

# Peer to Peer Session

Consulting in Complex Adaptive Systems

December 6, 2016


## Session Objectives

As the environment becomes more complex, the concept and process for org design and consulting is changing. In our peer-to-peer session, we will explore some ways consultants can be more adaptive to address client real time needs.

We plan to:

- Share a Consulting Framework to set context for current competence
- Explore how consulting approaches are evolving to adapt to complex systems challenges in a dramatically changing world

- Welcome
- Consulting Framework
- Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS)
- Evolution of Complex Adaptive Systems
- Consulting in Adaptive Systems
- Take Aways



What are your core consulting skills, knowledge, expertise?

# Consulting Framework

# A Macro Map for Consulting

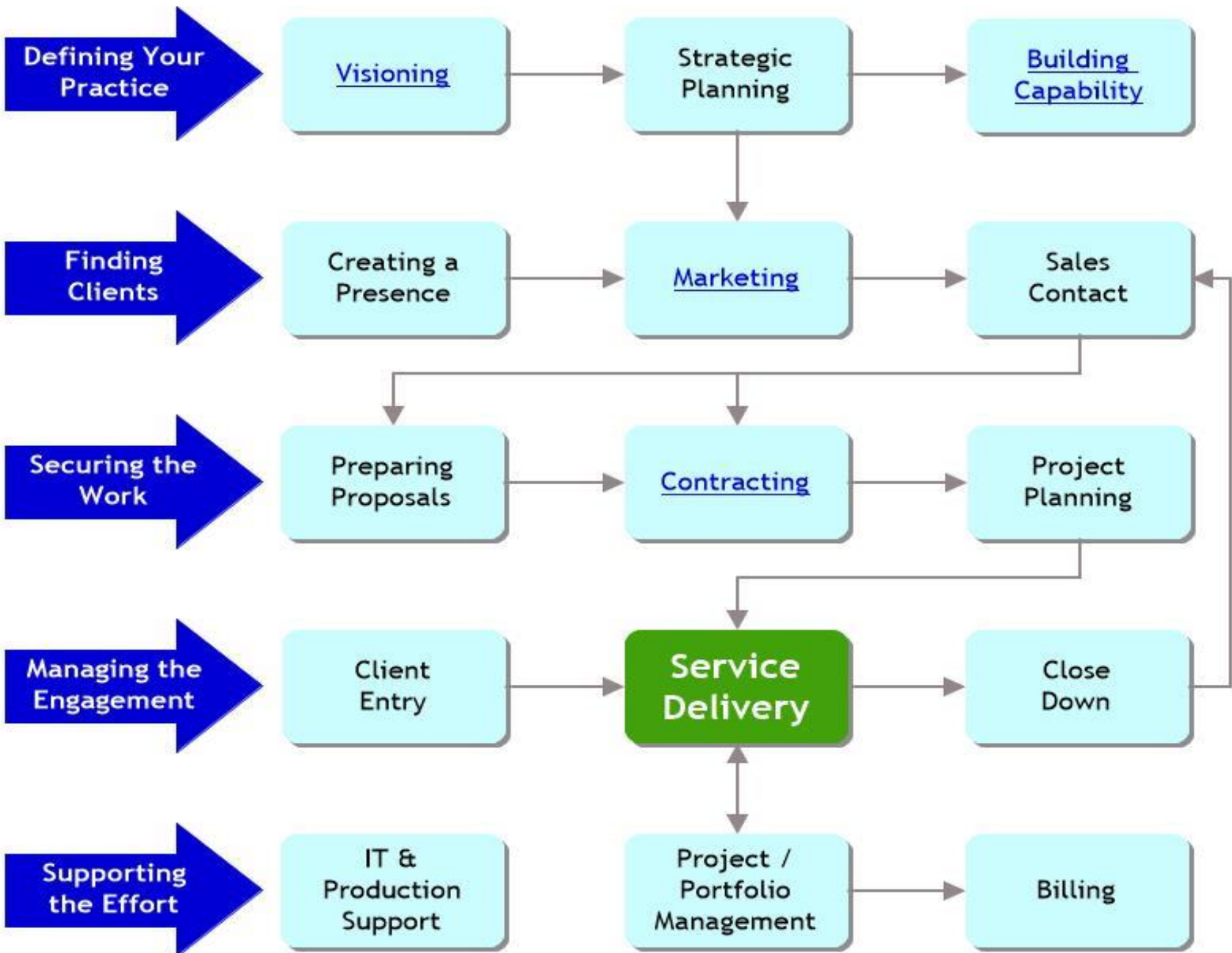
- Balancing
- Intention
  - Capability
  - Market Acceptance

- Represent the richness and uniqueness of your offering,
- Do it efficiently.
- Remaining authentic.

- Securing an initial contract with both clarity and elasticity.
- Translating broad outcomes into a WBS.

- Delivering perceived value within the promised contract
- Give voice to collective (and often unpopular) wisdom.

- Ensuring service delivery does not stumble
- Keeping the evolving contract visible and consensual



## Basic Tools

- Reflect
- Modeling
- Run Meetings
- Interview
- Survey
- Write Reports
- Present
- Facilitate
- Train
- Conduct Workshops

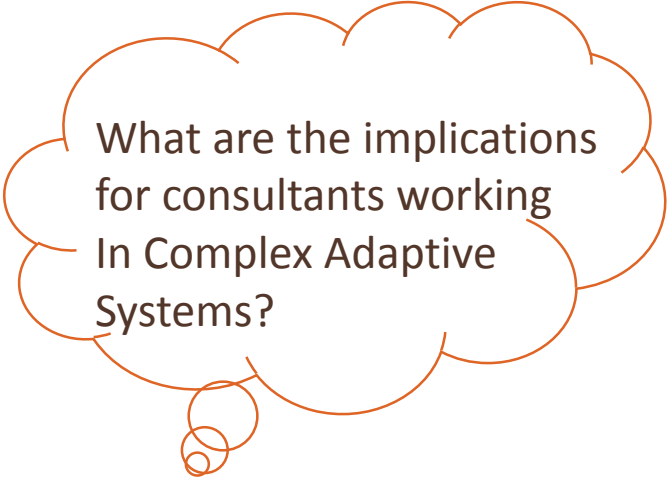
# Service Delivery

## Service Delivery

*Service Delivery* represents the wide range of knowledge, skills, expertise organization consultants apply to their client engagements.

- OD
- Org Design
- Strategy Development
- Change Management
- Communication
- Training
- Project Management

- Team Development
- Coaching
- Social Technical Systems*
- Agile*
- Adaptive Systems*
- Other?*



What are the implications  
for consultants working  
In Complex Adaptive  
Systems?

# Complex Adaptive Systems



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### **Adaptability:**

It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent; it is the one that is most adaptable to change. (Charles Darwin)

# Complex Systems

## Defined

Complexity is an interdisciplinary theory that grew out of systems thinking and cybernetics in the 1960s. It draws from research in the natural and physical sciences that examine **uncertainty** and **non-linearity**. Complexity theory emphasizes **interactions** and the accompanying **feedback loops** that constantly change systems. While it proposes that **systems are unpredictable**, they are also constrained by **order-generating rules**.

## Refined

*Complexity* is a concept that helps current and future leaders make sense of the organizational, political and regional challenges they are facing due to the rapid changes in technology, globalization, markets, culture. “In short, the science of complexity can help all of us address the challenges and opportunities we face in a new epoch of human history.

*David Snowden 2007*



# Complex Systems – Other Thoughts

## Complex Systems --Other Thoughts

- XXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXX

# Leadership Decisions in Multiple Contexts

	Context	Leader's Role	Danger Signals	Responses	Consultant Role
Simple	Consistent events Clear cause/effect Fact-based decisions	Categorize, respond Follow procedures Communicate clearly	Complacency Simplify issues Reliance on BP	Updated communication Stay connected Assume complexity	
Complicated	Requires expert input Emergent cause/effect Fact-based decisions	Analyze, respond Create panels of experts Listen to differing advice	Experts over confident Analysis paralysis Non experts viewpoints	Involve ext/int input Invite creative thinking Think outside box	
Complex	Flux, unpredictability Many competing ideas innovative approaches	Probe, sense, respond Support innovative ideas Increase interaction	Fall back on command Focus on fact vs pattern Speed up solution	Be patient Encourage reflection Encourage interaction Let patterns to emerge	Implications for consultants?
Chaos	High turbulence, tension No clear cause/effect Too many decisions	Act, sense, respond Look for what works Take action for order Provide clear messaging	Command/control "cult" of leader Chaos unabated	Setup parallel teams Urge open dialogue Shift chaos to complex	

Ordered  
Unordered

*A Leader's Framework for Decision Making, David J. Snowden, Mary E. Boone, HRB, Nov 2007.*

# Consulting in Complex Adaptive Systems\*

## 20<sup>th</sup> Century Organizations

- Linear Change
- Planned Staged change
- Change targets
- Primary design
- Environment scan
- Bureaucratic rules
- Dynamic equilibrium

## Complex Adaptive Systems

- Nonlinear Change
- Iterative Agile Theory
- Self organizing
- Primary-who ever lives in the system
- Co-evolution in response to context
- Flexible rules
- Edge of chaos

\*Dave Roitman, STS Presentation, Sept 2016

# Your Perspective and Input

- Comments or reactions to Snowden's framework on organization contexts?

- What are the implications for your consulting practice?

- What actions might you take to work in Complex Systems if any?

# Complexity Systems Highlights

A complex system has the following characteristics:

- It involves a large number of **interacting elements**
- The interactions are **nonlinear**
- The system is dynamic, the **whole is greater than** the sum of its **parts**
- Solutions** cannot be imposed; they **emerge** from the circumstances
- The system has a **history**, which is integrated with the present
- Hindsight does not always lead to foresight** because circumstances and systems constantly change

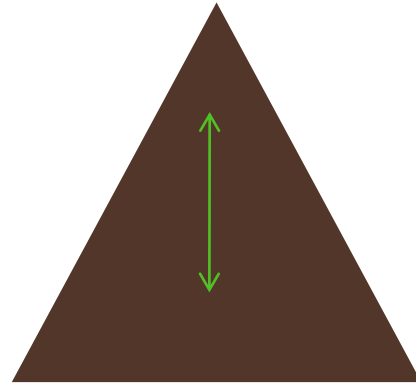
*A Leader's Framework for Decision Making, David J. Snowden, Mary E. Boone, HRB, Nov 2007.*



# Evolution of Complex Adaptive Systems

# Complex Adaptive Systems

## Evolution of Organization Design



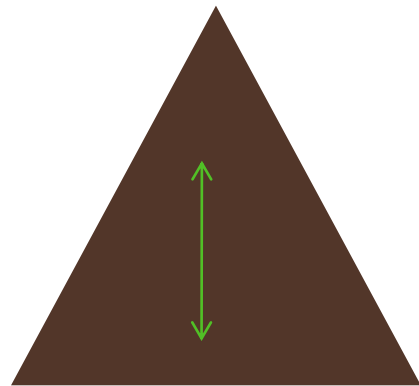
Vertical Integrated Systems

# Complex Adaptive Systems

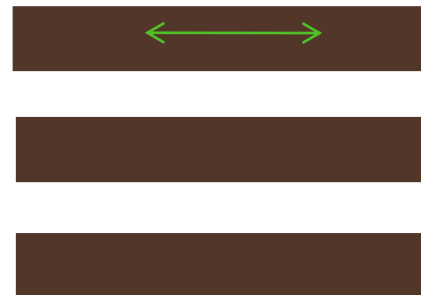
## Information Processing View

“A basic proposition is that the greater the uncertainty of the task, the greater the amount of information that has to be processed between decision makers during the execution of the task”

Jay R. Galbraith: *'Organization Design - An Information Processing View', Interfaces 1974*



Vertical



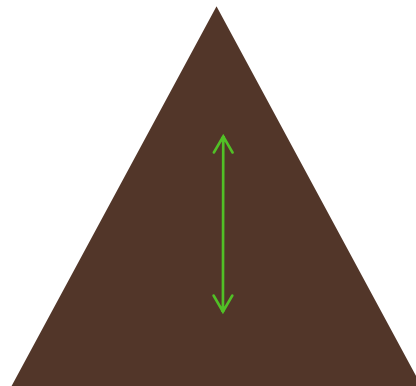
Lateral



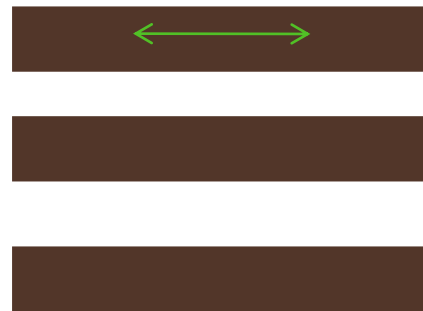
# Complex Adaptive Systems

## Organizations as Networks

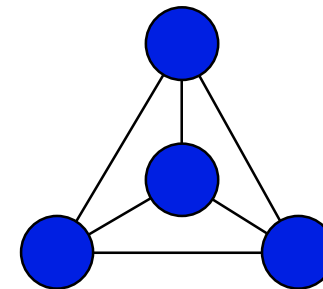
Third Organizational shift is where networks are more effective processors of information



Vertical



Lateral



Network

# Complex Adaptive Systems

Verticals, Horizontals, four to six dimensions, heavy matrixes



# Complex Adaptive Systems

Rapidly increasing and run away complexity



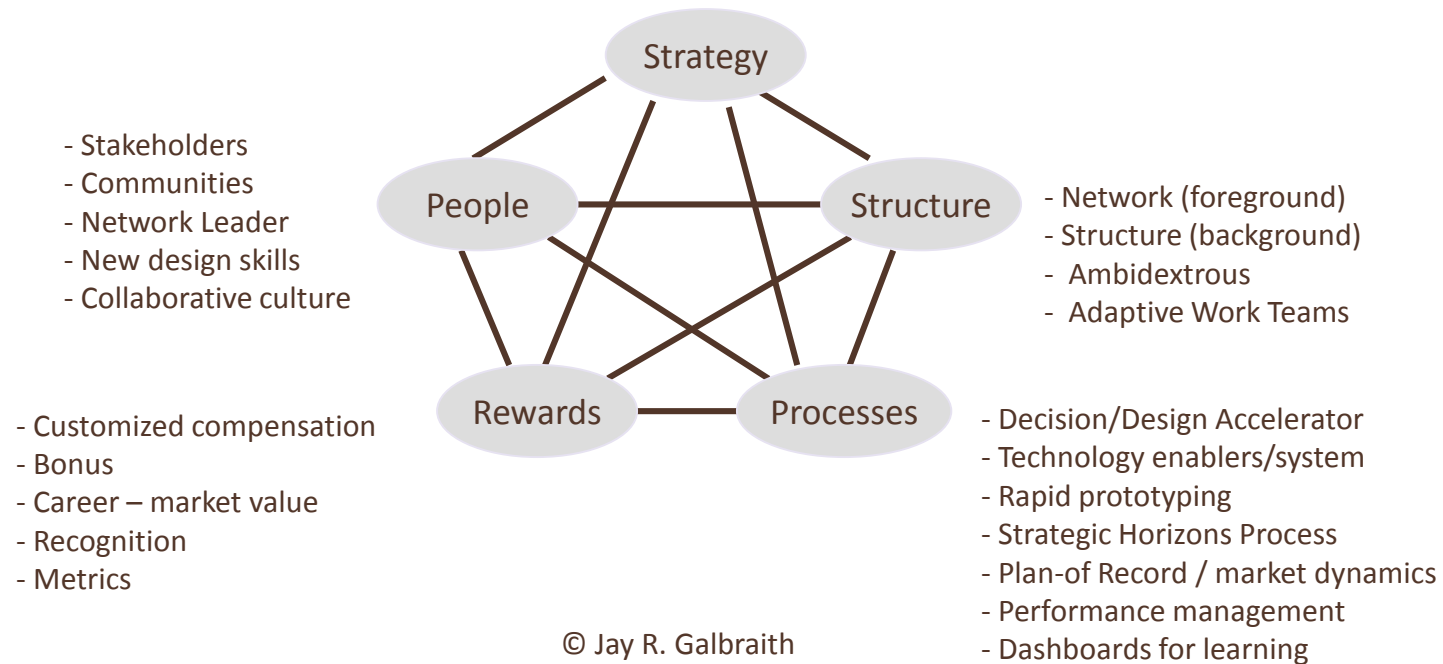
# Consulting in Complex Adaptive Systems

# Adaptive Work System

## Organization Design View

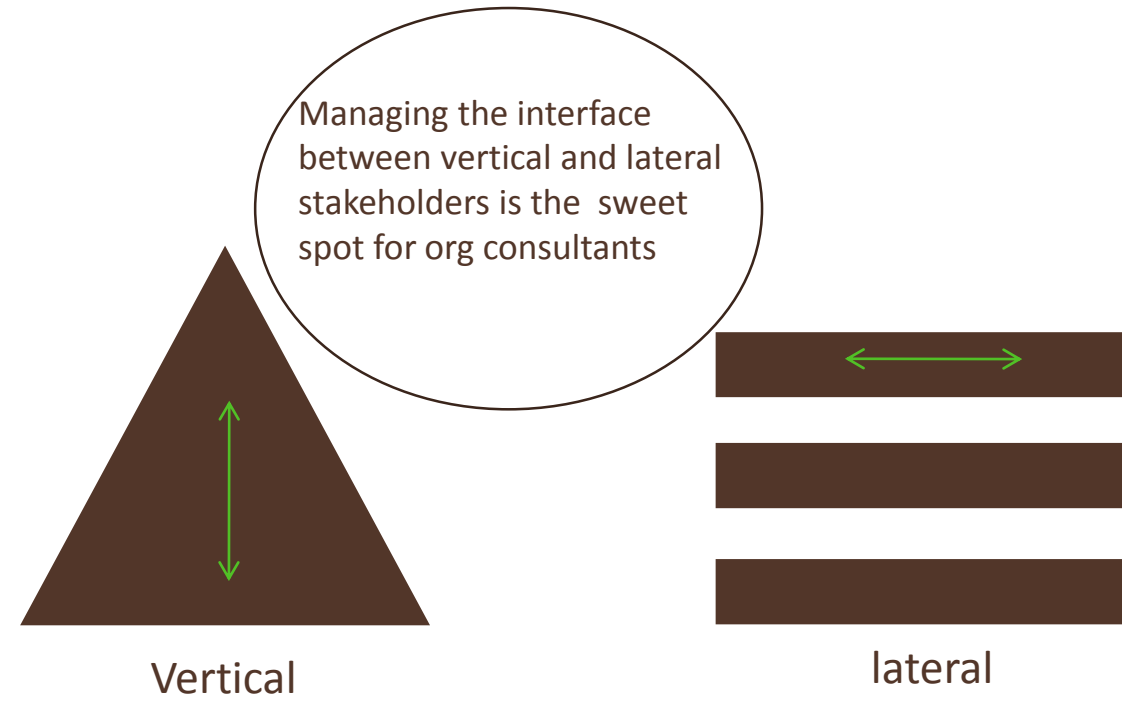
### The Agility and Speed Star Model

-Agility, flexibility, speed,  
and re-configurability



# Complex Adaptive Systems

Consulting at the vertical/lateral interface



# Consulting in Complex Systems

## Approaches and Methods Used to Consult in Complex Adaptive Systems

- XXXXXXX,
- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXX

# Take Aways



# Take Aways

*What skills, knowledge, expertise do I need to work effectively in Complex Adaptive Systems?*

Skills	Knowledge/Theory	Expertise	Methodology/Tools	Consultant Role
Facilitation Skills Assessing readiness Diagnostic skills	Org Design STS Cybernetics Network Theory	Org design Large Group Design Change Management CAS Network Design	SCRUM Agile Ethnography	Pair of Hands? Collaborative? Expert?

Thank You!

# Complex Adaptive Systems

## Verticals, Horizontals, Networks, Adaptive Work Groups

The Decision/Design Accelerator is a powerful management tool/intervention which improves both execution performance and innovation capability. We define the DA as a creative, knowledge rich, technology-enabled, highly collaborative environment where clients participate in work sessions to create solutions to complex business problems.

The DA is an organizational capability whose characteristics and benefits generally do not exist in traditional organizations and thus provides a source of advantage – reduced time to value (speed), maximizes productivity of resources (costs), accelerates stakeholder commitment (empowerment), significantly increases social capital (integration), and solves complex business problems with concrete solutions.

