PatternDynamics™
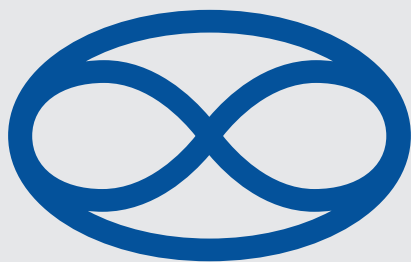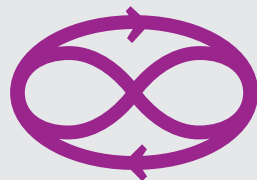
thrive in complexity

Decision Making

Practice Guide

PatternDynamics™ Decision Making Skills

Source Sensing	Perspective Mapping	Perspective Mapping
Source Tracking	**Perspective Taking**	**Perspective Seeking**

Core Bundle

Collaborative Systems Enquiry	Collaborative Systems Enquiry	Collaborative Systems Enquiry
Collaborative Thinking	**Perspective Coordinating**	**Systems Thinking**

Next Generation Decision Making	Next Generation Decision Making	Source Sensing
Rationale	**Decision Making**	**Tension Sensing**

PatternDynamics™ Decision Making Skills Explained

Tension Sensing
Becoming skilled at sensing when an important issue is emerging using our bodily sensations, emotional states, mental activity, and intuition.

Source Tracking
Learning to evaluate if an issue is related strongly enough to the ultimate purpose or Source of your group or organization to merit continued decision making effort.

Perspective Taking
The skill of identifying and considering other relevant perspectives–imagining what others may think.

Perspective Seeking
The ability to consult with and verify what others are thinking–confirm what others are thinking.

Collaborative Thinking
Employing skills related to communication, mediation, and facilitation that bring others into the decision making process.

Perspective Coordination

Engaging in enquiring conversations with an attitude of curiosity to learn more about other peoples' perspectives in order to resolve tensions between them and to coordinate them to enhance the collective intelligence available for problem solving.

Systems Thinking

Using the 7 First Order Patters in the PatternDynamics™ Framework to identify multiple principles of organization relevant to a given situation and to coordinate these perspectives in relation to the systems of your organization and its Source.

Rationale

The use of reasoning skills to frame your decision making rationale, clearly articulate your choices, and persuade others by making coherent arguments.

Decision Making

Employing a deliberative process in the act of making decisions that effectively evaluates the perspectives available and their relevance to a chosen goal.

PatternDynamics™ Source Course

Explanation: Source is related to your ultimate purpose as an organization. When it is co-created, widespread, clear, and present it forms a central organizing principle of that system. This 'course on a page' is designed to get you up and running with a powerful system thinking principle that will help you coordinate perspectives. Evaluating perspectives in this way will help you generate new insights for better decision making.

Instructions: Choose a topic or issue that is important to you, record it below, and read the descriptions of the three dimensions of Source. See if you can place an 'X' on each slider bar that indicates how you (or another) is thinking about this issue.

Topic/Issue: ....
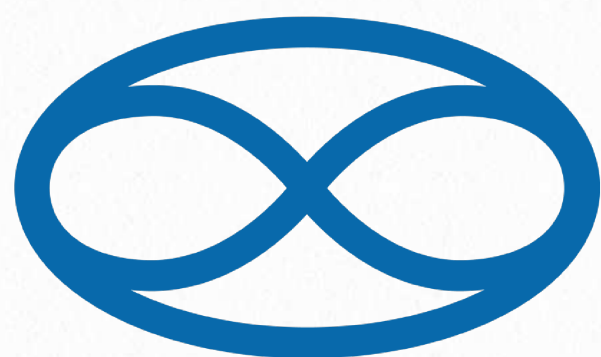
Source

Part	————————————————	Whole
Short Term	————————————————	Long Term
Tangible	————————————————	Intangible

Part/Whole: All systems are composed of a series of parts that come together to form an integrated whole. Does your thinking (or another's) relate more strongly to outcomes for a part of your organization or more to results for the organization as a whole? See if you can draw an 'X' on the Part/Whole slider bar above that represents where your thinking sits between these two polarities.

Short Term/Long Term: To function optimally all systems must balance achieving short term outcomes with long term goals. Does your thinking (or another's) relate more strongly to achieving short term outcomes or more to working towards long term aims and objectives? See if you can draw an 'X' on the Short Term/Long Term slider bar above that represents where your thinking sits between these two polarities.

Tangible/Intangible: All systems require the creation and maintenance of both tangible value that can be objectively measured (like financial outcomes) and more intangible value that tends to be evaluated subjectively (like the quality of relationships or the level of trust). Does your thinking on this issue (or another's) relate more strongly to creating tangible value for the organization or relate more to creating intangible value? See if you can draw an 'X' on the Tangible/Intangible slider bar above that represents where your thinking sits between these two polarities.

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Rationale Support Framework

Argumentation (rationale) is how you explain the reasoning behind your decision in a coherent, convincing, and authoritative manner. Doing this increases your influence as a decision maker and leader.

Below is a framework that will help you support your argumentation based on the decision making skills you have learned in this practice.

Tension Sensing: I sensed an informative tension related to (this issue/topic) _____

_____

in myself and/or others by observing these sensations/emotions/reflections/intuitions…

Source Tracking: This issue/topic relates back to the ultimate purpose of our organization through the following pathway…

Perspective Taking: I identified the following stakeholder perspectives as important for a good understanding of this issue/topic and I imagined what they thought as follows…

Perspective Seeking: Given the limited time and resources available for making this decision I chose to directly enquire and actually verify the nature of these perspectives _____

_____ .

This is how I've interpreted what they told me…

Collaborative Thinking: I engaged in enquiring communication, facilitation and/or mentoring to learn about these perspectives _____

and to bring them into the decision making process in the following ways…

Perspective Coordination: I learned more about the conflicts and tensions between the people and groups involved in this decision and I sought to resolve these tensions by locating this/these principles that show their common ground…

Systems Thinking: This/these Patterns help identify the overarching principles that help unite these perspectives…

Note: Source is a Pattern you can always start with.

Rationale: I am using the information from this exercise to craft the presentation of the arguments supporting my decision in the following ways…

Decision Making: I moved from deliberating about this decision to taking action by using this/these creative insight(s) _____

based on this/these unifying principles_____ …

Decision Guide

"Decision implies the end of deliberation and the beginning of action."

<div align="right">William Starbuck, professor in residence at the University of Oregon's Charles H. Lundquist College of Business.</div>

Methods: There is no magic formula for deciding on a course of action. All good decisions are made using a combination of these methods:

- Analysis
- Logical reasoning
- Intuition
- Emotion

Elements: Good decisions also take into account these elements:

- The causes of a challenge
- The goals that need to be met
- Different decision making options
- The perceived outcomes of different options

Often Practiced: Many currently taught decision making processes involve listing all the options recommended by different stakeholders and choosing the one with the most strengths and the least weaknesses for the widest range of stakeholders. This strategy involves deciding on compromises and trade offs.

Better Practice: Better decision making, supported by the method being advocated here, relies on finding the hidden commonalities between seemingly divergent perspectives and using these as leverage points to formulate creative solutions. These solutions are intended to meet more of all of the stakeholders' needs. Note: the most important and reliable commonality for uniting perspectives is their relationship and importance to the purpose (Source) of the organization, unit, group, or team.

Often Practiced	Better Practice
'Cast in Stone': does not change	Iterative: decision as hypothesis to test, revise, retest…
Choice between competing perspectives	Finding common ground between perspectives
Compromise and trade-offs • Favors a part of the organization	Creative solutions that are better for everyone. • Demonstrates support for multiple stakeholders so they can facilitate the health and goal attainment of the whole organization.

The decision I have made is: _____ .

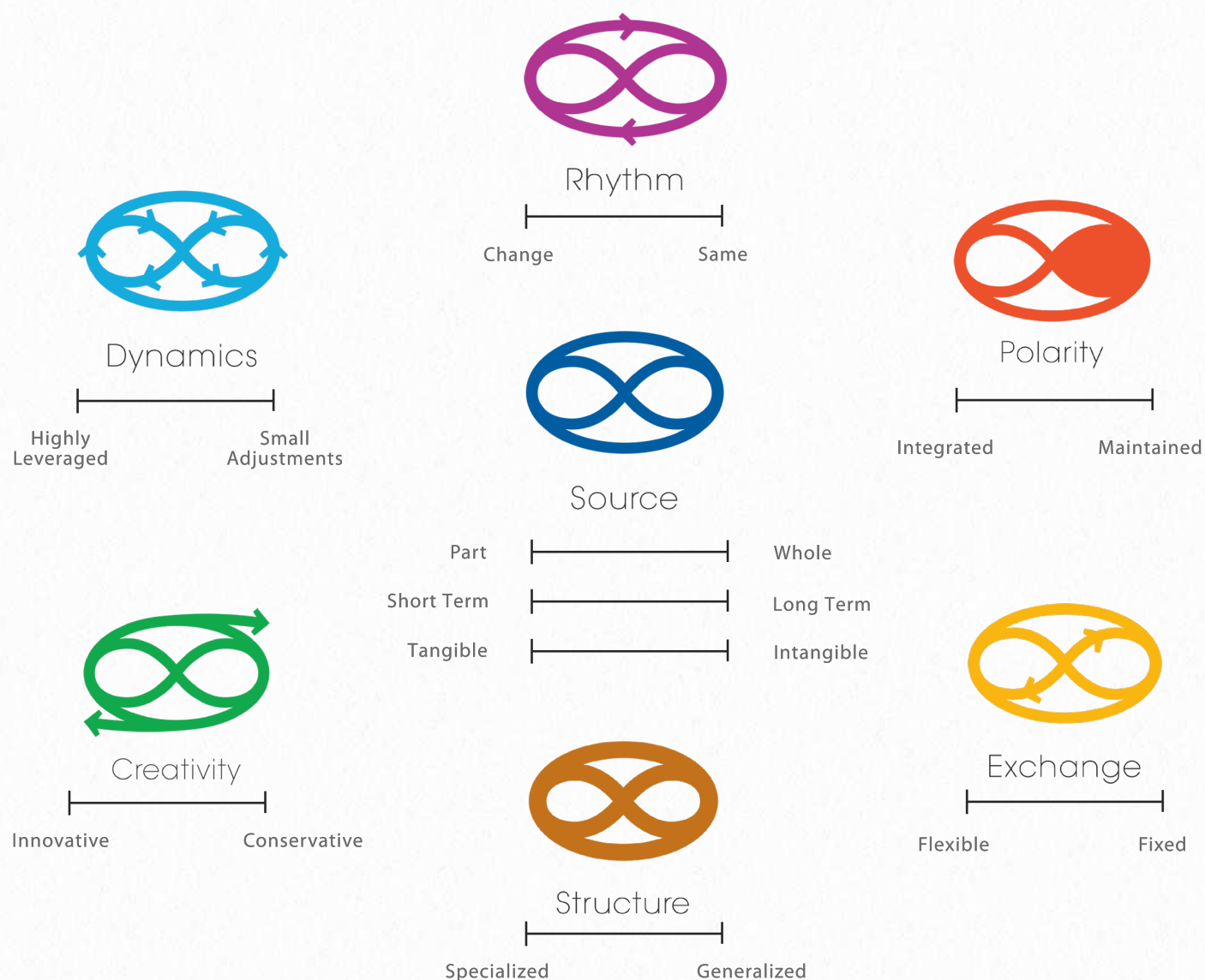It is a hypothesis I have decided to test that is based on this/these method(s) _____

and on this/these element(s)_____ . It demonstrates this/these creative solutions

_____ based on this/these unifying principles/areas of

common ground_____ .

PatternDynamics™ First Order Pattern Definitions

Rhythm

Change —————— Same

Dynamics

Highly Leveraged —————— Small Adjustments

Polarity

Integrated —————— Maintained

Source

Part —————— Whole
Short Term —————— Long Term
Tangible —————— Intangible

Creativity

Innovative —————— Conservative

Exchange

Flexible —————— Fixed

Structure

Specialized —————— Generalized

Rhythm

> **In plain language: The Rhythm Pattern represents everything in your organization that has to do with cycles in time. Below is its more precise definition within the PatternDynamics™ framework.**

Definition: The Rhythm Pattern represents the repetitions, swings, pulses, synchronizations and other regularities of processes that characterize a system's unfolding in time. The role of Rhythm is to coordinate elements and events in time. Rhythm demonstrates the effectiveness of regular patterns in time that assist elements of a system to engage in coordinated processes. Rhythms must be balanced so that, on the one hand, their regularity does not become fixed, which may cause problems if conditions require change; or, on the other hand, change too often or too quickly, which can pose unnecessary or costly adaptive challenges for the rest of the system.

Polarity

> **In plain language: The Polarity Pattern represents the principle behind everything in your organization that has to do with things that seem like opposites, but are often just two different sides of the same coin. Below is its more precise definition within the PatternDynamics™ framework.**

Definition: The Polarity Pattern represents opposing forces as two ends of a continuum in dynamic interplay.The role of Polarity is to build and liberate the potential within systems. The relationship between polarities stores potential and their integration liberates energies that drive the activity of systems. On the one hand, Polarities must be integrated to take advantage of both approaches, but, on the other hand, they must also be maintained to build potential.

Structure

In plain language: The Structure Pattern represents the principle behind everything in your organization that has to do with its supporting frameworks. Below is its more precise definition within the PatternDynamics™ framework.

Definition: The Structure Pattern represents the solid, relatively unchanging, frameworks, scaffolding or 'bones' of a system. The role of Structure is to support the more active and changeable aspects of systems. Structure demonstrates the effectiveness of having enduring frameworks that support the more dynamic activity. Structural frameworks, on the one hand, must be the most solid, unchanging, and enduring aspects of a system, but, on the other hand, they must also have some capacity for ready, if limited, flexibility.

Exchange

In plain language: The Exchange Pattern represents the principle behind everything in your organization that has to do with trades of energy and resources between its different people and groups. Below is its more precise definition within the PatternDynamics™ framework.

Definition: The Exchange Pattern represents the material, energetic and informational trades made between specialized elements of a system. The role of Exchange is to provide the production and efficiency gains of systems. Exchanges between elements with unique capabilities demonstrates the productivity and efficiency gains of systems that allows them to outcompete any group of non-specialized, non-trading elements. Exchanges must be balanced so that, one the one hand, elements within a system specialize enough that through trade the system gains a competitive advantage; but, on the other hand, elements retain the ability to cover off more than one function so as to ensure resilience.

Creativity

In plain language: The Creativity Pattern represents the principle behind everything in your organization that has to do with emergent new opportunities. Below is its more precise definition within the PatternDynamics™ framework.

Definition: The Creativity Pattern represents the emergence of new forms and processes within systems. The role of Creativity is to help systems adapt to changes in the ever-changing environments around them. Creativity demonstrates the large gains that can be made through successful innovation. Creativity must be balanced so that, on the one hand, a system gains the benefits of successful innovation; but, on the other hand, it does not become exhausted through continually expending energy on uncertain experiments.

Dynamics

In plain language: The Dynamics Pattern represents the principle behind everything in your organization that has to do with systems level change. Below is its more precise definition within the PatternDynamics™ framework

Definition: The Dynamics Pattern represents integration, coordination, and control at the systems level itself. The role of Dynamics is to provide highly leveraged means for integrating, coordinating and controlling systems level operations that support the attainment of goals. Dynamics demonstrates the often very highly leveraged effects of integrations, coordination, and control at the systems level. Dynamics must be balanced so that, on the one hand, integration, coordination, and control processes are effectively leveraged for meeting goals; but, on the other hand, care must be taken not to apply too much leverage causing systems dynamics to be thrown out of control.

Source

In plain language: The Source Pattern represents the principle behind everything in your organization that has to do with its ultimate purpose. Below is its more precise definition within the PatternDynamics™ framework.

Definition: The Source Pattern is most simply represented as a system's purpose. It's more complete definition is that it signifies the quality of the collective awareness of the ongoing evolution of a system's purpose, essential nature, or 'Source Code'. The role of Source is to serve as the core collective inquiry: "What is the origin and evolution our identity and purpose?" Source demonstrates the power of collective inquiry to generate awareness that strengthens the self-organizing drive all systems have to co-create the conditions that allow them to meet their aims and thrive. Source must be balanced so that, on the one hand, a strong connection is maintained to the origin of a system's identity and purpose; but, on the other hand, a strong inquiry is maintained that allows that same identity and purpose to evolve in a way that helps it thrive under changing circumstances.

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