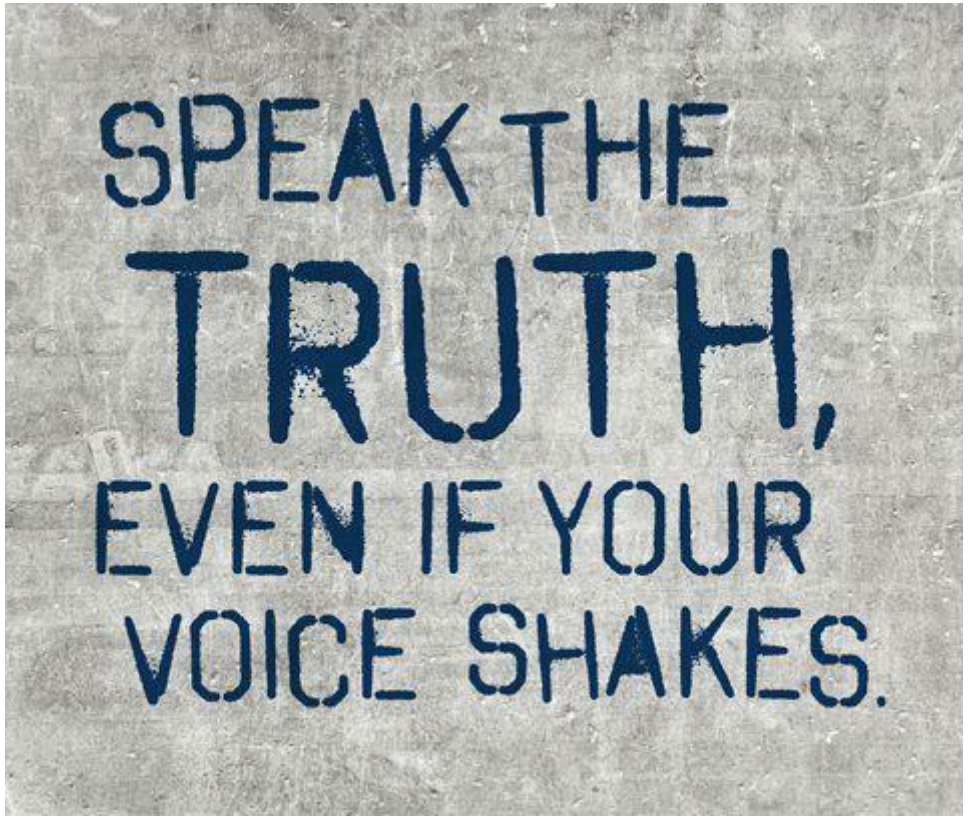
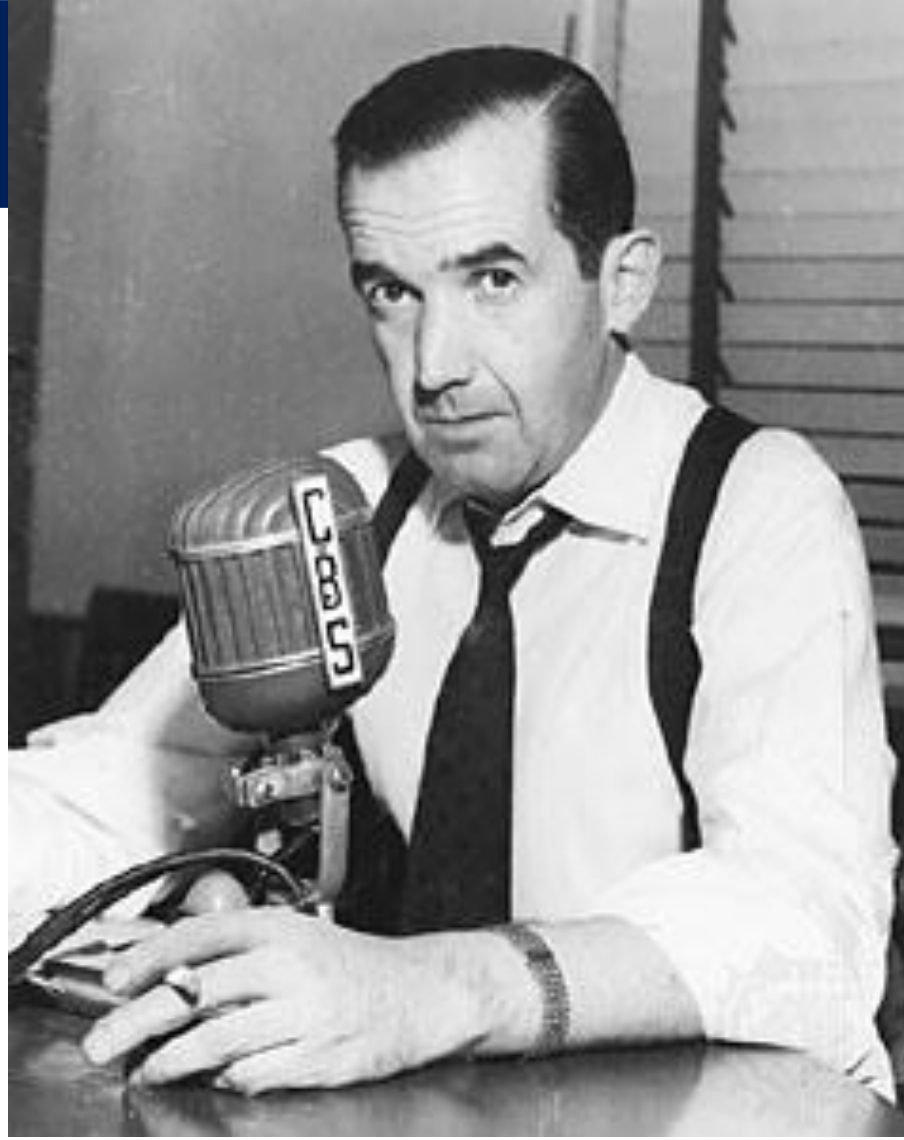
OD's quest for relevance: Are we sleeping at the wheel?

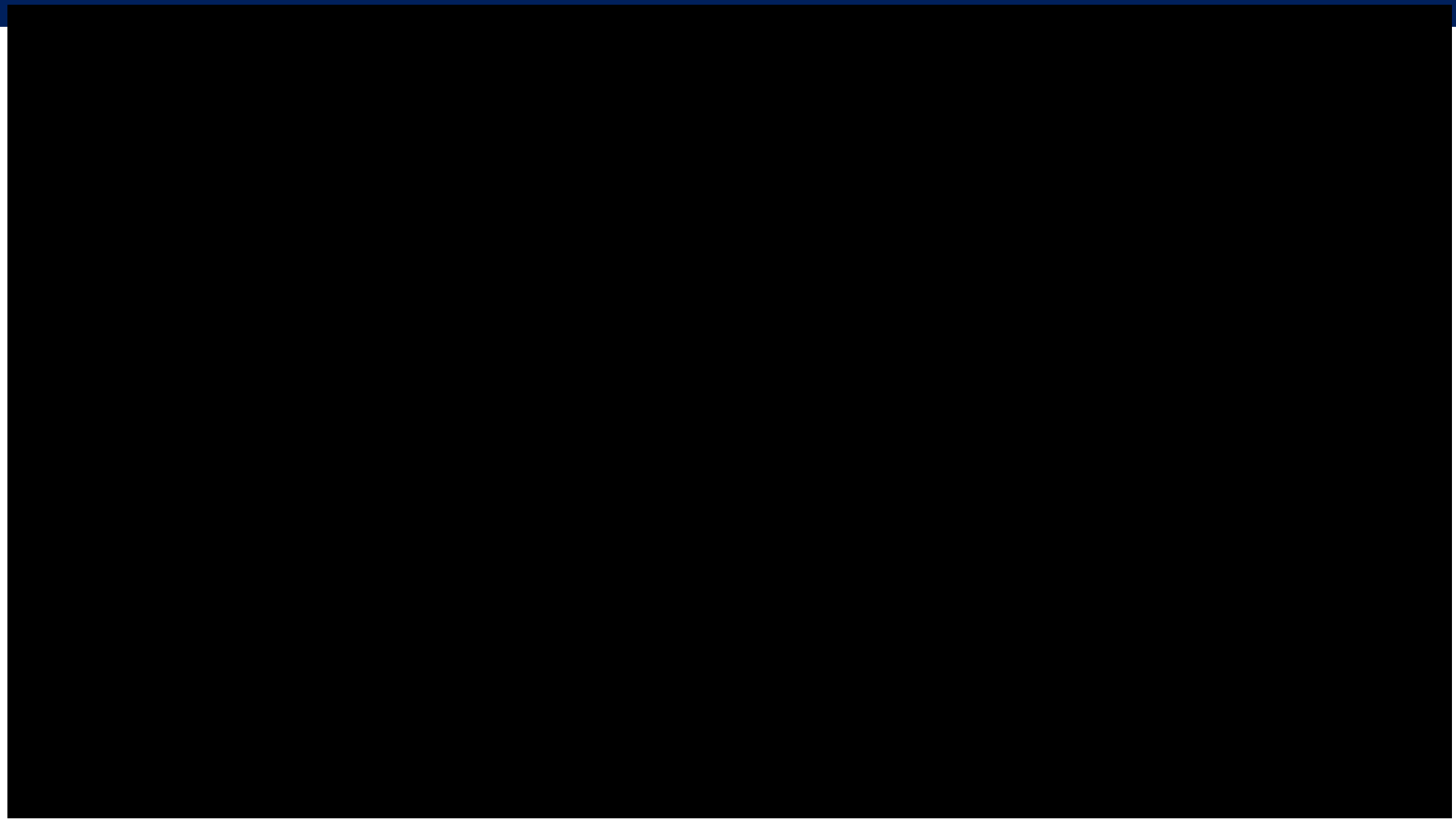
PEPPERDINE
GRAZIADIO
BUSINESS SCHOOL

Chris Worley
Senior Research Scientist
Research Professor of Management
@TheAgileOrg

Edward R. Murrow

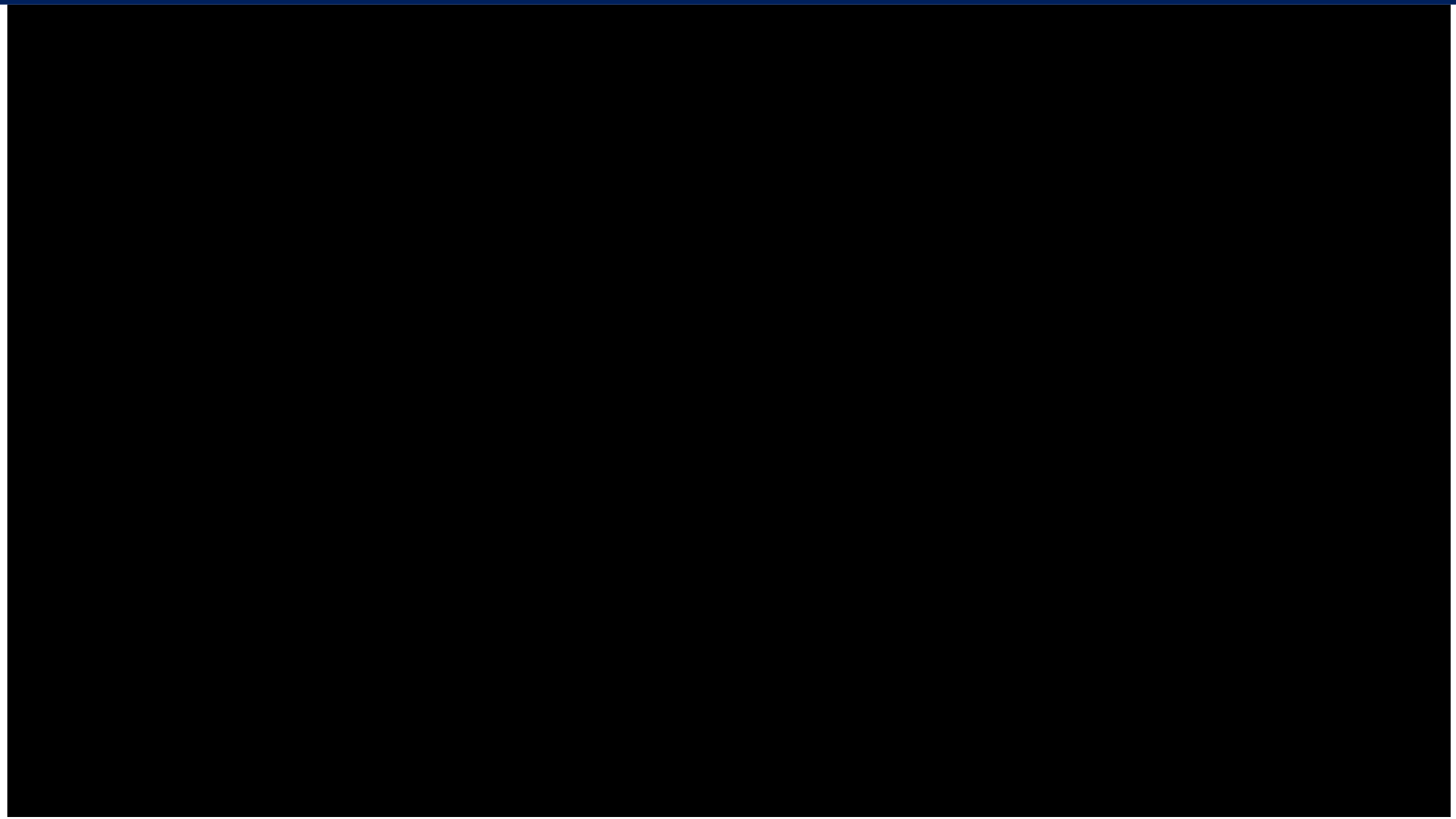






To destroy can be the thoughtless act of a single day…To build may have to be the slow and laborious task of years.

Sir Winston Churchill



Who are you?

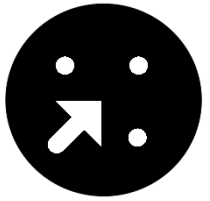
I could be anything
But for the faults that I've acquired on my way

If OD doesn't know who it is or why it's here…

- If **"everyone just tells us how to feel,"** then **trends will dictate choices** instead of human well-being
- If **"our hands are full but our lives are not,"** then **interventions will be uncoordinated and hollow** instead of orchestrated and substantial
- If **"we don't believe enough, but we still care,"** then **power will serve itself** instead of society (and OD becomes an unwitting contributor)

In response, OD must clarify its…

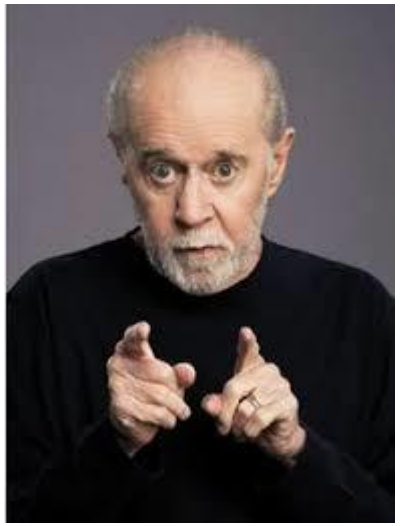
Purpose

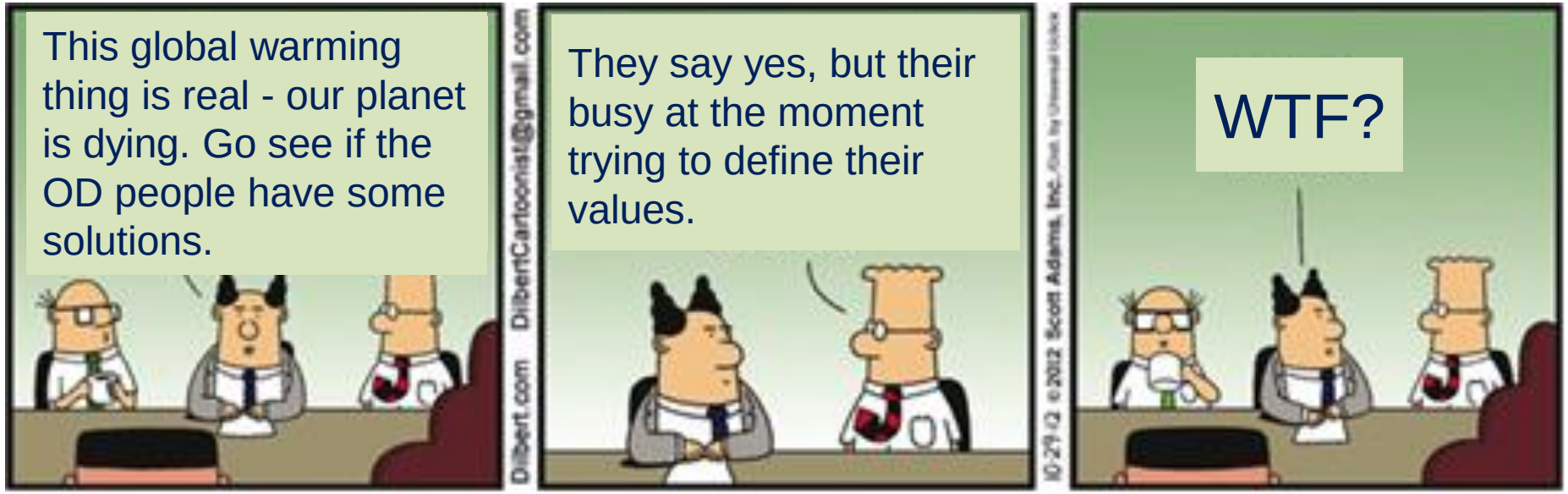


Strategy

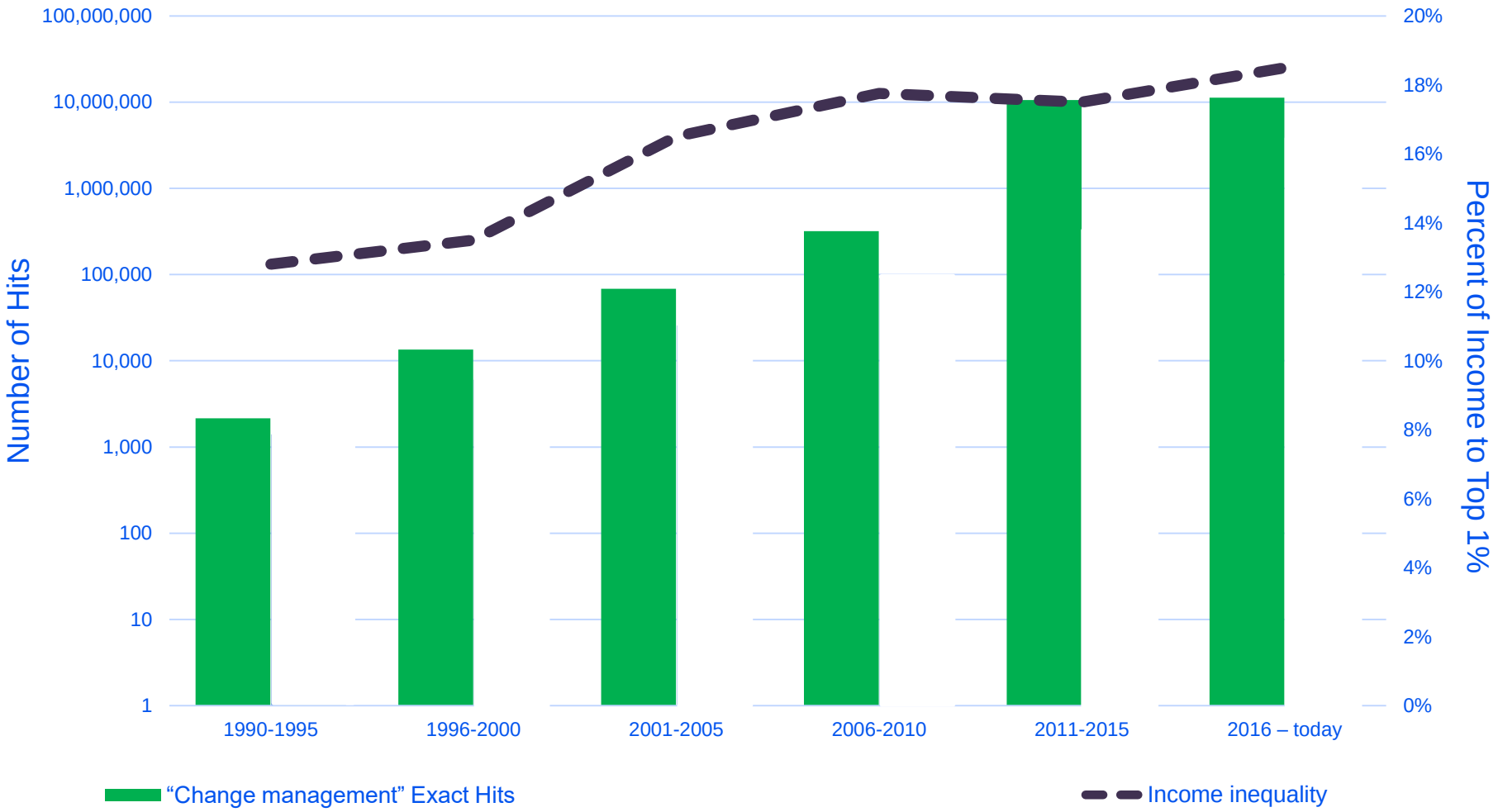
Capabilities

We profess to be systems thinkers, yet too many of our interventions and activities address specific and limited issues



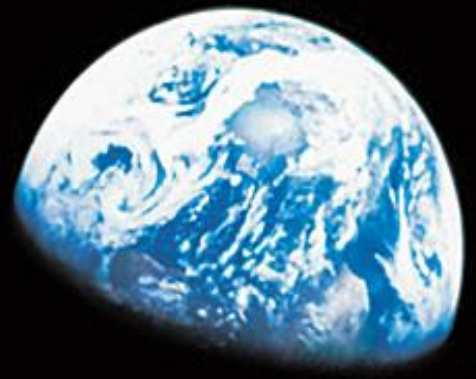


Change management, OD, and income inequality



The more popular change management becomes, the more income flows to the powerful 1%.

But if OD knows who it is …
if we have a shared purpose, clear strategy, and powerful capabilities…then we will be a relevant, formidable, hopeful, and influential movement



In essentials, unity;
In non-essentials, liberty;
In all things, charity

In Essentials, Unity - Shared Purpose

If OD knows who it is, we can bend trends and the activities that define them to serve “the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run.”

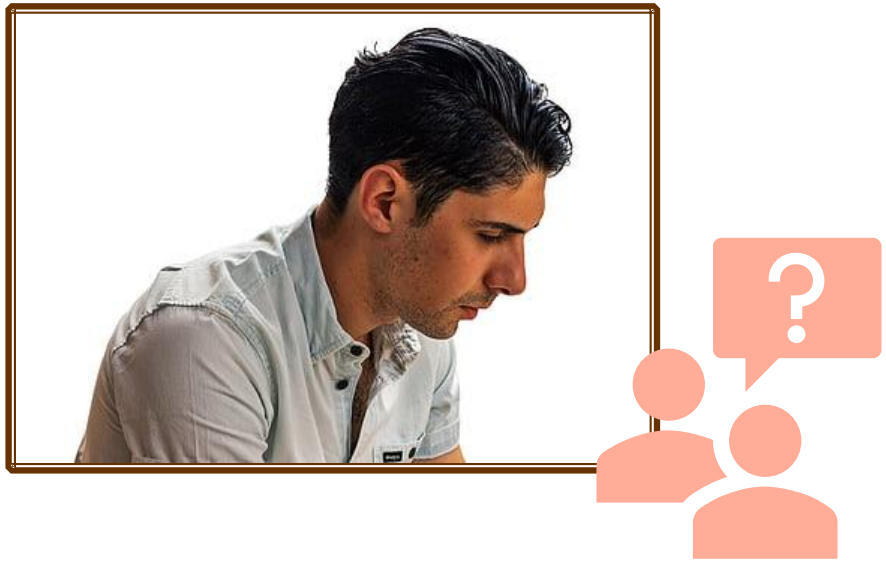
NON NOBIS SOLUM

Gifford Pinchot
1st US Forest Service Chief

In Non-Essentials, Liberty - A New Strategy

If OD knows who it is, has a shared purpose in ***non nobis solum***, our interventions can be diverse, orchestrated, and focused on organization and ecosystem sustainability.

Old Strategy: Look Down



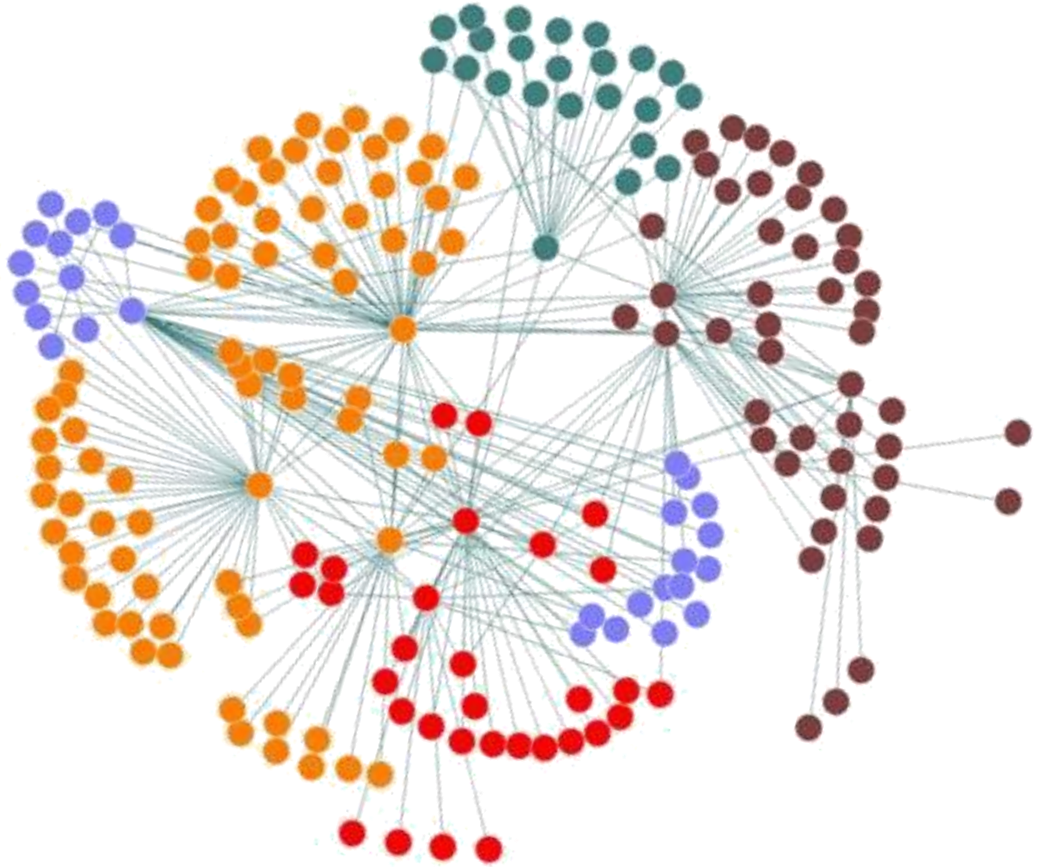
New Strategy: Look Up

Small Group Discussion

- Does OD – in your organization – spend more time “looking up” or “looking down?”
- How does the organization encourage/discourage one or the other?

In All Things, Charity: Building New Capabilities

If OD knows who it is, there is a shared purpose in ***non nobis solum***, we can build the capabilities to distribute power in serving humanity.



We need to stop talking about our values, and start acting on them.

Step 1: Lay the Foundation

Systemic

Empowerment

Versatilist

Skills and Knowledge

Architecture | Practice

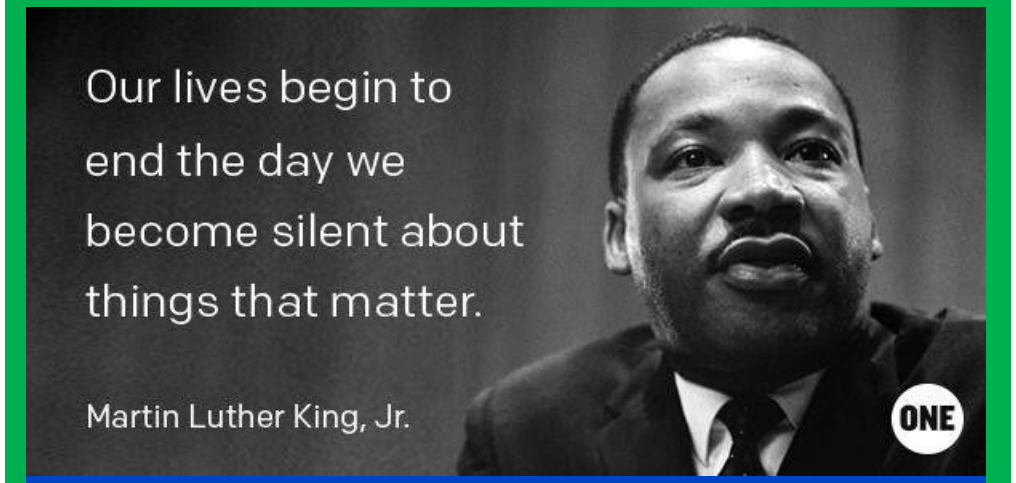
Organization Development Network
Advancing the Science, Practice &

ntl.org
NTL
empower | impact | transform

crf
CORPORATE RESEARCH FORUM

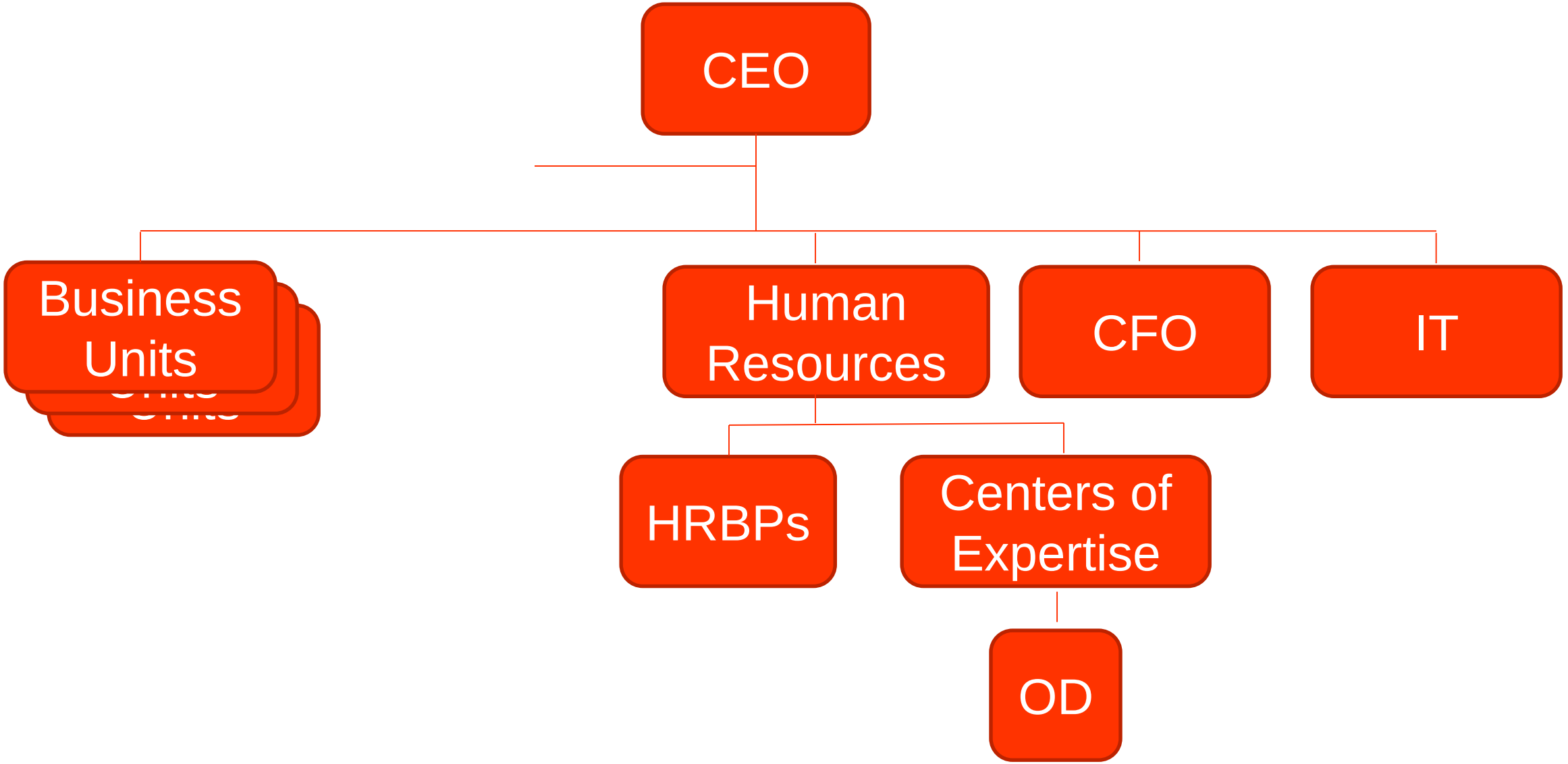
Organizati
Developmer
Change

EODF
European Organisation Design Forum

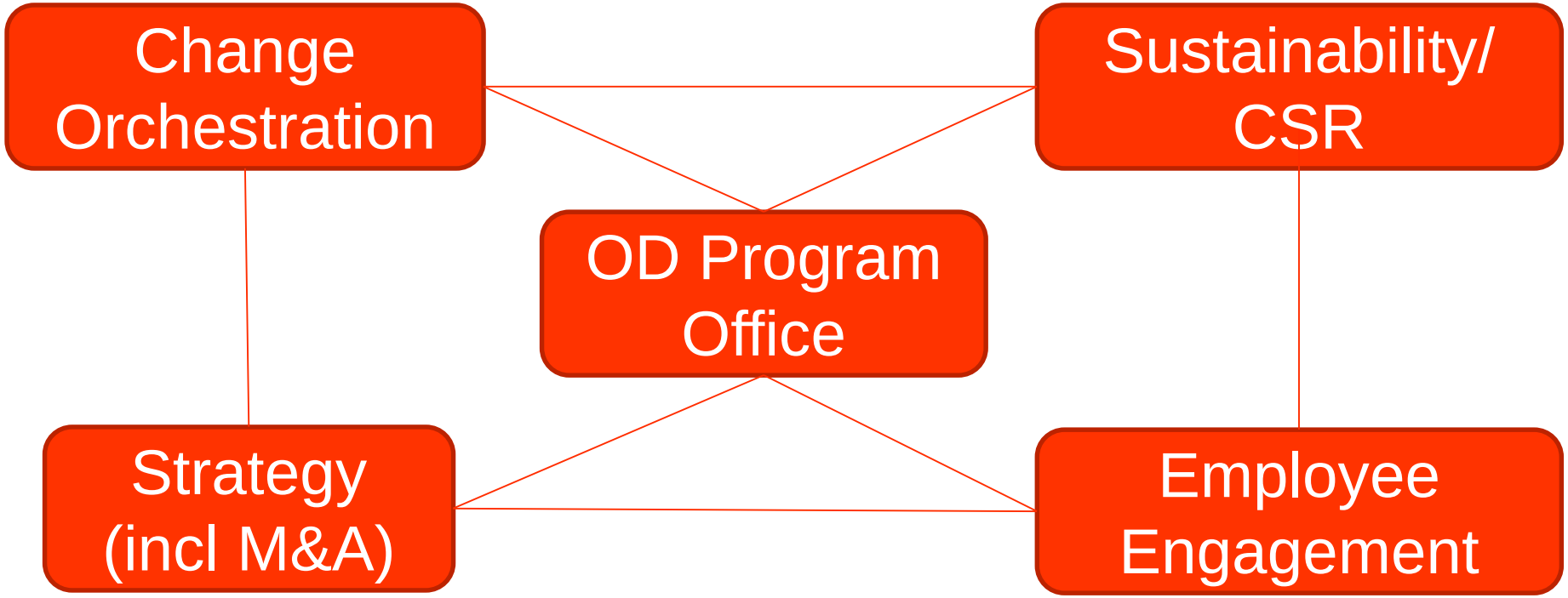


Petit a petit l'oiseau

Step 2: Organize for Impact



Step 3: Organize for Impact



Step 4: Charter for Accountability and Coordination

Mission:	Build the organization's change capability, orchestrate major (and some minor) initiatives, plot the organization's development
Goals:	Sustainable effectiveness
Key Stakeholders:	C-suite executives, HR, Board, Customers, Employees
Resources:	Versatilists – strategy, organization design, employee engagement, change orchestration
Decision authority:	Derivative - "on behalf of the CEO"
Requirements for integration with other groups:	Human Resource Council – Talent Management, Rewards, Performance Management, Succession Strategy Council – Business GMs, CFO, IT, CEO, HR
Communication responsibilities:	Status of change capability, progress of initiatives, metrics of sustainable effectiveness

KEIN PLASTIK MEER
So geht es
NICHT
Weiter!

THERE IS
NO PLANET B
My World's on
FIRE How
'bout your's??"

STOP
ECOCIDE
change the law
THERE IS
No
PLANET B
CLIMATE STRIKE KENYA
WTF?
(Where's The Finance?)
Wind
energy
blows me
away!
VOA

I Need to Wake Up

Melisa Etheridge

Have I been sleeping?
I've been so still, afraid of crumbling
Have I been careless?
Dismissing all the distant rumblings
Take me where I am supposed to be
To comprehend the things that I can't see

Cause I need to move
I need to wake up
I need to change
I need to shake up
I need to speak out
Something's got to break up
I've been asleep and I need to wake up now…

- If you truly believe that OD is awake, then you also understand that we cannot wait for others to see our brilliance.
- Building a new OD that helps organizations contribute to a sustainable ecosystem in diverse ways cannot be what other people do, but what we do.

Make a Wish…

Q&A

Who are you?

I could be anything
But for the faults that I've acquired on my way

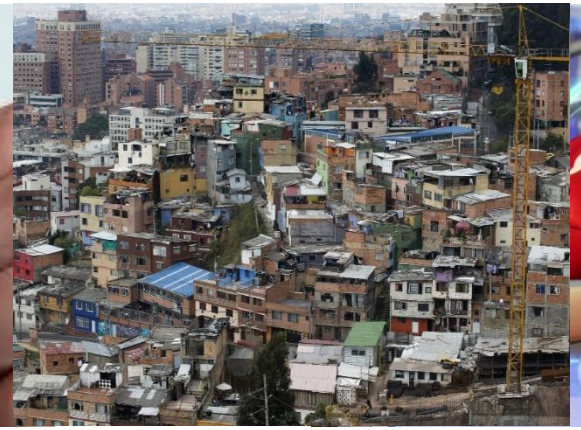
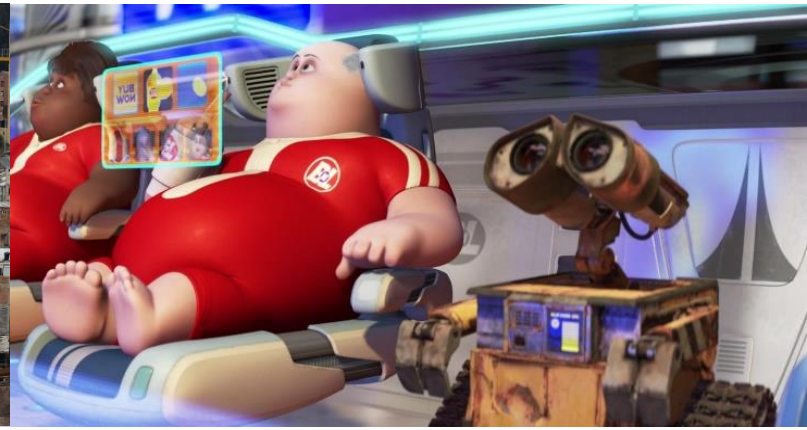
If OD doesn't know who it is or why it's here…

- **Trends will dictate choices** instead of human well-being
- **Interventions will be uncoordinated and hollow** instead of orchestrated and substantial
- **Power will serve itself** instead of society

The Need for Purpose

So come on, come on we can be saved
The lives we live, the wars we wage
When everyone just tells us how to feel
We're sleeping at the wheel

If OD doesn't know who it is or why it's here trends will dictate choices instead of human well-being

Globalization + Digitalization + Urbanization = Homogenization

The Need for Strategy

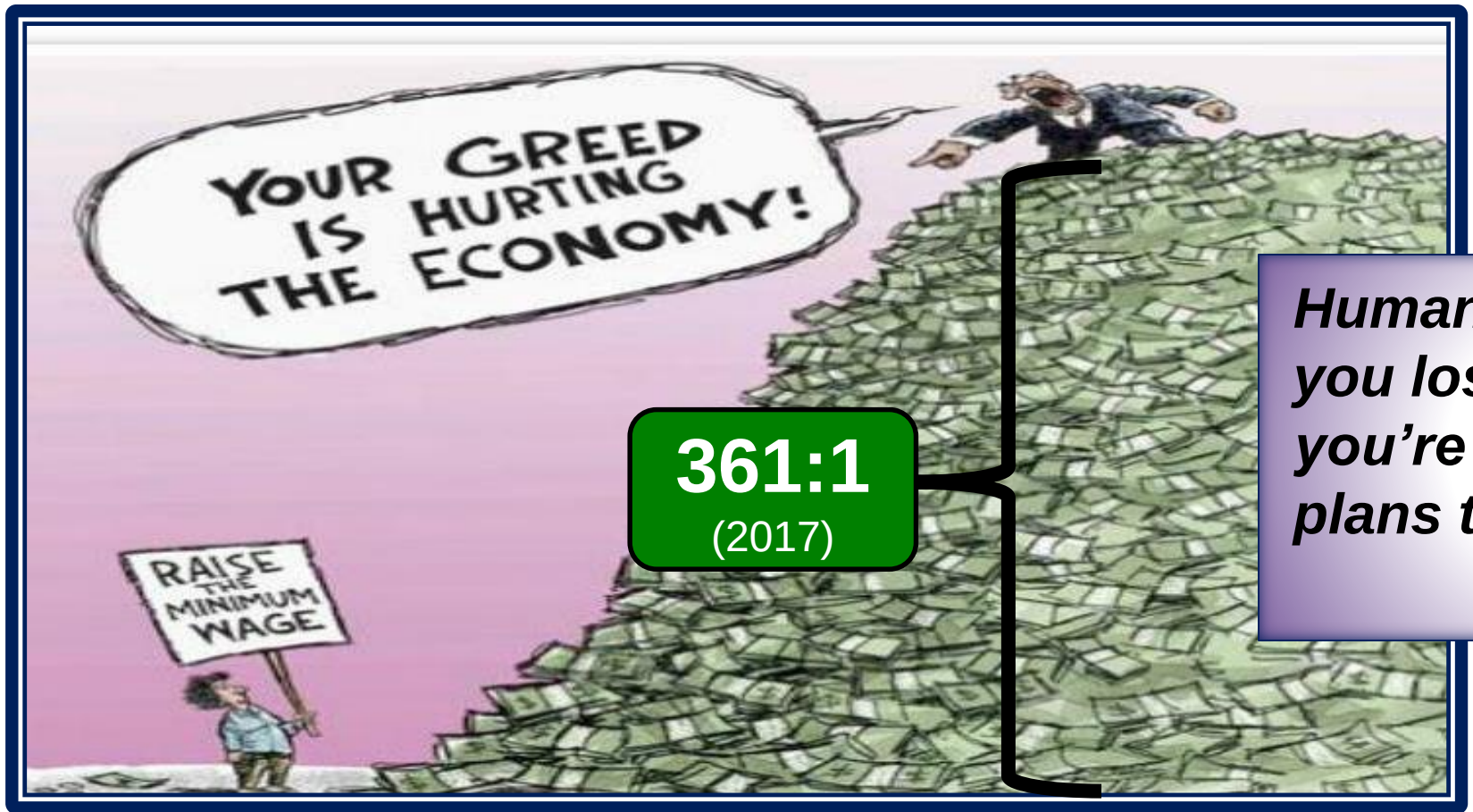
So come on, come on it's all we got
Our hands are full, our lives are not
The loose affiliation with the real
We're sleeping at the wheel

If OD doesn't know who it is or why it's here, our interventions will be uncoordinated and hollow

The Need for Capability

We've become the walls we raised,
We don't believe enough but we still care,
Standing on the edge without a prayer

If OD doesn't know who it is or why it's here, power will serve itself instead of society (and we become unwitting contributors)



Humanity is what you lose while you're busy making plans to gain power.

Peter Travers, Rolling Stone

What are we creating?

I used to think the world was flat
Rarely threw my hat into the crowd
I felt I had used up my quota of yearning

Used to look in on the children at night
In the glow of their Donald Duck light
And frighten myself with the thought of my little ones burning

But oh, oh, oh, the tide is turning
The tide is turning

The Tide is Turning

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Satellite buzzing through the endless night
Exclusive to moonshots and world title fights
Jesus Christ, imagine what it must be earning
Who is the strongest, who is the best
Who holds the aces, the East or the West
This is the **crap** our children are learning
But oh, oh, oh, the tide is turning
The tide is turning
Oh, oh, oh, the tide is turning