The Leadership Balancing Act

Lutheran Leadership Summit – February 2016

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One of the most common balancing challenges...

DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS

Innovation
Let’s hear from you!

• **Reflect** for one-minute....what is your biggest leadership challenge in “managing the day-to-day and innovating for the future?”

• Talk in **PAIRS** for two minutes to share your reflections

• Talk in **GROUPS of FOUR** and continue sharing

• **WHOLE GROUP?**
Day One:
Learnings? Connections?
Leveraging Polarities
The Polarity Energy System

Positive results from focusing on activity

Activity

and

Rest

Positives results from focusing on rest

Negative results from too much focus on activity and no rest

Negative results from too much focus on rest and no activity
The Polarity Energy System

Positive results from focusing on activity and Positives results from focusing on rest

Activity

and

Rest

Negative results from too much focus on activity and no rest

Negative results from too much focus on rest and no activity
Foundations in Polarity Thinking

Values = positive results of focus on the left pole

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the left pole to the neglect of the right pole

Early Warnings
Measurable indicators (things you can count) that will let you know that you are getting into the downside of this left pole.

Action Steps
How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this left pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?

Values = positive results of focus on the right pole

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the right pole to the neglect of the left pole

Early Warnings
Measurable indicators (things you can count) that will let you know that you are getting into the downside of this right pole.

Action Steps
How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this right pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?
Efficiency & Innovation
Can you have both? How can you have both?

Efficiency/Running the Business

Innovation

Action

Early Warnings

Actions

Early Warnings

Polarity Map™ © 1992, 2008 Polarity Partnerships Associates, LLC / * Thanks to John Scherer, The Scherer Leadership Center / ** Thanks to De Wit & Meyer BV / *** Thanks to Todd Johnson, Rivertown Consultants
Key points about how polarities “work”

- Both sides of the polarity are important.
- The more strongly you are attached to one side of the polarity, the harder it is to see the negative results of that side.
- Polarities are interdependent pairs that need each other over time in order to sustain both sides.
Key points about how polarities “work”

- When dealing with a polarity pair, the smaller the minority voice, the more important it is to pay attention to that voice.

- Polarity thinking helps us understand another person’s point of view.

- The oscillation between poles is ongoing. The natural tension between both sides is unavoidable, unsolvable, indestructible, and can be tapped.
Leaders, teams, and organizations that leverage Polarities well innovate better than those that don’t.
From Concept to Reality: Putting Innovation Into Action

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Why Innovation?

Say Innovation is Important: 94%
Say their organization is effective at Innovation: 14%

Source: CCL Panel of 500 executives
Reflect on innovation efforts you’ve seen...

What has happened when organizations try to innovate
Brainstorm ANY/ALL things that happen to make Innovation efforts FAIL in organizations.

(Include ANY/ALL ideas you’ve seen, heard of, experienced, etc.)
9 BEHAVIORS That Sabotage Innovation

Do your managers unintentionally kill off good ideas that could help solve organizational challenges?

1. Discouraging Creativity
   Don’t tell your staff to “be creative,” but then quickly quash new ideas.

2. Not Evaluating Carefully
   Plan to commit resources, systems, and processes to properly evaluate innovative ideas.

3. Pushing a Top-Down Approach
   Nurture innovation and generate buy-in with a bottom-up approach.

4. Forcing Structure
   Understand your organization needs both color-outside-the-lines creatives and by-the-book executors.

5. Confining Innovation to R&D
   Draw new ideas from across the whole organization.

6. Criticizing First
   Praise creative ideas first to send a pro-innovation message.

7. De-Risking
   As ideas travel through layers of management, they’re often scaled back so much the real innovation is lost. Don’t let that happen.

8. Rejecting Ambiguity
   If it’s a sure thing, it’s not innovative. Learn to tolerate ambiguity.

9. Acting Like a Know-It-All
   Model humility to encourage your employees’ creative ideas.
Research: What happens when they try

Specialists only, please:

“Any attempts to make specific people responsible for innovation has been a failure as it demotivates everybody else (labeling them) as ‘not smart enough to be considered part of it,’ ‘just good at running the day to day,’ etc.”
Research: What happens when they try

All smoke, no fire:

“The senior leader spoke of innovation, used the word in every large and small presentation he gave and got everyone excited, but no one, himself included, did anything. I feel like there was a misunderstanding of what innovation actually meant and what needed to be done to promote and execute on innovation.”
No training, lots of fear of trying something new...and failing:

“At one point, our leader set the expectation of an innovative culture for our company. What hindered (it) was the culture of fear related to making mistakes. Further, our organization was not innovative to begin with and there was no change management, training, or understanding of how to move from not innovative to innovative.”
Fortune Magazine Survey of CEOs, 2015

94% of respondents agree with the statement “My company will change more in the next five years than it has in the last five years.”
DEFINING OUR TERMS
Innovation:
Creating and implementing something new that adds value
The difference between **Creativity** and **Innovation**:  

Creativity is coming up with new options while innovation is transforming new ideas into action.
Leadership & Innovation

Smart innovation can’t be done by a few, talented people.

It takes an **Innovative Culture**, where people across the organization can easily share ideas within defined systems and processes -- made possible by **Leadership**.
Effective vs. Ineffective Organizations

1. Ineffective organizations lack *leaders* who encourage innovation.
2. Ineffective organizations have *cultures* that do not support innovation.
3. Effective organizations have a formal *innovation strategy*
4. Effective organizations have a *budget* dedicated to innovation.
5. Ineffective organizations lack a *direction for innovation*.

Source: CCL Panel of 500 executives, detailed in Clerkin and Cullen: *Navigating Innovation Roadblocks*, 2015 CCL Whitepaper
1. Ineffective organizations lack leaders who encourage innovation.

**Implication:** Leadership matters. It’s common for leaders to demand innovation, but then criticize -- and kill -- new solutions. It’s important for leaders to demonstrate behaviors that actively encourage innovation.

?? Do leaders in your organization allow people to take a chance on innovation? How could your organization work to ensure alignment between what it said (e.g., “Innovation is important.”) and leadership behaviors?

Source: CCL Panel of 500 executives, detailed in Clerkin and Cullen: *Navigating Innovation Roadblocks*, 2015 CCL Whitepaper
2. Ineffective organizations have cultures that do not support innovation.

*Implication:* Culture matters. Look at what’s working in the culture that can be leveraged—as well as what overtly blocks innovation—to begin to create a culture that sustains innovation.

?? What could your organizational culture leverage to encourage innovation? What cultural obstacles need to be broken down?

Source: CCL Panel of 500 executives, detailed in Clerkin and Cullen: *Navigating Innovation Roadblocks*, 2015 CCL Whitepaper
3. Effective organizations have a formal innovation strategy

*Implication:* Strategy matters. Leaders and organizations that truly want to be innovative must have an intentional strategy for innovation. Don’t try to copy. Leverage your strengths.

?? How might you develop a formal innovation strategy? How might your organization align people, processes, output with your organizational culture and environment?

Source: CCL Panel of 500 executives, detailed in Clerkin and Cullen: *Navigating Innovation Roadblocks*, 2015 CCL Whitepaper
4. Effective organizations have a budget dedicated to innovation.

**Implication:** Talk is cheap, but to create and implement something new that adds value is not. Innovation should be viewed as a critical, long-term investment.

?? How does your organization currently budget for innovation? How might you free up venture capital funds for experiments and prototypes?

Source: CCL Panel of 500 executives, detailed in Clerkin and Cullen: *Navigating Innovation Roadblocks*, 2015 CCL Whitepaper
5. Ineffective organizations lack a clear direction for innovation.

**Implication:** Innovation is a means to an end. The hype causes organizations to lose sight of why innovation is important. Start with a clear statement of purpose for innovation and very few objective measures of success. This helps focus on the desired outcome.

**How might your organization create clear direction, alignment, and commitment for innovation?**

Source: CCL Panel of 500 executives, detailed in Clerkin and Cullen: *Navigating Innovation Roadblocks*, 2015 CCL Whitepaper