

Chapter Nine

Reasoning Competency # 5: Adaptive Leadership

Knowledge plus leadership equals action. The adaptive leader performs as a change agent by facilitating him/herself and others in transition from the current state to a higher level-of-being.

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Reasoning Competency # 5: Adaptive Leadership

Introduction to Adaptive Leadership

Knowledge plus leadership equals action. The adaptive leaders performs as a change agent by facilitating themselves and others in transition from the current state to a higher level-of-being

Adaptive Leadership. From a life management perspective no amount of knowledge has practical value until it is applied to human needs and concerns. Someone needs to articulate what is known, show relevancy to the situation at hand, and propose a course of action that creates a meaningful result. It is the work of leaders to craft future visions that inspire others to accept change and become participants in the journey forward. The *adaptive leadership competency* is another foundational anchor in the learnership discipline because it moves knowledge into action. Theory is turned into practice, and practice leads to meaningful accomplishment for individuals and social organizations.

Within the context of learnership philosophy and architecture in this book, it is the learnership practitioner who develops the systems thinking, pattern recognition, situational learning, knowledge management, and adaptive leadership skills (the learnership reasoning competencies) that prove instrumental in improving personal, organizational, and community social systems performance. Adaptive Leadership (AL) applies Knowledge Management (KM) enabled by Situational Learning (SL) supported by Systems Thinking (ST) and Pattern Recognition (PR). The targets for adaptive leadership are the four societal systems described in the *Learnership Integrated Systems Architecture* (LISA). Concurrently adaptive leadership incorporates the discipline of TKM when in action. That is, adaptive leadership is focused on transitioning from the current (As-Is) state to a future (To-Be) state-of-being. And, the full range of *Total Knowledge Management* principles, practices, and technologies are considered when attempting to enrich the capability and performance in the four social systems for development or the six context setting universal knowledge spheres. The TKM sub-theme is now ready for cross-disciplinary implementation.

The following descriptions, explanations, and selected references direct our attention to contemporary organizational issues, and the changes that surround them as they attempt to fulfil their respective public or private sector responsibilities. In doing so, the role of the leader as a knowledgeable, supportive, and adaptive facilitator of innovation initiatives, rational decision-making, work group collaboration, and organizational change management is described. After establishing this organizational context, explanation of the unique characteristics and skills of *adaptive leaders (our learnership practitioners)* are addressed and followed by selected perspectives that serve as “think pieces” for the reader’s further consideration.

Organizational Context and Complexity. A selection of introductory perspectives follow:

Paradoxes and Competing Demands. In his book: *Beyond Rational Management: Mastering the Paradoxes and Competing Demands of High Performance* (1988) Robert Quinn addresses two areas of particular relevance to the subject of adaptive leadership. The first topic provides an overview of how leaders move from being a novice to a master of organizational management. The second topic describes the contradictions and paradoxes of organizational life that requires the most skilled of leaders.

Quinn introduces his subject by saying that: “In order to understand managerial effectiveness, we must first move beyond the theories of rational management and begin to better understand the dynamic, paradoxical, and competing forces that block us from creating high-performance systems...In running large organizations, there is no one way to manage effectively. Master managers understand this and develop the capacity to use several contradictory logics simultaneously.” (p.xiv) Quinn’s observations over 20 years ago have been confirmed by numerous studies and reports since that time, and we now find ourselves with much greater change and complexity than he probably anticipated.

On the subject of *mastery*, Quinn comments: “A primary characteristic of managing, particularly at high levels, is the confrontation of change, ambiguity, and contradiction. Managers spend much of their time living in fields of perceived tension. They are constantly forced to make tradeoffs, and they often find that there are no right answers.” (p.3) Given this situation (remember our *situational learning competency*), he says that: “The people who become masters of management do not see their work only in structured, analytical ways. Instead they also have the capacity to see it as a complex, dynamic system that is constantly evolving.” What this says to us is that the ability to understand a decision or problem’s larger context (remember our *systems thinking competency*), and perhaps the assortment of personalities and competing mental models (remember our *pattern recognition competency*) is an essential learning skill in order to sort out viable alternatives and courses of action.

Quinn offers an excellent perspective on how managers think using the research terminology of *cognitive complexity*. This concept deals with how well people are able to *differentiate* between related entities when necessary, and *integrate* seemingly disparate entities when relationships are needed to be considered. Complexity results when a situation involves significant effort toward differentiation and integration within the same subject area or domain of consideration. Quinn continues to state that: "Researchers have found that cognitive complexity is associated with more moderated attitudes, openness to disconfirming information and adjustment in thinking, more effective discernment of the intents and strategies of others, better interrelationship of decisions, more appropriate strategy development, and more flexibility in consideration of distant goals. In general, they argue that highly complex individuals are more effective managers." (p.5) Quinn also adds that when a manager moves from being a novice to becoming a master manager he/she learns to "read cues from the situation, calls on both a task and process view...[which involves] that two contrasting domains are understood and woven together...the result is a much higher level of productivity – a level most managers never experience." (p.11)

[Author's Note: I suppose we have to become much more *cognitively complex* people if we are going to become learnership practitioners.]

On the subject of the contradictions of organizational life that requires the management skills just presented, Quinn indicates that a major cause of most managers inability to handle the situations they encounter is that they have become blinded by their own purposes, that is, they have prematurely settled on the facts, theories, methods, values, and motives that they prefer to use (remember our personality types and mental models) and have even developed moral positions that they use to resist any different thoughts, perspectives, or strategies. He further illustrates how through analysis of the research data, four distinct problem orientations can be discerned; and that a four quadrant *Competing Values Model* advocated. The two axes he uses to develop the model are

1. Manager preference for *decentralization and differentiation* as contrasted with a preference for *centralization and integration*; and
2. Manager preference for maintenance of the *current socio-technical system* versus support for a *competitive systems* position.

Quinn's model shows that managers can self-select themselves into one or more of the four stylized categories based on questions concerning their managerial thinking and behavior: (pp.26-38)

1. Rational Model/Style – The preference is for short time lines and high certainty in information use and action. Use of single purpose and focus predominates in decision making. Decisions are made quickly and seen as final. Focus is on logical direction and taking action. [An MBTI **ST** Style]
2. Human Relations Model/Style – The preference is for long time lines and low certainty and the need is for affiliation and mutual dependence. Major emphasis is on information processing and consensus. High tolerance is shown for individual differences and spontaneous behavior. Team harmony is an essential outcome. [An MBTI **NF** Style]
3. Open Systems Model/Style – The preference is for short timelines and low certainty in information use to allow time for variation, risk, excitement and growth. Decisions are made quickly but are able to be changed as new information is acquired. Adaptability and external legitimacy are major concerns. [An MBTI **NT** Style]
4. Internal Process Model/Style – The preference is for long time lines and high certainty, and the need is for predictability and security. Tendency is for systematic examination of externally generated facts and the focus is on maintaining present capability. Respect for standardization and preservation of the current order of things is desired. [An MBTI **SF** Style]

[Author's Note: Quinn's research and perspectives are major contributors to the learnership philosophy of social systems development and the reasoning competencies that drive the maturation of those systems. The critical learning is that we live and work in dynamic, changing systems filled with uncertainty and complexity – which means that there is no one right way to accomplish our objectives. Being multi-skilled and circumspect concerning our situational environment is needed for good decision making. Adaptive leadership contributes to this end.]

5th Generation Management. Author Charles Savage in his *5th Generation Management* (1996) offers at least three ways we will need to change organizational management. First, he introduces us to the idea that U.S. business environment is moving away from the Late Industrial Age focus on the use of capital in rather routine production processes to the Early Knowledge Age in which the focus is on organizational knowledge and the use of knowledge networks to manage and coordinate complex operations. He says that the new conceptual principles are:

1. Peer-to-peer networking
2. Integrative processes
3. Work as dialogue
4. Importance of human time and timing; and the essentials of
5. Virtual enterprising and dynamic teaming.

Together, this new way of internal and external teaming to include both suppliers and customers reduces the hierarchical vertical organizational structure in favor of a horizontal, more inclusive and collaborative way of doing business and delivering value. Second, Savage makes the important point that leaders in this new environment have to face the difficult task of transforming their visions, values, and strategies to align with this new way of working. They will face significant challenges in that they will need to:

1. Overcome the fragmentation of organizational functions currently in place
2. Figure out how to maintain a sense of accountability in the new flat, dynamic organization
3. Increase support for continued and rapid personal and organizational learning
4. Develop methods for focusing and coordination among the increasing number of cross-functional task teams that will be working collaboratively across organizational barriers.

Third, Savage suggests that today's businesses have to go beyond the typical "find out what our potential customer wants or needs, and then fulfill those requirements." He says that firms should be teaming with their suppliers to work together to determine not only the needs of the primary customers, but also the "aspirations" of the customer's customers. His belief is that horizontal knowledge networking will bring more business intellect to bear on the marketplace and that firms will be looking further downstream in the supply chain to better define what customers "wish for" and will then be able to "anticipate" the developing market and provide enhanced customer services.

Organizational Complexity and Chaos. In a recent book entitled: *Surfing the Edge of Chaos* (2000) the authors (Pascale, Millemann, and Gioja) discuss what they term a new scientific renaissance in how businesses of the future will compete and be managed. They review the fundamentals of *Complex Adaptive Systems* (CAS) and explain the implication for today's organizations. They define CAS as a "...system of independent agents that can act in parallel, develop 'models' as to how things work in their environment, and, most importantly, refine those models through learning and adaptation." (p.5) The authors explain that their work builds on the new science of complexity that considers the common properties of all living things. They attempt to distill what they term the "four bedrock principles that are inherently and powerfully applicable to the living system called a business:

1. *Equilibrium* is a precursor to *death*. When a living system is in a state of equilibrium, it is less responsive to changes occurring around it. This places it at maximum risk.
2. In the face of threat, or when galvanized by a compelling opportunity, living systems move toward the *edge of chaos*. This condition evokes higher levels of mutation and experimentation, and fresh new solutions are more likely to be found.
3. When this excitation takes place, the components of living system *self-organize* and new forms and repertoires *emerge* from the turmoil.
4. Living system cannot be *directed* along a linear path. Unforeseen consequences are inevitable. The challenge is to *disturb* them in a manner that approximates the desired outcome." (pp.5-6)

The authors point out that "*complexity* and *chaos* are frequently used interchangeably, even though they have almost nothing in common. The world is not chaotic; it is complex. Humans tend to regard as chaotic that which they cannot control. This creates confusion over what is meant by the term *chaos*. From a scientific point of view, chaos is an unlikely occurrence in which patterns cannot be found nor interrelationships understood." (p.6) The authors also emphasize that the "living systems" term is more than a descriptive metaphor – it is, in fact, exactly how human institutions operate.

The concept of *surfing the edge of chaos* is presented by the authors as a real life organizational adventure. They comment that: "The edge of chaos is a condition, not a location. It is a permeable, intermediate state through which order and disorder flow, not a finite line of demarcation...The edge is not the abyss...It's the sweet spot for productive change." (p.61) The potential impact of this philosophy in today's highly complex competitive and "flat" world is not only is there a compelling need to accept change, there is the need to go out to the organization's boundaries and create change if none is on the immediate horizon. In most organizations this thinking is still counterintuitive; however, the authors indicate they will not be content until organizations actually purposely move away from a sense of stability into a place of continued

disequilibrium. That is, if a firm expects to succeed, over time, it needs to anticipate the future – even attempt to create an augmented future – in order to get a jump on the competition with products and services for which a desire is still somewhat subtle or unrealized. The organization management behaviors or disciplines suggested to help “sustain the disequilibrium driver for change are:

1. Infuse an intricate understanding of what drives business success. Establish a clear line of sight between a firm’s overall strategy and each individual’s performance; use deep (leading) indicators of desired outcomes.
2. Insist on uncompromising straight talk. Use frank, accurate, honest information. Conflict, reframed as ‘fuel for organizational learning,’ can contribute to an organization’s long-term vitality.
3. Manage from the future. Establish a compelling goal, but difficult goal, that draws organizations out of their comfort zone – a key discipline to move to the edge of chaos.
4. Reward inventive accountability. Permit self-organization to operate at opportune moments; go beyond procedures and rules; use common sense and see the larger picture; and, take accountability for the outcome.
5. Harness adversity by learning from prior mistakes. Self-organizing units need to learn from their experiences and adapt; use after action reviews as systematic learning opportunities.
6. Foster relentless discomfort. Always seek to do better, to make a difference.
7. Cultivate reciprocity between the individual and the organization. Achieve a level of trust and mutual respect in which organization members receive consideration and compensation in balance with their innovations and contributions; create a good teamwork and working relationships.” (Chapter 12 paraphrased)

[Author’s Note: The notion of recognizing the complexity internal and external to an organization, and in confronting the apparent chaos that results from that uncertainty is pertinent to the practice of learnership. Having the time and skill to enter into and complete cycles of new learning is critical to organizational development and effective decision-making. And yet, there is the need to move toward the organizational edge, to anticipate the potential future, and to proactively create change before it is clear what change will be required. As a minimum, the learnership practitioner will need to be good at scanning the external environment using available communication tools (internet, industry websites, search services, etc.) and being well networked within the organization itself (strategies, supplier websites, employee Blogs and communities of interest).]

Adaptive Enterprise. In his *Adaptive Enterprise: Creating and Leading Sense-and Respond Organizations* (1999) Stephen Haeckel addresses the organizational challenge of keeping up with, and getting ahead of, the increasing pace of marketplace and socio-economic change. His message of “*adaptive enterprise* is that large, complex organizations must and can adapt systematically – and successfully to this kind of change.” (p.xvii) Haeckel says that as important as speed-to-market, customer intimacy, operational excellence, and organizational agility happen to be – they are really subsets of a more pervasive issue: how well the enterprise can systematically adapt to its environment and remain successful.

Haeckel says that the make and sell organizations of the past industrial era will be replaced by the sense and respond organizations of the information and high technology age. The make and sell organization assumed that change was *predictable* and that the organizational goal was to become *efficient*. In contrast, the sense and respond organization assumed that change was *unpredictable* and the organization goal was to become *adaptive*. While the former used a closed system approach in which missions and strategies were planned in advance and implemented without much change, the latter situation is real-time sensitive and adapted to emerging customer requirements and change in the organization’s environment. Figure 6-1 (adapted from Haeckel’s work) provides a comparison of a number the organizational functions between the two approaches.

Haeckel comments on the changing role of leaders as organization transition to a sense and respond style of operations. He says “Transforming a system involves changing both its purpose and its structure. Leaders must anticipate the effects on the whole system of each change they make to any part of it. A system cannot be improved, much less transformed, by making isolated adjustments to individual capabilities.” (p.21)

[Author’s Note: Learnership practitioners will be expected to perform the roles required of them in assisting the creation of organizational flexibility and transition.

MAKE & SELL compared to SENSE & RESPOND

Leadership & Strategy	<u>MAKE & SELL</u>	<u>SENSE & RESPOND</u>
-- Strategic Intent	Business as an <i>efficient mechanism</i> for selling to predictable markets	Business as a <i>responsive system</i> prepared to satisfy unanticipated customer requests
-- Profit Focus	Profit margins based on achieving <i>economies of scale</i> – drive down fixed cost by increased production of the same product	Return on investment based on <i>economies of scope</i> – re-use modular processes over a range of product components and customers
-- Articulation of Strategy	<i>Strategy as a plan</i> to aim defined products and services at defined markets	<i>Strategy as an adaptive business design</i> to sense earlier and respond faster to unpredictable change
Organ. & Process	<u>MAKE & SELL</u>	<u>SENSE & RESPOND</u>
-- Organization Priority	Focused on <i>planning and scheduling</i> for greater predictability and efficiency	Focused on <i>building capabilities</i> for rapid process response to customer needs
-- Process	Achieve <i>mass production</i> using standard practices and repeatable processes	Build <i>modular capabilities</i> for customized responses to customer requirements
-- Operational Concept	<i>Functional and sequential activity</i> : a predefined value-chain responding to centralized decision making	<i>Networked and parallel activity</i> : dynamically formed team participating in decentralized decision making
Technology & Tools	<u>MAKE & SELL</u>	<u>SENSE & RESPOND</u>
-- Information Architecture	<i>Functionally managed</i> and optimized for each unit to achieve its own objectives	<i>Enterprise managed</i> to create a unified view of the business environment and an integrated approach to service/product delivery
-- IT Architecture	<i>Host-centric</i> : Shadowing the hierarchical top-down command and control management system	<i>Network-centric</i> : Shadowing the dynamic network of people and teams
Learning & Knowledge	<u>MAKE & SELL</u>	<u>SENSE & RESPOND</u>
-- Know-How	Embedded in <i>products</i>	Embedded in <i>people & processes</i>
-- Decision Making	<i>Competitive strawmen</i> proposed and defended using selective, known facts and personal appeal	<i>Collaborative inquiry and consensus seeking</i> opened to unknowns, uncertainty, and a range of alternatives
-- Culture	Emphasis on stability, reliability, and <i>“tried and true” perspectives</i> and methodologies	Emphasis on an <i>open and inquisitive approach</i> to sources of new learning and experience
-- Communications	<i>Monologue</i> : Seek to persuade	<i>Dialogue</i> : Seek to understanding

Table 9-1

Managing Organizational Change

Since humans have limited processing capability, and the mind is easily overloaded and clings to its past experience and knowledge, “letting go” becomes as important as learning — Alex and David Bennett

Now that we have considered the challenges facing modern organizations in terms of their need to become adaptive enterprises able to deal with cognitively complex situations, fragmented organizational functions, and complex business environments; our attention is directed toward the knowledge, skills, roles, and methodologies of the *adaptive leadership competency* – basically, the job of our learnership practitioners. The figures that follow are a continuation of the evolving Learnership Integrated Systems Architecture (LISA) that contains artifacts from the previously addressed learnership competencies of Systems Thinking (ST), Pattern Recognition (PR), Situational Learning (SL), and Knowledge Management (KM). And, both figures support the four areas of learnership social system development: personal, organizational, community, and society.

Social Systems Change and Development.

The specific emphasis, herein, is on two major adaptive leader responsibilities: developing a comprehensive methodology for organization change, and leading the change and development process.

Methodology for Organizational Change. After a decision has been made to proceed with an organizational change process and a target audience has been identified, an organization change methodology suitable to the effort should be developed. A comprehensive approach should identify and compare the pros and cons of the organization's *current system performance* with that of the newly defined and proposed *future system performance* (Figure 9-2). Additionally, the methodology should address the six critical business functions affected (strategy, structure, culture, process, technology, people) with sufficient explanatory information to gain the attention and support of those affected. Descriptions of these functions with examples of selected areas of emphasis are:

1. **Strategy** – An enterprise level view of the new goals and objectives to be pursued. Typical examples are: (a) Firm will become proactive, market-based, and adaptable to changing environment; (b) Customer and stakeholder satisfaction will be assessed and improved; and (c) Internal planning will focus on organization alignment and cohesion.
2. **Structure** – How the enterprise or business function will organize its authorities, locations and resources to accomplish its new goals and objectives. Typical examples are: (a) Workplace will be global, virtual, less hierarchical, and IT-enabled; (b) Governance will be participatory, democratic, and based on shared responsibility, (c) Leadership will be distributed, shared, and demonstrated through example; and (d) Community will be created through alliance with customers and suppliers.
3. **Culture** – Changes desired in terms of attitudes, priorities, relationships, and behaviors concerning internal operations and external contacts. Typical examples are: (a) Leaders and workforce should share a common vision and values; (b) Communication and collaboration will occur anytime, anyplace; and (c) Information and knowledge will be acquired, developed, coordinated, and shared.
4. **Process** – The standards, procedures and workflow changes that are implemented. Typical examples are: (a) Work will be knowledge-based, innovative, and value-driven; and (b) Processes will be reviewed, standardized, and continuously improved; and (c) Decision making will be informed, objective, and timely.
5. **Technology** – The information processing, new technologies and tools, and communication infrastructure changes that will be employed. Typical examples are: (a) Information technology will be digital, client-server, open-system, and include multimedia; (b) Workers should networked, collaborative, and empowered to act; and (c) IT networks are to be expanded and integrated to support virtual operations.
6. **People** – Changes planned in workforce knowledge, skill, competencies, work skills, responsibilities, and welfare. Typical examples are: (a) Learning is to be continuous, life-long, and integrated into work experiences; (b) Teamwork and individual initiative are to be valued and rewarded; and (c) Workforce well-being and satisfaction will be assessed and improved.

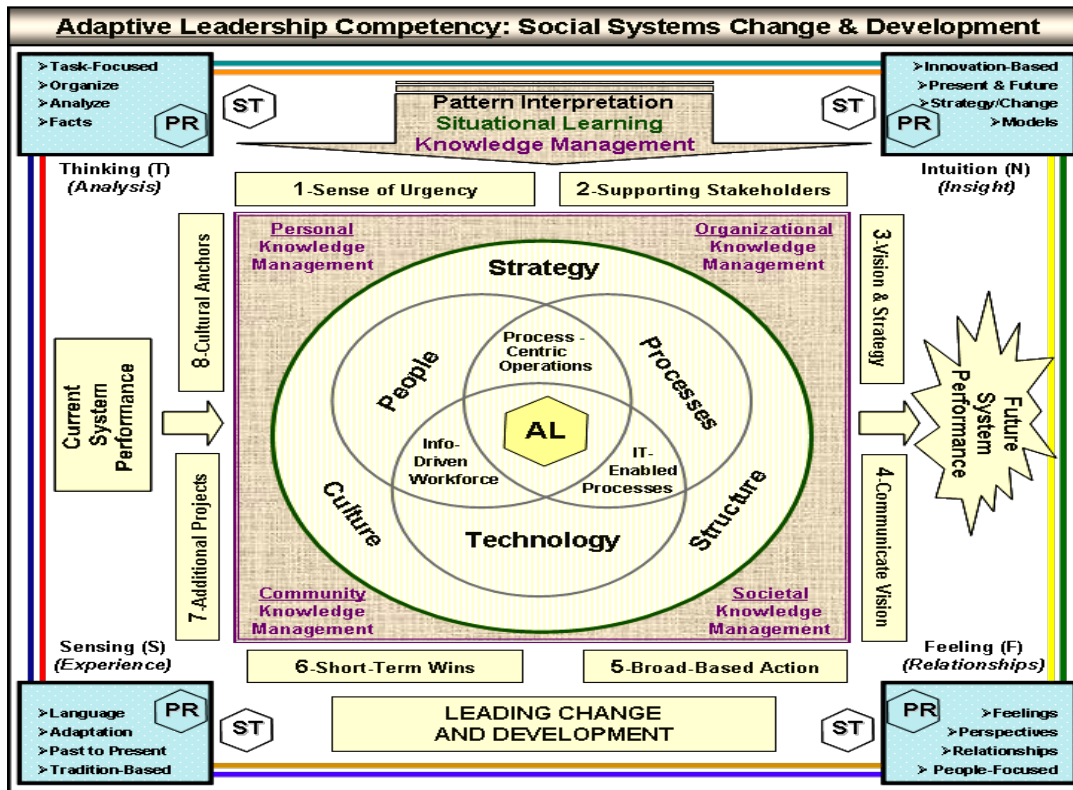


Figure 9-1

Leading Change and Development. The responsibility for leading organizational change and communications usually falls to those managers and workforce members with knowledge and responsibility for the functions and/or work processes being improved. However, executive involvement and leadership, as well as consultant and facilitator assistance, are often required when the initiative is complex or controversial. In his book *Leading Change* (1996) John Kotter presents a clearly written description of the challenges and techniques for leading major organizational change. Kotter comments that: "And those people at the top of enterprises today who encourage others to leap into the future, who help them to overcome natural fears, and who thus expand the leadership capacity in their organizations – these people provide a profoundly important service for the entire human community." (p.186) An adaptation of Kotter's overarching change management process and leadership activities is herewith summarized and illustrated in Figure 9-2:

1. Create a Sense of Urgency – Succinctly describe the potential crises or major opportunities that will result.
2. Identify and Involve Supporting Stakeholders – Organize a group of concerned and influential supporters.
3. Establish a Meaningful Vision and Strategy – Envision future benefits and a plan to achieve those results.
4. Communicate the Vision – Spread the word about the planned change and have leaders demonstrate their support.
5. Establish Broad-Based Action – Identify obstacles, risk management efforts, and advocates of initiatives to be implemented.
6. Achieve Short-Term Wins – Place priority on obtaining visible near-term results that contribute to the larger planned change.
7. Launch Additional Projects – Add additional projects and initiatives using outputs from the initial short-term wins.
8. Connect Success to Cultural Anchors – Identify the new attitudes and behaviors that contributed to more efficient operations and effective outcomes.

[Author's Note: The combination of a comprehensive change methodology and a well-led change and development process significantly increases the likelihood that the planned improvements will be accepted and supported by other leaders and the organizational workforce.]

Leader Attributes, Roles, and Dialogue

The four areas of emphasis in this section are (a) leader attributes, (b) leader roles, (c) leader dialogue and (d) leaders manage attention. They are illustrated in Figure 9-3, which together with Figure 9-2, depict the core capabilities of organizational change agents.

Leader Attributes. A survey of literature on this topic yields a long list of leader characteristics or attributes associated with having positive influence and attaining high performance. A few of the most prominent factors are being or having:

1. Competent in one's field.
2. Objective in handling decisions and problems.
3. Reflexive in looking at one's own attitudes and behavior.
4. Trustworthy in dealing with other's interests.
5. Innovative in the pursuit of better performance.
6. Focused in an attempt to maintain efficient operations.
7. Open-minded in considering relevant information and perspectives.
8. Confident that meaningful outcomes may be achieved.
9. Intuitive in considering tacit knowledge and experience.
10. Character exhibiting exemplary morals and values.
11. Initiative and willingness to take action.
12. Courage to take a stand for principle.

Leader Roles. In order to accomplish his organizational objectives the leader may have to perform different organization roles at various times and places. In each situation he is charged with moving other's reasoning and behavior forward toward desired results. A number of roles have been identified for use during appropriate circumstances:

1. Listener – Considering the perspectives and suggestions of others.
2. Collaborator – Participating in the give-and-take of conversation in an attempt to find common cause and consensus.
3. Facilitator – Organizing and guiding the process of group communications and deliberations.
4. Steward – Caring for the thoughts and property of others.
5. Convener – Bringing people and groups together for thinking, learning, decision making and/or problem solving.
6. Learner – Being open to new issues, information and perspectives in an effort to understand situations more clearly.
7. Educator – Allocating time to help others understand information and situations more clearly using facts, logic and experience.
8. Tactician – Determining near-term courses of thought and action to achieve desired objectives.
9. Strategist – Determining longer-term courses of thought and action to achieve better marketplace and mission positioning.
10. Visionary – Becoming mentally aware of overarching missions, purposes, and possibilities and sharing that perspective with others.
11. Supporter – Acting as a follower by assisting others to achieve their objectives.
12. Decider – Taking responsibility for choosing among alternative perspectives, objectives, methods, and course of action.

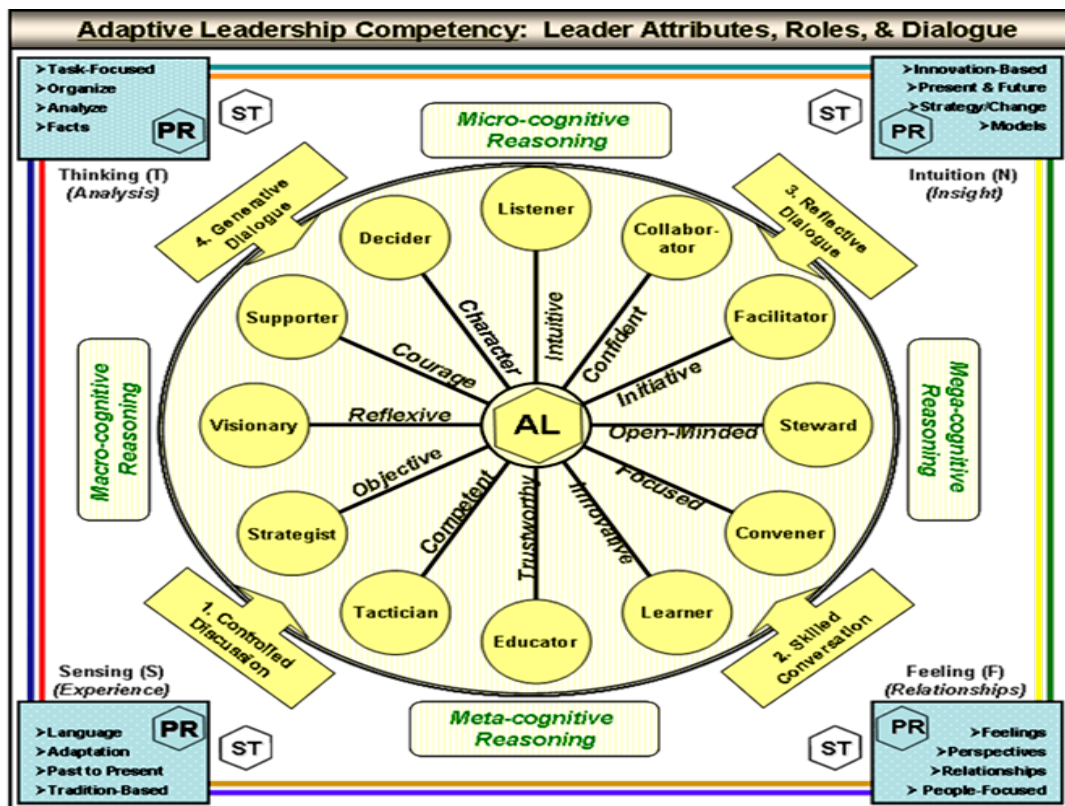


Figure 9-2

Leader Dialogue. In his book *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together* (1999), William Isaacs explains how important it is to move much of group and organizational conversation away from being unproductive and defensive to being skillful, reflective and generative. His research indicates that so often the initial strategy in a conversation is for individuals to mentally *deliberate* on whether to *defend* against others' views and objectives by *advocating* one's own views and needs – or to *suspend* one's own interests and needs and *listen* to what others have to say. Taking the former tact leads to either to *debate* (least productive in terms of consensus), or possibly skillful conversation (analytic and reasoned problem solving). If the latter choice (suspending) is taken initially, there is the probability that *reflective dialogue* leading to *generative dialogue* can be the result leading to more inclusion and better long-term organizational alignment and cohesion. The stages of progressive leader dialogue are:

- Stage 1. Controlled Discussion – Advocacy, competing, and abstract verbal brawling.
- Stage 2. Skilled Conversation – Analytic, use data for answers, and explicit reasoning.
- Stage 3. Reflective Dialogue – Exploring underlying causes, rules, and assumptions.
- Stage 4. Generative Dialogue – Creates new insights, possibilities, and group “flow.”

Leaders Manage Attention. Thomas Davenport and John Beck's book on *The Attention Economy: Understanding the New Currency of Business* (2001) is very timely in that it not only recognizes, but predicts major changes required to live and succeed in an information overloaded personal and business environment. They indicate that all aspects of business direction, operations, and performance will be impacted by the need for leaders and managers at all levels to keep their focus on essential business goals, objectives, functions, processes, outputs, and markets while wading through huge quantities of incoming communications (people, reports, articles, messages, decisions, problems, emails) demanding immediate attention. The overall effect will be to increase individual and organization stress, make building relationships and making informed decision-making difficult, and maintaining organizational cohesion and alignment an act of artistry.

On a daily basis, the dynamic, fast-paced work environment will be one that challenges the most experienced and skilled leaders. Add to this scenario the fact that the leader is often leading major organizational change and/or transformation to stay competitively positioned in the marketplace, we can see the need to employ techniques at filtering and control of

incoming information while simultaneously employing multiple paths for outgoing communications that ensures necessary information sharing and direction to organizational officials, the workforce, investors, competitors, and other stakeholders. In their chapter on Command Performance, the authors say that: “The universe is available twenty-four hours a day at the click of a mouse, and there’s more distracting information than we could ever absorb. Now, more than ever, leaders have to find innovative ways means of capturing and directing attention. With greater efficiency and creativity, leaders will need to secure the four elements of attention leadership.” (p.136) The elements are:

1. Focusing their own attention – Leaders need to monitor themselves and know where their own attention is being directed. “To manage attention well, we must be self-aware and believe passionately that the issues we focus on are the most important ones for our own careers, our company, our employees, and our customers. Employees throughout a company make decisions about what to pay attention to based on what their perception of what their leaders pay attention to. Consequently, leaders have to be more careful about how they invest their attention, for themselves and for their subordinates.” (p.137)

2. Attracting the right kind of attention to themselves – Most senior managers and executives have risen up the corporate ranks by knowing when and how to get the right attention at the right time. Although the old methods of leadership – power and position – are still effective at getting attention, they are decreasingly effective at *maintaining* attention. Attention leaders influence behavior by creating a meaningful context for information – attention is awareness with meaning. Thus, selecting and contextualizing information – choosing what to focus on and how to focus on it – is essential to successful attention management.” (p.141)

3. Directing the attention of those who follow them – “Leaders must work to shift the organization’s attention from *faux work*, or the politics that consumes too much daily energy, to ‘real work.’ To lead effectively, you must create a corporate culture in which people get used to communicating clearly and directly. Since we pay the most attention to things that are ours, include employees in the decision process at every turn. When an individual has created something, the person feels a natural sense of ownership and belonging.” (p.144-147)

4. Maintaining the attention of their customers and clients – “Even if you get 100 percent of your employees attention directed in the right ways 100 percent of the time, your company will still fail if you can’t secure and maintain your customers’ attention. Sometimes a firm might want their customers to keep the firm in a comfortable place in the *back of their minds* especially if the firm has a *captive relationship* with the customer. However, in other situations it may be more important to have the customers move the firm to the *front of their minds* because of a *voluntary relationship* that the firm needs to exploit.” (p.149)

[**Author’s Note:** The leader roles, attributes, dialogue and attention management practices of the adaptive leadership competency describe how a learnership practitioner goes about performing his or her personal, organizational and community social responsibilities – and getting action on the organization’s goals and strategies.]

Additional Adaptive Leadership Perspective

*To be a leader you have to have conviction – a fire in your belly. You’ve got to have passion.
You’ve got to really want to get something done. — Lee Iacocca*

This section provides perspectives from a slate of additional writers. The perspectives offered are meant to “round out” the emerging panorama of adaptive leadership skills – with particular emphasis on how our learnership practitioners succeed as leaders in their own organizations or as professional management consultants.

Adaptive Leadership Skills. Four areas are presented for consideration and learning: An Intrapreneurial Spirit, Project Management, Action Learning, and Action Coaching.

An Intrapreneurial Spirit. In their book *Intrapreneuring in Action: A Handbook for Business Innovation* (1999) Gifford Pinchot and Ron Pellman encourage people working in organizations to become intrapreneurs. They say that “*Intrapreneurs* is short for *intra-corporate entrepreneur* ...Within an organization, intrapreneurs take new ideas and turn them into profitable realities. Without empowered intrapreneurs, organizations don’t innovate.” (p.ix) And, regarding innovation Pinchot and Pellman say that: “Innovation is more than creativity. It is the creation of, and bringing into widespread use of, a new product, service, process, or system – from the first glimmer of an idea to successful implementation and exploitation.” (p.1) Some examples of the type of innovations they consider are: new products and services, better ways of reaching customers, improved organizational systems and structures, techniques for doing more with less, and new approaches for gathering and using information and knowledge. Pinchot and Pellman identify what they call the crucial roles in innovation: (pp.16-20)

1. Idea People – Most people in organizations can contribute potentially useful ideas if encouraged to do so. Only a few ideas will have a chance of being used; and then only if they capture the enthusiasm and commitment of competent leaders.

2. Intrapreneurs – Not necessarily the person who comes up with a new idea, but the one who can provide thought-leadership and turn an idea into commitment and action.

3. The Intrapreneurial Team – Volunteers that form a core group of knowledgeable people who stay with the initiative from inception to implementation.

4. The Sponsor – Support intrapreneurs by asking tough developmental questions, protecting the initiative from the “corporate immune system,” and assisting in obtaining limited resources.

5. The Climate Maker – Those at the executive levels that create a corporate climate in which suggestions and innovations get a fair hearing and an opportunity to show potential value.

The authors comment that their research on successful Intrapreneuring indicates the following learning and useful behaviors:

1. Be a courageous but moderate risk taker.
2. Be frugal, stay flexible.
3. Be creative about the pathway.
4. Build a team of enthusiastic volunteers.
5. Ask for advice before asking for resources.
6. Accept help when offered.
7. Express gratitude.
8. Under-promise, over-deliver.
9. Learn from everything.
10. Embrace barriers without losing optimism.
11. Develop business judgment.
12. Work for the good of the whole.

[Author’s Note: The Intrapreneurial spirit should be alive and well in the mind of the learnership practitioner. Moderate risk taking, learning from every situation, working for the good of the whole, and expressing gratitude demonstrates the use of learnership reasoning competencies and social systems development objectives are the core of the learnership philosophy and architecture.]

Managing Projects. In his book *Building Project Management Competence* (1999), David Frame suggests that in today’s increasingly competitive and changing world and work environment flatter organizations are required, middle management layers are being reduced, and organizational improvement is being accomplished by greater numbers of project teams. His argument is that the project management specialty is gaining more responsibility for improving, changing, and transforming organizations; and he identifies three levels of project competence that should be developed: the individual, the team, and the organization. Within the project team it is the project manager that bears ultimate responsibility for making things happen. He is the leader who is expected to balance the “triple constraints” of accomplishing the specified task (1) requirements, (2) within budget, and (3) in accordance with the project schedule. Frame comments that: “The *competent project manager* should do the following: (pp.46-48)

1. Be a *results-oriented*, can-do individual.
2. Have a *head for details*.
3. Possess a *strong commitment* to the project.
4. Be aware of the *organization’s goals*.
5. Be *politically savvy*.
6. Be *cost conscious*.
7. Understand *business basics*.
8. Be capable of *understanding the needs* of staff, customers, and management.
9. Be capable of *coping with ambiguity*, setbacks, and disappointments.
10. Possess good *negotiation skills*.
11. Possess the appropriate *technical skills* to do his or her job.

[Author's Note: This list of practical traits and skills is significantly aligned with the learnership *philosophy, architecture,* and *practitioner* competencies presented in earlier Chapters. The list also contains knowledge and skill similarities (see italics) with many core capabilities addressed in the organizational and community systems development chapters that follow.]

Frame is astute at reinforcing a core tenet of learnership that lifelong learning, hard work, and strong teamwork are essential ingredients in the achievement of personal, organizational and community success. In fact, Frame integrates his own experience and perspectives with those of Peter Senge and Daniel Goleman (whose views we have already included elsewhere) so effectively that only a direct quote could do justice to the powerful comment he provides: (p.63)

1. "A review of the lives of successful people in all walks for life (including spiritual leaders) shows that one thing they have in common is that they work hard to achieve their success.
2. Peter Senge's *Fifth Discipline* (1990) identifies *personal mastery* as one of the five key disciplines that people should seek. Although Senge is not precise in defining personal mastery, a key component is continual learning. People who achieve personal mastery have an insatiable appetite for knowledge and understanding. They never let up in their attempt to learn. The payoffs to such a duty to learning are substantial.
3. In his study of what contributes to the effectiveness of people in the worlds of school and work, Daniel Goleman (1995) notes that mastery is a characteristic these people share. He also points out that the achievement of mastery entails a high degree of discipline and a long-term commitment to learning. Again the payoffs are substantial."

[Author's Note: Learnership practitioners operating in organizational and community social system development will need project management knowledge and experience into which they can anchor many of their other competencies and personal capabilities.]

Action Learning. Author Michael Marquardt in his book *Action Learning in Action* (1999) says "*action learning* is both a process and a powerful program that involves a small group of people solving real problems while at the same time focusing on what they are learning and how their learning can benefit each group member and the organization as a whole...The benefits of action learning are:

1. Shared learning throughout various levels of the organization.
2. Greater self-awareness and self-confidence due to new insights and feedback.
3. Ability to ask better questions and be more reflective.
4. Improved communications and teamwork. (p.4)

Marquardt indicates that action learning is a systematic methodology or program of activities that derives its power from six components:

1. A Problem – One that is within the responsibility of the team, and can provide an opportunity for learning.
2. The Group – Four to eight individuals from across various departments in order to maximize perspectives and fresh viewpoints.
3. The Questioning and Reflection Process – Cycles of focus on both what is known and what is not known which allow insight and learning.
4. The Resolution to Take Action – The group has the power to either take action themselves or a commitment that their recommendations will be acted upon.
5. The Commitment to Learning – Uses a dual focus in which learning from the process is valued along with determining the task solution.
6. The Facilitator – Manages the group process and helps them slow down their process, which allows them to reflect on their learning. (paraphrased, pp.7-8)

The action learning methodology is distinctly different from what most people experience in everyday organizational life. Instead of a "rush to judgment" by a few well-connected "leaders" serving their own interests before others can get involved; action learning values much more deliberative conversation – even dialogue – which by its very nature expands workforce involvement, seeks useful input, and encourages a sense of participation and being valued in all involved.

Marquardt comments that: "Action learning creates conditions in which managers learn from their own experience of real-life problems, helped by and helping others in similar or dissimilar situations. A manager actually changes the way he or she manages, on the basis of reality. The focus of action learning is on learning about the process of managing change by actually managing an organizational change. It stresses the importance of learning about oneself and the influence that one's attitudes and assumptions have on how one leads and make decisions." (p.123)

[Author's Note: Marquardt states that modern organizations and communities need leaders that perform seven roles for a leader in the twenty-first century: (1) *systems thinker*, (2) *change agent*, (3) *innovator and risk taker*, (4) *servant and steward*, (5) *polychromic coordinator*, (6) *instructor, coach, and mentor*, and (7) *visionary and vision builder*. The same skills apply to our learnership practitioner.]

Action Coaching. Authors David Dotlich and Peter Cairo's book *Action Coaching: How to Leverage Individual Performance for Company Success* (1999) says that in today's organizations every manager is a coach and stresses the critical relationship between individual employee development and overall organizational performance. They note that quite often external coaches are brought into organizations to resolve development and performance issues that could have been handled by organizational leaders themselves – if they knew how to do effective coaching themselves. They comment that: "Action coaching is a process that fosters self-awareness and leads to the motivation to change, as well as the guidance needed if change is to take place in ways that meet individual and organizational performance needs...Action coaching has four clearly focused change goals:

1. Self-Awareness – A client gains a better understanding of his or her attitudes and behaviors, strengths and weaknesses.
2. Performance Improvement – A client improves his or her performance in a way that contributes to his effectiveness in growing a business.
3. Performance Breakthrough – A client raises his personal or job performance to an entirely new level, thereby benefiting themselves and the organization.
4. Transformation – A client makes a fundamental change in behavior, attitude, values, and basic emotional intelligence that serves them for the longer-run." (p.2)

The authors clearly establish that in action coaching the unit of analysis and improvement is the *employee within the needs and context of the organization*. That means that the *client* to be coached is most often an individual whose performance requires improvement for the benefit of the organization within which he or she works. The action coach follows a general problem solving methodology that proceeds from data collection and analysis to action planning and performance evaluation:

- Step 1 Determine what needs to happen and in what context
- Step 2 Establish trust and mutual expectations
- Step 3 Contract with client for results
- Step 4 Collect and communicate feedback
- Step 5 Translate talk into action
- Step 6 Support big steps
- Step 7 Foster reflection about actions
- Step 8 Evaluate individual and organization progress

Lastly, Dotlich and Cairo caution that when leaders, managers, and consultant's attempt to motivate change in other people's performance care must be taken to stay on target. That is, seek to understand and improve those individual behaviors with clear linkage to organizational performance. Some motivational mistakes that are often made when attempting to "close a gap" between individuals and their organizations include: (pp.118-120)

1. Closing the gap between who someone is and where he wants to be in his career. The action coach must distinguish between areas in need of strictly personal development and those that have organizational performance impact.
2. Closing the gap between who someone is and what personal bias dictates he or she should become. Action coaches must recognize their own biases and preferences and not allow them to become part of the client's issue.
3. Closing the gap between who someone is and an illusory business requirement. Find out from organizational leaders exactly what they need to accomplish, and use that information as the framework for data gathering and recommendations.

4. Closing the gap between who someone is and the new behavior everyone wishes he or she would develop. Attempt to change only those behaviors that really impact organizational performance.

[Author's Note: *Learnership practitioners* may perform their skills as a member of an organization or as an external consultant hired to assist an organizational change effort. In either function, they are astute observers of the situation on the ground – the issues, the players, the desired outcomes – and can fashion an approach for bringing disparate sides together using action coaching reasoning, interpersonal dialogue, and change management interventions.]

Organizational Consulting. In the book *Internal Consulting for HRD Professionals* (1994) the authors Jerry Gilley and Amy Coffern argue their case for using internal HRD professionals as organizational performance consultants to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness. They list eight areas in which the HRD office could perform consulting functions similar to what is often provided by external organizational consultants. In order of increasing organizational impact, these are:

1. Providing information.
2. Solving problems.
3. Conducting an effective diagnosis.
4. Providing recommendations.
5. Implementing change.
6. Building consensus and commitment.
7. Facilitating client learning.
8. Improving organizational effectiveness.

The authors also state that for those HRD professionals wishing to develop into internal consultants will need to embrace the increased knowledge, skills, and responsibilities that come with being a trusted consultant. “To be successful, you must have a set of values that guide your day-to-day activities. Each of the following is a value that can help you improve your efforts”:

1. Credibility as a focus.
2. Responsiveness as an attitude.
3. Competence as a standard.
4. Value-added as a method of operation.
5. Professionalism as a goal.
6. Performance improvement as a given.
7. Organizational effectiveness as a way of life.
8. Quality as a standard.
9. Communication as the key to success.
10. Involvement as an ongoing effort.

[Author's Note: On the face of it one would think that the HRD office should play a significant role in accomplishing the list of improvement functions presented, it is important to recognize that in most organizations middle and senior level managers prefer, instead, to hire external subject experts for most important and large scale organizational improvement projects. The reasons for this include: (1) deeper subject matter expertise; (2) knowledge and experience with best industry practices; (3) non-involvement with organizational politics; (4) greater objectivity in information interpretation and recommendations; (5) ability to use temporary contract employees rather than building up own staff; and (6) perception of easier application of authority using contract provisions.]

[Author's Note: You, the reader are reminded that just like in all the previous graphics presented in this guidebook, the Systems Thinking (ST) and Pattern Recognition (PR) reasoning competencies preferred by the people considering our topics – leads to unpredictable influences and outcomes. Becoming an adaptive leader is essential for success in today's rapidly changing and complex world.]

Complex Decision-Making

The rapid change, ambiguity and complexity of today's social and work environment places a premium on having senior managers adept at systems thinking, situational learning and adaptive leadership. Time pressure and lack of sufficient information are often at odds with the demands for decision-making and problem-solving. And due to the nationwide and international scope of many organizations, leaders may often be tempted to ease their stress level by taking action without considering the involvement of all the topics and people that have responsibility or essential knowledge that should be factored into assessments, decisions and subsequent actions.

Previous discussions in this chapter focused on leader dialogue, action learning and coaching, and project management competence have argued for leaders and teams to take care in their strategic and complex planning processes to allow for increased information gathering and knowledge building – as well as greater dialogue and expert participation – to ensure all the necessary content and context factors and best people are invited to share their insights and expertise.

Scoping the Issue or problem

Figure 9-3 illustrates the holistic American learnership approach that begins with Ten Team Scoping Discussions that address the four social system domains and six universal knowledge spheres in terms of their (1) degree of impact on the issue at hand, and (2) on the weighted priority that each should be given as discussions proceed. This Adaptive Leadership (AL) process establishes a “decision space” in which most major influences and risk considerations are acknowledged. Doing this permits everyone to articulate their expectations, to participate in critical thinking, and to experience authentic dialogue which, in time, may be key to obtaining their subsequent support when the final actions are decided.

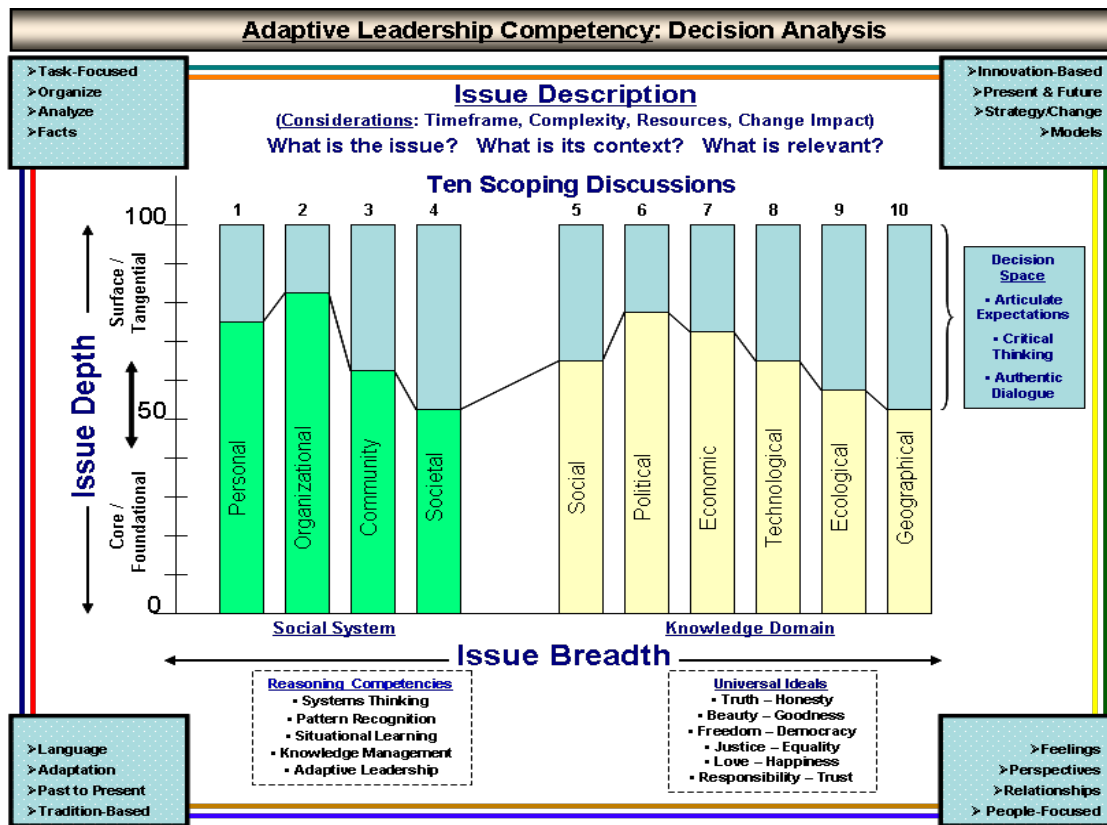


Figure 9-3

Using a systematic process

Once the Adaptive Leadership (AL) content deliberation and context setting effort of Figure 9-3 has been conducted and recorded for further use, the deliberation process in Figure 9-4 can proceed using the information already required on an as-appropriate basis. Through cycles of systematic learning and knowledge crafting, the team should acquire sufficient Knowledge (KM) factors that can be organized into alternative solutions for selection and action by the team and its adaptive leader (AL). Two major caveats that should be employed during the deliberation process are:

1. The deliberations will require an experienced strategic leader, subject matter experts and a skilled facilitator. This ensures structured meetings and conversations where substantive knowledge is exchanged and recorded.
2. Agree that “nothing is agreed to unless all is agreed to.” This will allow better information sorting because some items can be deferred until more appropriate times in the process.

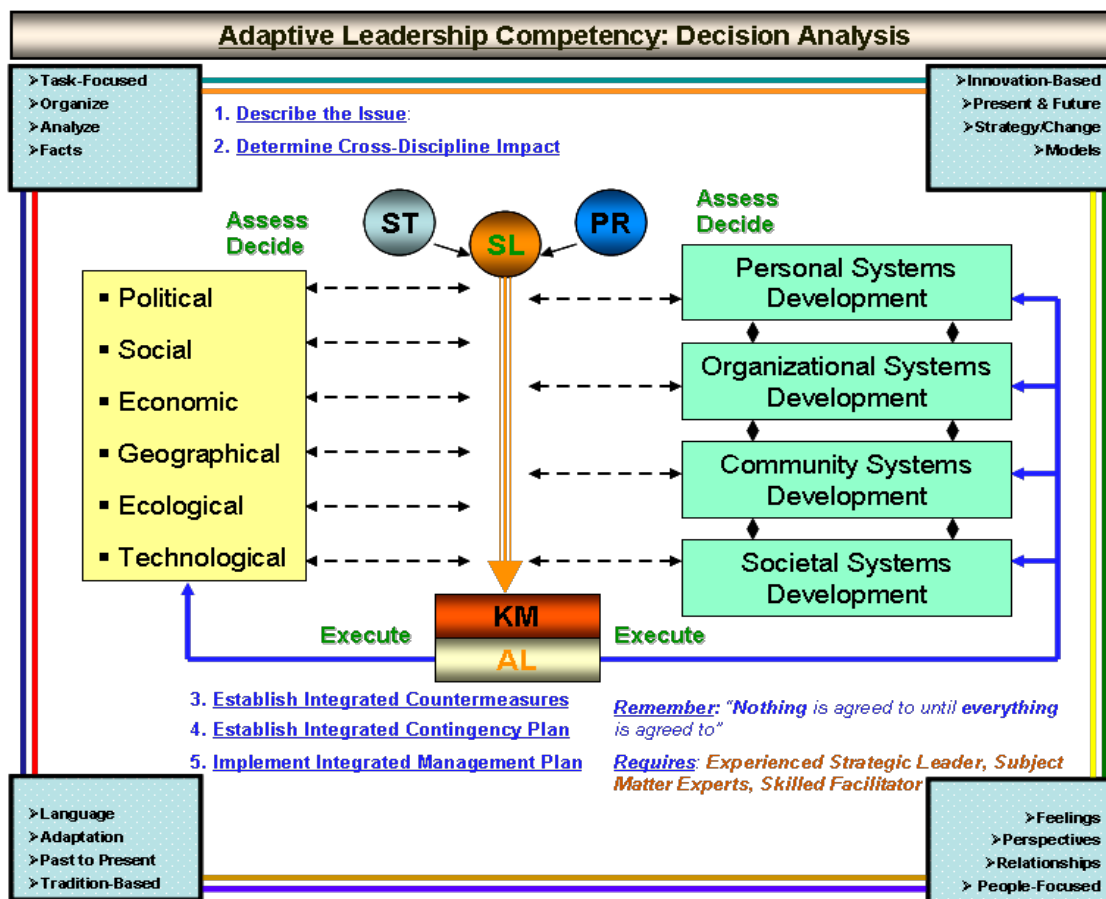


Figure 9-4

Phases of Change Management

An insight on adaptive leaders is that they maintain a continued awareness of the influencing factors in their respective lives, organizations and communities. In the external arena of personal and social system goals and mission requirements they are aware of emerging challenges that threaten the effectiveness and success of their initiatives. In the internal arena of operational productivity and workforce performance they pursue opportunities for increased efficiency to build competitive capacity. In fact, requirements for proactive and/or reactive change management are always ongoing or on the agenda.

Figure 9-5 is a dynamic illustration of the phases of change management. It is important to recognize that accomplishing change within ourselves, our companies and our communities is hardly ever an easy task. The nature of human change is that whatever the social domain change efforts are considered to be external initiatives that disrupt the status quo or comfort zone of the participants. The graphic suggests that people generally do not embrace change until they first become *aware* and have an *understanding* of why they should comply. Only when that occurs will our *attitudes* and *behavior* begin to accommodate the new requirements being presented and desired *results* have a chance to be achieved. Conceptually the change process is easy to understand, but in practice many obstacles tend to make the process less than satisfactory all along the way:

1. The lack of clear, continuous, and convincing communication from leaders makes getting started slower than anticipated.
2. Failure to assess and confront obvious or potential negative consequences stimulates active personnel resistance to the effort.

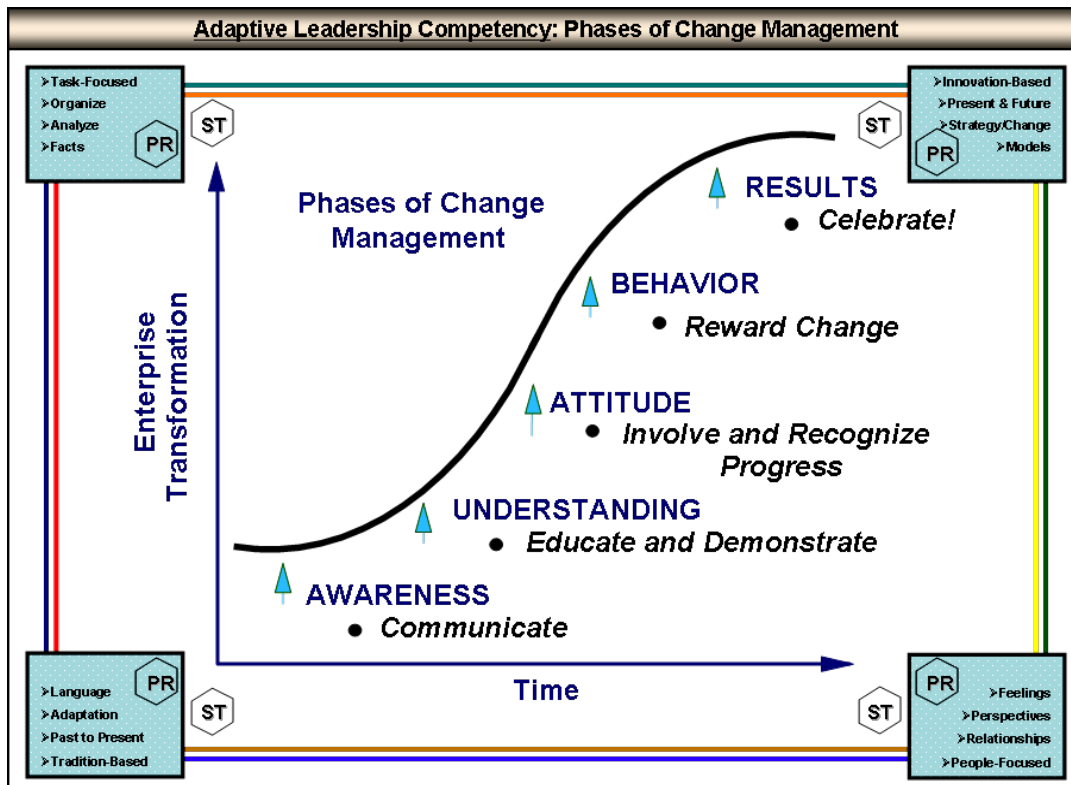


Figure 9-5

3. In the process of gaining support regarding 1 and 2 above, tradeoffs and compromises are agreed which may derail the expected results or cause unanticipated issues and cost to restrict progress and the outcome.

4. Slowing the process down allows inertia to build which becomes compounded if other related change efforts are begun that impact the availability of resources from the first initiative.

For the adaptive leader, the best course of action is to:

1. Prepare and implement a change management initiative concurrent with the improvement project itself.
2. Ensure needed resources are identified and prepared for usage as soon as they are needed for support.
3. Build a constituency of other leaders and subject matter experts to assist in building and maintaining communications and support.
4. Provide substantive information on project progress, and address questions and issues as they emerge.

Conclusion

The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on. — Walter Lippmann

Adaptive Leadership Competency. This chapter has taken a wide-ranging journey through organizational life; its challenges and complexities; and the kind of initiatives, skills, and people required to maintain a high state of efficiency and effectiveness. The *adaptive leadership* competency has now been added to the previously developed competencies (systems thinking, pattern recognition, situational learning, knowledge management) to round out the *set of five reasoning competencies critical for individuals to manage the effectiveness of the four social systems of their lives* – their personal, organizational, community, and societal social systems. These social systems are described and developed in the following chapters in a manner that exploits the advantages of using the five learnership competencies (represented by the *Learnership Integrated Systems Architecture (LISA)*, the stock in trade of *learnership practitioners*).

Implications for Integral Learning and Knowledge Management. Adaptive Leadership principles, practices, and technologies are of little use in an organization that does not take implementation action. Concurrent with the design and

change of work processes and procedures and the addition of IT technology and tools; leadership is essential to communicate the business case for change, arrange for training and mentoring, and to advise everyone in the enterprise of the improvements and what they mean to both internal units and external customers and constituencies. Adaptive leadership is the critical skill at this juncture because more than likely the changes being implemented will be based on greater distribution of organizational functions and people, and might even require an increased virtuality in the performance of tasks. Organizational changes require experienced, competent management by those well suited to stressful and oftentimes conflicted situations.

The wide range of practices and technologies available for today's leaders means change is continuous and adaptability to new circumstances is a regular requirement for those in leadership positions. The learnership social system domains addressed in chapters ten through fourteen will all need a strong infusion of Integral Learning and Knowledge Management (ILKM) to achieve their growth potential and universal goals (Self-Fulfillment, High Performance, Common Good, Human Enlightenment).

Personal Reflection. This topic appears at the end of each chapter and is meant to serve two purposes: (1) be a reader's guide to main points and "takeaways," and (2) to encourage everyone to take a moment to engage their mental cognition and intuition on what the chapter means to them – especially at this time in their lives. Questions for chapter reflection follow immediately below; and for those readers inclined to maintain a self-assessment, your thoughts may be recorded in your *American Learnership for Life, Work, Wealth, Health and Legacy Success* at Appendix B.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Have you worked for a manager who was often confused by the chaos surrounding her responsibilities and unwilling to see the true complexity of her job? What was the effect on your job performance?
2. Why is it so important in tomorrow's workplace to not only be skilled in one's field, but also to have the capability to continuously learn, to apply new methodologies, and to adapt to changing events and perspectives in getting the job done differently?
3. What are two to three differences between the predominant *make and sell* organizations of the past and tomorrow's need for more *sense and respond* organizations?
4. Can you list two to three major learning points from this chapter that you want to keep in mind to improve your ability to manage your life and career?
5. What do you think the impact of this chapter's information might be on the personal, organizational, community, and/or societal systems to be discussed later in the book?
6. Can you identify two to three topics, models, or perspectives in this chapter you would like to learn more about?
7. Should you be making an entry into your *American Learnership for Life, Work and Legacy Success* at Appendix B?

Insights, Commitments and Skills

If you plan to participate in the *American Learnership for Life, Work, Wealth, health and Legacy Success* self-development e-book experience, it is suggested you record your Insights, commitments and skills to be developed here in this chapter, and again in Appendix B:

My learning in terms of new insights, changing priorities, new commitments or skills I want to acquire:

1. Insights (Example): Remind myself that ...
2. Commitments (Example): Continue to ask myself ...
3. Skills (Example): Apply my knowledge and skills to ...

END