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LEADERSHIP AND FACILITATION OF THE CRISIS

Many people (in this post-modern age) instinctively don’t like this Rational Phase when they experience it or even when it is described to them – it feels mechanistic and old-school. So they may be tempted, when problems arise, to see organisational problems as the end-of-phase crisis and then get themselves ready for the next (sexier looking) Integrated Phase. But these problems may just need fixing. There are healthy forms of this Rational Phase, where organisations maintain human relationships and processes to balance the more mechanistic features of the phase.

But when the staff have reached a level of both empowerment and frustration and the levels of hot or cold crisis are high enough that productivity is falling consistently, it begins to make sense to transform the organisation, to move into the Integrated Phase. This will help break down the divisions and mobilise the more developed capabilities of the staff through a different quality of organisation.

Again it is quite possible that external facilitation is needed to assist the organisation to navigate the phase.

The challenge of leading or facilitating this crisis is similar to the crisis of the previous phase: appreciating and keeping what works and unlearning what does not, clearing the way for the new set of organisational principles and features that characterises the next phase to take root. (Another example of the U-process of change is described in Chapter 5.)

Many, if not most, of the leadership and management books available today focus on this crisis as experienced by big business corporates, describing their challenge to move to the Integrated Phase. Unfortunately these books get used by many organisations who are working from the Pioneering to the Rational Phase, so that the advice they get from these books is sometimes the very opposite of what they need!



“The organisation of the Integrated Phase is held together by strong common vision, purpose and values more than the rules and policies of the Rational Phase.”

The Integrated Phase

THE EARLY YEARS

This phase is an integration of the best features of the Pioneering and Rational Phases. It is more human and efficient and therefore more effective in mobilising the diverse capabilities of more mature staff and relationships.

The more empowered staff will tend to want flatter, simpler, decentralised structures that facilitate fluid communication and collaboration.