

1

HIERARCHY

Top-down, control based hierarchies discourage individual initiative, lead to slower reaction times, and diverts energy to “managing up”.

2

FEAR

Command-and-control systems lead to organizations filled with anxious employees who are hesitant to take the initiative or trust their own judgment.

3

DECISION BIAS

Defensive thinking, fossilized mental models, and contentment create a bias in favor of the status quo.

4

HABIT

Lack of proactive change often has to do with mindsets and behaviors: we must want to change, and also understand how to change.

5

CENTRALIZATION

When the responsibility for making big decisions is concentrated at the top, a handful of executives favoring the status quo can thwart change.

6

INFLEXIBLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

Highly optimized business systems are great for efficiency, but deadly for adaptability. Assets, skills, and processes become more specialized, and change becomes more incremental.

THE ENEMIES OF ADAPTABILITY

HACKING HR TO BUILD AN ADAPTABILITY ADVANTAGE

7

RIGID STRUCTURES

In many organizations, rigid unit boundaries, functional silos, and political fiefdoms hamper the rapid realignment of skills and assets.

8

SKILLS DEFICIT

Employees don't have the skills, training, and coaching they need.

9

SHORT-TERM THINKING

Compensation and incentive systems often truncate executive time horizons and skew perspectives.

10

INSUFFICIENT EXPERIMENTATION

Management processes typically arrive at the “one best strategy” through top-down, analytical methods, and discourage bottom-up experimentation.

11

LACK OF DIVERSITY

Management systems value conformance and cohesion at the expense of diversity and divergence. This limits the ability to generate the rich variety of ideas and options required to be truly adaptable.

12

A PAUCITY OF PURPOSE

Organizations without a compelling shared purpose may have trouble aligning on a natural path for adaptation.