

# Workshop

## Putting Out Fires: Crisis Management Strategies for High Pressure, High Reward Settings

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Intro slide

## Presenters







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**Areas of expertise:**

- Program Coaching & Cross-Team Alignment
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Self intro by the presenters

**Crisis from HR  
perspective**

**HUMAN  
LIVES  
MATTER**

Above all:  
**Human Lives**

- Crisis can affect many areas – above all human lives must come first.
- HR job is to educate the company about this so that it's reflected in their policies and procedures.

## Crisis from regular employee / business perspective



B.A.U.



Novel / New

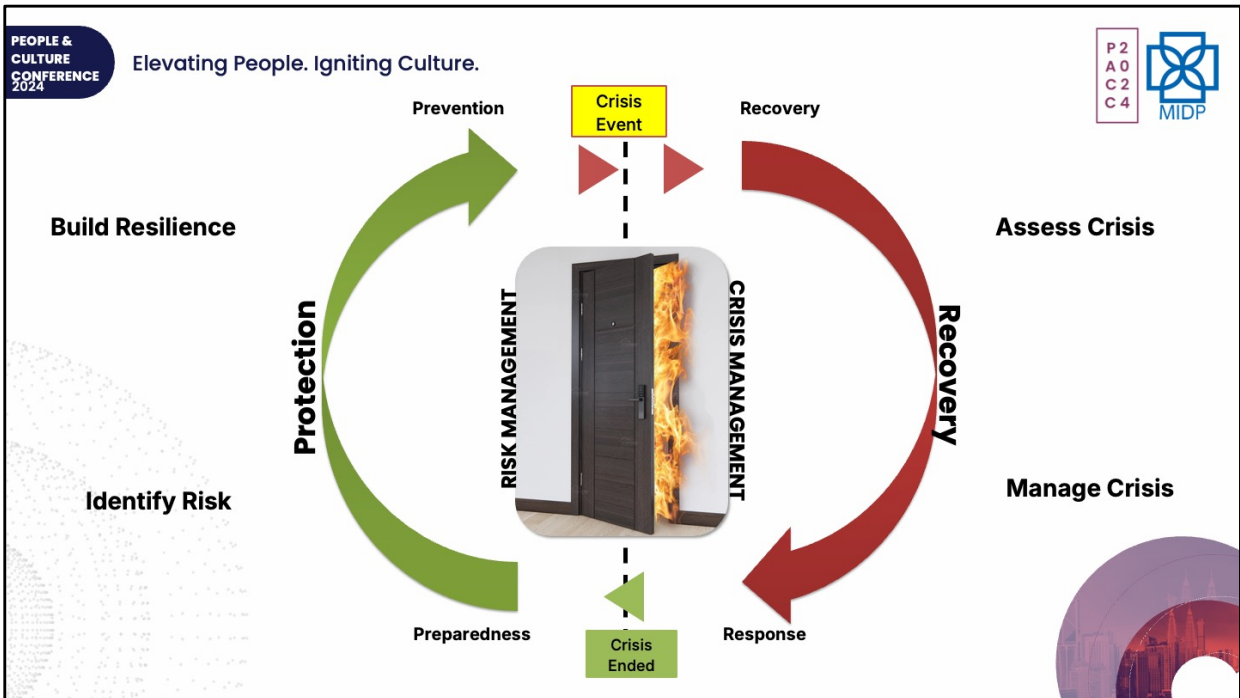
- On the other side of the crisis is the business.
- There are 2 parts
  1. The business as usual, which is the rice bowl and earning ability – the moment it's affected means there could be risk the the business making money and threatening its survival – getting this back ASAP is a must once we know that human lives are ok.
  2. The other part of crisis could be due to taking risks in doing something new – it is important to explore and find new sources of revenue, do R&D and try new product lines, but if not managed well it could lead to high spend and put company's cashflow at risk.
- Every area could be high pressure and high reward to different HODs. To best counter a crisis, we need to have a balanced and objective view of crisis, and not over react to 1 specific area.

## Defining: Crisis Management

Crisis management is an organisation's process and strategy-based approach for **identifying** and **responding** to a critical event.

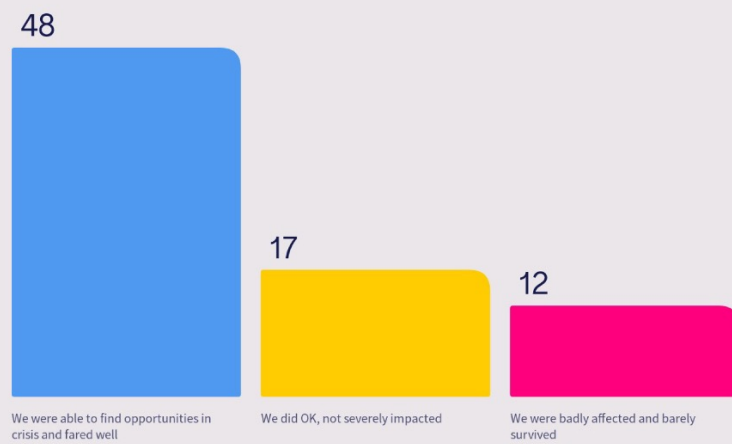
A critical event can be defined as any threat, unanticipated incident, or negative disruption with the potential to impact an organisation's **people, property, or business processes**.

- This is a definition that can help encapsulate the earlier slides.
- Identify and respond the critical event.
- Impact to people, property or business processes.



- The crisis event is just 1 part of the entire equation.
- If the company had prepared prior to the event, they can quickly fall back to their SOP and documentation for such crisis.
- But if they did not prepare at all, then they have to shift gears and move very fast to assess and manage the crisis.
- Culture of the organisation is a strong determinant to the ability to respond and recover.
- Covid-19 pandemic is a good example where it's so improbable and companies were not prepared for it, but somehow we could see that many participants in the audience were able to turn it into opportunity and did well. (poll result in next slide)
- When a crisis event has ended, it's important to do a post-mortem and see what could've been done better.
- Document it down and put in the processes to be able to handle is more efficiently should such crisis happen again.

## How did your organisation fare as a result of Covid-19 Pandemic?



Ask participants how they did in response to the covid-19 pandemic.  
Great to see many did well and was able to find opportunities.

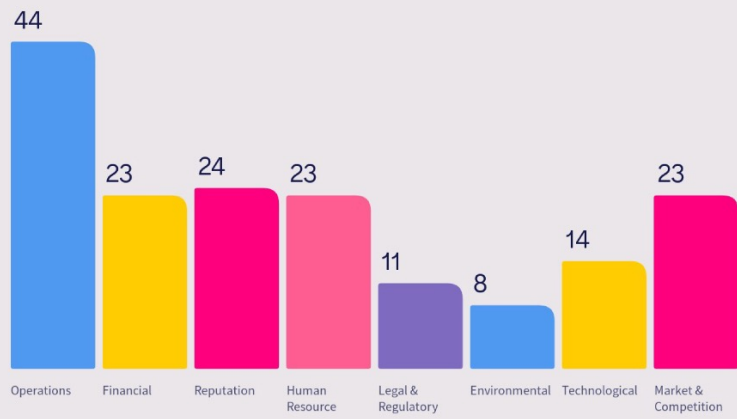


**“Never let a good  
crisis go to  
waste.”**

Kudos to those who were able to not only manage the crisis, but turned it into opportunity

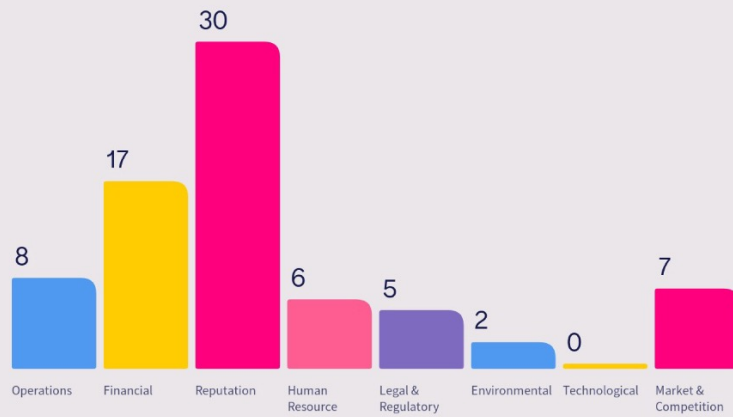


Select one (1) category of crisis which happens most frequently in your organisation



- As expected Operations is the most frequent crisis faced.

Select one (1) category of crisis, which you believe has the highest impact/damage (existential crisis)



- This was not expected – people voted reputation as the highest impact followed by financial.
- No one voted technological – such as AI replacing your business.

### Probability / Impact Matrix

		Impact →				
		Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Significant	Severe
Likelihood ↑	Very Likely	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	High	High
	Likely	Low	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	High
	Possible	Low	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	Med Hi
	Unlikely	Low	Low Med	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi
	Very Unlikely	Low	Low	Low Med	Medium	Medium

- This is an example of a matrix that people will learn from trainings and ISO certifications.
- We strongly recommend that you organisation has Risk and BCM (Business Continuity Mgmt) people even if it's not a regulatory requirement in your industry.
- If no headcount, perhaps engage an vendor to assist/assess and put some protection in place.
- Trained / certified professionals will learn all there is to know about business continuity, how to handle the awareness, communication, action, and more.
- Focus on our workshop is not on what's commonly available - feel free to explore, a good place to start is DRI Malaysia.

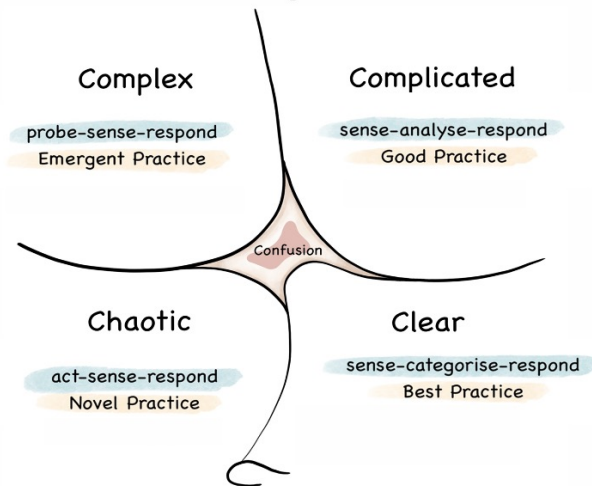
## In times of uncertainty...



**what you need is a compass**

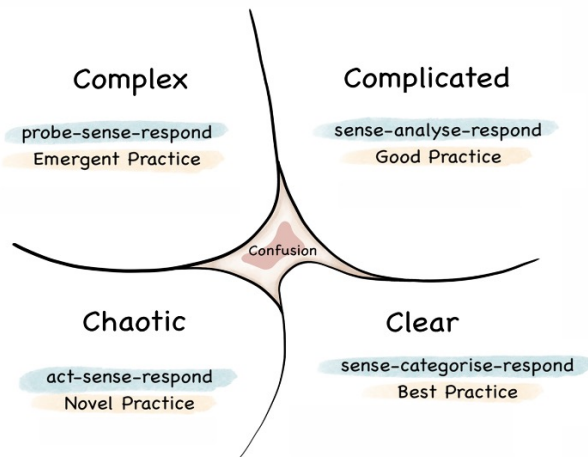
- In times of uncertainty, real crisis and chaos with more unknowns than knowns. It may not be sufficient to have process, but you need a compass, clear direction, and sense your way through the crisis situation.

## Cynefin framework as a compass



- Introduce the Cynefin framework. By Dave Snowden.
- There are 4 main quadrants (which are referred to as “domains) from Clear, Complicated, Complex and Chaotic.
- Each domain has a different nature and should be approached from a different method.
- Example. In complex domain, you should probe-sense-respond – this is considered as Emergent Practice.

## Cynefin framework as a compass



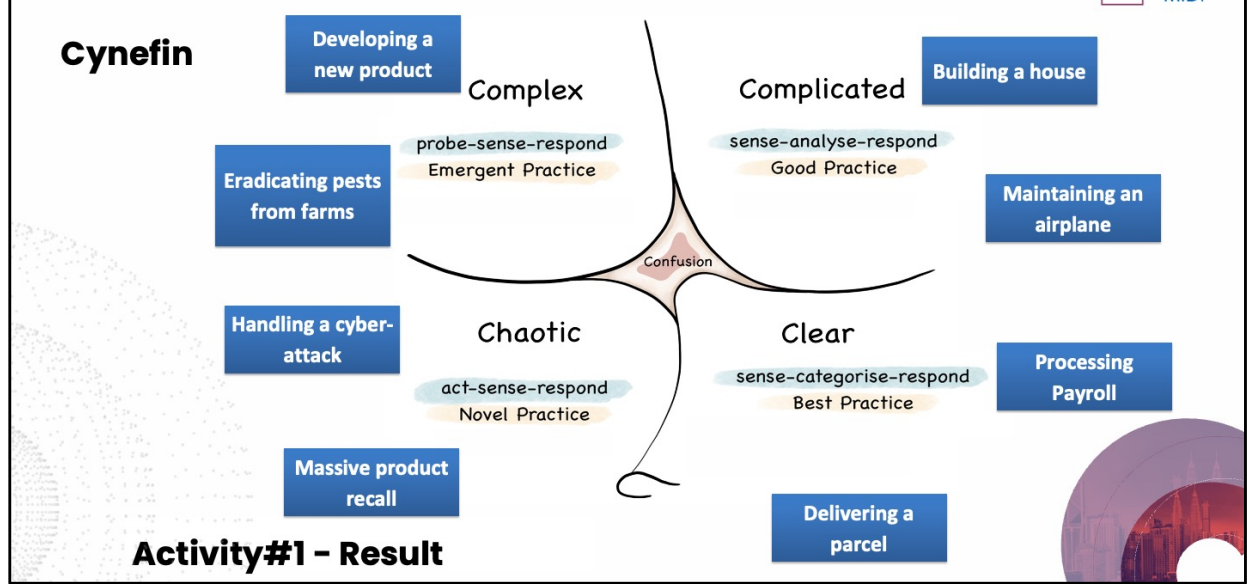
### Activity#1 - Categorise

Which quadrants do these situations fall under according to you?

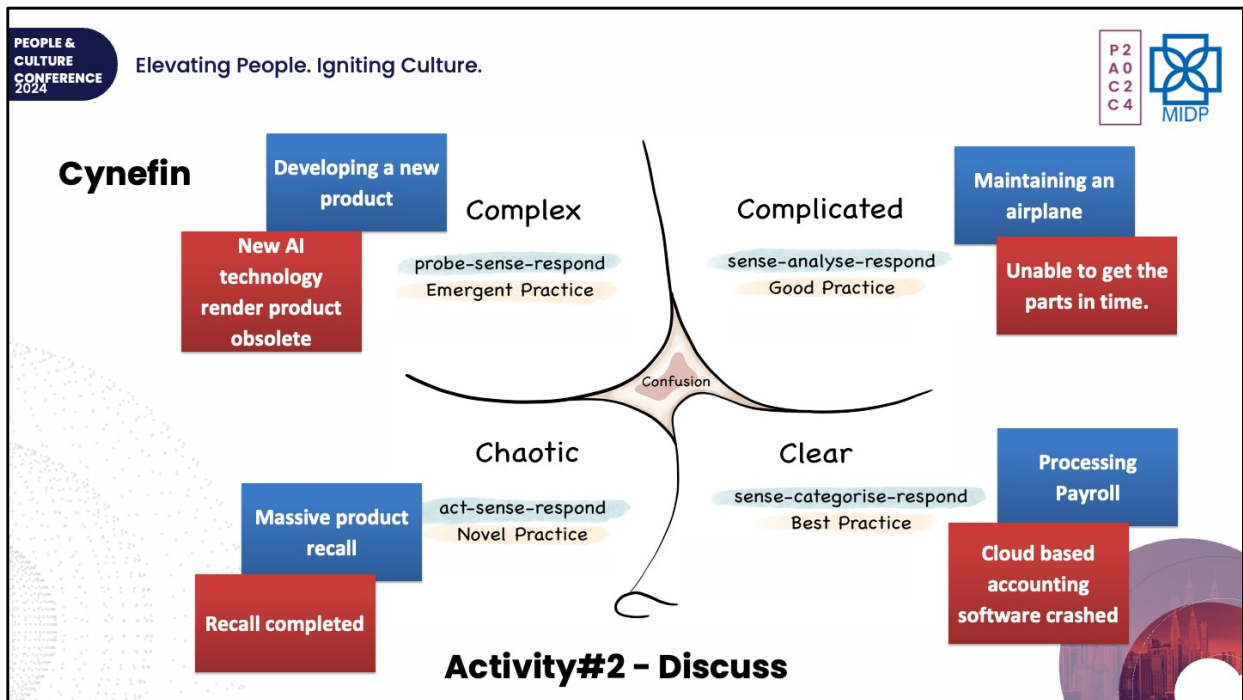
Discuss with the others at your table.

Delivering a parcel	Processing Payroll
Building a house	Maintaining an airplane
Developing a new product	Eradicating pests from farms
Handling a cyber-attack	Massive product recall

- Group activity: Get participants to categorize the type of work into each quadrant/domain.
- Then have a discussion why they think it belongs there.

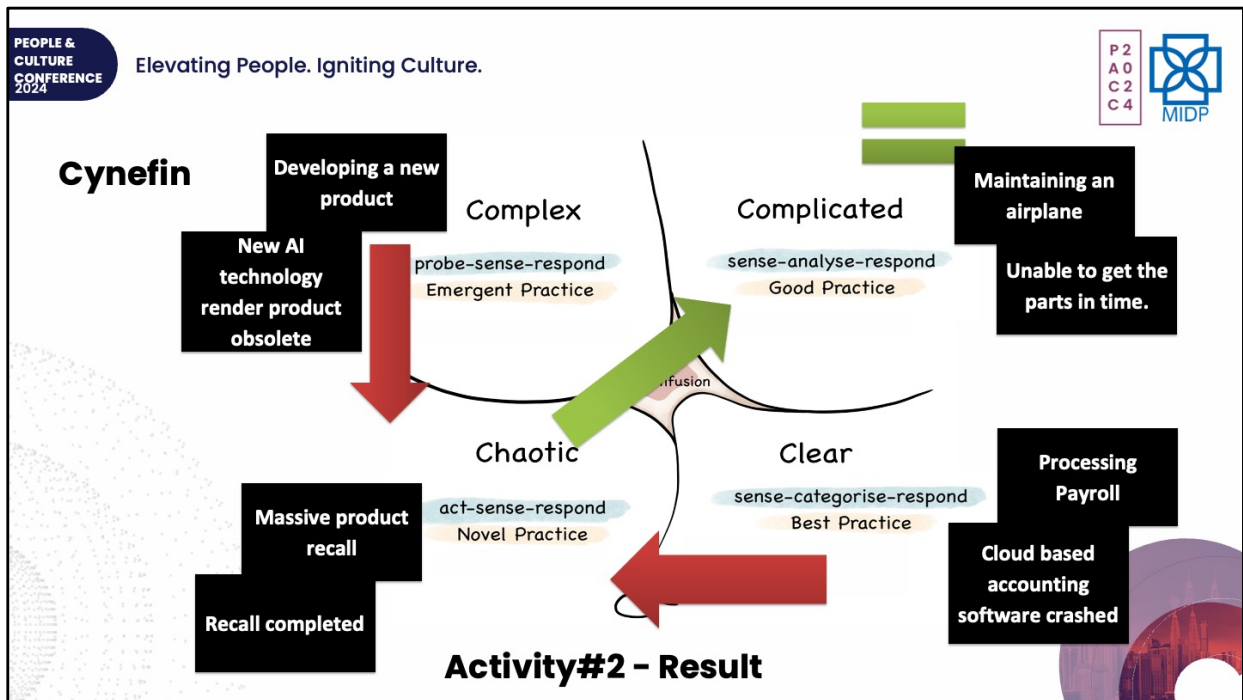


- Reveal the result of the activity and explain the rationale and distinctions.



- Part 2 of the activity is to add a crisis into some of the work activity and discuss in the group whether the work will remain in the same domain or it may be changed due to the crisis event!

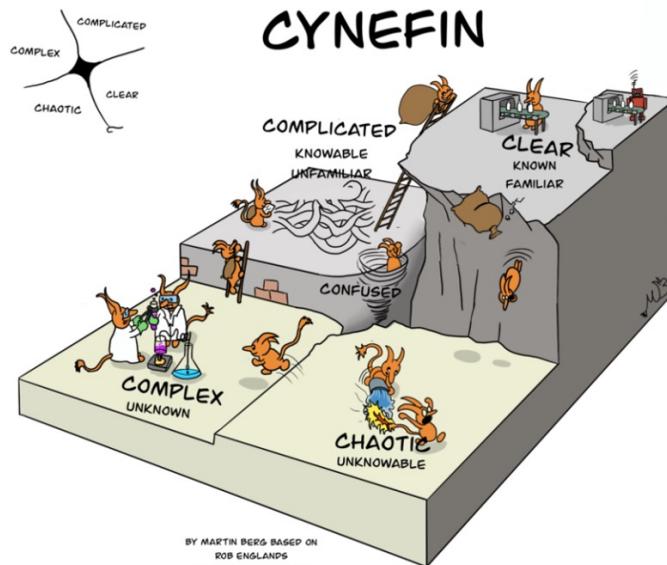




- Reveal the answer.
- In some cases like the Clear and Complex – the crisis caused it to fall into the Chaotic domain.
- The nature of the work is no longer the same – and should not be treated the same.
- In the case of Maintaining an airplane, it’s an operational or supply chain issue, but doesn’t switch into another domain as it is part and parcel of the work. Unless the problem is bigger (ie. The parts factory has gone bust) then they may need to consider as a bigger crisis.

Work can "fall" into  
different domains.

Or you can climb  
out of it.

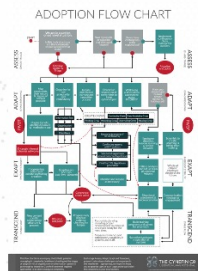


- An interesting illustration (credits to the owner) to help show the various quadrant/domains and how the work may switch to different places over time.
- It's worth noting that even in non-crisis this applies.
- The illustration also shows that in the Clear domain, it's repetitive tasks and should be automated with robots.



## Four (4) Stage Approach

### The Field Guide to Managing complexity (and chaos) in times of crisis



-  **assess the type of crisis and initiate a response;**
-  **adapt to the new pace and start building sensing networks to inform decisions;**
-  **repurpose existing structures and working methods to generate radical innovation;**
-  **transcend the crisis, formalise lessons learnt and increase resilience.**

- Introduce the field guide, which is a joint publication between the Joint Research Centre (JRC) the European Commission's science and knowledge service, and the Cynefin Centre.
- Purpose of this publication is to **HELP NAVIGATE IN TIMES OF CRISIS** – using the Cynefin framework as a **COMPASS**.
- This is published in 2021, so fairly recent and may be helpful to many participants in the workshop.

**“The Covid Pandemic Has Demonstrated That We Need To Find New & Better Ways Of Reacting. This Field-guide Offers Important Powerful And Practical Tips On How”**

– Steven Quest. Director General, European Commission –  
Joint Research Centre



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- Quote from the DG of the Joint Research Centre.
- The field guide was published in 2021 and is a great addition to your BCM and DR processes.
- We believe that the ISO standards will adapt and update in time, but this has a fresh approach AND can be used in times of Crisis, as well as non-crisis – meaning your innovation, process improvement, etc.

## Things have changed!

Speed of information is relatively slow: newspaper, TV, radio



Speed is near real time - live feed, social media posts

Limited channels of communication, press release, press conference, official statement. People may dial in or send email/fax to ask for more info.



Many channels - website, social media, email, instant messaging. And people may reply or comment directly.

- In this next few slide, we try to show that there has been changes over time and hence the old ways of working are no longer effective.

## Things have changed!

Public scrutiny was less,  
organisations had more  
control of what reached the  
masses



Greater public scrutiny and  
demand for transparency.  
Attempts to withhold info can  
lead to backlash.

Stakeholder engagement was  
one-way from organisation to  
the stakeholder



Stakeholders want more  
interaction and two-way  
communication, and sharing  
of their views

- In this next few slide, we try to show that there has been changes over time and hence the old ways of working are no longer effective.

## Things have changed!

Impact more localised, does not require global coordination.



May have global impact due to interconnected systems, economies and supply chains. Often requires global coordination and collaboration.

Strong charismatic experienced leaders help navigate the crisis with some difficulty.



Single leader is not able to keep up with the uncertainty, complexity and hyperconnected situation.

- In this next few slide, we try to show that there has been changes over time and hence the old ways of working are no longer effective.
- And leadership is of utmost importance.
- We will share some ways that leaders can shift how they handle crisis to better the odds of successfully handling any situation.



- Crisis are upheavals
- Upheaval creates fear, and in those times we crave security.
- What can create that sense of security, a feeling of direction that give us enough trust to go on.
- The old leadership style of... strength, confidence, and an unwavering mind
- With the complex and volatile world of today, where that type of leadership will no longer work.
- We need to flip the leadership playbook!
- We recommend this 4 areas / pillars for leaders to follow.



## Transparency



How to lead when  
there is so little  
certainty?

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Share the little  
you know,  
Admit what you  
don't know

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***Ramp up humility***



- Transparency and importance of involving stakeholders early in the crisis.
- Humility is not about being weak or submissive; it's about having the courage to admit when you don't know something, and being open to learning from others.
- Humble leaders come across as honest.
- They generate a sense of safety in people, that will be crucial in times of crisis, when everyone idea can be a way out of the darkness.
- Great ideas can come from anywhere in the organisation. (Principle 9) – source ABC's 9 Principles of Agile Leadership



## Transparency



### On a normal day

- builds a culture of trust
- requires **courage** to work & communicate openly
- creates safety
- enables collaboration
- enhances collective decision making



### In a time of crisis

- radiates trust
- requires **humility** to be clear about uncertainty
- helps maintain a sense of safety
- triggers people to participate and volunteer together

Amy Edmonson, author of Fearless Organization, the book about psychological safety,  
Says that “admit what you don't know, ramp up the humility”

Examples:

Lack of transparency

- Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011 > slow and inconsistent messaging, with contradictory statements from different officials
  - This eroded public trust
- Early months of the COVID-19 pandemic in the US, same problem.. > lack of transparency about the severity.
  - Confusion among public and stakeholders, undermining efforts to control the spread

## Urgency



Speed  
to  
action

Perfect  
solution

In a hyper connected world, speed and urgency is necessary to meet stakeholders expectations

Delays in action / communication may be perceived as untrustworthy



Changing decision is allowed within reason & new information

- Urgency's key take away is that speed is critical, even without full information, some action needs to be taken with available info.
- We live in a hyperconnected world, we cannot behave as though living in the age fax machines, and print press.
- Slow updates seem like "hiding information" and considered as untrustworthy.
- Slow decision making shows incompetence.
- Changing decision is allowed within reason & new information

# Urgency

## During an emergency



Quick action with as much info as possible



Communicate the action and get everyone moving



With new info, be ready to update and communicate again



## During Non-emergency

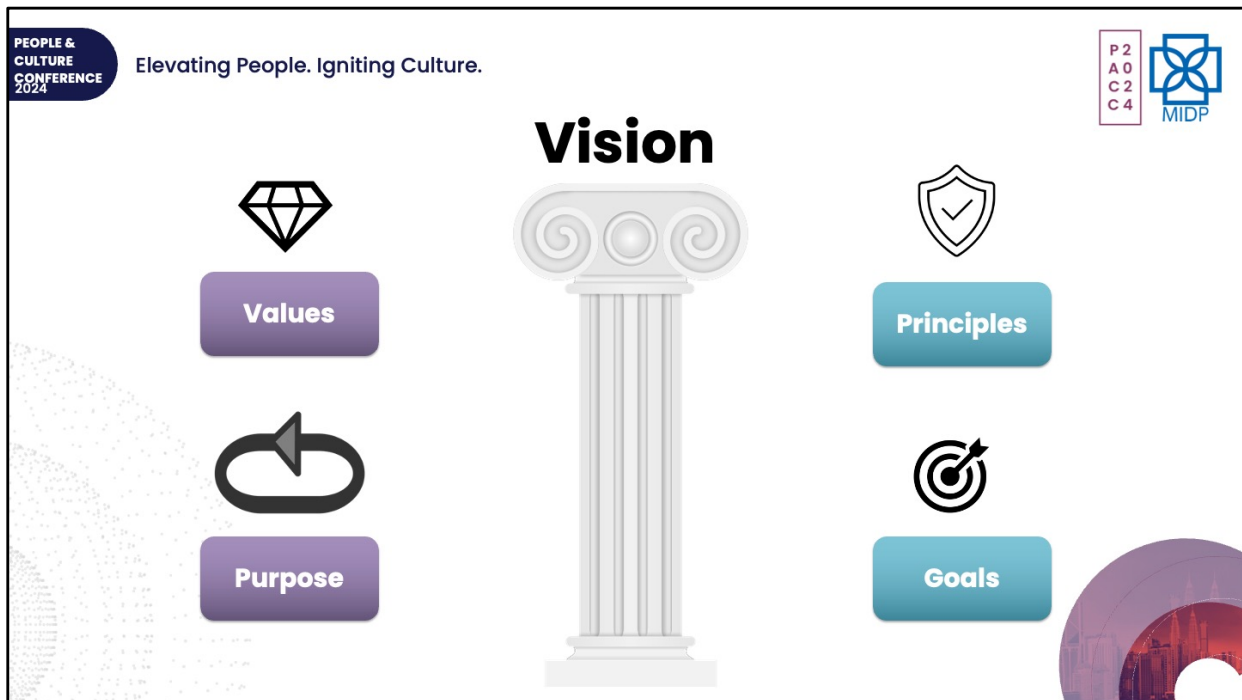


Set aside time to prepare for possible crisis



Make it a culture of collaboration and resilience, reducing silos and being goal oriented.

- Admitting you don't have all the information doesn't mean you don't take action. And remember to ask people for information they get.
- Fast action may be the only way to get information
- Beyond the crisis. Is to have urgency to prepare for the crisis – Usual training ISO , BCP
- But also creating an environment where employees are not divided, they have clarity of vision and they are empowered to do work together.
- It should be a muscle that is trained – via Culture.



- Vision's key takeaway is having clear values, purpose of organisation and corporate identity ensures that people are **aligned**.

## Vision

### On a normal day

- offers a line of sight
- enables prioritisation
- offers a compass when the path is unclear
- defines the culture
- instills strategic leadership

### In a time of crisis

- offers a light to work through the fog
- helps to maintain focus
- drives decisions & action
- creates a legacy
- helps people know who to follow with trust

## Apple's Comeback Story

In 1997, Apple was on the brink of bankruptcy after posting 12 consecutive years of financial losses. The company's product line was unfocused, and its market share was dwindling rapidly. Many industry analysts predicted Apple's imminent collapse.

The board decided to bring back co-founder Steve Jobs, who had been ousted from the company in 1985 (more than 10y earlier). Jobs returned with a clear vision to simplify Apple's product line and refocus the company's efforts on innovation and design excellence.

"This is a very complicated world, it's a very noisy world. So we have to be really clear on what we want them to know about us."

Values were very clear since his comeback, not just inhouse, but in also the marketing as well.

## Empowerment



Is not a free for all.  
Leaders are accountable.



Set "enabling" constraints.  
Don't be the constraint.



Enable frequent open  
communications

- Empowerment's key take away is that leaders must not hold on too tight.
- Holding tight does not mean control, it means you are the bottleneck.
- Traditional management (from 1900) is where leaders are better educated, smarter and the workers as less educated and need to be told what to do.
- Now management hire smarter people, and play important coordination roles and keeping everything together.
- Use "Enabling constraints" which are rules, guidelines, or boundaries that set clear expectations and provide direction, but do not stifle people ability to take action and solve the crisis.
- And make sure there is clear and frequent communication so that things people do don't go too far off tangent causing another crisis.

**We follow this new kind of leader through upheaval, because we have confidence - not in their map, but in their compass.**

- Amy Edmondson



Quote from Amy Edmondson



## Reflection Time



**What - So What - Now What?**

**Share with your neighbour**

- **What:**  
What the biggest take away for you in this workshop? What stood out?
- **So What:**  
So What does that mean? How is it important and why?
- **Now What:**  
Now What is a possible next step?  
Which action makes sense?

Give time for participants to reflect and identify

1. What they have learnt / stood out to them
2. What does it mean & why it's important
3. What they can do with it – leading towards action items and practical things they can do back at their organisations

We can also share some of our ideas such as

1. Embedding tabletop and other crisis simulation together with their normal teambuilding activities.
  1. This help to kill 2 birds with 1 stone – building team cohesiveness and strengthening the people ability to handle crisis events.
2. Employee engagement activities where crisis scenarios are created and employees come up with the solution (similar like a hackaton event)
  1. This boost awareness across the entire organisation and get it on the top of people's minds

## Summary

1

Use the Field Guide from  
Cynefin and EU JRC



A field guide for decision makers inspired by the Cynefin framework

2

Leaders to adopt these 4 Pillars to  
build culture of responsiveness

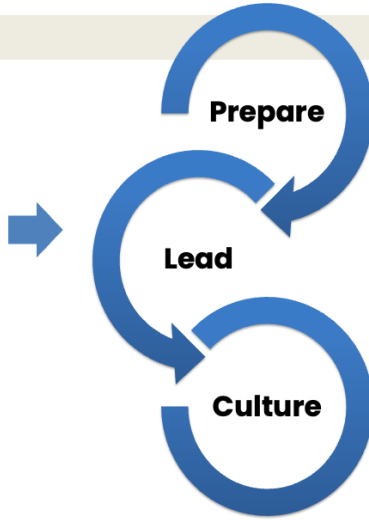


Summary is just to recap the 2 main messages.

1. There is a field guide that is based on Cynefin which can be used in addition to the normal BCM & risk management
2. Adopt the 4 pillars to build the culture – enabling responsiveness not only in times of but also in their daily work.

## Summary

Shift to new leadership methods which enable responsiveness during crisis and non-crisis situations



Allocate time and resources to prepare. Manage the risks and cover as many scenarios as possible

Enable entire organisation with agile ways of work to increase efficiency and effectiveness



PEOPLE &  
CULTURE  
CONFERENCE  
2024

Elevating People. Igniting Culture.



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Q&A session

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