A close-up photograph of a woman with reddish-brown hair, wearing tortoiseshell glasses. She is looking upwards and to the right with a thoughtful expression. The background is a blurred office setting. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Think Like an Executive— Recognize and Employ the Strategic Mindset

Pamela J. Green, SPHR, PCC, ICC

Our Dilemma: Myopia



“Some leaders are so focused on their department needs that they can’t make the connection to one another nor the work being performed in the rest of the company.”

— Anonymous Client



What does it mean to “be strategic”?

Being “strategic” means you can successfully navigate between ground-level and birds-eye views to create a vision for the future.

Strategic leaders, therefore, leverage that vision to engage and motivate those at the ground level to follow their direction.

What does it take to become a strategic leader?





Three Steps to Strategic
Leadership



Step 1

Evaluate Your Attachment

Step 1: Evaluate Your Attachment

- Are you more attached to your own performance (job knowledge) or to the performance of the organization (being strategic)?
- Clue: how is your performance measured?
- Clue: are mistakes blamed on others or are they owned by leaders?



Being Too Attached to Your Skills/Your Performance Can Lead You To....

Prior Performance Attachment

Peter Principle

A person who is incapable of rising to the duties and responsibilities required to execute their job effectively because the skills in one job do not necessarily translate to another.

Attachment To Themselves

Illusory Superiority

They mistake their cognitive ability and intelligence to be greater than those around them. This low-ability person is incapable of recognizing and evaluating their ineptitude.

Attachment to Self-doubt

Imposter Syndrome

This is when smart, capable people underestimate their abilities.



Step 2

Establish a Growth Mindset





The Brain

People with a growth mindset believe that intelligence, skills, learning, and creativity can all grow with time and experience.

We now know through the work of neuroplasticity that neural pathways are the basis of our habits of thinking, feeling, and acting. They are what we believe is true and why we do what we do.

Therefore, both our intelligence and personality can change.



Distinguishing the two:

Fixed mindsets are concerned with how they are being judged. In the panel scenario, a person with a fixed mindset was thinking that their ability was on the line. People are thinking about them and judging them. For this reason, their tension is through the roof.

People not given feedback are in jeopardy of remaining in a fixed mindset.



Eight Management Strategies to Establish a Growth Mindset

1. Ask for feedback.
2. See the situation with a comma, not a period.
3. Slow down the process whenever possible.
4. Believe you're fully capable. You have everything you need to navigate the moment.
5. Appreciate the journey. Associate it with positive emotions.
6. Become mindful of your self-talk. Are you leading in the failing of others or helping them to learn?
7. Celebrate progress.
8. Acknowledge shortcomings and move forward.



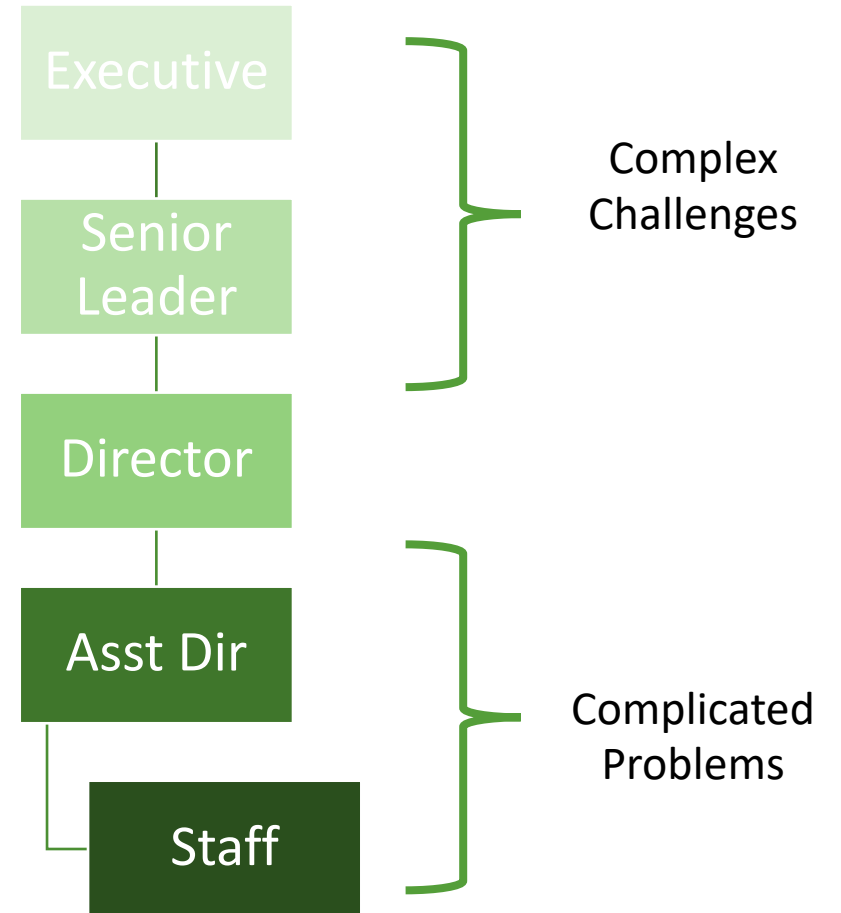


Step 3

Get out of the weeds



Are You Too Into the Weeds?



Why is Leadership Challenging?

Complicated Problems

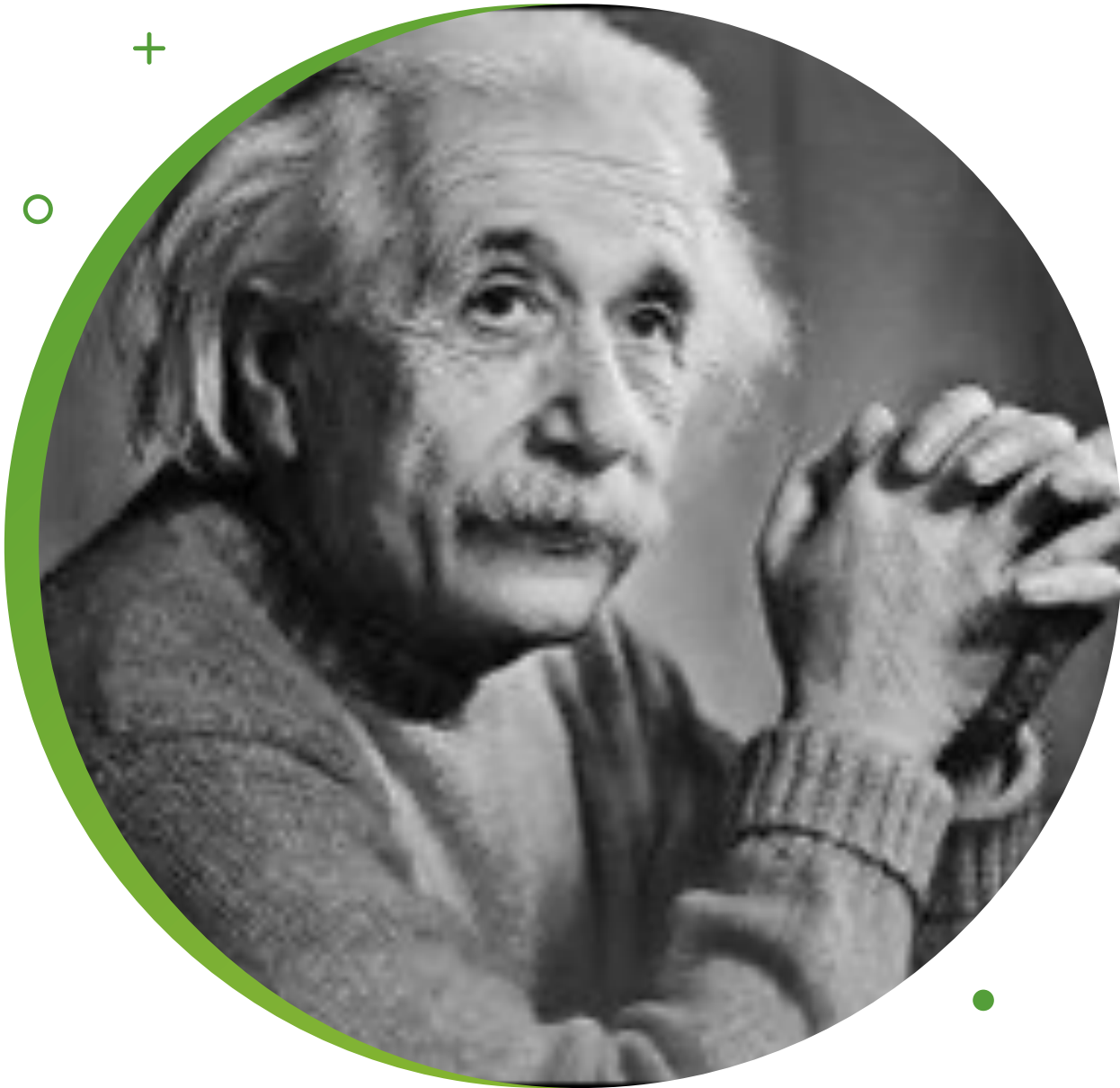
- A machine breaks down.
- An employee is repeatedly late.
- A technology solution is required to improve the customer experience.
- Employees are slow to adopt a new procedure.
- New hires need help getting acclimated to the culture.
- The dress code needs to change to resolve safety concerns.

Complex Problems

- You're running out of funding.
- A new competitor is moving into town, and employees find them attractive.
- Culture clashing among employees.
- A high-performing but ineffective leader relies on manipulation rather than influence to manage change which goes against your values.
- Leaders make consensus-based decisions that slow progress.

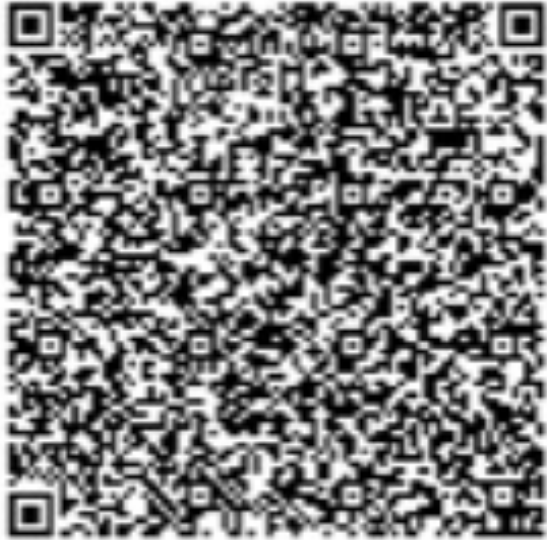
Shift to Executive Thinking

- Evaluate your attachment and elevate your thinking to the challenges outside of your area.
- Develop a growth mindset.
- Examine the type of problems you like to solve: complicated or complex. Start engaging in more complex problems.
- Learn to get comfortable with the complex so you can come up out of the weeds.
- Empower and delegate to give yourself room to focus.
- Develop skills necessary to lead at strategic levels.
- Practice, practice, practice new ways of thinking and leading.



“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”
— Albert Einstein

I'd love to hear from you:



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