

Working in Complexity

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Unpredictable

Unknowable

Unrepeatable patterns

*Cause and effect
knowable retroactively*

UNORDERED

Predictable

Knowable

Repeatable

Cause and effect clear

ORDERED

What other distinctions can you think of?

**What are five deliverables
you are responsible for?**

Write these clearly, one deliverable
per post it note

Method: Contextualizing

At your table, cluster your post-its according to the following categories:

1. This is something where the work is self evident
2. This is something experts or expert analysis has the right answer
3. This is something where there are many ways to address it with no finish lines
4. This is something that is random

CYNEFIN FRAMEWORK

COMPLEX

- Cause and effect can be understood only partially and only retrospectively
- Groups help us do it
- Evaluation: Developmental, learning monitor and keep sensing the current state and gauge against preferred direction
- Emergent practices apply
- Harvest collective intelligence

COMPLICATED

- Cause and effect are knowable and predictable
- Experts help us do it
- Evaluation: Summative, analytical, measure results against goals
- Good practices apply
- Harvest expertise

DISORDER

CHAOTIC

- Cause and effect are so unpredictable as to appear random
- Trained crews help us do it
- Evaluation: Figure out what you did after the situation stabilizes
- Novel practices apply
- Harvest wisdom

OBVIOUS

- Cause and effect are obvious
- Anyone can do it
- Evaluation: Either it worked or it didn't
- Best practices apply
- Harvest knowledge

COMPLEX

COMPLICATED

Engage

Analyse

Do and learn

Plan and do

Diversity

Expertise

Emergent practice

Best or Good Practice from precedents

Coherent with context

Right and wrong

Safe to fail

Fail Safe

Resilience

Robust solutions

Rapid cycle iteration

Project Management

Developmental evaluation

Summative evaluation

Leadership and Direction

Leader and Destination

A closer look at Complexity

Start by understanding the system as it is

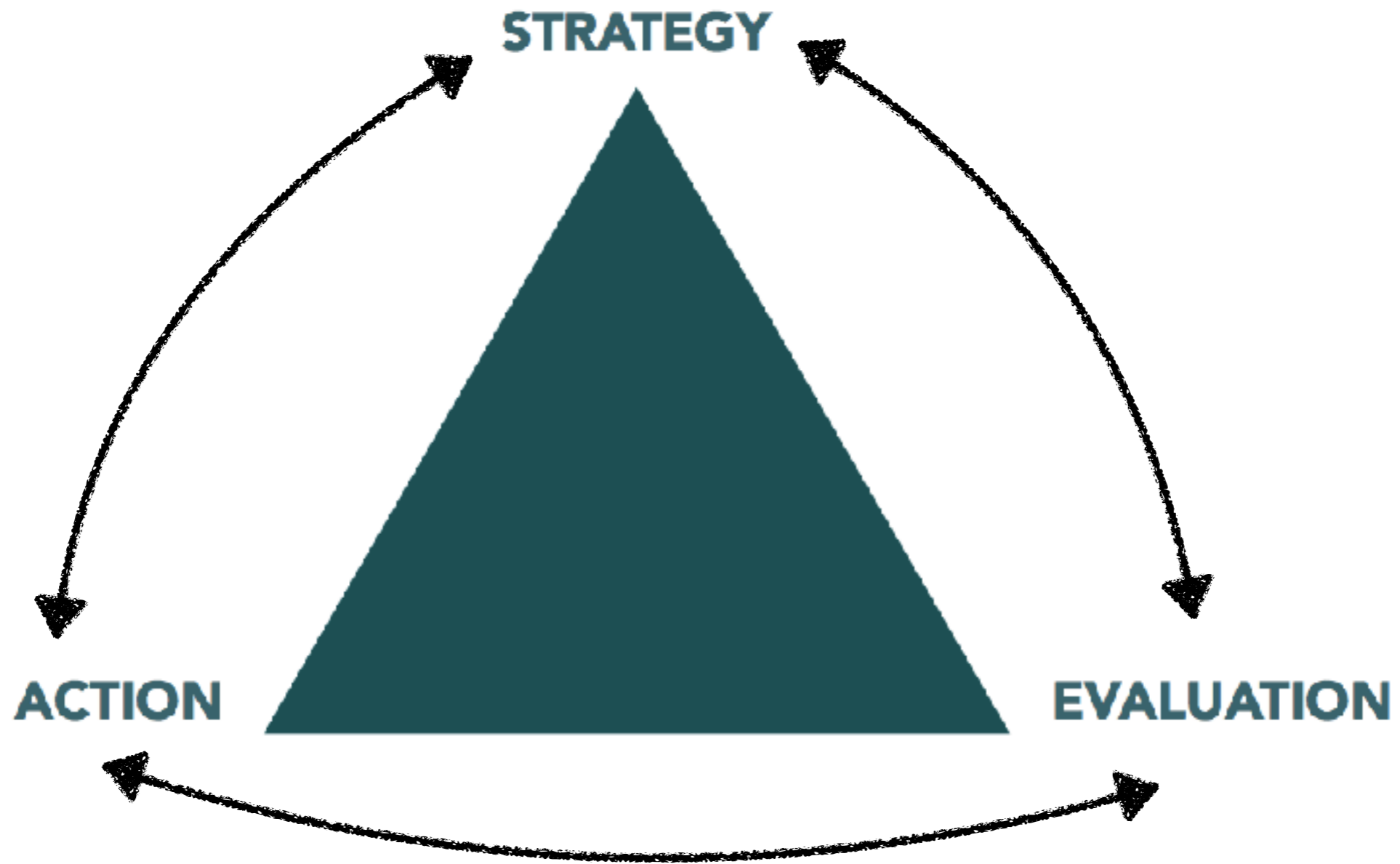
Understand how it is inclined to change or not:

Deep yes's and deep no's

Patterns which create stability,
patterns which create change

Understand the direction you want to go in:
journeys not destinations

Implications



Strategy and planning

Diversity helps because no one can know the whole

Outliers are critical

Work to address patterns not solve data points

Power, leadership and knowledge is distributed

Planning needs to be adaptive

Method: Signifying data

Think of five little stories that make you think “Things need to change!”

Mark them with a 1, 2 or 3.

1 means “I’m the only one who thinks this”

2 means “Me and a few close confindants get this”

3 means “Everyone knows this”

Method: Signifying data

Cluster these into groups of challenges and give each cluster a title.

SIGNAL PATTERNS



Taking action

Probe - sense - respond

Parallel multiple safe-to-fail experiments

You are trying to shift patterns

Every intervention will have unintended consequences

Explore before exploiting

Method: Safe to fail probes

Together, select the biggest pile of post it notes. In pairs design a probe that could address that cluster. Use this template:

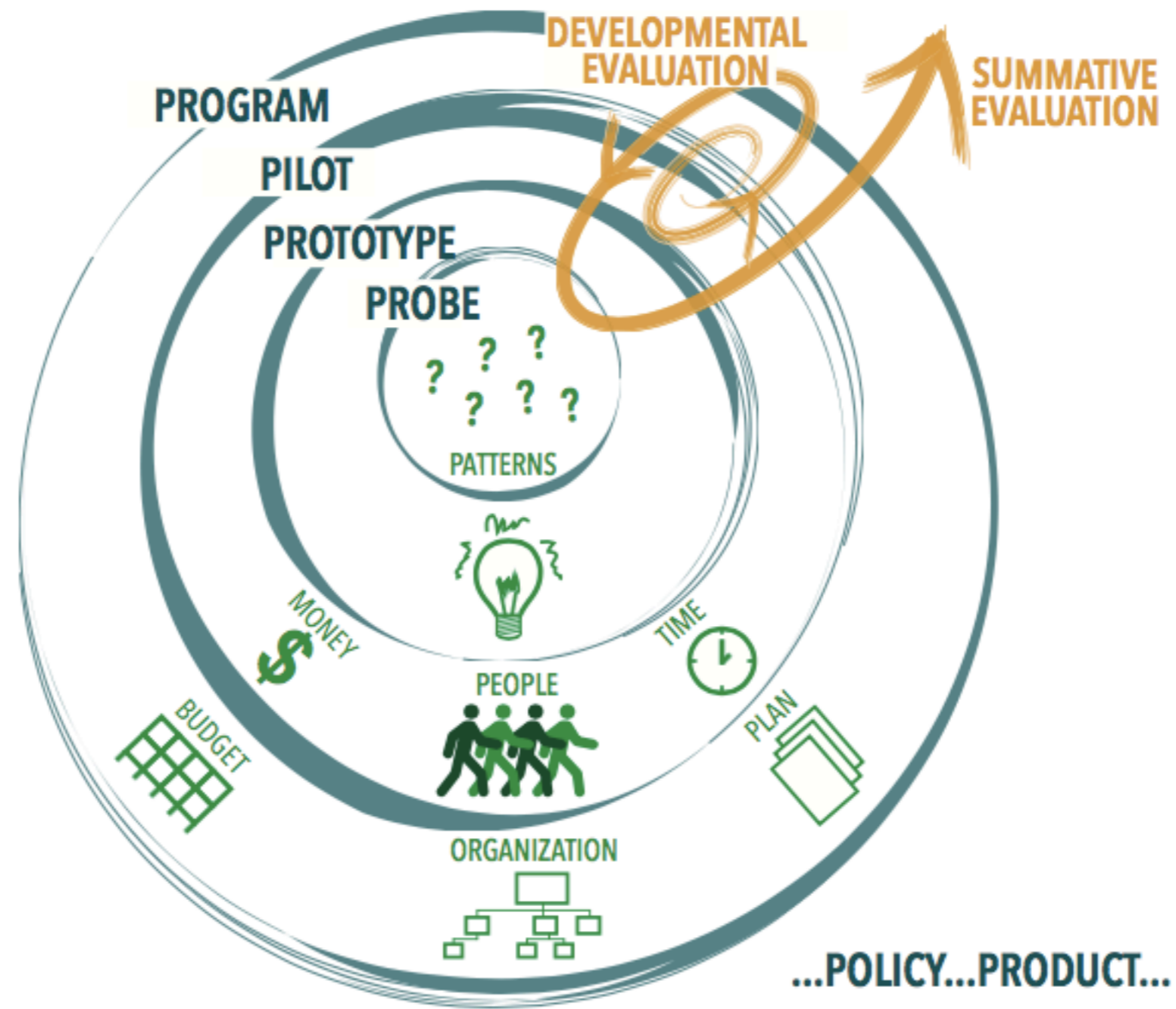
What is the action? Why does it make sense to try this?

What is an expected sign of success?

What is a possible sign(s) of failure

From Cognitive Edge: <http://cognitive-edge.com/methods/safe-to-fail-probes/>

PROBES, PROTOTYPES, PILOTS



Evaluation

Monitor to understand where you are

Describe the situation first before interpreting it

Make sense together

Do have a sense of what improvement looks like

**Identify, understand, pivot
(What? So what? Now what?)**

Method: W3

First stage: **WHAT?** “What happened? What did you notice, what facts or observations stood out?”

Second stage: **SO WHAT?** “Why is that important? What patterns or conclusions are emerging? What hypotheses can I/we make?”

Third stage: **NOW WHAT?** “Now what? What actions make sense?”

From Liberating Structures: <http://www.liberatingstructures.com/9-what-so-what-now-what-w/>