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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Context | Leader’s Job | Danger Signals | Response to Danger Signals |
| OBVIOUS | * Repeating patterns & consistent events * **Clear** cause-and-effect relationships evident to everyone; right answer exists * **Known knowns** * **Fact-based** management | * **Sense, categorize, respond** * Ensure proper processes are in place * Delegate * Use **best practices** * Communicate in clear, direct ways * Understand that extensive interactive communication may not be necessary | * Complacency & comfort * Desire to make complex problems simple * Entrained thinking * No challenge of received wisdom * Overreliance on best practice if context shifts | * Create communication channels to challenge orthodoxy * Stay connected without micromanaging * Don’t assume things are simple * Recognize both the value & limitations of best practices |
| COMPLICATED | * Expert diagnosis required * Cause-and-effect relationships **discoverable** but not immediately apparent to everyone; more than 1 right answer possible * **Fact-based** management | * **Sense, analyze, respond** * Create panels of experts * Listen to conflicting advice | * Experts **overconfident** in their own solutions or in the efficacy of past solutions * Analysis paralysis * Expert panels * Viewpoints of **nonexperts excluded** | * Encourage external & internal stakeholders to challenge expert opinions to combat entrained thinking * Use experiments & games to force people to think outside the familiar |
| COMPLEX | * **Flux & unpredictability** * **No right answer**; emergent instructive patterns * **Unknown unknowns** * Many competing ideas * A need for creative & innovative approaches * Pattern-based leadership | * **Probe, sense, respond** * Create environments & experiments that allow patterns to **emerge** * Increase levels of interaction & communication * Use methods that can help generate ideas: open up discussions (as through large group methods); set barriers; stimulate attractors; encourage dissent & diversity; manage starting conditions & **monitor for** **emergence** | * Temptation to fall back into habitual, command-and-control mode * Temptation to look for facts rather than allowing patterns to emerge * Desire for accelerated resolution of problems or exploitation of opportunities | * Be patient & allow time for reflection * Use approaches that encourage interaction so patterns can emerge |
| CHAOTIC | * **High turbulence** * **No clear cause-and-effect** relationships, no point in looking for right answers * **Unknowables** * Many decisions to make & no time to think * High tension * Pattern-based leadership | * **Act, sense, respond** * Look for what works instead of seeking right answers * Take **immediate actions** to reestablish order (command & control) * Provide **clear, direct communication** | * Apply a command-and-control approach longer than needed * “Cult of the leader” * Missed opportunity for innovation * Chaos unabated | * Set up mechanisms (such as parallel teams) to take advantage of opportunities afforded by a chaotic environment * Encourage advisers to challenge your point of view once the crisis has abated * Work to shift the context from chaotic to complex |

