

Adaptive Leadership Strategies

State Controller's Fall Conference with County Auditors

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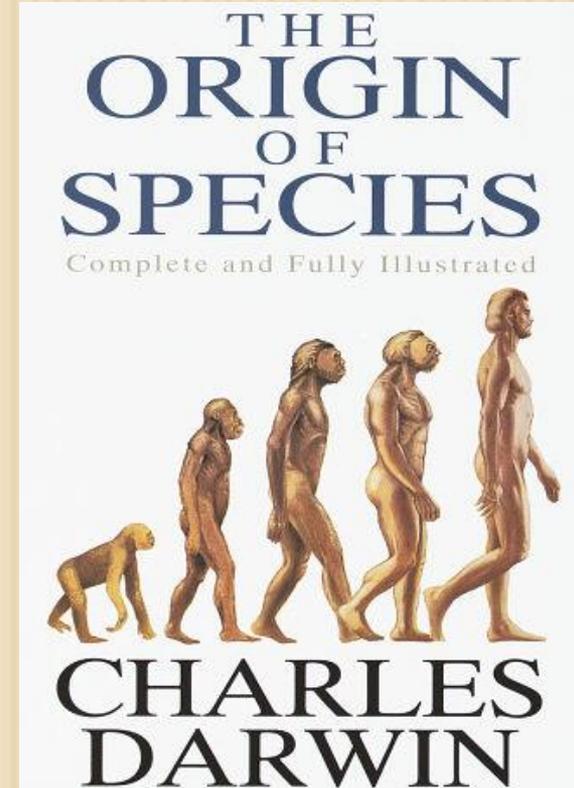
Frank's Personal Experience

- My house fire
- What did Frank learn from 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. 3 Reactions to change
2. Drivers of disruption
3. The big challenges facing counties
4. Technical vs. adaptive challenges
5. Indispensable competencies for 21st century leaders



Overview (con't)

6. Taking “smart risks”
7. Resources
8. “Just one commitment”
9. Reactions



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?”



disrupt

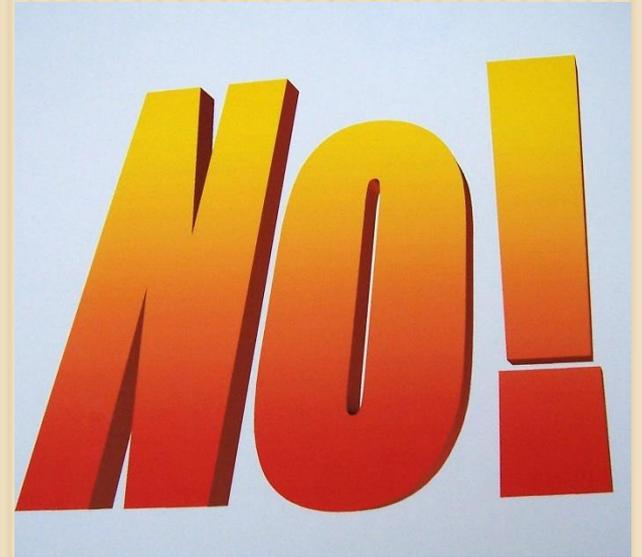
Drivers of Disruption

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



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 **very big challenges** that you'd like to help the County organization 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



“Right Answer”

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. Resiliency
7. Ability to grow more leaders



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
 - “Personal Learning—The Key to Adapting & Advancing”
 - “Engaging Employees for Success”
 - “Bouncing Back for Defeat”



Resources

- ICMA Coaching Program

www.icma.org/coaching

- Webinars

- One-to-one coaching + new training videos

- Speed coaching

- Career Compass columns

- CSAC Institute

www.csacinstitute.org



“Just One Thing”

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

MY COMMITMENT



www.frankbenest.com