ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

— PROGRAM —

Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilising people to tackle tough challenges and thrive.

Adaptive leadership is distributed leadership so the process is not about the 'heroic' leader sweeping in and saving the day with a solution to a long-held organisation problem. The particular process is used by those who are directly involved in the problem so it involves the leaders ability to convene and host conversations with diverse groups whilst not acting or solving the problem until it is deeply understood.
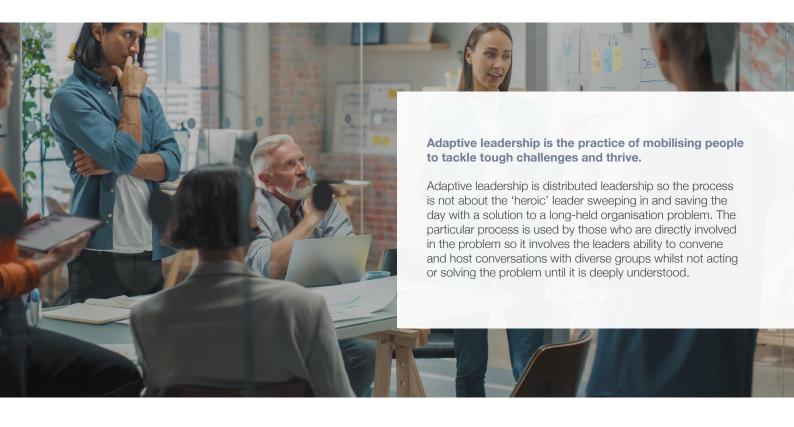
Adaptive challenges can only be addressed through changes in people's priorities, beliefs, habits and loyalties. They are difficult because they require people to change their ways. The solutions to adaptive problems lie in new attitudes, competencies, and coordination of people with the problem itself. Because the problem lies within people, the solution lies in them too.

So the work of addressing an adaptive challenge must be done by the people connected to the problem. The leader's role in turn, changes fundamentally from a position of authority, to one who exercises and facilitates leadership.

Adaptive leadership also involves the leader understanding how they themselves contribute or don't contribute to the issue itself. Leaders must also gain some distance from the issue in order to see it with 'new eyes' and to diagnose "What is really going on here?".
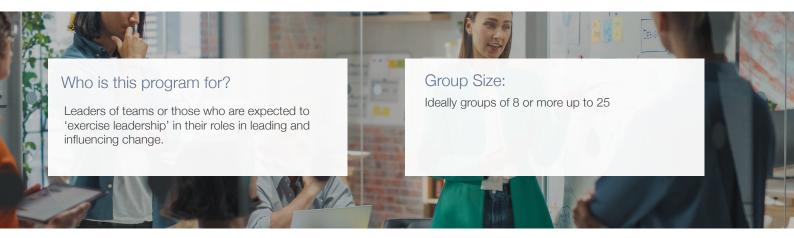
> Adaptive work is required when our deeply held beliefs are challenged, when the values that made us successful become less relevant, and when legitimate yet competing perspectives emerge. We see adaptive challenges every day at every level of the workplace—when companies restructure or reengineer, develop or implement strategy, or merge businesses. We see adaptive challenges when marketing has difficulty working with operations, when crossfunctional teams don't work well, or when senior executives complain, "We don't seem to be able to execute effectively". Adaptive problems are often systemic problems with no ready answers. — Heifetz, Linsky & Grashow Authors of "The Art & Practice of Adaptive Leadership

Nell Wilson CONSULTING

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

— PROGRAM —

Who is this program for?

Leaders of teams or those who are expected to 'exercise leadership' in their roles in leading and influencing change.

Group Size:

Ideally groups of 8 or more up to 25

Sessions

- 2 x 1-day workshops
- Workshop 1 – designed to introduce Adaptive Leadership theory and practices and support participants in identifying their Adaptive Challenges.
- Workshop 2 – build competence and confidence using the 'Case in Point' methodology and some of the more complex approaches required for adaptive leaders.
- There is an optional online 'report out' session where the group can convene and discuss their progress around their adaptive challenges between workshops to increase accountability and continue peer-group learnings.

Approach

1. Introduction to Adaptive Leadership theory and practices.
2. Members of the group act as "Case Presenters" outlining their Adaptive Challenge to a small group of peers using 'Case in Point' methodology.
3. Small groups use a rigourous process of diagnosis for analysing the system dynamics in their organisations.
4. Identification of strategies of action to mobilise collective attention and problem-solving responsibilities (not just solutions).

Objectives

At the end of the program, participants can:

- Describe the difference between technical and adaptive problems.
- Define each of the adaptive leadership principles and why they are relevant to solving adaptive problems.
- Outline a specific workplace problem you have either attempted to solve or wish to focus on and that you cannot solve alone.
- Practice (and receive feedback) on how well you accurately describe the problem to others and enlist the support of peers and colleagues.
- Identify new questions that can help you and others better understand and diagnose the adaptive problem.
- Develop a strategy for engaging courageously and enlisting others in the issue.
- Conduct further observations, analysis, interpretations, and interventions.

- Diagnose the political landscape by identifying and interviewing stakeholders including identifying and leveraging allies and opposition.
- Orchestrate conflict by creating a holding environment in order to gain new perspectives and focus on an issue people don't normally deal with during their day-to-day work.
- Generate a level of trust and open discussion that may not be present in the workplace by using group norms.
- Generate multiple interpretations of data analysis before auditioning ideas and 'ripening the issue'.
- Design iterative and improvisational interventions.
- Sell small pieces of the idea and score some early wins.
- Hold themselves accountable to their peer group by way or report backs and peer check-ins.
- Provide support, guidance and sustenance to other leaders.

Nell Wilson CONSULTING