

Leadership as strategy I:  
leadership in complexity



# Purpose of this session

- ◆ To develop understanding of the role of leadership in supporting others to disambiguate and create comfort in VUCA contexts



# Leadership as strategy

- ◆ ~~Strategic leadership~~
  - ◆ ~~A style of leadership~~
- ◆ ~~Leadership strategy~~
  - ◆ ~~How we plan to organise our leadership~~
- ◆ Leadership as strategy
  - ◆ The choice to make leadership one of the levers you can use in your



# Leadership as strategy

- ◆ Like organisational culture, leadership happens whether you pay attention to it or not
- ◆ It is your choice whether it works for you or against you



# Nokia

- ◆ "We didn't do anything wrong, but somehow, we lost"

**NOKIA**



# Nokia

- ◆ “Nokia people weakened Nokia people and thus made the company increasingly vulnerable to competitive forces.”
  - ◆ Nokia suffered from organisational fear, grounded in a culture of temperamental leaders and frightened middle managers
  - ◆ Leaders intimidated middle managers, and in return were lied to out of fear
  - ◆ Executives were afraid to acknowledge weaknesses in their product

**NOKIA**



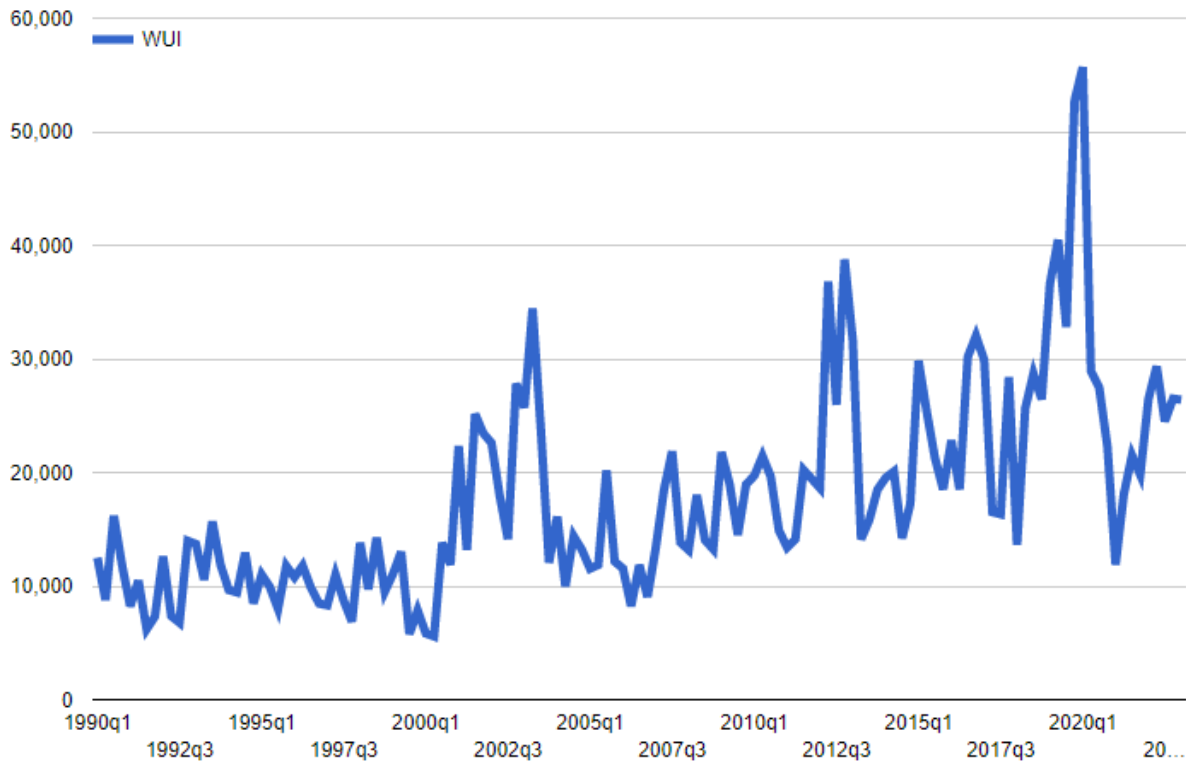
# VUCA

- ◆ **V**olatility
- ◆ **U**ncertainty
- ◆ **C**omplexity
- ◆ **A**mbiguity





# World Uncertainty Index







# VUCA and you

- ◆ How does VUCA present itself in your organisation?
- ◆ In your groups you have 7 minutes to come up with the top three ways in which you see VUCA appear



**LEADERS CREATE  
STRUCTURE  
AND SHAPE**



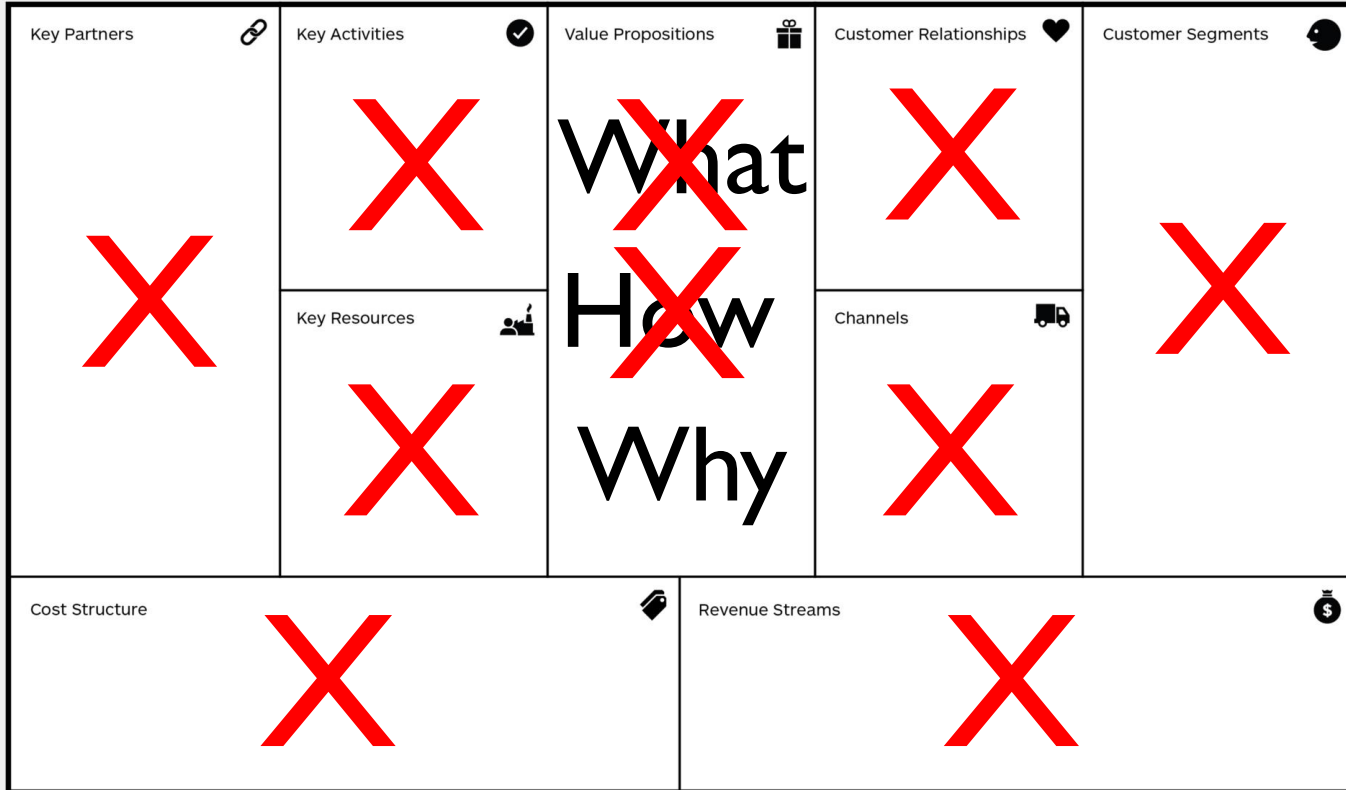
# The Business Model Canvas

Designed for:

Designed by:

Date:

Version:





## The comfort of clarity

- ◆ “For my part I know nothing with any certainty, but the sight of the stars makes me dream.”

Vincent van Gogh



# Enterprise v organisation leadership

◆ Organisation leadership is the maintenance of a system of relationships

**Outcomes**

◆ Enterprise leadership is the maintenance of a series of interconnected value chains

**Outputs**



# Your mindset is your toolkit

- ◆ Your mindset is the lens you use to examine the world
- ◆ You can hold multiple mindsets and choose which ones to adopt according to context



# Explorer mindset

Personal Resilience  
Ambiguity Tolerance  
Approach Orientation  
Risk Tolerance  
Leading Innovation  
Preparedness  
Perspective Taking



# Personal Resilience



- ◆ The psychological characteristics involved in our response to challenge and adversity.
- ◆ It feeds our can-do attitude.
- ◆ It prompts us to look for ways to make things happen.
- ◆ It needs to be nurtured.





# → Ambiguity Tolerance



- ◆ The perception of ambiguity as desirable, challenging and interesting.
- ◆ Attraction to the complex, unfamiliar and uncertain.
- ◆ Predicts a greater comfort in leading in highly ambiguous situations.



# Approach Orientation



- ◆ The tendency to be opportunity focussed.
- ◆ See situations as opportunities for gain.
  - ◆ It predicts how many opportunities (relatively) we will identify.
  - ◆ It predicts the likelihood that we will tend to pursue opportunities.



# Risk Tolerance



- ◆ Tendency to take risks
  - ◆ Highly Risk Tolerant people will embrace risk and invest little time in seeking out knowledge of or managing risks.
  - ◆ People with a low Risk Tolerance will prioritise risk/error minimisation over other activities.



# Innovation Leadership

- ◆ A leadership approach that....
  - ◆ Attracted to innovation
  - ◆ Encourages creative behaviour, new ways of working and innovation.



# → Preparedness



- ◆ Tendency to be organised, prepared and goal orientated. Informs the standards we set for ourselves and others.
  - ◆ Put yourself in the position to be lucky.
  - ◆ Predicts achievement because it predicts preparation and follow-through.



# → Perspective Taking

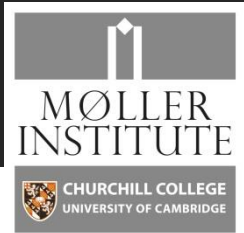
- ◆ Tendency to empathise and see things from the perspective of others.
- ◆ To think about more than one stakeholder group.





# Leadership is a choice

- ◆ You can choose to lead or simply be in charge



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