

Leadership Worksheet - What Kind of Challenge Are You Facing

Challenge Complexity Level Self-Assessment

Discover whether your current leadership or organisational challenge is Simple, Complicated, Complex or Chaotic, and what to do next. Note that you may have multiple levels of complexity nested in one challenge.

Step 1: Choose the challenge you want to assess.

Describe it in a sentence: *"e.g. Restructuring our team, Launching a new service, Fixing broken communication"*

Step 2: Answer these 5 quick questions.

1. **How well do you understand the cause of the problem?**

- ☐ It's clear and predictable ●
- ☐ With some analysis, I can figure it out ●
- ☐ It only makes sense in hindsight ●
- ☐ It's unclear, things are changing too fast ●

2. **How confident are you in a known solution?**

- ☐ There's a clear best practice ●
- ☐ Experts or data will tell us ●
- ☐ We need to experiment and learn ●
- ☐ We need to act fast just to survive ●

3. **How stable is the situation around this issue?**

- ☐ Stable and routine ●
- ☐ Some uncertainty, but manageable ●
- ☐ Unpredictable and shifting ●
- ☐ Turbulent and urgent ●

4. **Who has the answer?**

- ☐ Anyone with the manual ●
- ☐ Subject-matter experts ●
- ☐ We'll need collaboration and sensing ●
- ☐ No one—there's no time to ask ●

5. **What's the risk of applying a wrong approach?**

- ☐ Low—mistakes are easy to fix ●
- ☐ Medium—some cost, but containable ●
- ☐ High—missteps may spread unpredictably ●
- ☐ Critical—urgent action is required ●



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Step 3: Your Result

Count your coloured dots and if you have a majority of one colour, refer to the coding below. If you don't have a clear pattern, you probably have nested problems with varying levels of complexity. Try separating your challenges into their different aspects.

● Your challenge is: **SIMPLE**

What this means: You're dealing with a known problem that has a tried-and-tested solution.

What to do next: Apply best practices, SOPs, or standard training. Keep things consistent and efficient.

Be careful of: Overthinking or overcomplicating it.

● Your challenge is: **COMPLICATED**

What this means: The problem is solvable, but it requires expertise, analysis, or a detailed plan.

What to do next: Bring in experts or use structured decision tools. Compare options and validate the best one.

Be careful of: Assuming simplicity or skipping diagnostics.

● Your challenge is: **COMPLEX**

What this means: The solution will emerge over time. Patterns are only visible after the fact.

What to do next: Run safe-to-fail experiments, listen for weak signals, and adapt as you learn.

Be careful of: Forcing a plan or seeking "the answer" too early.

● Your challenge is: **CHAOTIC**

What this means: You're in a crisis or unpredictable state—action must come before analysis.

What to do next: Stabilise fast. Act to create order, then reassess.

Be careful of: Freezing or over-analysing when speed is critical.

Do You Want Help Moving Forward?

I've helped leaders clarify, adapt, and act across all four domains. If you'd like to explore your result in more depth, I offer a free 30-minute "Complexity Lens" conversation.

👉 Contact me [Here](#)



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