



Leading the Lean Enterprise: The Dynamics of Distributed Leadership

Lessons Learned on Distributed Leadership

Prof. John S. Carroll
Lean Aerospace Initiative Plenary Conference
April 20, 2006

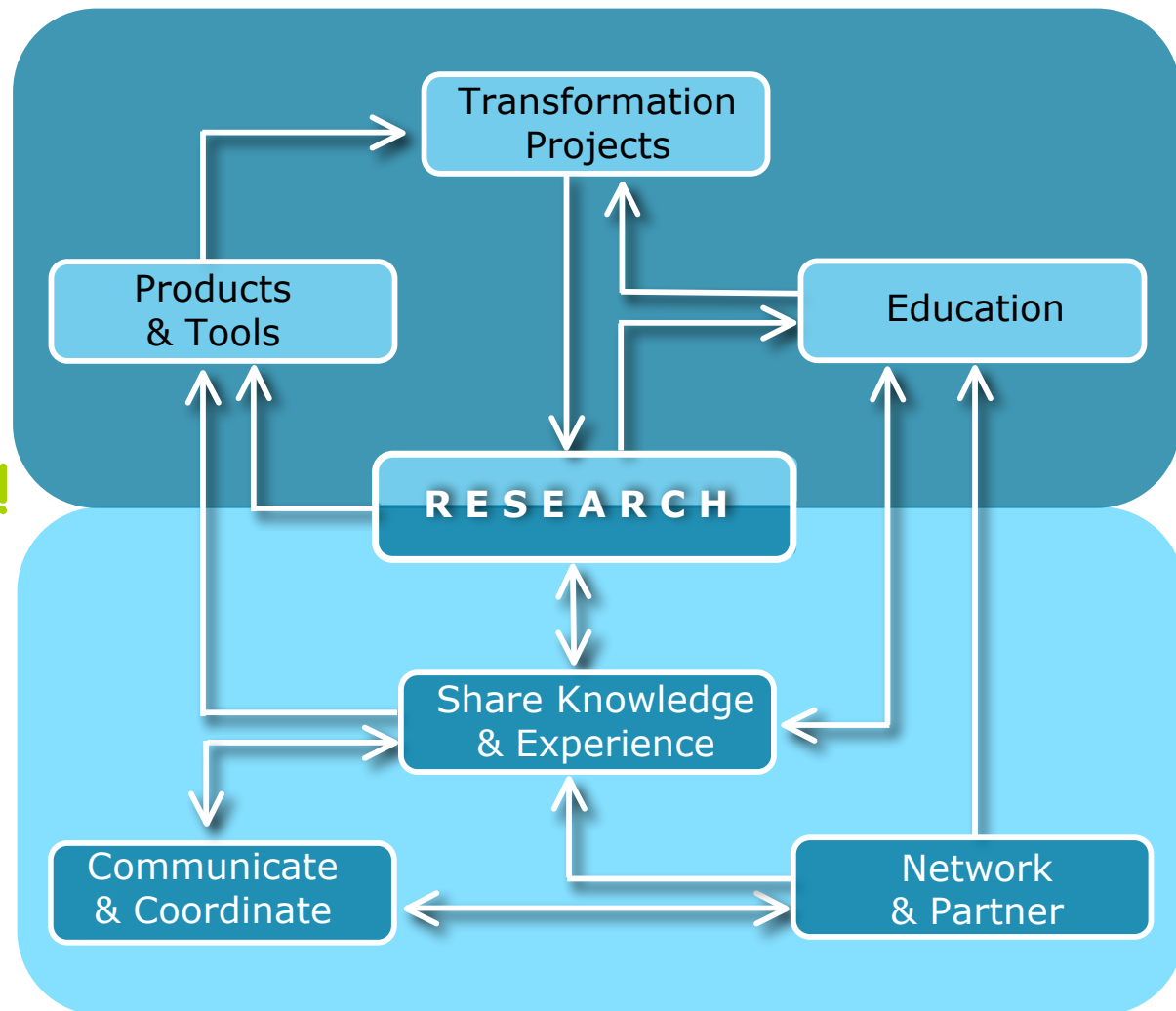
LAI Value Delivery System

Enabling Action

We're doing this!



**Building Knowledge
and Supportive
Relationships**





Conference Accomplishments

- We shared **stories** of progress, impact, insights, lessons learned, principles, problems, plans, and prospects for the future
- We continued to build a **learning community** and network of resources bridging across government, industry, and academia
- We challenged ourselves to **dream big**: from local projects to national and global enterprises, from operational to strategic, from customers to stakeholders, from aerospace to healthcare
- We had **fun!**



Some Observations of the Conference

- A lot of positive energy in the room during the talks: real interest, excitement, continuing conversations into the breaks
- A trusting atmosphere where people could reveal setbacks as well as successes, ask tough questions, and talk about the politics of change
- “Change management is a full-body contact sport”: many examples of learning from others, inside and outside the organization and the industry, asking for and getting help
- Our graduate students have had wonderful conversations and offers of support (more needed)



Voices Of The Consortium

- “We are here because we have committed ourselves to moving out to the ‘edge of the blade’”
- “It’s easy to transform when you’re on the eleventh step of the gallows”
- “If Pratt and Whitney can do it, anybody can”
- “The only wrong way is not to start at all... do something and learn from it”
- “Once you take the human out and try to do it by numbers alone, you’ve lost”
- “Culture change takes a long time... if something doesn’t work in six months we think we have failed”
- “We deploy lean with our people rather than on our organizations”
- “The ice-cream sandwich syndrome”



More Voices of the Consortium

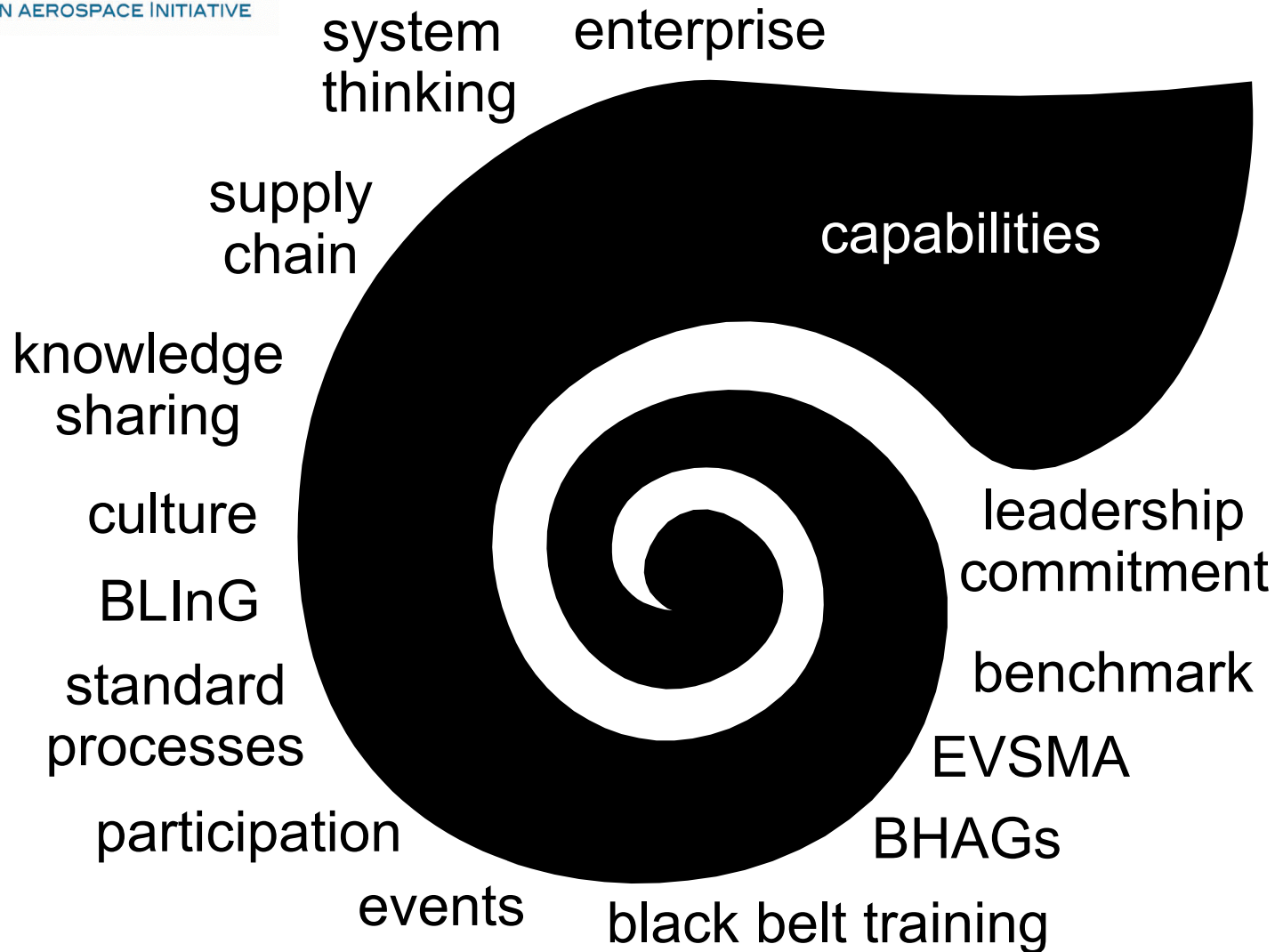
- “Leadership engagement is necessary”
- “I spoke about it everywhere”
- “Keep the squeeze on”
- “He’s retiring in 2 years... he’s leaving next year... what do we do to make sure lean isn’t just a blip?”
- “IPT structure empowers leaders at all levels”
- “So much of this is just getting people to talk to each other. You put them in the same room and things just happen.”
- “The best part for me is when they grab the chalk out of my hand”
- “I am a recovering engineer”



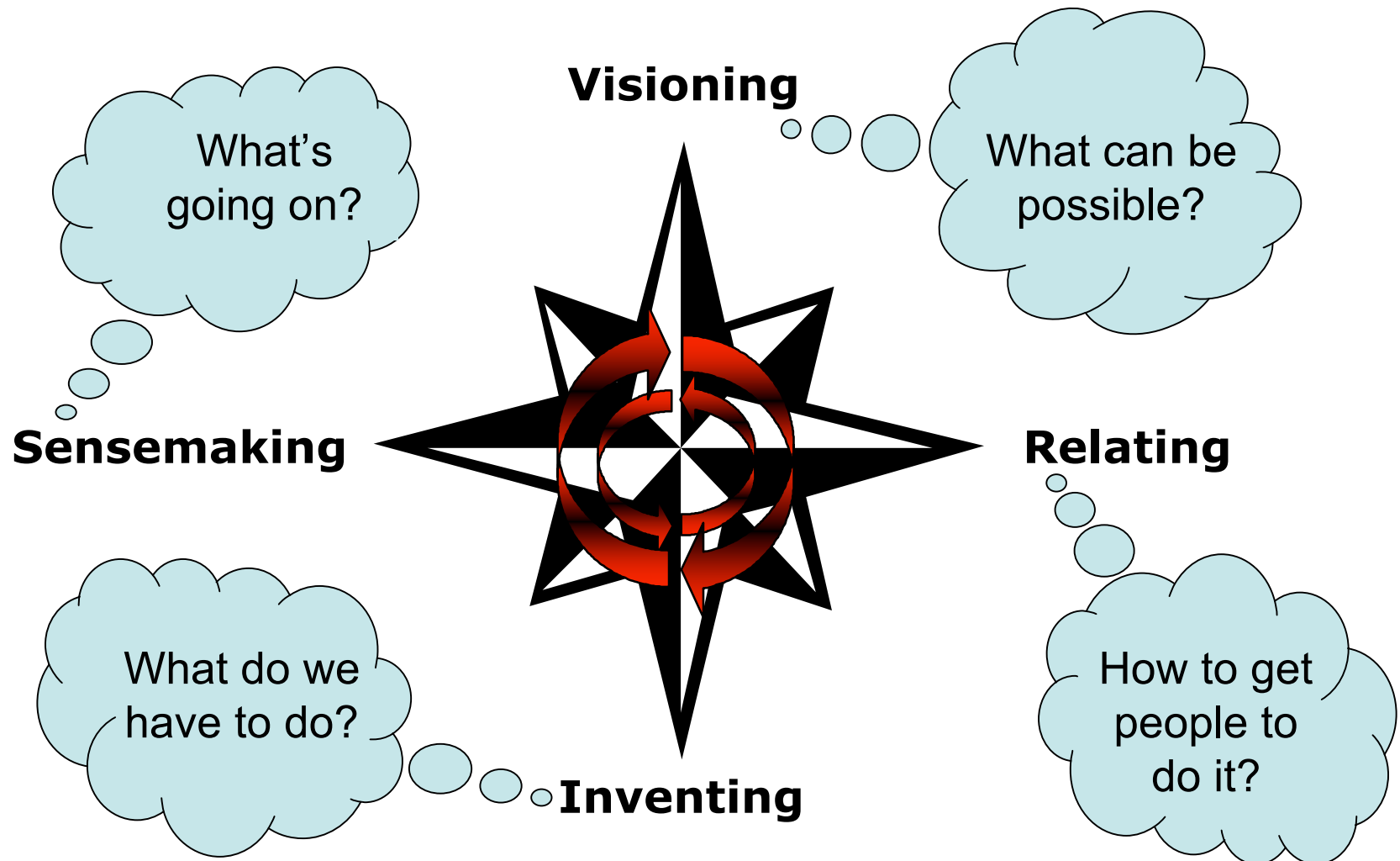
Wrestling With Big Questions

- Deliver tactical results **and** enterprise transformation
- Does change require a “burning platform”? Can a mature culture sustain and grow lean without fear?
- Does the same approach work in every organization, defense or civilian, large or small? Top-down, bottom-up, middle-up-down?
- Leaders go first, except when they go second. How can we socialize, coach, and challenge leaders, i.e., “bend but don’t break”?
- How can we influence things outside our control or stop trying? E.g., “...like trying to teach a pig to talk... it wastes your time and annoys the pig”

Spiral Development



MIT Distributed Leadership Model

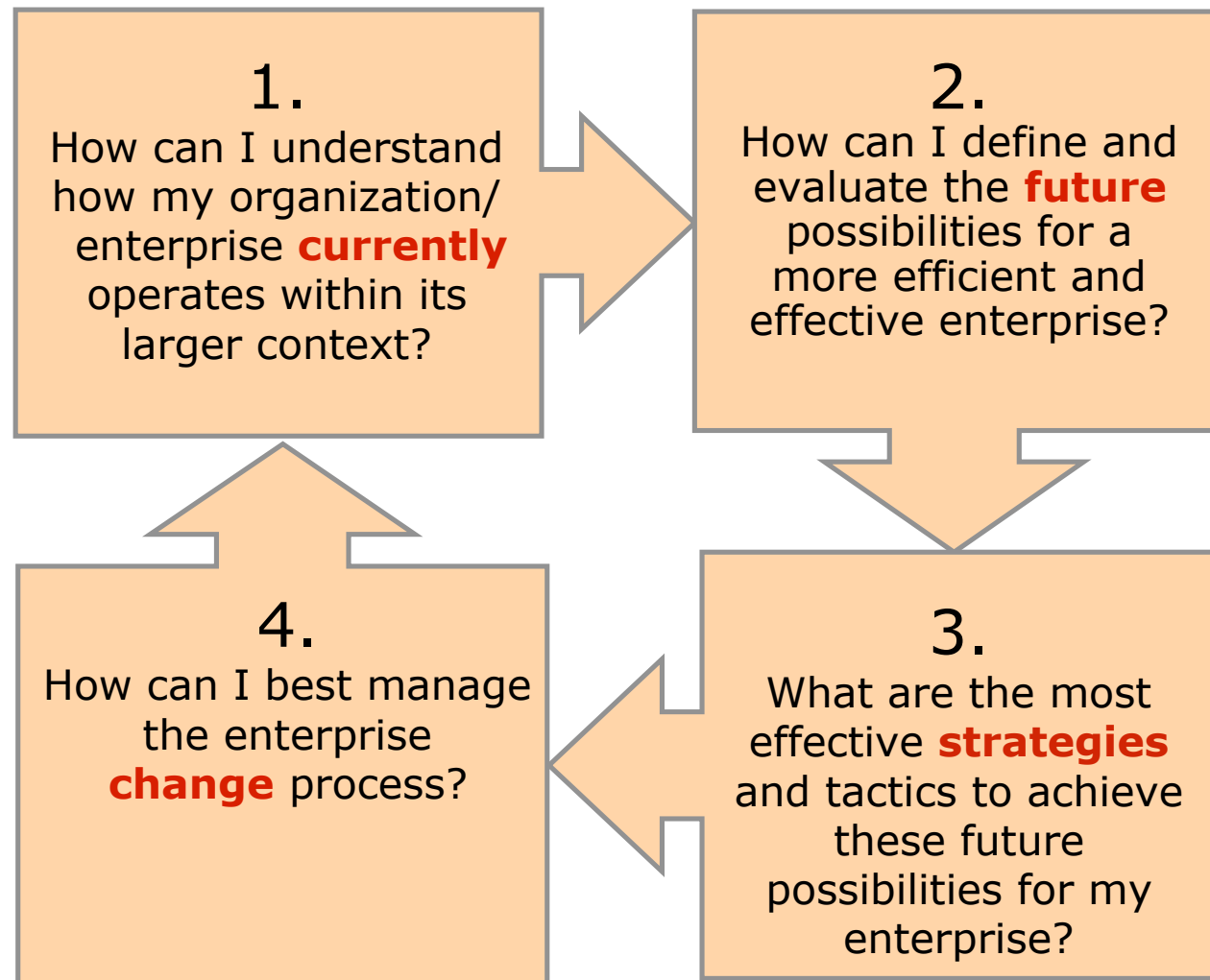




Distributed Leadership and Enterprise Transformation

- **Sensemaking** – shared language and concepts, open communication, EVSMA, LESAT, common metrics, seeing the waste
- **Visioning** – shared purpose, customer focus, BHAGs
- **Relating** – trust building, engaged leadership, networks, communities of practice
- **Implementing** – process facilitation, tiered IPTs, shared tools, CIP, spiral development, training

LAI Grand Questions Derived from the Transformation Imperative





Distributed Leadership Lessons

- There is no transformation without leadership – transformation requires the same capabilities!
- Leadership is distributed throughout the organization among executives, line and project managers, subject matter experts, and network builders (not just in “leader” positions)
- Effective leadership is not about commanding obedience but about developing leadership capabilities throughout the organization: “The function of leadership is to produce more leaders”



Parting Thoughts

- We are **all** part of this learning community.
- We need your participation and inputs.
- Help us make research part of **all** we do. If “research is the seedcorn of LAI,” then leadership is cultivating, weeding, fertilizing, watering,...
- Your inputs are essential in shaping the Consortium’s future direction and goals.
- Hope you have enjoyed the conference and are taking away some new ideas you can use.
- Stay connected! See you next year!