

Adaptive Strategy -- Principles and Practices

Principles Guiding Adaptive Strategy

- Acknowledge that the pace of change has sped up
- Adopt a “let’s try” and “let’s experiment” posture
- Take risks and be willing to fail (*be willing to learn*)
- Know that we are working on “wicked complex questions” that don’t have simple answers
- Ask a variety of questions that open exploration of possible options and opportunities

Practices of Adaptive Strategy

- Focus more on “the why” and less on “the what” of your strategy
- Be explicit about core questions and transparent even if there are not easy or explicit answers
- Create a regular (quarterly) semi-formal process within the organization or group, with a real-time cadence and a focus on assumptions and questions
- Examine information together, including:
 - Data (*looking backwards*) -- use real-time data that can inform action
 - Trends and shifts we are noticing in our community or
 - What we notice in the ways we are working, adapting, or experimenting
- Tap into perspectives outside our own -- find regular ways to listen to and consider other leaders’ and disciplines’ perspectives

Focus of Adaptive Strategy

Adaptive strategy supports planning of the organization’s direction. It works at a relatively high level of focus for the organization or group and uses three “bubbles of focus” for articulating the strategy and guiding the regular process of reflection and adaptation.

