

WELCOME

# INTRODUCTIONS



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# THE NEXT TWO DAYS:

4 primary sessions: integrated leadership, industry trends, the school business model, strategic planning for the future

All in service of the question of “what’s next?”

Each session poses a problem and *one* way to think about it/move forward

Lots of reflection built in: you need paper and a pen.



AND NOW:  
MANDATORY FUN





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# International Schools

Integrated change-  
leadership and why we need  
it now more than ever.





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# OUR OBJECTIVES

1

Why do we need an integrated approach to school leadership?

2

What does an integrated leadership team look like, and how do we get there?

3

Spend time reflecting, alone and together, about how to move forward with an integrated approach.

## Preview: INTEGRATION IS A CYCLE →



- Integrated leadership is the first step toward innovation
- We either innovate or become irrelevant
- How do we integrate? Try empathy driven consent model of problem solving and catalytic questioning
- Pay close attention to your role on the team
- Aim to be the organization of the future to retain faculty and staff
- Become more integrated as you allow others (deeper in the school) in to generate ideas and move toward strategic innovation

First



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Lead

Grow

Develop

Guide

Disrupt



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# Integrated School Leadership



## Trusting and Supportive

- The team is mutually supportive of one another, including the Head
- Individuals work in concert
- Personalities are not driving decisions
- They interact well with each other, with faculty, with the board

## Cast a Vision

- Leaders want to be ahead of the curve
- They create original, energetic ideas for the school
- They articulate the school's vision in *the same way*

## School over Self

- Sounds obvious, but it isn't!
- No one department is above any other
- Good of the school is king, not any one need (even if that need is for the school)



A "high-performance work team" refers to a group of goal-focused individuals with specialized expertise and complementary skills who collaborate, innovate and produce consistently superior results.



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Does this sound like your  
school?



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Maybe, maybe  
not.

## School teams are often dysfunctional:

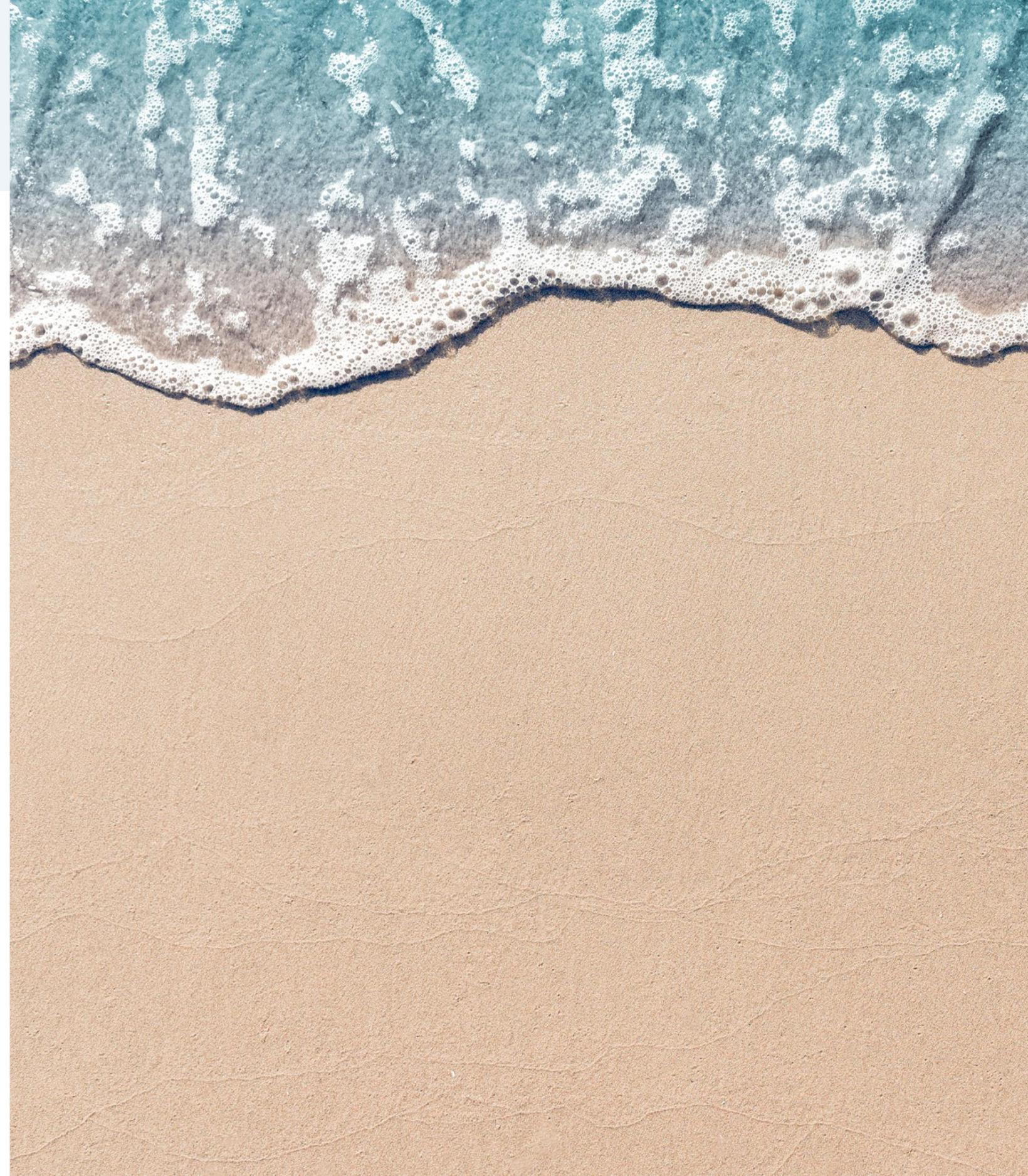
- Many are well-meaning but don't often articulate or understand the school's needs in the same way
- Often personality conflicts get in the way
- Most are not arranged to support the Head and Board in a meaningful way





# WHY INTEGRATE?

- Sands are shifting
- The international school landscape is different than it was 20 years ago
- All independent schools must diversify revenue streams
- To do this, our leadership teams must work together to innovate





# WHY INTEGRATE?

- It's imperative for schools to survive into the future.
- 32% of CASE schools experienced Head turnover this school year OR for 2023-24 (recent survey)
- The average tenure of a Head of School in the US has shrunk from 7 years to 5 years since 2011

32%

I FEEL LIKE I'M ALREADY  
TIRED TOMORROW



Why become more integrated? →

- Heads are tired (everyone is tired)
- Heads often take on far more than another CEO at a similarly sized organization might
- If trends continue, we'll have a leadership vacuum
- We need to pull together to achieve outcomes in a challenging landscape



Stronger work  
with the Board  
to plan  
strategically

New ideas, less  
waste,  
streamlined  
schools



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High  
functioning  
leadership  
team



High  
functioning,  
competitive  
school



Why not stay the same? →

- We risk losing faculty and staff
- We risk losing students to other institutions
- We risk a disengaged alumni population



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# Factors Driving Change

- Economy
- Escalating costs and inflation
- Changing job market for graduates
- Concerns of student well-being
- Growing parental anxiety
- Desire for customized experience
- Teacher shortages
- Increased expectation for workplace flexibility





# We know schools need to innovate

It starts with the leadership, the vision, and the  
financial model.



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## LEADING CHANGE

*What does this actually  
look like?*



# First, a quick reflection:

How would you structure the leadership team if you were starting from scratch? Who is on it now and what would you change?

Remember – roles, not personalities.

Take 3 minutes



# First, the team

- What is the leadership “dream team?”
- Operations/Finance, Division Leaders, Admissions, Advancement, Head
- Those who lead **finance, product, and sales**
- Schools are ultimately businesses, after all, and we **must emulate them**





# Now, what should that team be focused on?

The school schedule? The perfect time for alumni weekend? The ultimate academic experience? Efficiencies within the budget?

Maybe... and, what if we were thinking bigger?



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# Principles of the Future Organization

Jacob Morgan, "The 14 Principles of the Future Organization," *Forbes* (January 14, 2015)

- **“Focuses on ‘want’ instead of ‘need’:** In order to attract top talent organizations must create an environment where employees actually WANT to be there instead of assuming that they NEED to be there...
- **“Tells stories:** Employees want to work for organizations that they believe in and whose values align with their own [and] there is no better way to do this than through telling stories about how the company started, why it exists, and where it’s going...
- **“Shifts from profits to prosperity:** [looking] at things such as employee health and wellness, community involvement, sustainability, and making a positive impact on the world.”





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# Principles of the Future Organization

Jacob Morgan, "The 14 Principles of the Future  
Organization," *Forbes* (January 14, 2015)

- **“Intrapreneurial” with “innovation everywhere”** enabling “anyone to come forward with an idea and then give them the opportunity to turn that idea into something”
- **“Adapts to change faster”** and operates like a small company
- **“More women in senior management roles:** ... Recognize[s] the value of having more women in senior level roles and [takes] actions to ... support this....
- **“Flatter structure:** ... Communication and collaboration flows up, down, and side to side....
- **“Democratizes learning** ... any employee is able to act as a teacher or student [who] can learn from colleagues anytime and anywhere.”





Does this sound like your  
school?

Take 5 minutes and reflect on  
whether your school meets  
those criteria, and if not, why?



Does this sound like your  
school?

It's starting to...



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# COVID jumpstarted this inevitability

- We had to become comfortable with quick changes
- We wanted good ideas to survive, and we got them... from all over
- Definitely have a focus on well-being and health
- *We want* to tell stories of social change and impact (but do we?)
- We realize we need to be more flexible to retain outstanding talent





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# 2022: Change Fatigue

- If anything, we have change fatigue
- But we still must disrupt and continue to find innovative ideas for the future
- Structural change is easy; cultural change is not
- It must start with **us**





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# Why Change is Hard



## Loss Aversion

Behavioral economics gives insight as to why change (i.e. moving to an integrated leadership model) is hard. We naturally try to avoid losses which makes taking strategic risks hard

## Politics and Silos

Silos and politics exert additional drag on effective change implementation

## Murky goals

Poorly defined objectives and milestones that seem impossible complicate a change process



Schools generally suffer from all of these: politics, fear of risk, and murky goals.

But how do we shift?



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# Flatten your leadership team

- Lead differently
- Normalize the consent model of problem solving
- Change the way you meet as a leadership team**
- Change the way you ask for input from faculty and other staff



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# The Consent Model of Problem Solving on Teams

# CONSENT MODEL: PROBLEM SOLVING



Strives for mutual understanding...

## Problems with majority rule

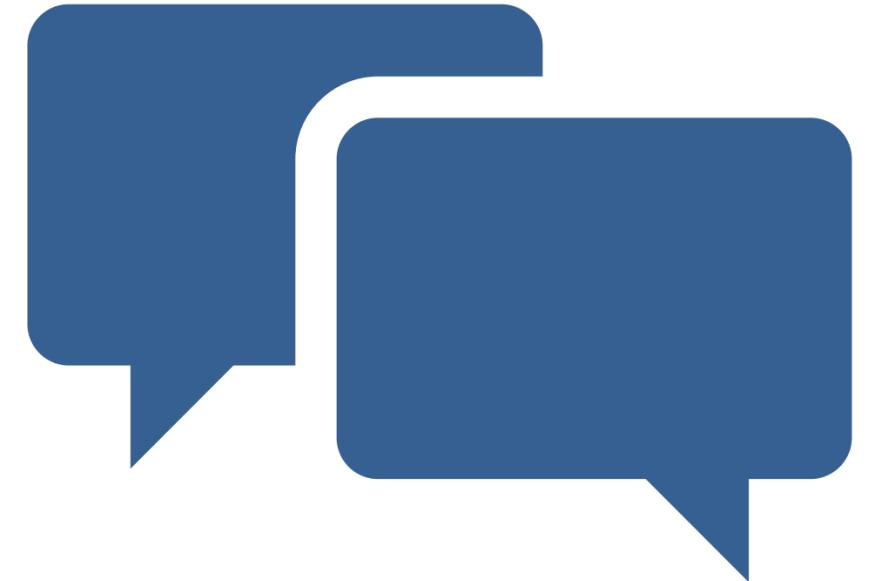
- Can eliminate important alternative viewpoints
- Those with opposing views aren't invested in the decision
- People can feel that their voices were not heard

## Problems with consensus

- Takes longer than tolerable for some
- Can lead to frustration

## Empathy-driven consent model

- Strives to achieve mutual understanding of one another, as well as the issues at hand





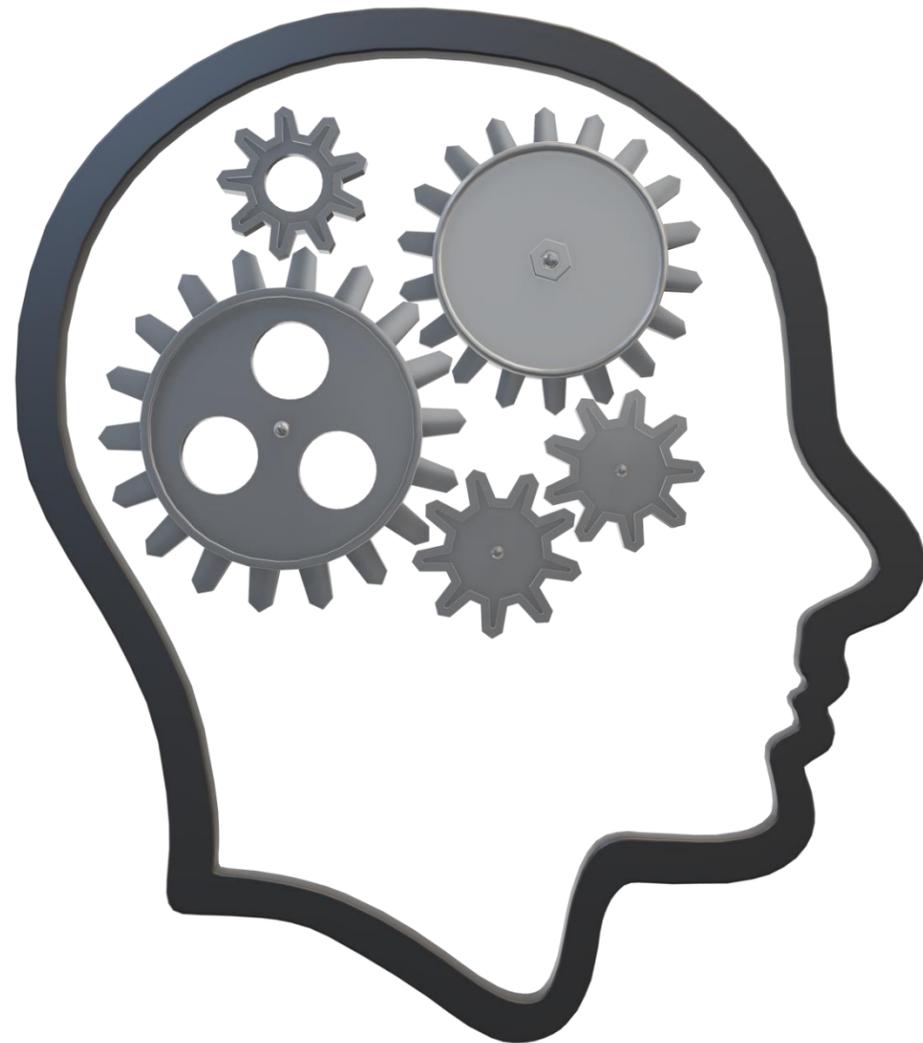
## CONSENT MODEL



In the consent model, the question becomes “Can you live with this agreement and on what level?”

- Promotes dialogue from those who oppose in order to understand what needs are unmet that keep them from supporting.
- Promotes dialogue from those who support regarding what may be the cost of not supporting a proposal.
- Decision-making process becomes structured around connecting to one another’s feelings and needs.

## EXAMPLE...



The school needs a new database system. It must address student billing, grading, provide a parent portal, and track enrollment applications.

One member of the team wants to convert the database over the summer, other members want to convert over the winter.

“Can you live with this agreement and on what level?”



## Reflection:

Think of a time on your school's leadership team when empathetic consent might have led to a better outcome.



# Where does this model lead?

- A team who is deeply connected to one another
- A flatter structure that invites in empathy-driven problem solving
- A supportive team where leaders aren't burned out and exhausted
- A team that is used to this kind of dialogue and can emulate that with their direct reports, faculty, and other employees





# Remember the principles of the future organization?

You reach that kind of environment by having a leadership team that is comfortable disagreeing, engaging in dialogue, moving ahead and inviting others in.

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# Catalytic Questioning

*Harvard Business Review,*  
2013



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# Catalytic Questions

Catalytic questions are ideal when you want to encourage further thought, deeper reflection, sharper insight, innovation and action. They are powerful tools for generative thinking, which involves inventive ways to produce ideas and tackle habits of thinking that hold us back from making good strategic decisions.





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# Catalytic Questions

- Generate curiosity among listeners
- Stimulate reflective conversation
- Provoke new ways of thinking
- Surface underlying assumptions
- Invite creativity and new possibilities
- Generate energy and forward movement
- Evoke even more questions



# ENGAGE IN CATALYTIC QUESTIONING



## A problem-solving method based on reframing discussions

Steps in catalytic questioning:

- “Pick a problem that your team cares about intellectually and emotionally ... [and] one that you honestly don’t have an answer to.
- “Engage in pure question talk, with one team member writing down each question verbatim. This gives everyone the chance (especially introverts) to see each question, reflect a bit, and then create even better ones. Don’t give preambles to the questions and don’t devote any time or energy to answering them. Just ask... Go for at least 50, perhaps 75....
- “Step back and decide which questions on your list seem most ‘catalytic,’ or which ones hold the most potential for disrupting the status quo.”



## A problem-solving method based on reframing discussions

- “Get to work! Find some answers.... If you prefer observing the world to get answers, go out and make some systematic observations. If you love to network for new ideas, go talk to people who don’t think or act like you (those from a different industry or country-of-origin are prime candidates) to get diverse responses to the questions. If you get new ideas by experimenting, go to work with a series of rapid prototypes—fast, cheap, virtual experiments to get instant feedback about which potential solutions matter most....
- “Regroup and use the best traditional brainstorming techniques to leverage all your new input into creating even better solutions to your problem.”



# Examples:

- Instead of *“What is the problem and how will we solve it?”* a catalytic version would be *“What is the future we want to create and for whom?”*
- Instead of *“Where will the money come from?”* a more catalytic version would be *“What real resources do we need? Who already has what we need?”*





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# Example: Increased Competition for Admissions

- Traditional questions:  
Are our student outcomes good? Are we inviting to families?
- Catalytic questions:  
What kind of school do parents want? How is teacher morale impacting retention?



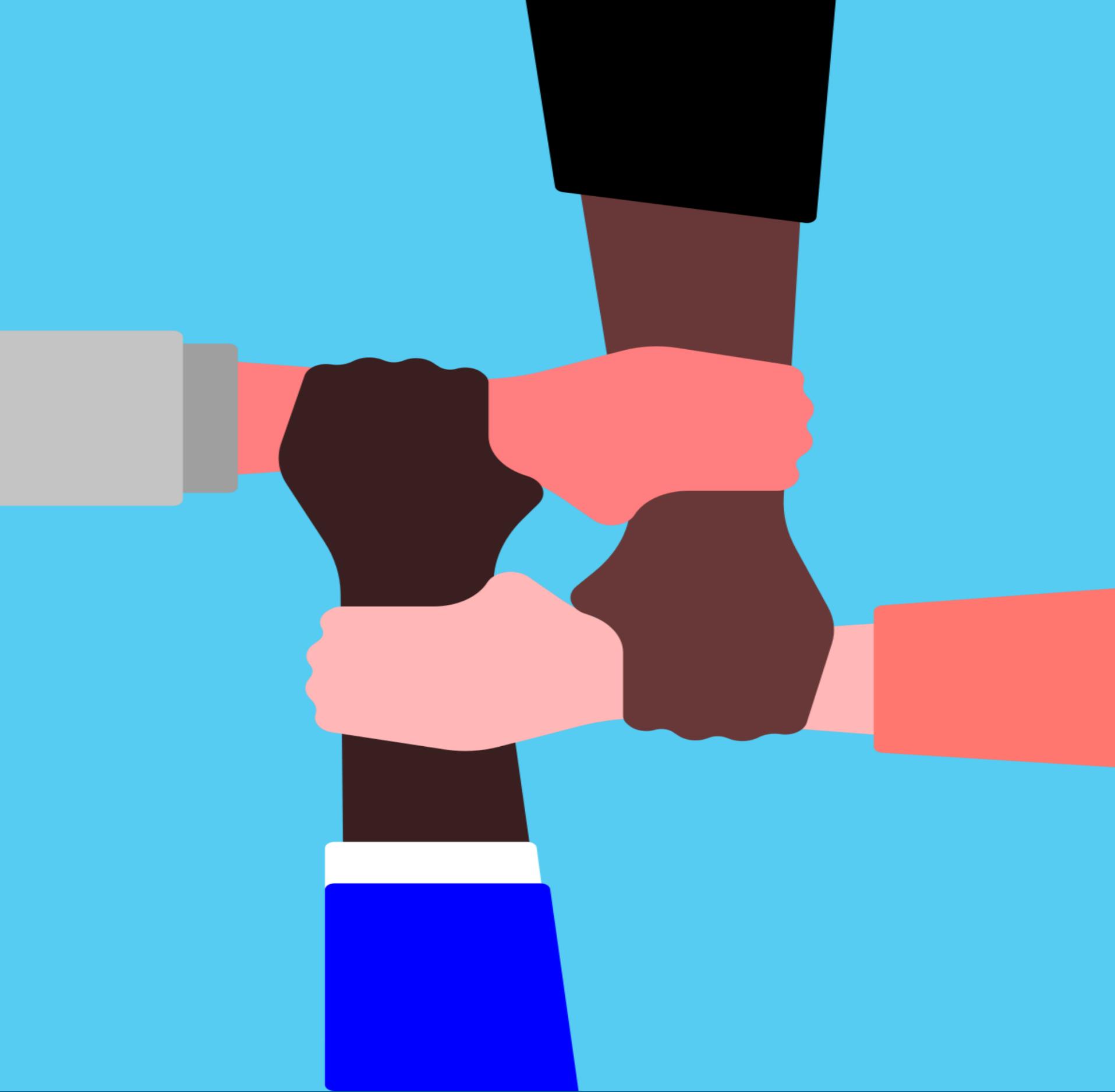


How does this feel? Does it  
resonate with you?

Can you create a few catalytic  
questions to bring back to  
your team?



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What's  
my role?



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# LEARNING ABOUT YOUR ROLE

Part of examining our own roles in an integrated team means literally helping our teammates understand the jobs we do

This is a difficult process and is often tied up in emotions, particularly if you feel single-handedly responsible for the budget, or the curriculum, or revenue

In order to be truly integrated, you need to give colleagues the chance to better understand why your role is integral to the team

It's incumbent upon them to be curious, but it's also incumbent upon you to help them understand

How often do you feel misunderstood or overlooked?

A small circular logo with the word "CASE" inside, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.



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# Embracing change with emotional intelligence

Kandi Wiens and Darin Rowell, "How to Embrace  
Change Using Emotional Intelligence," *Harvard  
Business Review* (December 31, 2018)

## 1. Identify the source of your resistance....

For example, if you're resisting because you're worried that the change will make you look incompetent, you can create a learning plan for the new skills you will need in order to be successful.

## 2. Question the basis of your emotional response.

The resulting new awareness can help you separate an emotional reaction and "story" from the actual events.

## 3. Own your part in the situation....

By reflecting on how your initial reaction contributes to a negative chain of events, it'll be easier to adjust your attitude to be more open to considering new perspectives.

## 4. Turn up your positive outlook....

First, ask yourself *Where are the opportunities with this change?* And then, *How will these opportunities help me and others?"*



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# True integration



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# Key Relationships Among Leaders

- There are key relationships that must be nurtured as part of the leadership team
- Natural affinities amongst departments need to be air-tight to ensure smooth operations and goal setting
- For our purposes this week, we'll look at two of those key areas that affect strategic outcomes





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# Golden Triangle: School Revenue Management

- Key relationship between admissions, advancement (development), and finance
- Supports the Head
- Ensures sound, data-driven financial goal setting
- Alleviates daily strain to ensure vision casting
- Creates mutual ownership





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# Integrated Advancement

- Key relationship between admissions, communications, and development/alumni
- Supports the Head
- Ensures brand recognition and storytelling
- Reduces overhead costs
- Creates shared understanding and deeper constituent engagement



# RELATIONSHIPS MATTER



Strong relationships on the leadership team mean stronger work

Using various models to help fuel your conversations will give a foundation for vision setting and developing goals

Increasing needs for innovation in schools means we must work together

Without strong teams, we compete with ourselves

High  
functioning  
leadership  
team



High  
functioning,  
competitive  
school of the  
future



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## SUMMARY: INTEGRATION IS A CYCLE →



- Integrated leadership is the first step toward innovation
- We either innovate or become irrelevant
- How do we integrate? Try empathy driven consent model of problem solving and catalytic questioning
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**CHOOSE ONE AND JOURNAL (INDIVIDUALLY):**

What are the barriers to success (infrastructure?  
Resources? personalities?)

Journal about your role and how you contribute,  
positively or negatively.

Reimagine the leadership team: what would you do  
differently?

Group together by title in teams of 3-4 of people with similar positions to yours

Make a list of everything you have always wished your leadership teammates understood about your challenges / area of school responsibility.

What are the key pain points, data points, or challenges your school colleagues need to understand? How could you help them get there? Design a training for your colleagues.