

Technical Problems and Adaptive Challenges

Technical problems are those that can be addressed with existing resources and expertise.

Adaptive challenges are those which have no easy answers but require new learning. They are challenges we must address together in order to move into the future.

Kind of challenge	Problem definition	Solution	Locus of work
Technical	Clear	Clear	Authority
Technical and adaptive	Clear	Requires learning	Authority and stakeholders
Adaptive	Requires learning	Requires learning	Stakeholders

Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, p. 20.

Common Technical Problems:

"Our website needs updating."

"We need to hire a new staff person."

"Our building has some maintenance issues."

"We need more volunteers in our kids' ministry."

"We need to do a better job communicating the opportunities our church offers."

Examples of Adaptive Challenges:

"Our neighborhood has changed and we don't know how to be in relationship with our new neighbors."

"Established ways of worship and faith aren't speaking to younger generations and they are abandoning church. We don't know how to form Christian faith in their lives."

"The congregational business model of membership, pledging, and volunteerism is breaking down and we don't know what will replace it."

"People in our congregation don't feel comfortable naming how they sense God's presence and activity in their daily lives."

"Most of our congregations can't identify their source of hope."