Adaptive Leadership in the “New Normal”

CALAFCO
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Polling Question #1

What is your relationship to LAFCo?

- Commissioner
- Staff
- Legal counsel
- Consultant
Let’s Start with a Story
Frank’s Personal Experience
Frank’s Personal Experience
What Did Frank Learn?

To effectively adapt, we must. . .

- Focus on our values
- Identify priorities
- Act with confidence amidst uncertainty
- Take a few steps, pivot & learn as we go
- Get assistance & coaching
- Cross silos & develop new relationships
- Create a new “story”
A Beginning Quote

“It is neither the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”
1. The new normal
2. What is adaptive change
3. What is the focus of leadership in an uncertain world
4. Leading others on your adaptive journey
5. Taking “smart risks”
6. Q & A
7. Resources
Polling Question #2

In my “new normal,” I am:

❑ Working from home
❑ Using new technology
❑ Jumping from team to team to solve different kinds of problems
❑ Responding to new kinds of demands (ex: police reform, homelessness, COVID-19 tracing)
❑ Crossing silos to solve problems
❑ Learning to cut my own hair
❑ All the above
The New Normal
The New Normal

- Accelerating & non-linear change
- Permanent fiscal stress
- Static structures, processes, rules
- Technology transforming service delivery
- Demographic, generational, value, & political shifts
The New Normal (con’t)

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

Adaptive leadership is the act of mobilizing a group to take on difficult challenges & emerging triumphant at the end of the process.
Focus of Leadership
What is the new future or “story” for our team, dept., organization?

What does the new future include?

What must come true for us to realize the new story?
  - New technology?
  - New ways of doing business?
  - New partners?
  - New skills & competencies?
To lead others in adapting, I’m...
Approaches for Leading Others

1. Confront your fears
2. Emphasize purpose of work & your core values
3. Connect with others
4. Be clear about goals
5. Do something!

“The path forward emerges as you move forward, not before.” Dan Rockwell
Approaches for Leading Others

6. Leverage collective intelligence
7. Seek opportunity
8. Communicate with confidence
9. Learn as you go
10. Show progress
“Smart Risks”
Polling Question #4

In respect to taking risks in my professional life:

- I am very comfortable taking risks. I consider myself a risk-taker.
- I am willing to take a risk if the issue is very important.
- I am cautious about taking risks.
- I avoid risk-taking.
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 by engaging partners & allies
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 (“little bets”)
9. Debrief experiences as you go along
10. Seek guidance from your “dream team”
Resources

- Career Compass columns, ICMA Coaching Program
  - “We Need Adaptive Leaders Now”
  - “Taking Smart Risks”
  - “Leadership is the Art of Conversation”
Resources (con’t)

- ICMA Coaching Program
  - Webinars
  - One-to-one coaching (“CoachConnect”)
  - New training videos
  - Career Compass advice columns

www.icma.org/coaching
To serve as a better adaptive leader, what is one thing I want to start doing tomorrow?
Final Quote

“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