



How the Crisis of Imagination Shows Up in Organizations*

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1. Strategic Myopia

- Short planning horizons
- Overreliance on past performance as a predictor of the future
- Avoidance of bold or unconventional options

2. Risk Aversion Embedded in Culture

- Preference for proven solutions over experimentation
- Punitive responses to failure
- Innovation limited to surface-level tweaks

3. Narrative Deficits

- Vision statements that are generic or uninspiring
- Difficulty mobilizing people around long-term change
- Fragmented or contradictory internal narratives

4. Innovation Bottlenecks

- Innovation confined to a single department rather than distributed
- Bureaucratic approval processes that slow or kill new ideas
- Lack of psychological safety for proposing unconventional approaches

5. Over-Indexing on Efficiency

- KPIs that reward optimization over exploration
- Limited slack time for creative thinking
- Pressure to deliver short-term outputs at the expense of long-term vision

6. Technological Determinism

- Technology-first rather than problem-first thinking
- Assuming digital tools will solve structural issues
- Underinvestment in human-centered innovation

7. Leadership Narratives That Constrain Possibility

- Framing change as a threat rather than an opportunity
- Using crisis language that limits creative thinking
- Rewarding compliance over curiosity

8. Lack of Diverse Perspectives

- Limited representation in decision-making spaces
- Ideas filtered through a narrow set of lived experiences
- Innovation that fails to resonate with diverse stakeholders

9. Underdeveloped Foresight Capabilities

- No scenario planning or horizon scanning
- Decisions made without considering long-term consequences
- Surprise at predictable disruptions

10. Burnout and Cognitive Overload

- Creativity declines under chronic stress
- Teams default to habitual thinking
- Imagination becomes a luxury rather than a capability