

Technical & Adaptive Challenges

Adapted from the work of R. Heifetz and M. Linsky

	Technical Challenges i.e. Payroll issues	Adaptive Challenges i.e. Culture Change
Distinctions	Solved by expertsLogic & IntellectOften quick & easy solutionsEasy to identify	 Cannot be solved by experts Changes in values, beliefs, behavior, roles, relationships, & approaches to work Difficult to identify & easy to deny
Nature of Solutions	 Requires change in one or few places, often within organizational boundaries Solutions can be implemented quickly — often by edict People generally receptive to technical solutions Locus of Work: AUTHORITY 	 Changes in many places, often across organizational boundaries "Solutions" often required experiments & new discoveries Implementation often takes time & cannot be done by edict People often resist adaptive solutions Locus of Work: STAKEHOLDERS
Role of Leader/ Authority	 PROBLEM SOLVER: solve or delegate to experts to solve Implement solutions by edict, resource assignments, etc. Focus on SOLUTION 	 CONVENER: bring the people together with the problem to do the work of solving it Allow for long-term outcomes Communicator: transparency Focus on PROCESS
Strategy	FIX IT!	 Convene conversations necessary for group thinking (i.e. Relationship-building, Mutual Understanding, Possibilities, Action – see below) Allow for experiments that explore opportunities or test assumptions Prototype & scale up what works; share learning from what doesn't
Learning Required	 INFORMATIVE Learning Bringing into mind new ideas, skills & content Basic Perception of self & world remains the same 	 TRANSFORMATIVE Learning Changing whole mind – perspective, perception, orientation Feels unfamiliar, outside of comfort zone, risky Requires courage & growth

Working Adaptively

Model adapted from the work of Nancy Dixon & Trish Silber

Conversations for Working Adaptively

1. Relationship Building

- Develop trust and safety for serious work on any issue
- Discover the meaning of the work for those in the room
- What is valued or important to each person in relation to the adaptive challenge
- Generate decisions, commitments, coordinated actions
- Important to be explicit and structured
- · Make commitments/decisions public
- Often the "default/first conversation"
- More likely to move forward when other conversations have taken place
- Collective action strengthens relationships

4. Action

Common Understanding Of Challenges/Goals

- Make sense of the data, get clear on what we know, ID trends or themes
- Uncover other perspectives, reasoning and ideas
- This Needed before individuals can align, decide or coordinate effectively
- Innovative thinking based on the facts, circumstances, and data
- Understand biases and assumptions, look at the problem through a new lens
- Time to generate ideas, consider small moves that have a big impact

3. Explore the Possibilities

Questions for Working Adaptively

1. Relationship Building

- What do I value about my work?
- Why is this issue important to me?
- How are we going to work together (e.g. ground rules, roles, expectations)?
- What are our first steps and who is doing what by when?
- What support is needed to move on this (who, what, when)?
- How do we communicate our intentions and to whom (who, what, when)?
- How do we document, track and assess our actions?

4. Action

2. Common Understanding Of Challenges/Goals

- What do we need to know about this challenge?
- Who is affected? Who might need to be part of this process?
- What assumptions are we making?
- How else might we think about this challenge? What's missing?
- What have others done? What's already working?
- What would be occurring if our solution was successful?
- What self-imposed limitation, blind spot, bias or assumption is holding us back?
- What might be a way to experiment?
- What are the risks and rewards of a particular action?

3. Explore the Possibilities