

Promoting Adaptive Change

in a Messy World

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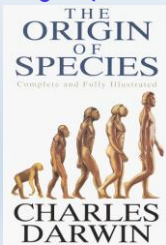
Frank's Personal Experience

- My house fire
- What did Frank learn from the experience?



A Couple of Quotes

"It is neither the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."



A Couple of Quotes

“The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn & relearn.”

Alvin Toffler, futurist

unlearn.

Overview

1. Three reactions to change
2. Drivers of disruption
3. The big challenges
4. Technical vs. adaptive challenges



Overview (con't)

5. Indispensable competencies for 21st century leaders
6. Taking “smart risks”
7. Resources
8. “Just one commitment”



3 Reactions to Change

- 1. Embrace the change
- 2. Try to be neutral
- 3. Resist the change



Drivers of "Disruption"

"What are the mega-forces disrupting local government organizations?"



Drivers of Disruption

- Unsustainable cost structures
- Out-of-whack tax system
- Structures, processes, & rules oriented toward static world
- Technology
- Demographic, generational, value, political shifts



Drivers of Disruption

- Problems are complex, difficult to solve, emotion-laden & divisive
- Power is diffuse (“veto” power)
- No one institution can solve any problem
- Citizen mistrust in all institutions including gov’t



Leading in Disruptive World

- Leaders must understand change is accelerating & discontinuous
- To confront any major challenge, leaders must cross boundaries & engage others
- Leaders must focus on experimenting, getting it “roughly right,” & fixing things along the way
- Learning is the key to adapting



“Are we learning as fast as the world is changing?”

Gary Hamel

The Big Challenges

- What are 2-3 **big challenges** that you'd like to help your LAFCo address in the next 5 years?



The Nature of the Challenges

- **Technical challenges** ("tame")
Solutions are known & can be addressed through management
- **Adaptive challenges** ("wicked")
Solutions are unknown, often involve value conflicts & require leadership at all levels



The Essence of Leadership

"Leaders do not force people to follow - they invite them on a journey."

Charles Lauer

Indispensable Competencies

1. Active futures orientation
2. Boundary-crossing & partnering skills
3. Learning agility
4. Ability to start conversations & tell stories
5. Ability to create meaning
6. Ability to grow more leaders
7. Resiliency



Risks in Uncertain Environment

- In my professional or personal life, what was a risk that was worth taking?
- Why was I able to pull it off?



Taking "Smart Risks"

1. Consider risks only if they are important to you & are aligned with your passion
2. Calculate the costs of doing nothing (status quo option)
3. "Ready, fire, aim"
4. Use a respected sponsor
5. Spread the risk



Taking “Smart Risks” (con’t)

- 6. Tie change project to another initiative or investment already underway
- 7. Pilot everything
- 8. Take incremental steps & ramp up over time
- 9. Debrief experience as you go along
- 10. Seek guidance from your “dream team”



Resources

- William Bridges, *Transitions: Making Sense of Life Changes*
- Kevin Duggan & Frank Benest, “Navigating Through Transitions - Strategies to Help You Cope with New Realities,” *PM Magazine*
- Career Compass columns
 - “Leadership is the Art of Conversation”
 - “Bouncing Back from Defeat”
 - “FIO - Key Competency for 21st Century Leaders



Resources

- ICMA Coaching Program
 - www.icma.org/coaching
 - Webinars
 - One-to-one coaching + new training videos
 - Speed coaching
 - Career Compass columns



“Just One Thing”

“What is just one thing I commit to do to better adapt to change?”

MY COMMITMENT



www.frankbenest.com
