

PRE-PROGRAM PREPARATION

YOUR BUSINESS LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

During the 2 day workshop you will have an opportunity to work on a real and pressing leadership challenge you face that will provide learning for you and your peers.

You are asked to nominate an Adaptive Business Leadership Challenge that you currently or are about to experience. The challenge is to be one that is adaptive in nature (rather than technical). Capture the challenge by completing the template at the end of this document.

As a starting guide and to aid your description, some of the key distinctions between adaptive and technical problems are:

Technical problems

- The problem is well understood although may still be complex and critically important.
- The solution is known, although implementation of the solution may still be challenging.
- Implementation can occur within the existing system.

Adaptive problems

- The actual problem may not be acknowledged or well understood.
- Solutions require changes in people's priorities, beliefs, values and practices.
- Implementation necessitates working outside authoritative expertise, shedding entrenched ways, tolerating losses and generating new capacity.

Your challenge is something that matters to you and something where you do not already know what to do. This may be because it feels overwhelmingly large or because nothing you've tried so far has been successful. It may also be something where others are implicated in the challenge, either because you need their involvement in the solution or because they will be affected by the solution (whatever that turns out to be).

Using the materials on the following pages, prepare an overview of an adaptive challenge and bring this (ready to be shared) to the workshop.

Testing the Nature of Your Challenge

Problems and challenges do not always come neatly packaged as ‘technical’ or ‘adaptive’. Most problems or challenges are a mix of technical and adaptive, the elements being blended in a non-obvious way.

When you have a challenge in mind you can test it against the statements in the table below.

If you are seeing more T’s than A’s then you need to reconsider the challenge you have identified so that you can bring a challenge that is heavily biased toward the Adaptive.

TECHNICAL PROBLEMS (T)	ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES (A)	T or A?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are known solutions that can be implemented through current expertise and procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a gap between what we have and what we want, but we are unable to close the gap with our current expertise and procedures 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problem is well understood and can be defined (although may still be complex and critically important) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The actual problem may not be acknowledged or well understood. It is unclear, difficult to identify and define 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a fairly quick and easy solution that can be implemented readily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will require changes in values, beliefs, roles, relationships and ways of working 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problem can be solved by an authority or expert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It’s going to take more than an expert or authority to solve this challenge 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A solution will require change in just one or a few places and is likely to be within organisational boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A positive outcome will require change in numerous places and is likely to be across organisational boundaries 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A solution could be implemented quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A positive outcome will require experiments and new discoveries over time 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A solution would cause minimal disruption to the status quo and minimal discomfort in the organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption to the status quo and some discomfort are likely in the course of a positive outcome being achieved 	

Adaptive Business Leadership Challenge Description

(Make this easy for others to read. Use a clear font of 11 point or larger or hand write legibly)

Participant Name:

The challenge as I see it

The challenge as I think others see it

How is the challenge showing up?

What is not known about the challenge?

Who has an interest in seeing this challenge addressed?