

CIT Board Strategy Workshop (updated 22Nov)

Background and Context

no organization can be understood independently of its context

- Woden committed
- New Government in ACT – commitment to ‘the clever capital’
- COVID – VET initiatives – Commonwealth and ACT – uncertainty in funding and pricing
- Serious difficulty in University sector and hollowing out in VET
- An unsustainable economic model
- Shift in student demographics
- Hyper-competition in RTOs
- AI/Synthetic media...
- Micro-credentialling...
- Our 4 promises which have and continue to guide our long-term commitment to our eco-system:
 - Shaping Change - Raising our ambitions to meet new expectations
 - Advancing Canberra’s Workforce - Adapting our courses and means of delivery to provide skills for the future
 - Growing our Region’s Economy - Supporting jobs, economic resilience and future prosperity
 - Transforming our Business - Investing in our business for viability and value
- ...

Aspiration and Intent

Our gaze is directed ‘beyond Woden’ to a future that is rich with possibilities: a future where CIT is at the centre of a vibrant, constantly adapting eco-system of government, employers, industry and students:

- We’re Influential in our Ecosystem – our capacity to adapt to changing circumstances means we’re brilliant at collaborating with multiple stakeholders to capture and create new possibilities, building resilient bridges into all parts of our wider system to coalesce around new opportunities. We show up right where the emerging needs for vocational education are and deliver outcomes that close skill shortages and the needs for trained staff. Government sees us as vital for economic growth, industry knows they can’t do it without us and students will always remember their learning at CIT.
- We’re recognised by students for excellent student-centred (teaching and learning) delivery
- We’re a test and proving ground for what’s possible in VET
- We’ve lost none of the interaction, care and support we have for disadvantaged members of the community, we’re at the forefront of vocational education for those with disability and the disadvantaged in our community. The community trusts CIT.

Current Situation

We are confronted with **System Rigidity** in numerous ways among which the most constraining and problematic for us are:

- The National Framework limits local responsiveness to employer needs forcing employers into sub-optimum arrangements and often taking their spend outside the ACT – as the world moves rapidly to micro-credentialling, this is currently not an option in VET
- Our funding model locks us into an old paradigm and removes flexibility to make investment decision that allow the Institute to adapt to: new teaching and learning delivery models, emerging industry and employer needs...
- Our performance culture and employment practices lack the intensity of many of our emerging and existing competitors and are tuned to maintain the current system not adapt to a rapidly changing world

This means we **Lack Agency** in the system, not fully able to respond to the flexibility that industry and employers needs, not able to plan for the flexibility that students are looking for nor the innovations we see occurring around the world. This is accentuated by the general decline in the VET sector and its perception in the minds of many that is embodied in:

An **Unhelpful Narrative** in the minds of many of our stakeholders:

- VET is not ‘real education’
- CIT’s role is to catch the Canberrans who can’t make it anywhere else
- Universities can be trusted to ‘own their assets’ but not CIT
- It’s not the role of CIT to rapidly adapt to emerging needs – just stick to the knitting

Despite these significant constraints there are numerous **bright spots** and pockets of excellence which we can build from:

- COVID has shone a light on the importance of the VET sector in economic recovery and the ACT Government has trusted us to play a pivotal role in that recovery here
- We have shown an ability to adapt and shift quickly during this last eight months – hybrid delivery
- This has been aided by our work in Evolving Together which is building a culture that is more sensitive to context and more open to experimentation and adaptation
- We have some strong and emerging relationships with industry
- We have proven an ability to see opportunities in the environment (skill shortages, growth areas) and to deploy programs to meet these needs (Cyber, Renewable Energy) but these programs soon become constrained by the system rigidity
- CITSOL
- Passionate and committed people

Strategic Postures

Increased agency – we will adopt a bias to influencing the eco-system, creating and holding a new narrative and influencing the eco-system to more adaptive responses

Increased adaptability – we'll embody and demonstrate the adaptability that will make the eco-system broadly more resilient and successful over the long-term

Strategic Pathways

1. More Digital

How might we be revered for our digital sophistication and effectiveness?

- Philosophically we err towards the most human digital experience
- Double down on digital – build capability across the Institute – everything that can be, should be digital
- Build on COVID models of digital delivery - scan and learn from the best, experiment and scale
- Use digital models to automate, streamline to improve both the experience and the efficiency

2. Greater Adaptive Capability

How will we grow and adapt faster than the changes in our context?

Our current investment in **Evolving Together** is having a positive impact evidenced during COVID disruptions. This organisational capability to adapt and respond to changing conditions will be critical in an increasingly uncertain future:

- Embed a stronger understanding of and advocacy for Evolving Together throughout the Institute and greater coherence among leaders around this work
- Build our capacity and experience in rapid experimentation, the ability to generate insights from the environment, rapidly prototype and learn
- Become rigorous in using feedback loops for learning and improvement – deploy robust feedback loops everywhere

3. Influential Stakeholder Collaboration

How could we become indispensable to our eco-system, central to its ability to adapt and flourish?

- Re-write the narrative
- Multiple safe to fail experiments in the narrative – learning how to tell our story in ever more influential and collaborative ways
- Establish an alumni network
- Build a deep capability in collaboration
- Engage more collaboratively in existing partnerships – Tesla, Toyato, Atlassian, SA Energy
- Develop new alliances
- Create pilot programs
- Establish strategic alliances in learning delivery – LinkedIn, Google Analytics, Skillshare etc
- Influence the thinking of government and industry (continually reframing to a more adaptive context driven narrative)
- Establish a robust process of co-designing with industry

4. A More Commercial Orientation

How might we unlock new streams of funding which allow for more experimentation, more agency and faster adaptation?

- Explore different funding models (eg: bequests etc)
- Use CITSOL more deliberately to prove new models and generate dividends to be used for strategic initiatives (this ability to fund adaptive capability is critical)
- “Run a tight ship” and ask, “what can we stop?”
- Use digital initiatives above to generate commercial efficiencies

5. Tune the Culture

How will we build a thriving, flourishing, joy-filled culture that rocks with performance intensity and has collaboration and learning at its core?

- Shift the balance between colleges and the Institute – shift to more commonality of identity, more porous boundaries – stronger sense of collective identity and Purpose
- Leaders need to shift their
- Collaboration as deep, differentiating cultural characteristic – inside and outside
- Re-balance process and outcome – more outcome orientation – eradicate red tape and bureaucracy and gradually lift the performance intensity of the Institute
- Review and reform attraction and recruitment processes, be clearer on the capabilities we are building for
- A stronger orientation towards ‘right staff for the right job’

Measures

Adopt a long-term range of a few clear measures to track this strategy over time.

From: [Andrew Bell](#)
To: [Cover, Leanne](#)
Subject: Glimpses of 2021
Date: Thursday, 18 February 2021 4:59:27 PM
Attachments: [Glimpses of 2021.pdf](#)

Glimpses into 2021

Dear Leanne,

It was wonderful to spend some time with you the last couple of days. I said I would try and consolidate the essence of our conversations and the collective thinking we did. I've tried to capture some of the insights and then framed them through windows of possible help for you. I hope this feels helpful.

Glimpse 1 – Change we don't believe in

There is a strong disposition in the organisation towards “we'll be alright... the government can't let us fail... we play a crucial role in the ACT”. The Government's investment in Woden and JobTrainer funding are seen as proof for this belief set. So not only are systems and structures rigid but so are beliefs about the future. You share with the Board a passion for more expansive possibilities but have struggled to enrol CIT's leaders in these possibilities. Many leaders, therefore, continue to make decisions that solidify boundaries and structures and act at a very local scale – directing resources and action to maintain the *status quo* and dampen transformation efforts. At best, these are well-intended efforts by good people trying to run the Institute well, 'subject-to' a strong culture of maintaining the *status quo* and personally not putting themselves at risk, at worst there are moments of deliberate disruption.

Glimpse 2 – Conversations we don't want to have

As we discussed, it has become clearer and clearer that leaders at CIT have a reluctance to pursue candour and transparency in their conversations. We've all seen that some find it easier to complain to external parties rather than talk directly to colleagues in the organisation. The tension and emotional angst that accompanies what might otherwise appear simple queries as to courses of action; the lack of feedback flowing between individuals and teams; the unwillingness to simply discuss how I see situations all significantly affect efforts to shift the culture and bring learning and improvement to the Institute.

Glimpse 3 - (Mostly) Self-development we don't want to do

It is not uncommon for leaders in organisations to believe that everyone (except them) needs to improve and be developed. Leaders at CIT have a strong disposition this way. Their relationship with development is more 'something I have to provide for students' than 'something I need to do myself to help stay centred in the face of the exponential change that is coming at us'. There is an intellectual, arm's length interest in development and a resistance to the vulnerability required to open myself to new possibilities. The leadership group struggles to be 'object-with' the culture of the organisation. This is not unusual though the disposition is remarkably strong for an educational organisation.

Glimpse 4 – There is an openness and hunger for change and improvement ‘below’ the leadership groups

This will be the focus of the work Patrick will do this year, catalysing and holding multiple exploratory experiments which will explore both new possibilities at a more granular scale as well as allow for emergence of stronger adaptive capacity organisationally. We share a concern for the sustainability of the excellent work Patrick is doing if more leaders can't hold the transformative energy for a more adaptive future. The system needs enough guiding/catalysing energy and capacity beyond this year to hold the capability into the future.

Glimpse 5 – The new Government is glimpsing inside the system and beginning to ask some of the same questions you have been asking.

While the system level contradictions and lack of environmental fitness have been clear to you and seen by some of the Board, your new Minister is glimpsing some of these things too. Strategically, we have agreed that is very important that CIT is able to exert more agency in the ecosystem. Investors and analysts often talk about organisations with respect to the strength of their ‘moat’ – how protected they are from disruption. Your moat looks to be increasingly under threat: new competitors who can operate at scale (for instance, the Amazon education engineering experiment in India); a deeply threatened and stressed University sector clawing for every revenue stream it can (e.g.: University of Canberra lobbying Government and re-writing its Constitution to allow it to compete more directly in VET); Governments everywhere unclear and confused about the role and place for VET, defunding elements, working directly with Industry bodies; Industry bodies establishing their own VET programs; the union standing strongly for no job cuts while the Government is asking questions about productivity improvements... it's a heady mix, crystal clear to you, while somehow remaining unclear for most in the organisation (Glimpse 1). The pre-conditions for some significant disruptive change might seem to be building.

In the age of pandemics, rolling lockdowns, mobs occupying Capitols, Presidents being ‘de-platformed’... one might think we were more prepared for discontinuous, disruptive change... but then Facebook today decided to stop all news sharing in Australia as a response to its internet oligopoly being threatened! This is what discontinuous change looks like.



Possibilities where we feel we could help:

1. Continue to work with you directly on creating a stronger, more compelling ‘container’ to hold the transformation and help coach a ‘transformation leadership team’ as it forms. As we’ve often discussed, we believe innovation, deep change and transformation all emerge as much from an energetic frequency shift as they do from strong process. As leaders we are all experiencing a quantum shift in context, where both problems and opportunities are becoming more complex, blurred, hyper-dependent, digital and diverse. This shift in context means it is no longer possible for an individual (be it in a team, an organisation, or a government) to hold all the information, to spot the warning signs, or to find the most elegant solution and pathway through the future. Your organisation continues to behave as though they expect you to do this.

The challenge for leaders is to step out of the middle, and from being at the centre, to instead create spaces that feel held, purposeful and charged with energy, so people are called forward (evoked) to do things they never thought they could do. These spaces allow new possibilities to arise and latent potential to be released so that a team surprises itself with what it achieves. This is particularly relevant given your need to err towards the side of developing capability rather than replacing people. We have to find ways to bring more people with you.

Leaders also need to be centred enough to hold the uncertainty and emotion that comes with disrupting the status quo – and safe enough to speak the truth and provide candid feedback. They must create the need and the desire to step into the unknown, as well as the stillness needed to catch the fragile and fleeting glimpses of ‘the new’ that inform and fuel new patterns of thought and action. The way we think, relate, learn and organise together either moves us towards this energetic frequency or away from it. So, the leadership challenge of our time is to learn to tune the energetic frequency at which our teams and organisations operate, by design.

Of course, it’s even more complex than that as it’s not just a transformation that needs to be tuned and held, it’s actually the dilemma and tension of transforming and delivering elements of the status quo – at the same time.

2. Re-connect with ‘the 18’. We have always said the development we did with this group last year was about building a practice. You’ll see below we have some very specific suggestions for this in working with ‘the 35’. After a long break and busy start to the New Year, it feels like a ‘practice re-fresh’ would be useful – a couple of hours to re-energise and fertilise what had begun to take root before Christmas – and then to add, we’re suggesting, two specific half-day developmental workshops. The first on *Immunity to Change* as a way of catalysing deeper self-awareness and a more developmental mindset and the second, to go deeper into the *Practice of Conversations that Matter* – to help bring more directness, candour and transparency into the conversational fabric of the Institute. It will continue to be difficult to create an organisation that learns if the people in it (especially senior leaders) have a propensity to know rather than learn; and, almost impossible, if we can’t talk about the things we most need to talk about.

3. Extend the development curriculum to ‘the 35’, deliberately calling on ‘the 18’ to deepen their practice by coaching PODs through their workouts and co-hosting development sessions with us, setting context, describing their own learning experiences and even leading some inputs. Part of this design would be to deliberately match ‘the 18’ leaders to ‘the 35’ PODs to both play to existing strengths and meet people where they are developmentally. As you and Patrick begin to do more work with the teams of this group of leaders, it seems important that their leaders are Holding Space for that work, catching the Moments of the new and inspiring as appropriate and not shutting down and closing off new emergent possibilities as they arise as has more often been the case.

4. An alternative, bolder focused SAS-like strike deep into the heart of the organisation.

What if we took the, say, 15 people from across the organisation most likely to be the organisational catalysts and guides of adaptive capacity over the next several years and worked with them with you and Patrick in a ‘developmental intensive’ through the year to build their capability to guide the organisation into 2022 and beyond. The ‘core curriculum’ for this would look similar (me as catalyst/guide; Holding Spaces for possibility; Catching Moments of insight: Working Together Differently – Meeting Craft to design meetings that generate creativity and momentum) but we’d take that much more granularly and apply to the day-to-day, week-to-week work of the cohort and more actively support and coach the application of the theory to the work.

I hope that feels like it bears some resemblance to the conversations we have had. Let me know when you’ve had a chance to consider and reflect and perhaps as you suggested, you and Patrick and I could have a conversation to iterate and deepen our collective thinking.

I have also attached here Leanne, a letter that we’ve been sending to some of our clients about Meeting Life (as a Creative Adventure) which you’ve heard us talk about. I wanted to give you a deeper understanding of what we’re doing with Meeting Life. It seemed wrong not to, given your student population. You’ll see that it is still early days for us, but we’re very committed and deeply excited by the results from the several early experiments that we’ve run. We’re exploring all kinds of models for how the idea might get traction and open to discussing any possible funding/business model. As you will see from the letter, we’re currently working with some of our larger corporate clients to see if they would consider a model where they run the program for their graduates but pay to fund for less privileged elsewhere. There’s some interest in that. Anyway, again, we’d love you to have a look, offer any feedback, suggestions, creative inputs and possibly consider how we might be able to have some CIT students who would benefit be involved in programs this year.

Look forward to catching up again soon.

All the best,

Andrew Bell 18 February 2021

Meeting Life as a Creative Adventure

February 2021

We would like to take a moment to share some news that has us pretty excited – and to ask for your help...

Over 20 years ago, when we founded nowhere in the UK, we set up a not-for-profit Foundation to focus on young people and education, and for over 15 years we learnt about and developed an approach that became known as ECL – Enhancing Children’s Learning. It was a rich and rewarding period of work.

At the same time, we were working with many amazing leadership teams, often in global organisations; work that gave us the opportunity to experiment with and try ground-breaking approaches to building eco-systems of creativity, innovation and performance.

Along the way we always knew it was not just about work. We sometimes say that we have a lifestyle business – where we get to do what we love, with amazing people we enjoy. That is why we have always made sure we had taken time ourselves to stop and reflect on what we’re doing, what we’re seeing and how we are experiencing the world.

A couple of years ago, one of these conversations turned to the topic of the changing world and in particular, given the focus of the Foundation, the challenges faced by young people – the growing numbers struggling to feel belonging and fulfilment in large organisations and the increasing numbers suffering from mental illness, especially anxiety and depression... there was an opportunity to help young people find greater joy, connection and fulfilment at work through a better understanding of and deeper connection to their creative ability ... and at the same time, the huge possibility and potential in this cohort that organisations were simply not harnessing.

One observation made in this conversation was that by the time young people move into the workforce, they have often spent over 15 years in educational institutions predicated and focused on making sure they know things. And yet the organisations they join are almost always grappling with complexity, ambiguity and change that is hugely unknown and unknowable. It is no wonder so many feel ill prepared and equipped for the world they suddenly find themselves inhabiting.

Looking at it this way, an obvious missing was the mindsets and skills of creativity – the ability to dance between and work with the known and the unknown; something we had spent years exploring with our clients.

So, three of our team started to draw on this work to design and develop a new program, specifically focused on helping young people better unlock and access their potential, creativity and energy.

We called it **Meeting Life as a Creative Adventure**.

It’s already been a success – with programs run last year out of the UK, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand – and, given its virtual design, including participants from over 12 countries.

In 2021 we want to take it further – offering it to more young people in more cities and countries, expanding the curriculum and further supporting the emerging global community of Meeting Life graduates.

Here in this part of the world we are excited to embrace this effort as part of how we share the magic we have been privileged to work with for over 30 years. Whilst we have not formed a specific not-for-profit entity, we will be supporting the programme by offering most of our time for free.

And we would love your help.



We are currently setting up the next round of Meeting Life as a Creative Adventure and we are looking for partners, supporters and participants. You could be one, or all three!

A little practical information...

- Meeting Life as a Creative Adventure is specifically for emerging young leaders aged 18 – 26.
- It runs over five online modules of 2 hours – with reflection exercises in between.
- It is highly participative; it is not a lecture. It helps young leaders shift their relationship with the unknown, get excited and see it as an opportunity to be creative, generative and bring newness into the world.
- One benefit we did not see, but has become obvious in early programs, is that the program also helps participants leverage and take forward the insights and learnings of earlier development work, creating a new way of relating to what they have previously seen and learnt.

Do you have some young people you would like to send on our public program? (We can confirm dates.)

Are you prepared to pay a little more for these participants so that you can sponsor others and make the program financially accessible to those otherwise unable to attend?

Or perhaps you have a larger cohort of young leaders you would like to build together in a bespoke version of this work with a view to perhaps even certifying to run the program yourselves.

In all cases we would love to work with you to make something happen. To find out more, please don't hesitate to reach out to david@now-here.com or joe@grainofsand.com.au

David Hansen, Andrew Bell, Joe Bell

PS: Take a look at our Website <https://www.now-here.com/meeting-life>

And hear what some participants are saying about the program <https://www.linkedin.com/company/meeting-life-1826/videos/native/urn:li:ugcPost:6711565926715686912/>

PPS: the current discounted program fee is \$425 per person. By paying \$575 per participant you can sponsor someone else to attend at a discounted rate of \$275.

Program Overview



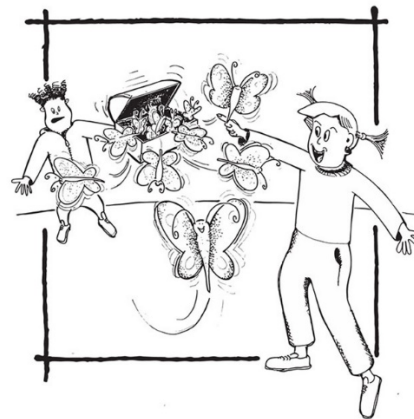
Standing in Your Magic
Develop the self-awareness to see your own uniqueness.
Module 1



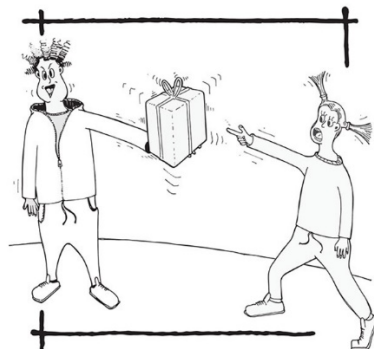
Working with Difference
See and value difference in yourself and others.
Module 2



Going into the Unknown
Learn to hold the creative tension that comes with stepping into the unknown.
Module 3



Glimpsing Breakthrough
Learn to work in groups to capture moments of breakthrough.
Module 4



Returning a Gift
Create gifts for yourself and others to help catalyse next steps and new adventures.
Module 5

From: [Andrew Bell](#)
To: [Cover, Leanne](#)
Cc: [Joe Bell](#)
Subject: Leadership Development Approach
Date: Monday, 15 June 2020 8:34:38 PM
Attachments: [Leadership Approach Letter.pdf](#)

Leadership Development at CIT

Dear Leanne,

Further to our recent conversations, I've attempted to consolidate our thinking and explore some options. You will see that I think there's an emerging preferred option in my mind but there's many possibilities still for iteration.

Context

You have identified a need to cause a shift in the leadership capability of the organisation, not just in the Executive group but more broadly in the extended leadership group. You have noticed a tendency for the Evolving Together work to, at times, fragment and lose cohesion, struggle to get momentum and shift capability in the Institute at scale.

The lack of coherence among significant stakeholders (Government, Unions, Board, Leaders, students, the organisation...) creates some confusion but primarily a strong attractor pattern for the status quo. Yet the Federal Government has announced an intention to significantly reform the vocational education sector, you have a plan to move into a state of the art new campus in four years and the recent response to COVID has potentially re-shaped the experience for stakeholders, accelerating trends to online learning and virtual collaboration. Significant change is upon CIT, are leaders ready?

There is an emerging but not yet fully aligned and coherent view about what the developmental focus should be. Our sense of that is that it revolves around three or four core needs and opportunities that we've heard you express in different ways:

- **Speeding up the organisation** – things continue to move too slowly, there's too much friction, trying to solve too many issues in traditional sequenced ways when what's required is breakthrough step changes.
- **Collaboration** – teams are understandably looking in and down rather than out and across, this is causing friction at many organisational boundaries
- **New ways of working** – preparing for a new campus and step changes in education

These things are obviously complex and entwined, difficult to fully separate and I think it is helpful to see them as partially discrete but also nested together as an entwined developmental container.

The Core Idea

Three intersecting ideas are the core of how we think about leadership development. Leadership is conceptually simple but tactically difficult – leaders want something to be different in the future than it is now, they excite and enrol others in that aspiration and cause them to act in pursuit of it. The developmental challenge is to build mastery over-time of these entangled ideas:

- 1. Working with Contextual Sensitivity & Flexibility** – leaders are constantly tasked with switching from context to context – one moment for example, dealing with the challenge of solving competing resourcing issues or a budget overrun and the next needing to energise and motivate a team to work on an ambiguous, complex challenge. Sensitivity to context and the flexibility to respond to different situations more and more effectively are a hallmark of effective leaders in a constantly changing world.
- 2. The importance of Pursuing Self Awareness & Development** – these contextual shifts have implications for how I show up as a leader. Am I effective in an ordered, stable environment but find myself, adrift and uncertain when faced with high ambiguity? Do I metabolise the constantly evolving complexity as a threat and therefore crave false certainty? Am I able to remain choiceful in the different contexts with which I am confronted? The challenge is to be able to stay in curiosity and learning – not be ‘triggered’ into unhelpful patterns by circumstances. (Fear makes people stupid, overactivation of the cortical system stops learning).
- 3. And thirdly, we must continually develop our capabilities and micro-skills to improve our Ability to Connect, Move and Inspire Others.** Given the complexity of the challenges facing most organisations, leaders need to be condition creators, who hold and energise spaces of opportunity and possibility for teams of people to nurture the emergence of new solutions to old problems. If we’re to connect and inspire people to galvanise around opportunities and possibilities, to solve increasingly complex and wicked problems, to remain vigilant and disciplined, reaching new heights in performance, I need to access and use a range of skills and tools and not rely on my default settings.

Most Organisations are Experiencing 8 Dysfunctions

There are also a number of dysfunctions that typically get in the way. All of these dysfunctions kill change, innovation and transformation. Some of them you can energetic feel within minutes of meeting an organisation. Others are more hidden.

1. A time poor culture

Time poor organisations often confuse busyness with productivity. It is easy to hide behind busy as it feeds our ego/sense of importance, provides a great reason why we can’t do anything new or different and encourages us to default to what we know and are familiar with. A busy culture comes from the top.

2. An unsafe culture

Cultures where it is unsafe to speak up and challenge thinking, for fear of consequence – perceived or real – make people feel unable to bring their full selves to work, so they default to doing just enough. They typically put in more (command and control / parent-child) processes to avoid conflict and difficult conversations.

3. A broken meeting culture

You can tell so much by how meetings are run – including the underlying performance paradigm of the organisation, and the success model of the leaders themselves. Dysfunctional meeting cultures are the norm, whether that's meetings starting late, leaders over-dominating, everyone and their dog being invited and where next actions have become the measure of success... and this is just the tip of the iceberg.

4. When the machine runs the show

It's not uncommon for a part of an organisation to develop an inappropriate level of influence. It could be a function, a dominant business unit, the CEO office etc. Whoever it is, their enthusiasm, and mostly good will, is not the problem – rather it's how their default mode blinds them from letting in a different point of view and how they unconsciously drain the energy of the organisation.

5. Too much “stuff”

Many organisations need a “stuff” amnesty – because they have so much stuff weighing them down and holding them back... a nine-box grid here, my plans there, spot rewards, wellbeing initiatives, D&I imperatives, this survey, that leadership, agile coaching, sustainability goals, values, behaviours, purpose, strategy, vision and ambition... and this is just scratching the surface. All good. All important. None of it joining up.

6. Knowledge is not enough

The key to change, innovation and transformation is being able to lead yourself and others into the unknown to shape the unmade future. But most leadership development doesn't help because it's born from a knowledge paradigm. The real work is learning how to move beyond what you know and wander with wonder in the unknown.

7. Agile everything

While Agile ways of working are great at increasing clock-speed and developing end-to-end solutions that are more efficient and sometimes enormously so, they rarely lead to game-changing discoveries, innovations and transformations because, by their very nature, they have become mostly about managing the known better, rather than working in and with the unknown.

8. Purpose and green washing

One of the biggest and most troubling dysfunctions we come across is purpose washing and green washing. The issue here is when purpose gets hijacked and corrupted, it's very difficult then to discover and embed a true purpose that is able to animate the organisation and become its wellspring for innovation.

All of these dysfunctions get in the way of the real work of change, innovation and transformation. They all complicate the landscape. And, they are unfortunately all too common. And yet, helping organisations navigate them is the work of catalysts and catalytic leaders. The mistake is to try and interrupt them one at a time, as this only leads to a plethora of disconnected initiatives that continue to collude with the dysfunction and add to busy.

The real work is to give people experiences of turning up, relating, thinking, leading, meeting and organising that are more productive, creative, innovative and energising. Then many of these dysfunctions begin to lose their power and drop away, and a more interconnected, efficient and next gen way of working takes their place.

The Broad Approach...

At the heart of our practice are our beliefs about how change and development occur – our **catalytic practice**, a way of relating, thinking, leading and organising, that is designed to:

- transform cultures and especially meeting cultures - the simplest and most profound way of unlocking higher levels of productivity, creativity, innovation and organisational energy at scale
- help leaders, teams and ecosystems of teams do breakthrough work i.e. paradigm-shifting discoveries, strategies and innovations

The benefits/outcomes of this way of working include:

- Our physical, mental, psychological, social, creative and decision-making capacities become magnified
- Our creativity, productivity, innovation, collaboration and communication skills go through the roof
- A whole new world of conscious, creative and commercial possibilities opens up, evoking the best possible version of ourselves and others – creating more joyful, happier and meaningful work experiences
- Acquiring new and next generation skills e.g., our pattern recognition faculties expand
- Moving from high performance to peak performance
- Becoming 5x more productive

Building peak-performing cultures, that are on purpose and in flow, is about understanding how...

- Sustainable performance improvement is a balancing act between managing the known (being ever more efficient and effective) AND purposefully pushing into the unknown (insight and innovation). You need both.
- Different contexts, problems and opportunities create different types of work which in turn require different types of thinking and therefore different types of meeting.
- These different types of work/thinking/meeting take different amounts of time – and require us to use space, information and energy differently too.
- How people ‘turn up’ in meetings is determined by how the leader ‘turns up’, which in turn determines the group’s capacity to think and move forward together or not.
- A simple set of core-skills underpin different types of work and great meetings – and each require practice
- Moving from an ‘agenda paradigm’ to a ‘design paradigm’ is the key i.e. learning to design and run collaborative processes and meetings by attending to both content and human process (as most dysfunction is driven by poor people dynamics).

Introducing and embedding these ‘catalytic ways of working’ is about learning this catalytic practice through ‘practice’. It is not just about imparting knowledge. The development must happen, in fact, can only happen, in the process of doing the real work.

We do this:

- Through a series of short immersive experiences, each followed by periods of focused, deliberate practice. No practice, no next module!
- By making sure it is actionable, practical and transformational (personally and professionally)
- With designs that are replicable and scalable (without being dumbed down) – so we can align, shift and elevate whole populations
- By working at scale with many leaders at the same time rather than the slow drip feed of sequential programs

We’d see three key building blocks of this way of working and leading and development:

1. Holding Space

“Great leadership in this age is a movement from taking up space to beautifully holding space.”

Leaders are experiencing a quantum shift in context, where both problems and opportunities are becoming more complex, blurred, hyper-dependent, digital and diverse. This shift in context means it is no longer possible for an individual (be it in a team, an organisation, or a government) to hold all the information, to spot the warning signs, or to find the most elegant solution.

The challenge for leaders is to step out of the middle, and from being at the centre, to instead create spaces that feel held, purposeful and charged with energy, so people are called forward (evoked) to do things they never thought they could do. These spaces allow new possibilities to arise and latent potential to be released.

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This is how we move from high performance to peak performance.

2. Moments & Micro-Skills

“The challenge is to tune into, lean into and/or intervene in --- moments that matter.”

A growing number of people are already working all hours of the day, most weekends and into their holidays. It is of course an unsustainable way of increasing productivity and yet the pattern persists and intensifies.

Unfortunately, we find ourselves trapped in these ‘achiever’ cultures that relentlessly, obsessively and often unhealthy push for ever increasing levels of performance in lazy ways. The ultimate tragedy here is how the push for high-performance undermines any chance of reaching peak performance and of unleashing new levels of productivity and creativity.

Peak performance is not about relentlessly pushing. Rather, it is about optimising the conditions for breakthrough – those sublime moments that irreversibly shift our thinking, move us forward, bind us collectively, and release the energy needed to create new movement – and then knowing how to recover, re-charge and go again.

Tuning into and shaping these moments is a core skill of advanced organisational cultures and their leaders, because in peak performance the moment is always full of both power and danger. In these cultures, individuals and teams have honed the way they work and interact in the moment. They know that when they deepen their listening, use their voice, give candid feedback, disclose, appreciate others, value difference, step into the unknown, see pattern and catch the fragile glimpses of ‘the new’ – that these moments energetically move us and transform us, such that we

change, the way we think changes, and the way we think together changes, enabling us to move forward with heart, mind, power and focus.

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- Each with step-by-step process guides
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- Tips and traps showing how to maximise them and things to watch out for

3. Thinking and Working Together (Creativity, Collaboration and Meetings)

Some scary facts about meetings from recent client experiences:

- 66% of executive meetings are described as unproductive
- 63% of meetings don't have a clear purpose
- 34% of staff fall asleep in large scale meetings
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All of which means ... a large company can annually waste hundreds of thousands of hours in poor quality meetings which in turn suck the energy, engagement and life out of the people involved and stagnate performance and productivity.

“What I thought a meeting was all about has fundamentally changed. This is a game-changer – not only for me, but for us all”

95% of a leader's time is in meetings, preparing for meetings, or having meetings about meetings. And yet most meeting cultures are wholly unsatisfactory for all involved at the level of effectiveness, use of time, cut-through and breakthrough – often achieving none of the above.

The way we think about, plan and run meetings is simply out of date. You could go as far as to say that most organisations are stuck in a collective trance, where ill-discipline and bad habits run the

show, and yet for some reason we accept this as the way things are. This is crazy when we come to understand that meetings are the only stage upon which leaders perform their craft, a craft that they should continue to grow into and master over time.

Transforming the way we meet (and therefore work) is needed more than ever before, not only to help businesses grow and reinvent themselves, but also to help us all face into the super-wicked problems of our time. We need to unlearn what has become the norm and we need to see with fresh eyes how we can use time, space, information and energy differently in the way we meet.

This is how meetings stop being a huge waste of time, and start being a great use of time, enabling us to shape amazing futures together. So, what if we could save you 10% of your time by showing you a different meeting paradigm? What if that number was more like 40% as well as enabling you to be four to five times more productive? What if we could also amplify your creativity, decision-making and communication skills? If we change the way we meet, we will literally change our world.

More Specifically...

1. Confirm Set up and Logistics

The big question we discussed here was group size, 17 or 42? My sense is we go with 17 and target specific workouts and practices that have the 17 working with the 42. I'm not concerned by the added numbers, per se, and there is always a case to be made for larger groups creating momentum and coherence. I wonder though whether we can create a container tight enough at this stage for 42 to be 'in it', committed, energised, questing together. It feels more likely that we can create this with 17. It might be 'interesting' to invite the 42 to the kick-off session and enrol their support for the work. We could have them work, in parallel, on some activities.

Venue is important... really important. It must be a large, light-filled space with significant space for small groups to work and spread out, unencumbered by fixed tables. Very happy to work onsite if we can have suitable space. Venue hire remains your responsibility and we will provide more specific details and venue specifications when needed.

2. Kick-Off Session

Three-quarters of a day session (10.00-16.00):

- Overview program
- Set up and establish "trios" – groups of 2-4, usually 3, that will stay together throughout all modules and workouts
- Build a relationship to core frameworks
- Set up first workout and practise period

3. Module 1: Being Catalytic

'2 day' (10.30-20.00 and 08.00-14.30):

- Increased self-awareness and ability to use feedback
- Explore the foundations of the catalytic practice
- Understanding how to create and energetically charge 'containers'
- Set up workouts and practise period

4. Module 2: Holding Space

'2 day' (10.30-20.00 and 08.00-14.30):

- Debrief from the Being Catalytic practice-period and claim the learning
- Explore the art of Holding Space
- Understand personal capacities and identify development desires
- Introduce and start playing with the Micro-Skills
- Set up workouts and practise period

5. Module 3: Thinking Together

'2 day' (10.30-20.00 and 08.00-14.30):

- Debrief from Holding Space and claim the learning
- Go deeper into the Micro-Skills
- Explore the power of Moments - catching those sublime moments that irreversibly shift our thinking, move us forward, bind us collectively, and release the energy needed to create new movement.
- Learn to think horizontally with peers and thought partners where you don't have positional power
- Set up workouts and practise period

6. Module 4: Working Differently

'2 day' (10.30-20.00 and 08.00-14.30):

- Debrief from Thinking Together and claim the learning
- Meeting Craft - unlocking new levels of productivity, creativity, innovation and organisational energy through meeting re-design
- Wander into the unknown and ride the creative-rollercoaster
- Set up workouts and practise period

7. Closing and Appreciating

Three-quarters of a day session (10.00-15.00):

- Include all 42
- Capture and share learning – learning showcases
- Establish ongoing development plan

Approximate Fees

Inclusions:

Participants are supported in each module by a range of materials to enable a catalytic experience and purposeful development. This includes:

- workbooks that build through the course of the modules, providing core frameworks, note taking and journaling space
- a booklet for each module that captures the key frameworks, elements and essence of that module
- a unique, curated collection of targeted micro-skills for how we relate, think, lead and organise together more effectively
- worksheets to enable purposeful practice between modules
- and a range of other artefacts and instruments to help capture and embed learning, insights, experience and knowledge.

Fees:

It's obviously difficult to lock down a firm estimate until we confirm the approach Leanne, but our estimate at this stage Leanne is a budget of \$78,000 + GST for the work outlined above. This is inclusive of all facilitation and materials. Catering and venue hire (if required) remain your responsibility. Reimbursable expenses (accommodation, meals etc) are charged at cost as incurred and always agreed before-hand.

There's a lot there Leanne. I suspect it will take a day or two to digest and sense-make. Don't hesitate to let me know if any immediate questions occur. Once you have had a chance to review, we can discuss any iterations and then give you a budget for the work.

All the best,

Andrew Bell

Director, Grain of Sand and Samurai Associates

From: [Andrew Bell](#)
To: [Cover, Leanne](#)
Subject: Re: Leanne (CIT) mud map
Date: Tuesday, 2 June 2020 1:26:58 PM
Attachments: [Exec Leadership Approach Letter.pdf](#)

Hi Leanne,

In the interests of giving you something quickly to respond to and a sense of what resonates, as I've said I've just depersonalised a letter I wrote to another client recently, grappling with many similar issues in quite different contexts. I thought it would be useful to see some of the thinking/possible approaches. This letter eventually turned into a program for around 70 senior leaders which looked like:

Four 30-hour residential modules for the whole group of approximately 70 ELT following a 'fast start' 90 min briefing, each module about 6-8 weeks apart. There is an expectation of working into the evening and a bright and early start on day two.

Module 1: Being Catalytic – personal mastery

Module 2: Catalysing Others – Holding Space

Module 3: Thinking Together – collaboration, Moments, MicroSkills and Meetings 1

Module 4: Working Differently – meetings 2 and creative ways of working

Before module 1 and between each module, participants develop skills and capacities in action, on their work through specifically designed 'workouts' and purposeful practise. Between each module 2hrs coaching and check-in with the Exec team and 60-90 mins 1:1 coaching with each Exec member.

I'm not thinking that's the right approach for your team but some of the elements I think are probably in the right territories. Have a look and let me know what resonates and what doesn't, what's missing etc and then I'll noodle that around with my notes from our conversation and some other thoughts and come back with a couple of options for how we might move forward. Hope that makes sense. Let me know if any questions at all.

Best, Andrew

Andrew Bell
Samurai Associates
Grain of Sand Pty Ltd
ABN 21 141 574 969

A: P.O. Box 2206, Normanhurst, NSW 2076

M: 0410 412 757

E: andrew@grainofsand.com.au

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be confidential.

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On 2 Jun 2020, at 12:39 pm, Cover, Leanne <Leanne.Cover@cit.edu.au> wrote:

Hi Andrew

Thank you for your time today. Pls see my mud map - trying to create alignment and inclusion of the multiple elements of CITs work . It's through a lens of :

- what's visible and tangible, from the lower order work of the Evolving Together work with Patrick through to the higher order work of Board and Government (which is more tangible).
- the Board has given in principle support to the underlying approach to our transformation being 'CIT is a system that learns'.
- the simple description of our Evolving Together strategy is 1. We develop situational awareness 2. We deploy scale specific responses where appropriate, 3. We deploy scale invariant/agnostic responses where appropriate(eg the I- space and/or Hollings adaptive cycle - underpinning the long term flexibility, resilience, adaptation of CIT is that we Always sense make/ learn.
- our Evolving Together 'basecamp' framework underpins our actions - our actions are guided by the 4 modules in the Basecamp framework 1. Acquire knowledge, 2. Gain visibility of the system,3. Test and experiment ,4. Design and scaffold
- we work at multiple different levels of granularity - constantly diverging and converging - evolving
- everything in the system is under constant dynamics of change although we don't always see this given the multiple and concurrent spatial and temporal scales we are working at .

I take your point that the way I've presented the context may be a bit binary with the " most/least value and visibility' references but that may help you orientate my thinking for now.

Look forward to discussing with you further

Regards

Leanne

<IMG_0127.PNG>

Sent from my iPad

This email, and any attachments, may be confidential and also privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender and delete all copies of this transmission along with any attachments immediately. You should not copy or use it for any purpose, nor disclose its contents to any other person.

Executive Development and Culture Transformation

Dear,

YYY, you'd asked XXX and I to meet to talk about what an integrated view of Executive Development and Culture Transformation might look like in the 18 months ahead. We met last week. XXX filled us in on the ELT offsite and where the HR plan was landing and some of the background to the Thriving Leaders work. It felt like the conversation was really helpful at providing some clarity, XXX, so thank you for that.

Context

There is a strong recognition that you need to cause a shift in the leadership capability of the organisation, not just in the Executive group but more broadly in the extended leadership group. You have several existing relationships that have suggested approaches for this development and some pre-payment with suppliers that are doing work with the Academy.

There is an emerging but not yet fully aligned and coherent view about what the developmental focus should be. Our sense of that is that it revolves around three or four core needs and opportunities that we've heard you express in different ways:

- **Speeding up the organisation** – things continue to move too slowly, there's too much friction, trying to solve too many issues in traditional sequenced ways when what's required is breakthrough step changes. There's a limited window to be able to build the competitive differentiation you need.
- **Collaboration** – teams are understandably (given the recent re-structure and improvement focus) looking in and down rather than out and across, this is causing friction at many organisational boundaries
- **New ways of working** – most especially learning how to lead and hold creative processes and a step change in meeting culture

These things are obviously complex and entangled, difficult to fully separate and I think it is helpful to see them as partially discrete but also nested together as an entwined developmental container.

I know your brief to me YYY was to discuss with XXX a plan for an integrated collaborative approach to Executive development but the more we talked, the more concerned I was. You know we have worked collaboratively like this, many times in the past. Here, my concern stems from the speed issue and the fact that leaders have intense delivery agendas. Your context seems to me to call for a razor-sharp focus, tight co-ordination and an orientation to one voice rather than many voices. There are many things you could focus on developmentally and, through a generic lens, they'll all make sense. I think given the context that it is critical that you focus in on what is most important right now for driving the specific changes and performance you need.

I have only seen a brief overview of the Thriving Leaders program and it looks like there are broad overlaps between our practices and I'm completely sure that it's excellent work. But even if we are very well aligned, there are bound to be unintentional mixed messages, contradictions and unhelpful crossed wires which in most ordinary contexts wouldn't be a concern. Your situation is not ordinary.

The Thriving Leaders program includes delivering 8 monthly group interventions and 8 individual coaching sessions. At the same time, some Execs have individual coaches, some do not, and many/all(?) are interested in at least exploring this option. This alone is a large developmental load on the ELT. If we added a 'series' of inputs from us... I just worry the load is too much. That's why I suggested to XXX that perhaps it may be better if we continued through to the March offsite and then effectively handed the baton to the Thriving Leaders work. If we were on the same page about that, March would be ideal timing I think, as it would be a natural conclusion of the work we've done to date and we could segue the feedback and development focus on the team and individuals into a springboard for the Thriving Leaders work.

If the One Voice was Our Voice...

As I expressed, we have no interest in engaging in anything like an 'our work is better than their work' conversation. We have confidence that anyone you are engaging is doing good work. You did ask though, XXX, how we might go about solving for the issues of speed, collaboration and shifting to new ways of working.

At the heart of our practice are our beliefs about how change and development occur – our catalytic practice, a way of relating, thinking, leading and organising, that is designed to:

- help leaders, teams and ecosystems of teams do breakthrough work i.e. paradigm-shifting discoveries, strategies and innovations
- transform cultures and especially meeting cultures - the simplest and most profound way of unlocking higher levels of productivity, creativity, innovation and organisational energy at scale

The benefits/outcomes of this way of working include:

- Our physical, mental, psychological, social, creative and decision-making capacities become magnified
- Our creativity, productivity, innovation, collaboration and communication skills go through the roof
- A whole new world of conscious, creative and commercial possibilities opens up, evoking the best possible version of ourselves and others – creating more joyful, happier and meaningful work experiences

- Acquiring new and next generation skills e.g., our pattern recognition faculties expand
- Moving from high performance to peak performance
- Becoming 5x more productive

Building peak-performing cultures, that are on purpose and in flow, is about understanding how...

- Sustainable performance improvement is a balancing act between managing the known (being ever more efficient and effective) AND purposefully pushing into the unknown (insight and innovation). You need both.
- Different contexts, problems and opportunities create different types of work which in turn require different types of thinking and therefore different types of meeting.
- These different types of work/thinking/meeting take different amounts of time – and require us to use space, information and energy differently too.
- How people ‘turn up’ in meetings is determined by how the leader ‘turns up’, which in turn determines the group’s capacity to think and move forward together or not.
- A simple set of core-skills underpin different types of work and great meetings – and each require practice
- Moving from an ‘agenda paradigm’ to a ‘design paradigm’ is the key i.e. learning to design and run meetings by attending to both content and human process (as most dysfunction is driven by poor people dynamics).
- To think differently about the architecture of meetings i.e. the forums and flows of monthly, quarterly and annual rhythms.
- Breaking free of the collective trance of unproductive and dysfunctional meetings is not about having fewer or shorter meetings, or having less people in a meeting, or giving everyone meeting-free days or afternoons ... because this thinking is too simplistic, too left-brain, and born from the same mindset that created this crisis in the first place.

Introducing and embedding these ‘catalytic ways of working’ is about learning this catalytic practice through ‘practice’. It is not just about imparting knowledge. The development must happen, in fact, can only happen, in the process of doing the real work.

We do this:

- Through a series of short immersive experiences, each followed by periods of focused, deliberate practice. No practice, no next module!
- By making sure it is actionable, practical and transformational (personally and professionally)
- With designs that are replicable and scalable (without being dumbed down) – so we can align, shift and elevate whole populations
- By working at scale with many leaders at the same time rather than the slow drip feed of sequential programs

We'd see three key building blocks of this way of working and leading and development:

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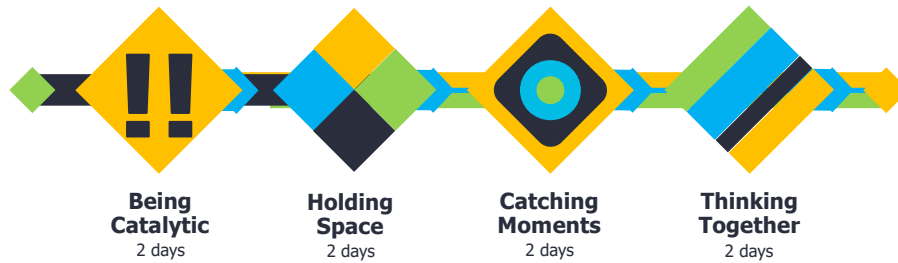
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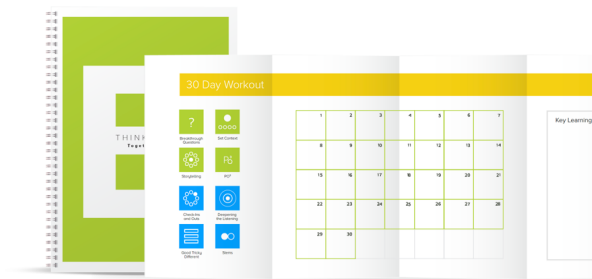
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Introducing Catalytic Ways of Working

CAT LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM

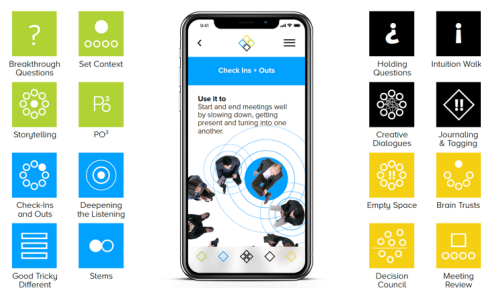


PRACTICE PERIODS



Personal experiments, daily workouts and design challenges.

MICRO-SKILLS



A unique collection of Micro-Skills for enhancing how we relate, think, lead and organise.

That would be the essence of our approach. Lots there obviously to take in. As always very happy to talk more when you're back YYY or before XXX.

All the best,

Andrew