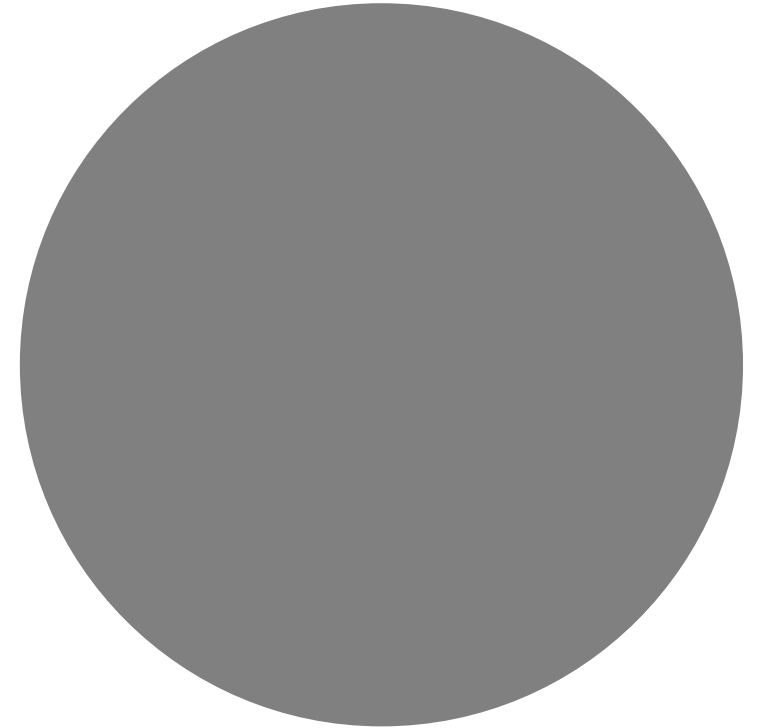# Advancing the Individual and Organizational Boundaries of Innovation
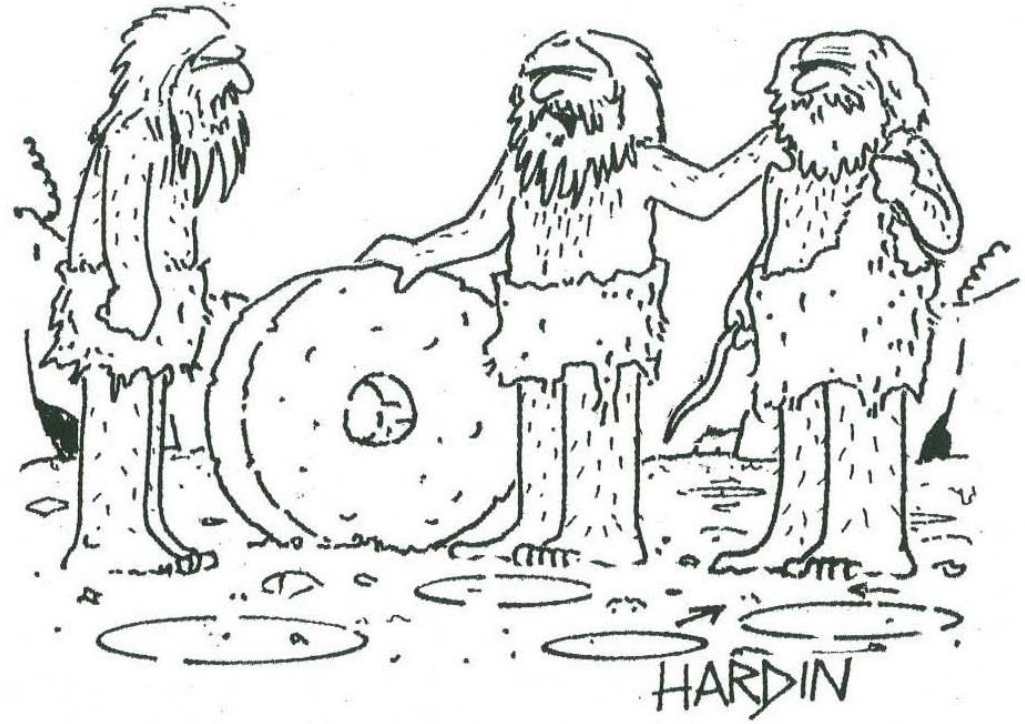
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Theory and practice in innovation

"To be honest, I never would have invented the wheel if not for Urg's groundbreaking theoretical work with the circle."

HARDIN

Narrow

- New, original

Broad

- Intention to improve
- New to the organization

Definitions of Innovation

Other Key Definitions

Adoption:

Incorporating practices developed in other organizations
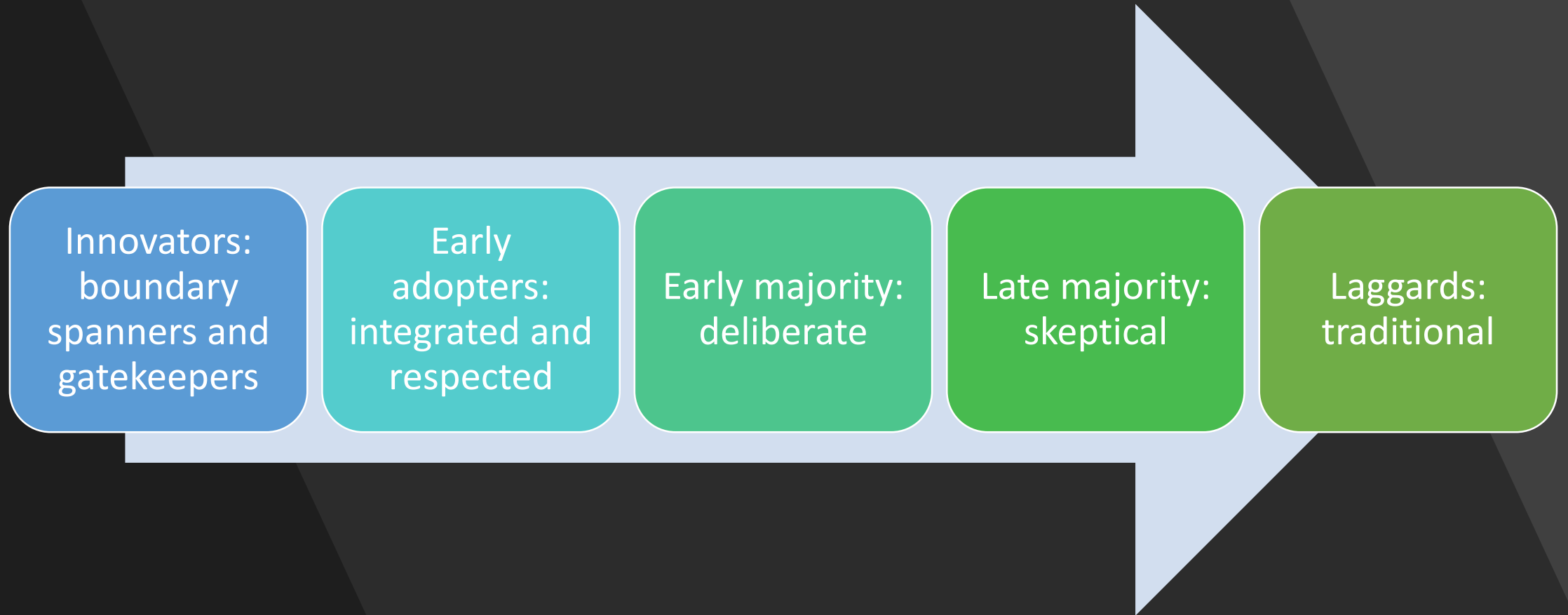
Includes adaptations

Invention vs. Adoption & Adaptation

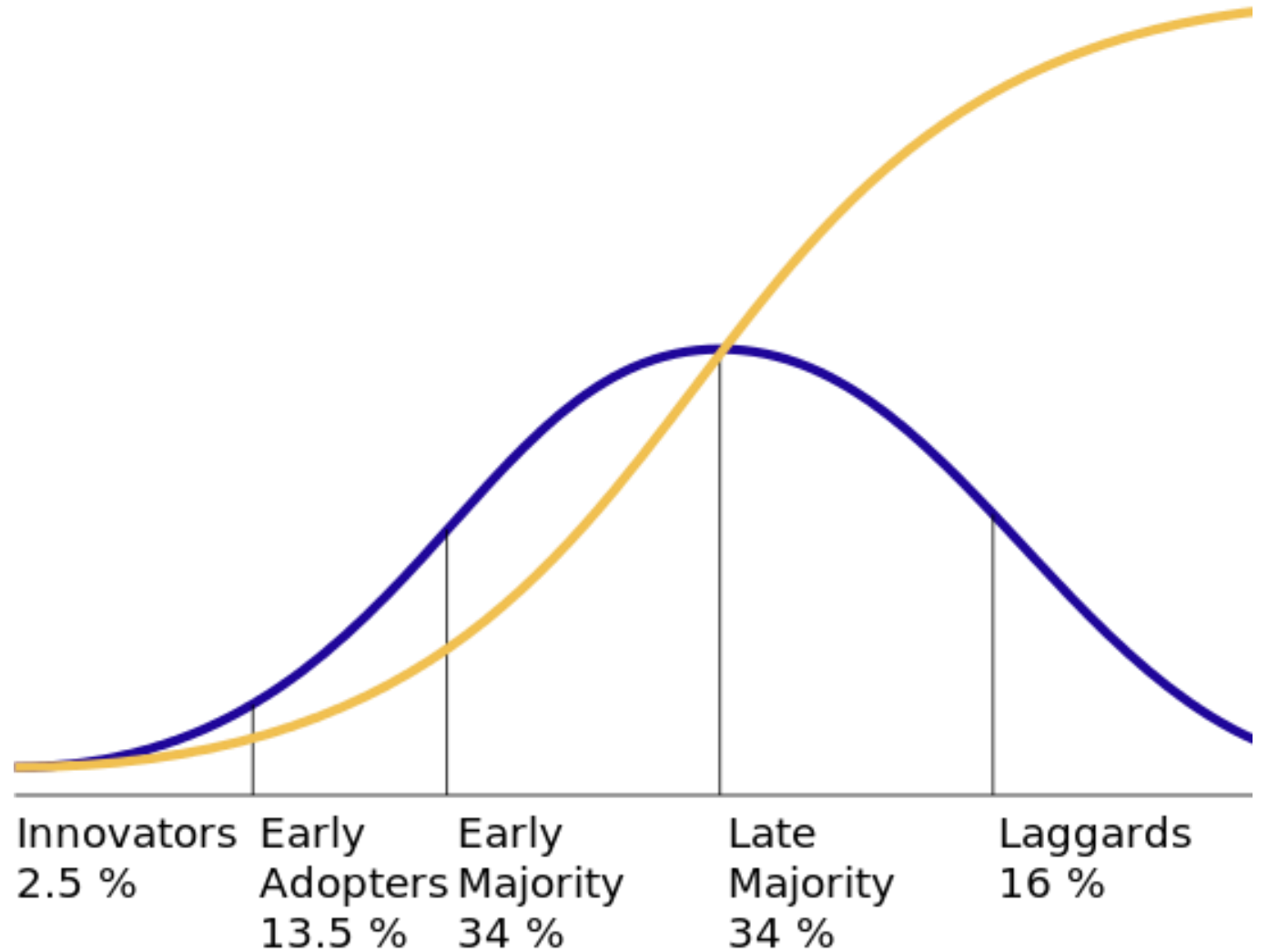# Other key definitions

Diffusion: the spread of new ideas and practices through the local government sector

Inventers and Adopters

| Innovators: boundary spanners and gatekeepers | Early adopters: integrated and respected | Early majority: deliberate | Late majority: skeptical | Laggards: traditional |

Distribution of Innovator Types

Innovators 2.5 % Early Adopters 13.5 % Early Majority 34 % Late Majority 34 % Laggards 16 %

Discussion:
Provide a brief description of an innovation you have participated in (developing or implementing).

Building Capacity for Innovation: Individually & Organizationally

Individual Characteristics

- Orientation to change and risk-taking
- Discovery skills
- Intentions and vision

Adaptors and Innovators

Most innovation-oriented:

- Variety
- Question assumptions and look for new solutions
- Enjoy change
- Out-of-the-box thinker
- Focus on possibilities

Adaptors and Innovators

Most adaptation-oriented:

- Try out new approaches
- Are impetus for change
- Think beyond rules
- Shake things up

Adaptors & Innovators
Positives and Negatives

What are contributions that innovators make?

What are potential negative impacts of very strong innovators?

What are contributions that adaptors make?

What are potential negative impacts of very strong adaptors?

What are contributions that moderates make?

Are there potential negative impacts of moderates?

Behaviors of innovative leaders in private sector

N Senior executives of the most innovative companies don't delegate *creative* work.

THEY DO IT THEMSELVES.

Five "discovery skills" that distinguish the most creative executives

Associating
- Successfully connect seemingly unrelated ideas

Questioning
- Constantly ask questions that challenge common wisdom. *Ask "Why?," "Why not?," "What if?"*

Observing
- Scrutinize common phenomena, particularly the behavior of potential customers
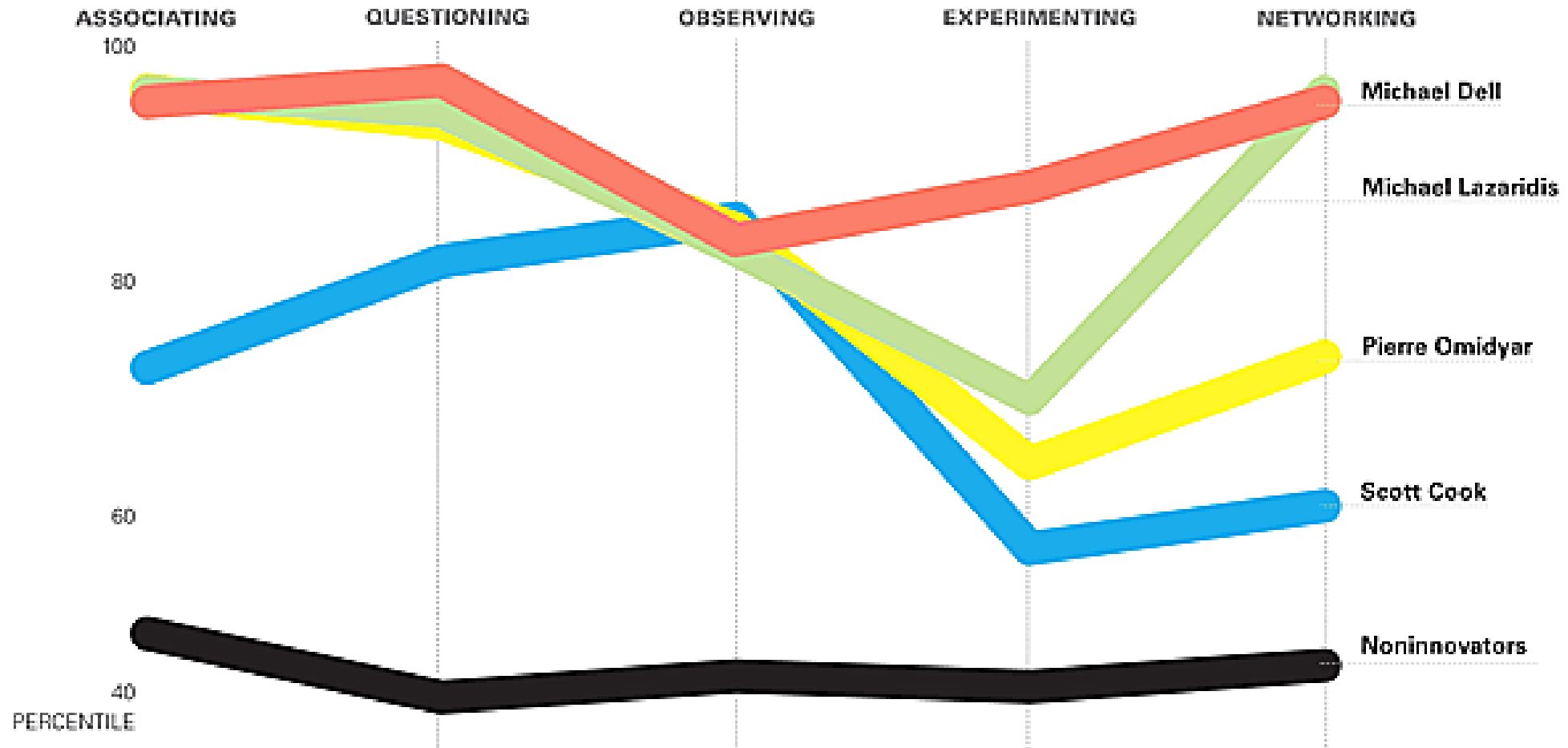
Experimenting
- Try out new ideas and approaches

Networking
- Find and test ideas through a network of diverse individuals.

Seeing Something Others Don't See

Special Traits of Creative Entrepreneurs

Vision

Good Cause

Creation is turned into innovation

Organizational capacity— organizational climate

- Elected officials work well together
- Council respects professionalism of staff
- Leadership is strong

Organizational capacity-elected officials

- Elected officials are collaborative
- Consensus decision-making is the norm
- Satisfied with the way the group functions
- Trust each other
- No personal grudges

Organizational capacity- council & staff

- Manager works well with the board
- Board members respect & trust management
- Board seeks staff recommendations & generally follows them
- Manager can discuss difficult subjects without fear of retribution from the board
- Board stays out of day-to-day operations

Organizational Capacity-Leadership Credibility

The **Manager/CAO**—

- Uses participative leadership style
- Actively communicates vision, wins employee acceptance & support
- Delegates sufficient authority when assigning tasks/roles
- Follows through on promises
- Recognizes & rewards high performance

Promote innovation in yourself & your community

- Commit to being innovative
- Develop and practice discovery skills
- Encourage – create and sustain a positive and creative climate in the community
- Support – identify and reward staff members with innovative ideas and superiors who help get new ideas accepted
- Partner with individuals and organizations in the community
- Experiment – put new ideas into practice

Innovation intention:
Which is your organization committed to?

1. Encouraging inventions and being the first to adopt new approaches *[innovators].*

2. Supporting inventions and actively seeking out newly emerging ideas in other places *[early and extensive adopters].*

3. Monitoring new approaches and adopting them when other local governments have tested them *[early majority].*

Which is your organization committed to? (continued)

4. Following other governments in adopting approaches that are proven to be worthwhile or effective *[late majority].*

5. Maintaining current practices and considering change if the organization is clearly out of touch *[late and limited adopters].*

6. Preserving the status quo *[laggards].*

WHICH WOULD YOU PREFER FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Discuss in small groups

What is your preferred intention for your organization and why? How does this match your change orientation?

How big a change is this from the present?

What steps would you take to move the organization in that direction?

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