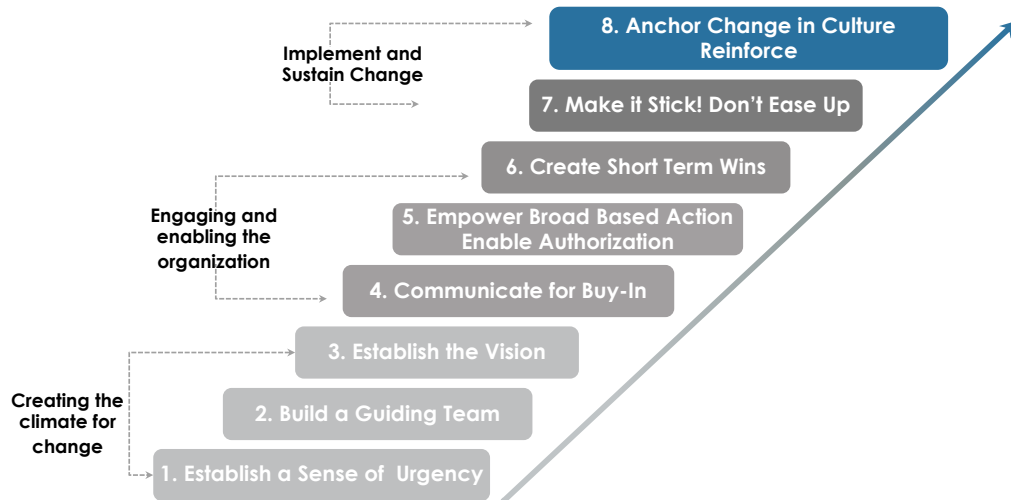

14

Organizational Lifecycles.

15

Innovation

1. Committing staff time and financial resources to thoughtful experimentation, being sure to reward both the successes and the failures;

2. Promoting organizational diversity;

3. Articulating new challenges that force the staff to collaborate with others and stretch their thinking

4. seeding the organizational environment with new ideas and influences.

5. Initiate change to improve performance and to embrace it in response to new circumstances

16

Kotter's 8-Step Change

In 1996 John Kotter wrote Leading Change* which looked at what people did to transform their organizations. Kotter introduced an 8-step change model for helping managers deal with transformational change. This is summarized in Kotter's 8-step change model.

Implement and Sustain Change

8. Anchor Change in Culture Reinforce

7. Make it Stick! Don't Ease Up

6. Create Short Term Wins

Engaging and enabling the organization

5. Empower Broad Based Action Enable Authorization

4. Communicate for Buy-In

3. Establish the Vision

Creating the climate for change

2. Build a Guiding Team

1. Establish a Sense of Urgency

17

John Kotter's 8-Step Change

1. Establish a Sense of Urgency
   a. What threats exist if changes are not made? What are the benefits to making changes?
   b. Identify the top 3 reasons to make a change.

2. Build a Guiding Team
   a. Who would you choose to be part of the coalition to champion the change?

3. Establish the Vision for Change
   a. What are the values central to the vision?
   b. What is the vision of success? Be specific!
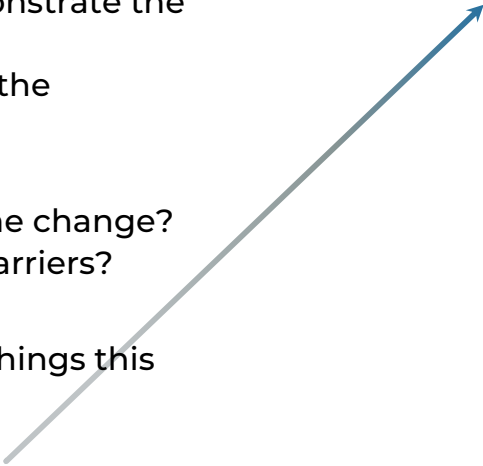
18

John Kotter's 8-Step Change

4. **Communicate for Buy-In**
   a. How would you communicate or demonstrate the vision?
   b. Where would you embed the vision in the organization?
5. **Remove Obstacles**
   a. What barriers exist to implementing the change?
   b. What would you do to remove these barriers?
6. **Create short-term wins**
   a. What are the simple and inexpensive things this organization
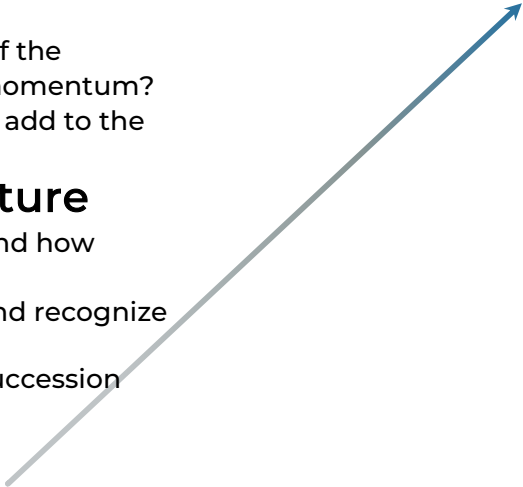   can do to make change?

19

John Kotter's 8-Step Change

7. **Make it Stick!**
   a. If progress was being made as a result of the changes, how might you build on this momentum?
   b. Who might be new agents of change to add to the coalition?
8. **Anchor the change in culture**
   a. What success stories might you share and how would you share these stories?
   b. How would you celebrate the success and recognize agents of change?
   c. How would you embed the change in succession planning, hiring and training?

20

Scenario Planning

- **Sample** – You are a senior leader in a Nonprofit Organization and have been asked to lead the implementation of recent reforms within the organization that will impact how communities are served, what data is collected about services, and how will you know that you have reached your expected change outcomes.

21

Group Roles

FACILITATOR... The Facilitator leads the discussion, making sure that everyone is fully participating

SCRIBE...   The Scribe writes for the group.

REPORTER...   The Reporter reports the small group's work to the whole group.

TIMEKEEPER... The Timekeeper keeps track of the time and makes sure that the group finishes their task on time.

GATEKEEPER (Everyone) ...   The Gatekeepers make sure that everyone is on task.

22

Resources

The Practice of Adaptive Leadership by Ronald Heifetz, Marty Linsky, and Alexander Grashow 2009

Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading, by Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky, 2002

Leadership Without Easy Answers, by Ronald Heifetz, 1994- 13TH Printing, multiple languages

23

THANK YOU.

Lyn Corbett, MPA
The University of San Diego
Lyncorbett@sandiego.edu

24