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Understanding the Adaptive Challenge and the Role of Leadership in Times of Change and Innovation
Technical vs Adaptive Challenges

Understanding The Challenge

Need to Create Context for Learning

Need to Reset

Limits of Technical Solutions
Leadership Today

Deeply held beliefs about leadership are challenged.

Values that made us successful are now less relevant.

Skills that made us successful are now less relevant.

Adapted from R. Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, 1994
## You Face Two Different Kinds of Challenges

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Resolving the Challenge is the Responsibility of the Collective Intelligence

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Does It Require a Change in People’s

Values?

Attitudes?

Habits of Behavior?
Don’t try to use a technical solution...

Deciding
Telling
Prescribing

...to Solve an Adaptive Challenge.
Challenge: Increasing Cultural and Linguistic Competence

Technical Solution: Brochures and materials in native languages

Adaptive Solution! Learn the ways of diverse communities and build relationships
Challenge: Desire to use integrated forms across agencies

Technical Solution: Multiple logos and staple forms together

Adaptive Solution! Collaborate to define “unified” and “integrated” and align perspectives
You Will Do Both

Technical  Adaptive
Leaders Have Two Primary Roles in Adaptive Work

Creating a context for learning and growth

Reset
Your Primary Role as a Leader

Create a context for learning and support so that the innovation or change can be generated, understood, absorbed, and acted upon by all.
Your Primary Role as a Leader

Reset
Revising or adopting new values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors based on an openness to hear new information, perspectives, or truth.
Me First!

Work to reset yourself before asking others to reset.
“Reset requires figuring out what, of all that you say you value, is really important and must be preserved ... and what, of all that you value, you must leave behind in order to adapt to a fundamental new reality.”

Summary

Let go of the pressure you feel to apply technical solutions to adaptive challenges.

Step back to see the adaptive work.

You may have to reset.

Shifting to adaptive work is a process.
References


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Management Matters
A PMFO Series

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