

How Do We Move Fast Without Losing What Matters?

Dialogue en Fishbowl
Que faudrait-il pour aller de l'avant avec audace et confiance afin de saisir cette occasion ?

PRESENTED BY



PARTNERS



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SPEED is NOT the PROBLEM OR the SOLUTION

There is real risk and concern that urgency is conflated with speed, becoming a pretext to bypass consultation or set aside legitimate concerns. A common thread throughout the discussion was that speed is neither the enemy nor the answer. The real question is whether the decision-making process is effective, efficient, legitimate, and just.

TAKEAWAYS

- Speed ≠ urgency. Conflating them leads to reactive, poorly-considered decisions. Moving too slowly can be equally damaging, so the goal is to find the right pace for the decision at hand.
- The “move fast and break things” approach carries an unspoken assumption that someone else will clean up the mess. Better processes leave fewer messes to begin with.

Taking time to include people is sometimes seen as a barrier to the urgent decisions we face, but inclusion helps us make better decisions and actually speeds things up downstream. This is especially important in the context of Indigenous rights, where consultation reflects the responsibility to engage Indigenous Peoples as rights holders, not simply as stakeholders. Drawing on diverse perspectives surfaces unknowns, improves transparency, builds trust and accountability, and reduces the chance of costly mistakes.

TAKEAWAYS

- Acknowledge that communities are not monoliths, engage them with openness, and view them as a source to accelerate decisions rather than a risk mitigation or liability.
- Recognize Indigenous Peoples as rights holders and partners in decision-making.
- Build processes that build trust preemptively and include more voices in ways that are both efficient and effective

INCLUSION is an ACCELERATOR, Not a Brake



A productive metaphor emerged: the current system often feels like a race course with arbitrary barriers. What we need instead are clear guardrails: a visible pathway people can see and trust, within which speed is possible.

TAKEAWAYS

- Decision-making processes should be visible, transparent, and predictable. Clarity about the pathways is itself an accelerant.
- The Westminster system is designed to slow things down, and there are real strengths in that. The challenge is knowing when different speeds are needed and having the flexibility to match them.

GUARDRAILS, Not BARRIERS

CONTEXT MATTERS: We're FLOURISHING & we're WORRIED

A useful tension surfaced: statistically, humanity is doing remarkably well by historical standards. And yet the uncertainty and anxiety feel very real. Both things are true, and holding that tension matters for how we make decisions because when everything is a crisis, nothing is. Our information environment can amplify urgency in ways that distort our collective judgment, so regularly stepping back to reassess our context is an important practice.

TAKEAWAYS

- Step back to prioritize with more honesty about what truly demands urgent action, and create space to celebrate and build on what is actually working



TECHNOLOGY: TOOL not ORACLE

Technology — including AI — (how about those signature em dashes eh?) featured throughout the conversation, with concern, curiosity and nuance. The question wasn't whether to use it, but how.

TAKEAWAYS

- Technology can be a powerful tool for better decision-making, but only if it is used with intention, governed well, and oriented toward specific outcomes rather than scale for its own sake.

The importance of creating spaces for community dialogue came up throughout our discussion, whilst noting that these don't need to be formal and are a practice to bring into our daily lives.

TAKEAWAYS

- Belonging and engagement are deeply connected — people who feel seen in democracy are more likely to participate in it.
- Strong communities are built through everyday actions: checking in on neighbours, volunteering, participating in local life, and maintaining social connections.
- Engaging young people early and creating meaningful opportunities for civic participation helps strengthen long-term community trust and democratic culture.

DEMOCRACY is INFRASTRUCTURE, & it's BUILT DAILY



WHAT NOW? WHERE WE CAN START

These aren't meant to be a manual; think of them as starting points to explore within your own organization, sector, or community.

- 1.** Define what “sound decision-making” looks like in your context (e.g., effective, efficient, legitimate, just) and make that framework visible to everyone involved.
- 2.** Build processes that integrate consultation at the start, not after conflict emerges. Resource it properly and treat it as a design feature, not a compliance exercise. Stop designing processes primarily around risk mitigation. Design them around opportunity, relationships, trust, and long-term outcomes.
- 3.** Invest in social capital, especially beyond the usual rooms and across differences. Community is built in person, over time, through genuine encounter.
- 4.** Stay on your toes, not your heels. Adaptability and reactivity are not the same thing. One is a posture of readiness; the other is a loss of direction.

