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# THE HAMES-OKA STRATEGIC LEARNING SPIRAL

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## Questions from 1<sup>st</sup> Altitude

### *PHASE 1 - CONTEXTUALISING*

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- *What are our general strategic concerns?*
- *What do we feel is going on around us?*
- *How do these concerns relate to the environment in which we are operating?*
- *What are the key characteristics and/or dynamics of this environment?*
- *What are the key relationships between these characteristics and/or dynamics?*
- *What has changed (is changing) in the environment from our previous understanding of our environment?*
- *What are people/stakeholders saying, seeing and feeling about these changes in our environment?*
- *What are our stakeholders' general and specific wants and needs?*
- *What is a possible systemic description/map of our environment?*

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### *PHASE 2 - FOCUSING*

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- *Given a systemic understanding of the environment, what are the most strategically significant issues requiring our attention?*
- *What specific factors make these issues significant?*
- *What are the relationships between these and other strategic issues?*
- *How should we resolve any dilemmas between what is strategically important versus what is not as important but more urgent?*
- *Given what is and is not under our direct control, what should we be attending to in order to ensure our strategic viability?*
- *How might our boundaries (of role, responsibilities, niche, etc.) change as a result of the previous questions?*

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### *PHASE 3 - PATTERNING*

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- *What are the gaps in our current thinking and ways of knowing?*
- *Where can we get the information and from whom?*

- *What assumptions are being made that should be challenged or examined?*
- *What other perspectives are needed or could be useful?*
- *Are there any other ways of perceiving the issues that could raise different questions, problems, solutions and opportunities?*
- *What are some alternative future scenarios that could be incorporated into our thinking?*

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## *PHASE 4 - REPERCEIVING*

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- *What new light has been shed on the situation that was previously hidden?*
- *How have our beliefs about what is important changed?*
- *What significant insights are we now able to more easily see?*
- *What has been confirmed from our previous understanding?*
- *What is a meta-perspective that can account for the diversity in multiple perspectives?*
- *What is an explicit meta-description (eg. systems map or rich picture) of our context?*

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## *PHASE 5 - REFOCUSING*

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- *Given a deeper systemic understanding of the environment, what are the most strategically significant issues now requiring our attention? Why?*
- *What specific factors make these issues more critical than those previously identified?*
- *What broad operational perspectives do we need to take into account when recalibrating the ‘critical domain of attention’?*
- *How can we best illustrate or expressly describe the recalibrated ‘critical domain of attention’?*
- *Given what is and is not under our direct control, what should our plans address in order to ensure our strategic viability?*

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## *PHASE 6 - CHARTING*

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- *What strategies are possible?*
- *What strategies will work best given your existing internal capabilities?*
- *How do you know these strategies are comprehensive enough to effectively address the ‘critical domain of attention’?*
- *What stays the same? What do we stop doing? Do we have an appropriate balance between change and maintenance strategies – based upon what is possible with accessible resources?*
- *How might your culture need to be shaped in order to enable your strategy to be optimally deployed and effective?*

- *How can we ensure that our Strategic Program effectively integrates business outcomes with social dynamics for a healthy organisational ecology?*
- *What are the consequences, risks and opportunity costs of choosing these strategies?*
- *How does the Strategic Program need to be designed in order to ensure the RAIISE factors?*
- *How can we best illustrate or categorically describe the linkages between the main components of the Strategic Program? What maps are we using to chart these changes?*
- *Are we sure that our strategies will address key systemic leverage points?*
- *What continued resourcing will be needed to ensure that the Strategic Program is effective?*

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## *PHASE 7 - EFFECTING*

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### *(a) Before or during deployment –*

- *What actions will we now need to take to ensure that our intended strategy is realised? What do we need to do to ensure our deployment capability?*
- *How can we explicitly integrate our business directives with the shaping of cultural dynamics for optimum deployment capability, specifically:*
  - *How will we help people to make meaningful translations between the organisation's strategy and their daily work?*
  - *How will we help them understand the links between performance measures and strategic intent?*
  - *How can we improve communications, formal and informal relationships, and collaborative learning?*
  - *How can we reward results, reflecting positive movement towards our strategic direction and discipline non-movement?*
  - *How will we help people develop new skills that may be needed in thinking, feeling and doing?*
- *What are our strategic time requirements for deployment?*
- *How will we know if we are being effective given our 'critical domain of attention', Strategic Program and strategic framework? What are appropriate metrics and monitoring systems?*
- *What should be the required 'timing' of our feedback loops to ensure effective corrective action can be taken in the areas of the strategy itself, our internal capabilities and human performance? [NB. Timing here refers to (a) when in the deployment process the feedback loop occurs and (b) its cycle time].*
- *How do we resolve or accommodate measuring systemic change strategies (with their inherent lag times) with short term performance requirements?*
- *Are all feedback loops and management interventions appropriately placed in order to optimise operational effectiveness while avoiding any tendency to micro-manage?*

(b) After deployment has begun:

- *How do we know our metrics and monitoring systems are giving us the right information we need to effectively navigate?*
- *Are our results demonstrably generating our strategic intentions?*

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## *PHASE 8 - COEVOLVING*

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- *How are the dynamics of the business environment changing as a result of our strategy? What means are we using to map these changes?*
- *What signals will indicate that a fundamental change is occurring in the context from which we are defining our strategy?*
- *What are the critical unintended consequences of our strategy? Do we need to correct, adjust or abandon elements of the current strategy?*
- *Will our strategic framework need to change to remain in alignment with this emerging context? If so, how might we now think differently about our strategic intentions? How might our thinking also need to change in order to continue to benefit all stakeholders?*
- *Do we now see gaps or flaws in our previous thinking? How will we upgrade our current thinking accordingly? How might we have done things differently in order to achieve better results? How might those lessons help us rethink our strategy now?*