

Leading Through Crisis & Change

Personalize Action Plans
to Address Specific
Challenges

Workshop 3

La Piana
CONSULTING



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Introductions in Chat

- ✓ Name
- ✓ Role
- ✓ Pronouns
- ✓ Organization
- ✓ One word to describe how you're feeling entering today's conversation



3-Part Series

Workshop 1

Identify and implement leadership strategies to effectively manage crises and organizational changes

Workshop 2

Strengthen communication and decision-making skills to build trust and maintain stability during uncertainty

Workshop 3

Learn how to **personalize action plans** to address specific challenges facing your nonprofit organization

Participation Norms



Be present and open



Share generously and listen actively



Confidentiality: what's shared here stays here



Take what you need, leave what you don't

Workshop 1 – Recap

- Skills for leading through crisis and change, including what “good leadership” and “ineffective leadership” looks like
- Technical vs. adaptive challenges and why the distinction is important
- Crisis leadership framework
- Call to action – what leaders should be doing “right now”
- Small group discussions on superpowers, adaptive challenges, crisis leadership framework reflection, and key upcoming priorities.

Workshop 2 – Recap

- Decision-making
- Leadership approaches to communication
- Building trust in communication during periods of crisis or change
- How to communicate the “unknown”
- Communication strategies
- Strategy screen
- IAP2 Spectrum of public participation
- RACI, DARCI, MOCHA

Workshop 3 Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:



Self-Assessment



Identify a goal



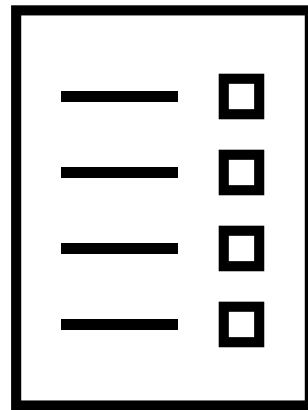
Identify a tool



Lay the groundwork for action planning

Agenda

- DEI Stance
- Scenario Mapping
- Self-Assessment
- Goal Setting
- Choosing the right tool
- Action planning
- Resources + Q&A



Holding Your DEI Line in Crisis

- Decide your stance/strategy:
 - Option A: Resist, be loud and proud
 - Option B: Supportive but subversive
 - Option C: Do the work but lay low and shift language to avoid risk
- Focus on your impact and outcomes rather than ideology
- Redefine language while staying values aligned
- Review legal frameworks with counsel, updating criteria transparently
- Remain in compliance, have everything in order
- Host internal dialogues and stakeholder education
- Publish solidarity statements, building coalitions



A VUCA*

(Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous)

World is Becoming the Norm



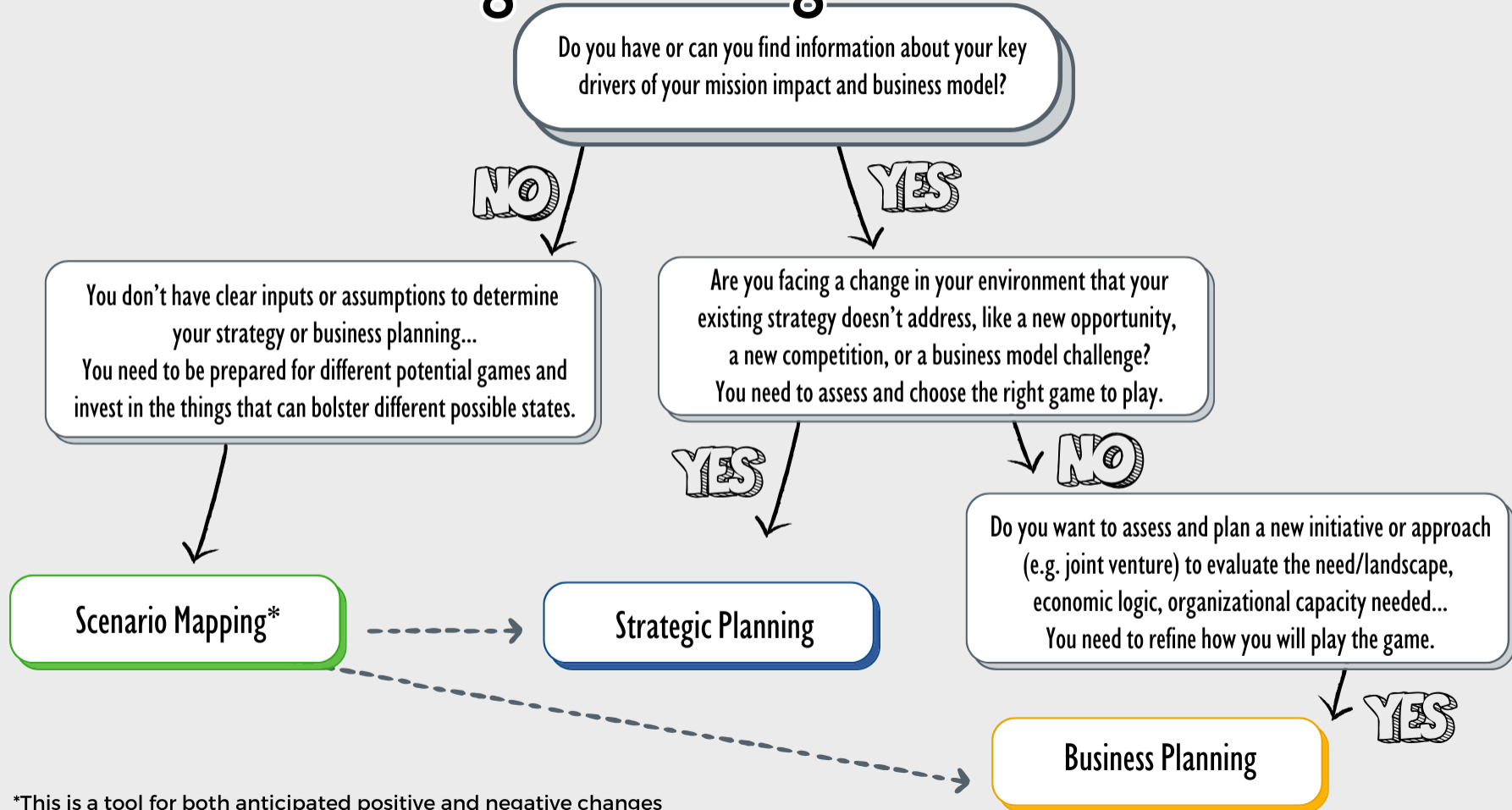
*Concept: US Army War College (1987)

How much do you know about the situation?

How well can you predict the outcomes of your actions?

- **Volatility:** frequent, rapid, and significant changes where even small triggers can result in larger-than-expected shifts.
- **Uncertainty:** events are unpredictable, cause and effect are not well understood, and previous experience doesn't help make sense of it.
- **Complexity:** interconnected issues and the relationships between these issues are difficult to understand.
- **Ambiguity:** lack of clarity, making it difficult to understand what the situation actually is and to discern future trends.

Choose the Right Planning Tools for Your Situation



Scenario Mapping

Scenario Planning may be a useful tool if...

- You are likely facing a very different environment but are unsure exactly what it will be
- Your operation or funding is sensitive to fluctuations in the larger economy or political climate

Scenario planning can be a good first step before strategic or business planning

Strategic Planning

You are a good candidate for strategic planning if...

- Your environment (regulatory, funding, market demand, etc.) is relatively stable
- Your competitors are well known
- You can understand any key factors that are not yet clear
- You expect any changes in your environment to be modest in scale
- You do not anticipate being targeted politically for your work
- You expect the future to build on past and current trends
- Your funding model is sustainable

Business Planning

You may need to consider business planning if...

- Your strategy demands major new investments or shifts in funding/operations
- You face major operating decisions (e.g. starting/stopping or growing/shrinking activities)
- You plan to expand, contract, or change your geographic scope
- Technology innovations disrupt your operation and/or market position
- You anticipate threats to your business model (program scope, competition, and/or funding mix)
- You need to better understand your cost structure, pricing, and financial position

Questions?



Self Assessment, Considerations, & Prompts...



Scenario Mapping



Prioritization



Leadership



Communication



Self-Assessment

Scenario Mapping During Periods of Change

1 – Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree



In 2025...

1. My team and I have taken stock of all of our work and we know what is most at risk.
2. My team and I have mapped out more than one potential scenario so we are proactively prepared for any possible outcome.
3. My team and I have discussed our most critical, important work – we know our must do's.
4. My team and I have engaged in planning for a new way to doing our work (e.g. partnership, new program, new funding strategy, etc.)
5. My team and I have identified opportunities for collaboration and partnership to meet the evolving needs of our community.

Scenario Mapping Considerations



- **Assemble a team:** take stock of assets and risks
- **Map scenarios:** consider each drivers' likelihood, potential impact, and interactions
- **Identify your actions and guardrails:** List Must Do's, Won't Do's, and Might Do's
- **Consider existential options:** hang on, merge/partner, or close
- **Take care of yourself:** your resilience will enhance your decision making

Scenario Mapping Prompts



- Are the assumptions that inform our strategy confirmed?
- Are we faced with a new opportunity or need?
- What is key role we play in the ecosystem?
- Do we have a variety of funding sources?
- Do we know where we won't waver?
- How will we live in our values in the face of a catastrophic situation?

Self-Assessment

Prioritization During Periods of Change



1 – Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree

In 2025...

1. My team and I are aligned on the core activities we must prioritize right now and have a strong rationale to support our decision.
2. My team and I have discussed revising our organizational strategy to meet an emergent and important need.
3. My team and I have discussed under what conditions we will need to pivot or change our strategy or activities.
4. I have mapped our most urgent activities.
5. I know, with certainty, where we make the biggest impact.

Prioritization Considerations



- Define what stability means for your organization
 - $\text{Stability} = \text{Consistency} + \text{Trust} + \text{Adaptability}$
- In extreme cases, you may need to put a hold on everything that is non-essential and re-orient resources to cover the essential work.
- Reassess timelines for non-essential work
- Monitor priorities often, have criteria for pivoting
- It's not about doing more with less, but making sure essentials stay strong.
- Chaos-Stability Spectrum
 - High Chaos – daily shifts, roles unclear
 - Moderate Stability – prioritized activities, clear communications
 - High Stability – predictable workflows, resilient team

Prioritization Prompts



- What is most essential to our mission right now?
- Who will be most impacted – positively or negatively – by what we choose to do (or not do)?
- What are we uniquely positioned to do well at this moment?
- What activities are urgent versus important – and can we distinguish the two?
- What can we stop, pause, or delegate to free up capacity?
- What resources do we have and what do we realistically need?
- In what sequence will our actions build on each other for maximum impact and momentum?

Self-Assessment Leadership Skills During Periods of Change

1 – Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree



In 2025...

1. I have been successful with pivoting or changing plans to meet evolving needs.
2. I have modeled our organizational values in my approach to communication, leadership, and decision-making.
3. I have created shared spaces for innovation, brainstorming, and creative decision-making, including delegating tasks.
4. I have taken a step back to really observe and analyze a problem before identifying a solution.
5. I have identified and differentiated my approach to an adaptive versus technical challenges.

Leadership Strategy Considerations



- **Name the moment** — acknowledge what's happening
- **Anchor in values** — return to mission & core beliefs
- **Overcommunicate with intention**
- **Create short-term action plans**
- **Protect your people**
- **Mindset**
 - Embrace imperfect decisions
 - Stay consistent in presence and tone
 - Allow room for grief, tension, and creativity
 - Model flexibility without chaos

Leadership Prompts



- What do my team and community most need from me right now – clarity, calmness, decisiveness, or empathy?
- What values do I need to hold steady – even when everything feels uncertain?
- How can I communicate with transparency even when I don't have all the answers?
- What signals should I be listening to – internally and externally – to guide our next steps?
- Am I creating space for others to lead, speak up, and share responsibility?

Self-Assessment Communication During Periods of Change



1 – Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree

In 2025...

1. I have communicated with transparency and in a timely manner, even when the path wasn't clear.
2. I have had anticipation brainstorms and been proactive, rather than reactive (e.g. I have scripts prepared for more than one scenario).
3. I have clear communication strategies for different stakeholders.
4. My team and I have openly talked about leadership tensions and become aligned on our communications approach.
5. I have a decision-making protocol that we follow, with clearly defined roles.

Communication Strategy Considerations



- Reconnect with your mission
- Lead with transparency
- Speak directly to each audience
- Use the right channels and use them often
- Be simple, clear, and consistent
- Anticipate, don't just react

Communication Prompts



- What do I know?
- What am I exploring?
- What don't I know yet?
- Am I being transparent?
- Do I have the right balance of authority and empathy?

Reflection, which assessment did you score LOWEST on? What is your goal?

Goal 1. *I aim to map out different scenarios, so I am prepared for a “VUCA” ecosystem.*

Goal 2. *I aim to prioritize, sequence, and/or modify our programming to meet the current moment.*

Goal 3. *I aim to implement a new leadership strategy that is particularly important during this period of uncertainty.*

Goal 4. *I aim to implement a new communication strategy that is particularly important during this period of uncertainty.*

Small Groups

1. What is your goal?
2. What is the desired outcome of your goal?

La Piana Resources

- [Do I need a Strategic, Business, or Scenario Plan?](#)
- [Leading with Clarity: Communicating Through Volatile Times](#)
- [Unlikely Alliances: How Nonprofits Can Acquire For-Profits as a Strategic Option](#)
- [Career Advice for Senior Leaders](#)
- [Scenario Planning in Times of Crisis: The Board – Executive Partnership](#)
- [Nonprofit Scenario Planning in an Age of Chaos](#)
- [Strategy is Back in Style](#)
- [Subscribe to our Quarterly Newsletter](#)



Resources: Workshop 1

Leadership in Crisis

- Heifetz & Linsky, *Leadership in a (Permanent) Crisis*, HBR (2009)
[Read Article](#)
- **The Practice of Adaptive Leadership** by Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky
[Book Info](#)
- **Bridgespan: Resilient Leadership in Uncertain Times**
[Read Article](#)
- adrienne maree brown, *Emergent Strategy*
[Book Info](#)

Crisis Management & Communication

- **15 Strategies to Adopt When Navigating Nonprofit Crisis Management**
Offers insights on strategic foresight, stakeholder communication, & scenario planning.
[Read more](#)
- **Crisis Communication Planning and Strategies for Nonprofit Leaders**
A comprehensive guide on developing effective crisis communication plans.
(Book)

Thought Leadership & Commentary

- **NonprofitAF Blog** (Vu Le)
[Visit Site](#)



Resources Workshop 1



Financial Resilience

- **How to Prepare Your Nonprofit for a Recession**
Provides practical steps for financial planning during economic downturns.
[Read more](#)
- **Fundraising During a Recession Playbook**
Outlines strategies to maintain fundraising efforts amid economic challenges.
[Read more](#)
- **CEP: Managing Through Tough Times**
[Read Report](#)



Sustaining DEI Efforts

- **DEI Initiatives in the Crosshairs of the Administration**
Discusses legal considerations and risk assessments for DEI programs under political scrutiny.
[Read more](#)
- **Holding the Line: Strategies for Sustaining DEI Amid the Rising Tide of Opposition**
Offers actionable measures to protect and advance DEI initiatives.
[Read more](#)
- **ProInspire's Equity in Leadership Framework**
[View Framework](#)



Resources Workshop 1

Workforce Well-being

- **The Nonprofit Workforce is in Crisis**
Highlights challenges in nonprofit staffing and suggests resilience-building programs.
[Read more](#)
- **Addressing the Nonprofit Workforce Crisis: 4 Practical Strategies**
Provides strategies to improve staff retention and organizational culture.
[Read more](#)

Navigating Political Challenges

- **Resiliency Strategies for Nonprofits in Times of Political and Financial Instability**
Discusses approaches to maintain operations amid political and financial uncertainties.
[Read more](#)
- **A Time of Crisis: As Nonprofit Leaders Face Extraordinary Challenges, Here's What They Are Saying**
Shares insights from nonprofit leaders on current challenges and needed support.
[Read more](#)



Resources: Workshop 2

Leadership & Crisis Communication

- Be the Calm in the Storm: How to Communicate with Staff and Stakeholders During a Crisis
– *Bridgespan*
- Decision-Making in Nonprofits
– *Nonprofit Quarterly*
- Awake to Woke to Work®: Building a Race Equity Culture™
– *Equity in the Center*
- Managing Uncertainty: What to Communicate to Your Team
– *The Management Center*
- Managing Through Tough Times
– *Bridgespan*
- Adaptive Leadership Framework
– *Heifetz, Harvard Kennedy School (HKS)*



Resources: Workshop 2

Decision-Making & Role Clarification

- <https://www.managementcenter.org/?s=decision+making>
- <https://www.managementcenter.org/?s=role+clarification>
- https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/spectrum_8.5x11_print.pdf



Resources: Workshop 3

Action Planning

- Eisenhower matrix
- La Piana prioritization tool
- Strategy screen
- Start, stop, continue
- Scenario planning templates
- Managing when things are not okay





Thank you!

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