

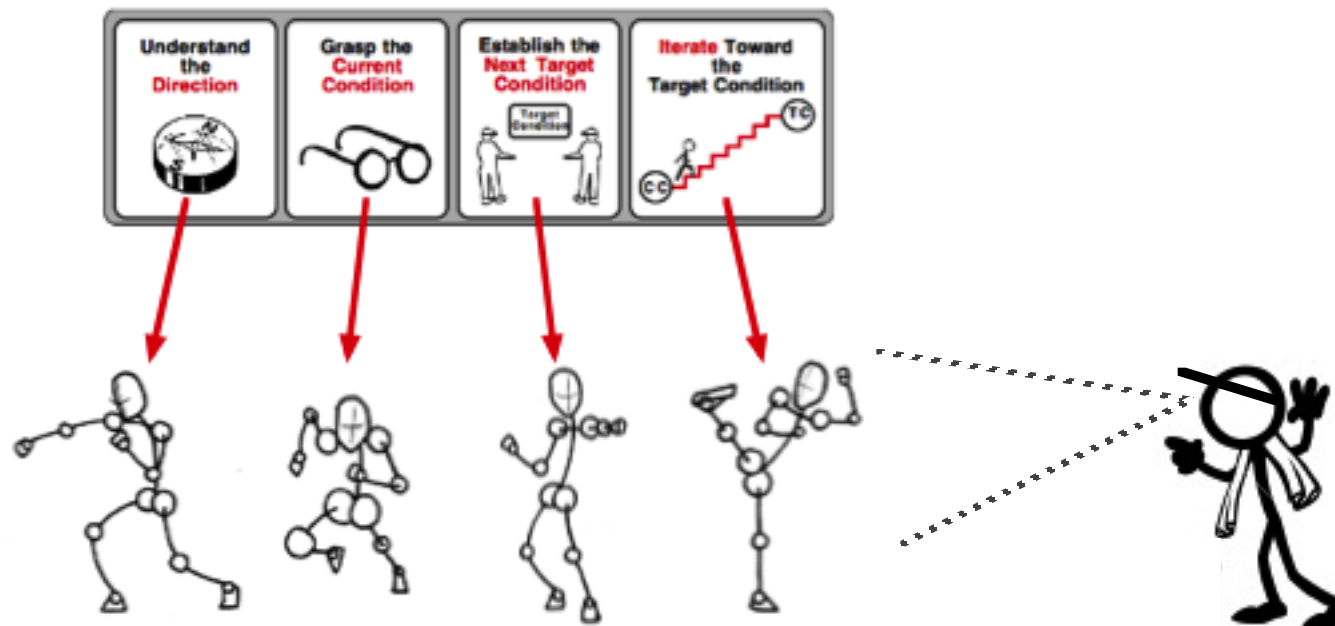
# **PART II: Practice Routines for The Improvement Kata**

**Deliberate practice of the Improvement Kata pattern has the ability to change how we think about and deal with challenges and uncertainty. This section of the Handbook walks you step-by-step through the practice routines for each step of the Improvement Kata.**

# A KEY POINT ABOUT PART II

The practice routines in this part of the Handbook are used to learn the scientific thinking pattern of the Improvement Kata through application practice

## The IMPROVEMENT KATA PATTERN (the scientific approach)



**These are specific PRACTICE ROUTINES to acquire / develop the scientific pattern of thinking and acting**

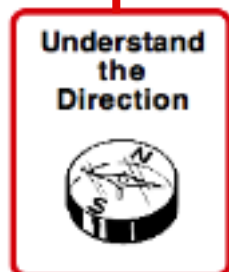
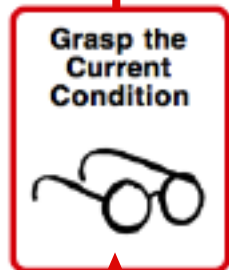
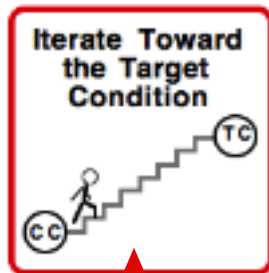
(HANDBOOK PART II)

**The COACHING KATA is a practice routine for learning how to teach the Improvement Kata pattern**

(HANDBOOK PART III)

# THE STEPS OF THE IMPROVEMENT KATA BUILD ON ONE ANOTHER

What you do in one step  
frames the next step



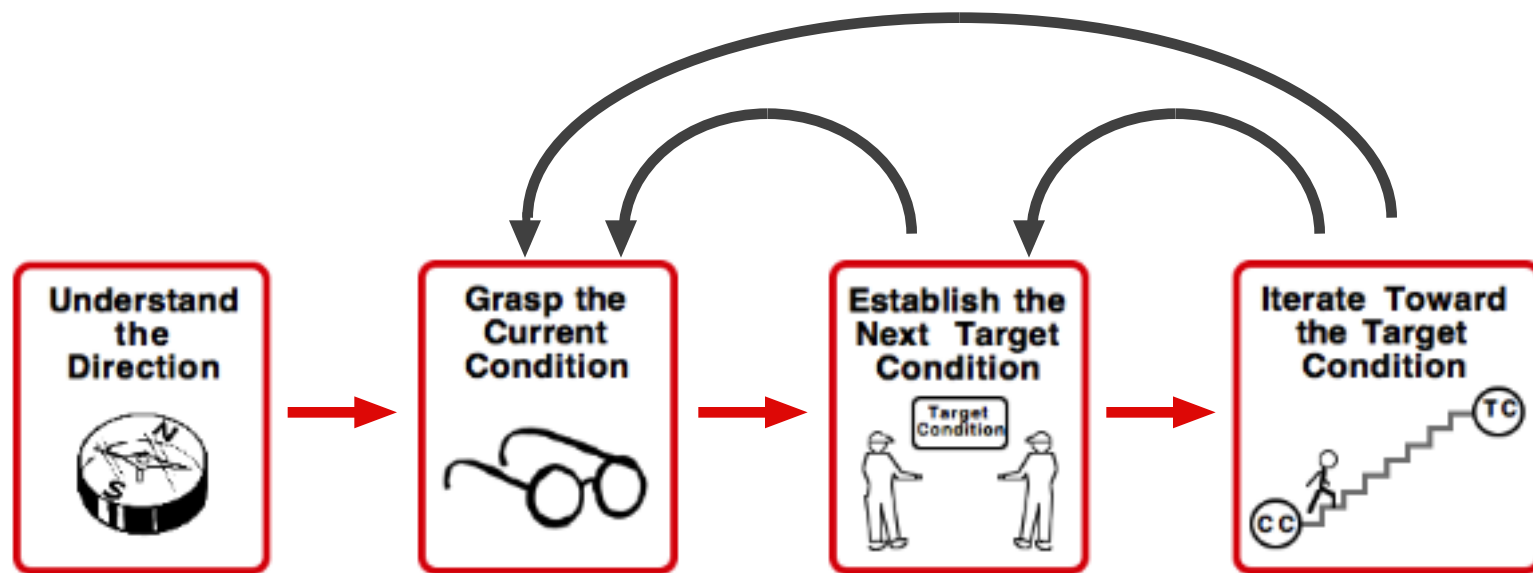
The more precisely you define the **Target Condition**, the better and more quickly you can recognize obstacles and **iterate** toward it with rapid experiments .

The better your analysis of the **Current Condition**, the more precise your definition of the **Target Condition** can be.

The clearer the definition of the **Challenge**, the more appropriate will be your analysis of the **Current Condition**.

# THE STEPS OF THE IMPROVEMENT KATA ARE ALSO RECURSIVE

What you encounter in one step  
may adjust what you learned in earlier steps



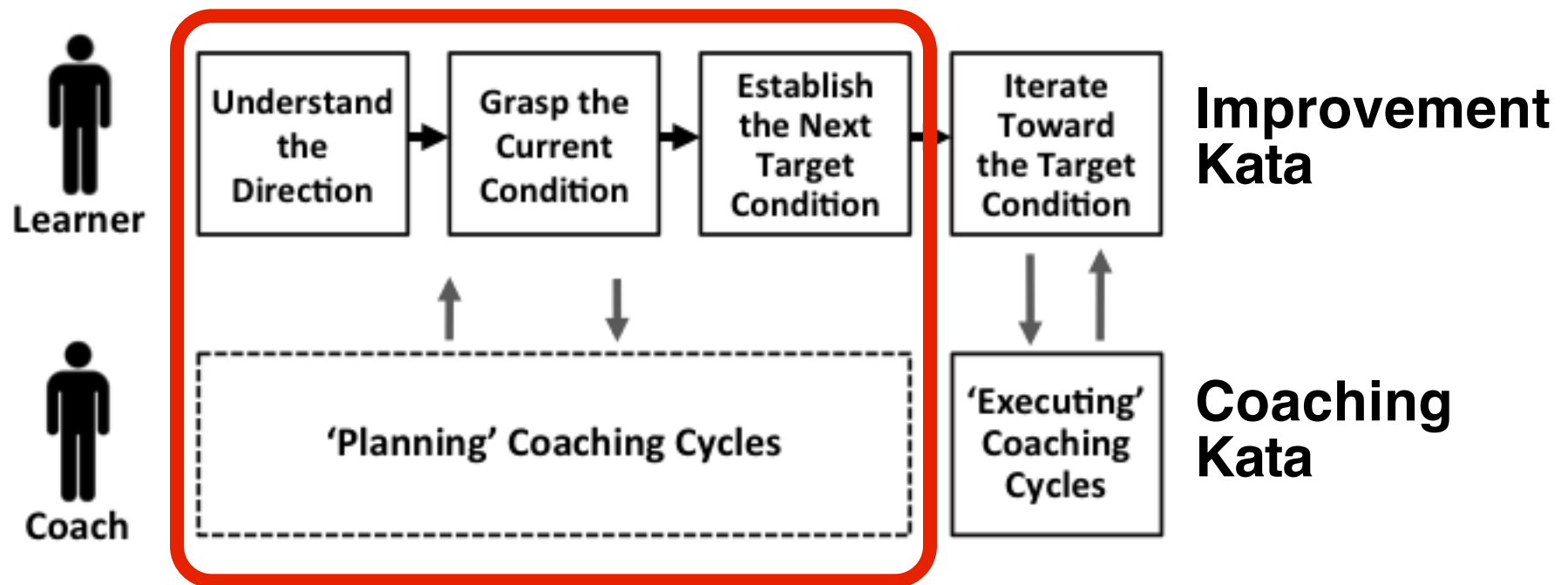
# PLANNING PHASE

## *Where Do We Want to Go?*

Chapter 4. Step 1: Understand the Direction / Challenge

Chapter 5. Step 2: Grasp the Current Condition

Chapter 6. Step 3: Establish the Next Target Condition

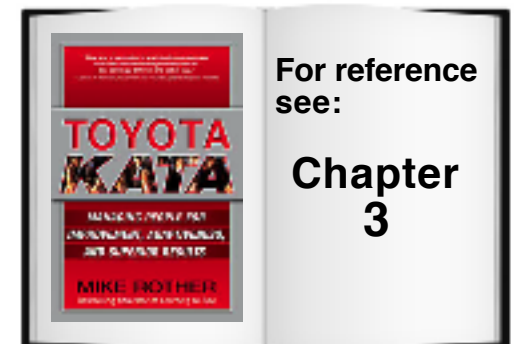


# Chapter 4

## The Improvement Kata - Planning Phase

### Step 1: UNDERSTAND THE DIRECTION / CHALLENGE

**Practice  
this  
Routine**



# ORIENTATION

 **YOU are here**

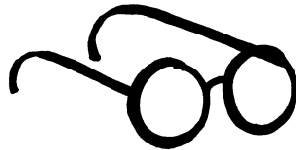


**Understand the Direction**

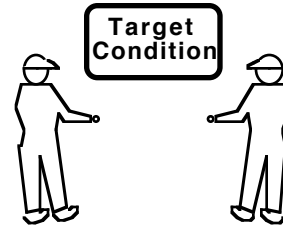


**What challenge are we striving to meet?**

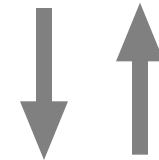
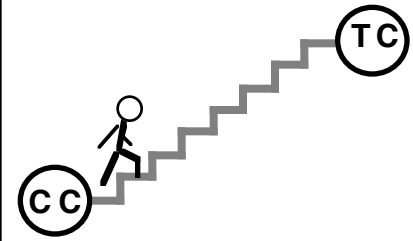
**Grasp the Current Condition**



**Establish the Next Target Condition**

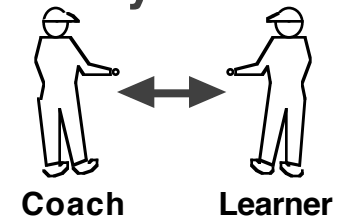


**Iterate Toward the Target Condition**



**'Planning' Coaching Cycles**


**'Executing' Coaching Cycles**



# LEARNER'S STORYBOARD

Learner and Coach are now concentrating on this field



<b>Focus Process:</b>		<b>Challenge:</b> 
<b>Target Condition</b> Achieve by: _____	<b>Current Condition</b>	<b>PDCA Cycles Record</b>
		<b>Obstacles Parking Lot</b>





## THE IMPROVEMENT KATA PATTERN BEGINS WITH A SENSE OF DIRECTION

**You Are Here**



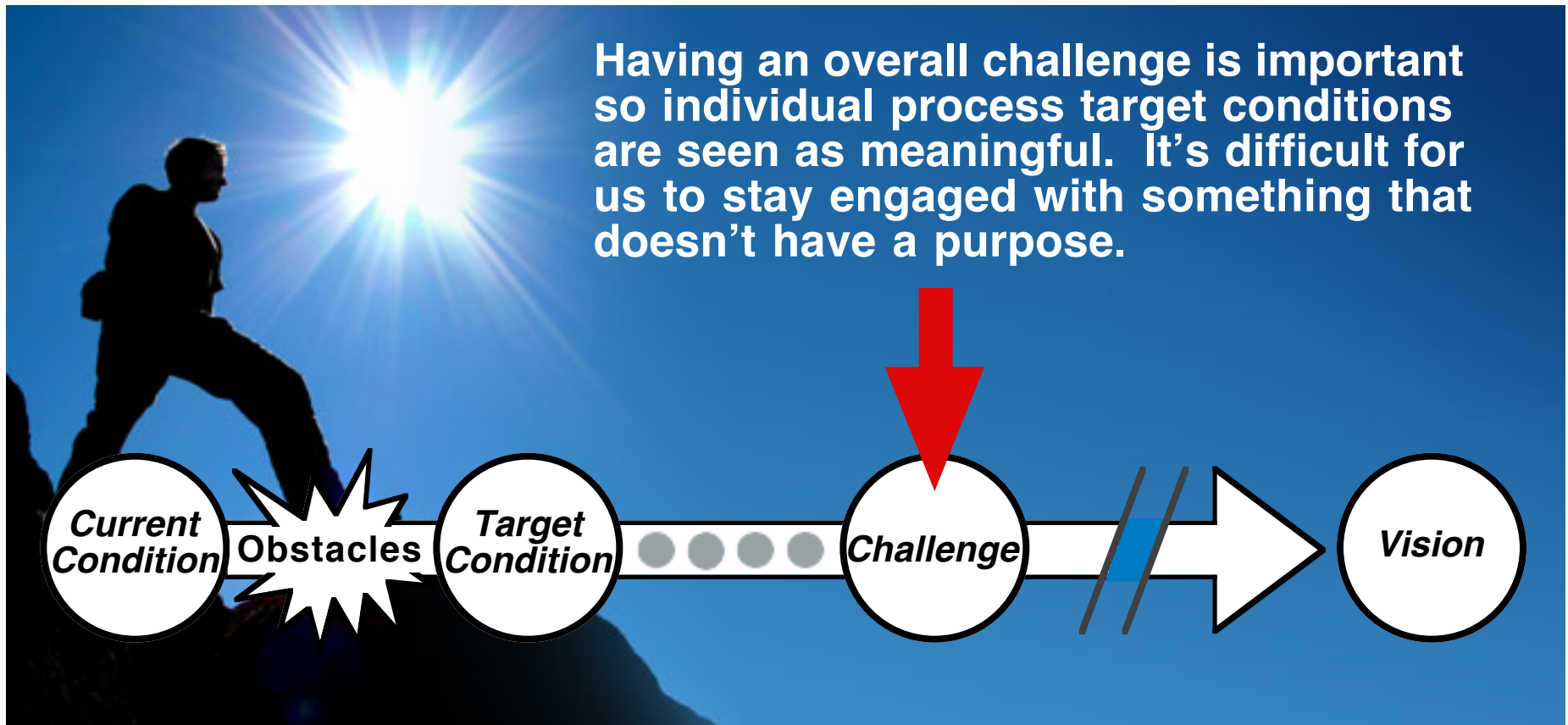
**Breakthrough Challenge  
related to better serving  
the customer**



Based on a graphic by Bill Costantino

# SPECIFICALLY, THE FIRST STEP OF THE IK PATTERN IS TO DEFINE THE OVERARCHING **CHALLENGE**

This is the context within which the rest of the Improvement Kata is applied



*“When people see themselves as components in a system [and] work in cooperation to achieve a shared aim, they feel that their efforts hold meaning. They experience interest and challenge and joy in the work.”*

~ W. Edwards Deming, The New Economics, page 128

# THE ROLE OF A CHALLENGE

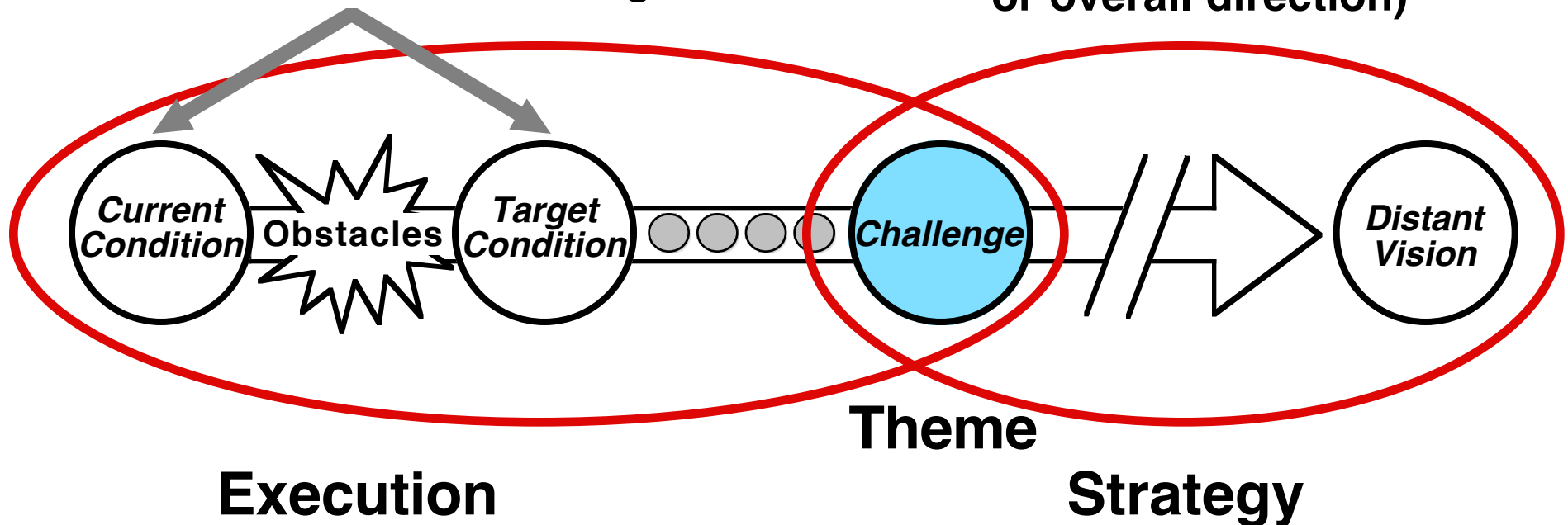
**Ideally, a challenge is a theme that connects strategy with process-level execution**

## A Task for *MANAGERS*

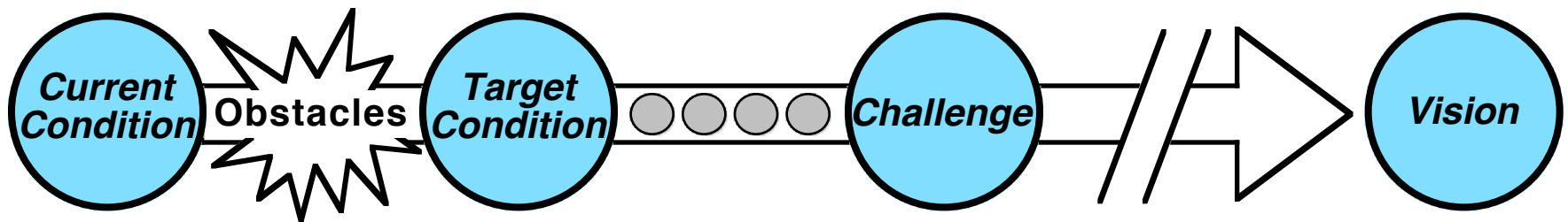
Day-to-day coaching the application practice of the Improvement Kata pattern, in the direction of the challenge

## A Task for *LEADERS*:

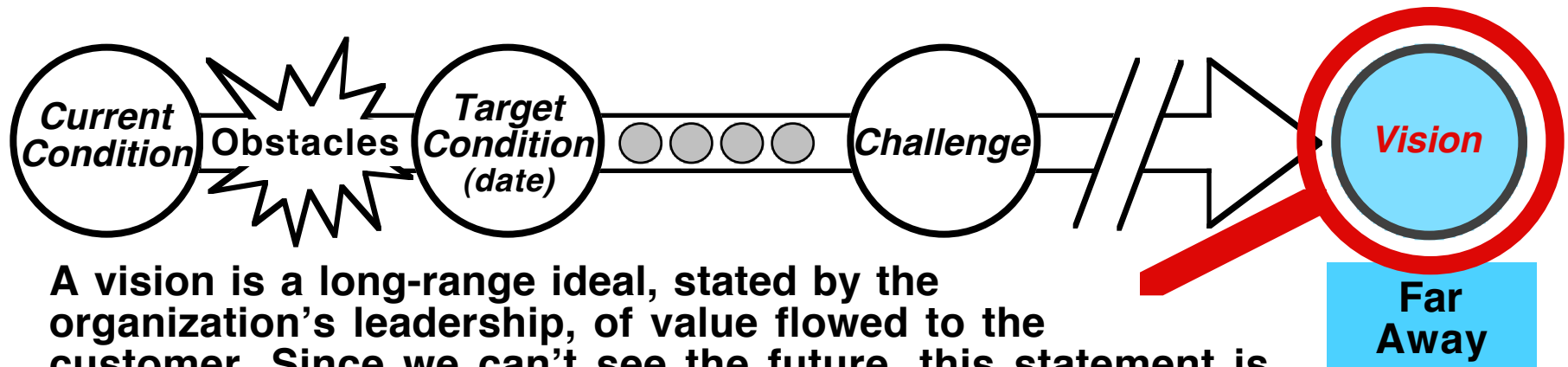
Establishing the organization's strategic concept (the “rallying point” or overall direction)



# LET'S LOOK AT EACH OF THESE ELEMENTS



# THE LONG-TERM VISION: STRATEGIC PURPOSE



A vision is a long-range ideal, stated by the organization's leadership, of value flowed to the customer. Since we can't see the future, this statement is a description of value that's not limited to the organization's current products or technologies. If you look beyond the processes and products you have today (which can blind you to the bigger picture), what do customers actually need or want?

For example, a long-term vision statement for an automobile manufacturer could be, *"Better transportation for more people."* A vision statement for a manufacturer of drills could be, *"Holes where you want them when you want them."*

It's acceptable and even desirable for the vision to represent a puzzle from the perspective of current competencies. It's far away, difficult to imagine, and the path to it is not foreseeable.

This sense of direction gets deployed into the organization by defining more specific challenges or themes that guide and inform application of the Improvement Kata pattern, to strengthen existing capabilities or develop new capabilities as necessary to move in the desired direction.

Further details on establishing a long-term vision are outside the scope of the Improvement Kata Handbook.

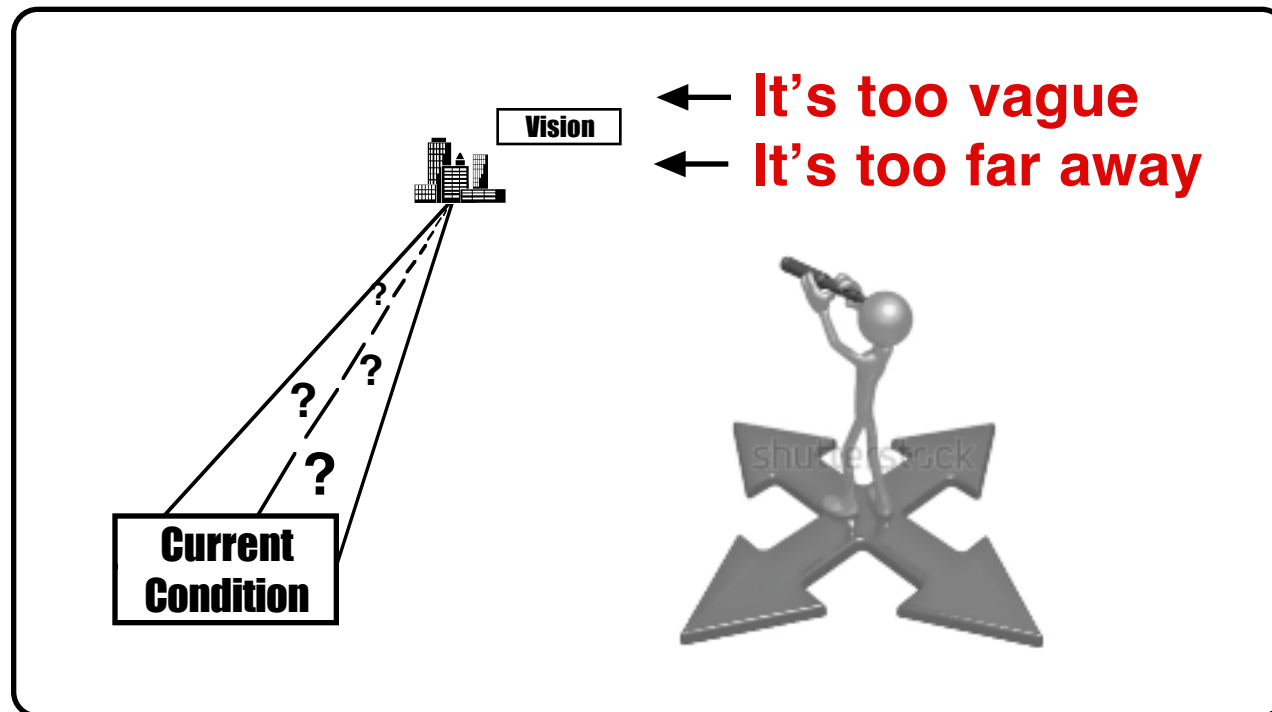
**Note:**  
***EFFICIENCY AND COST CUTTING  
ARE NOT A DIRECTION***

**Just operating on low cost is unlikely to be a source of sustained competitive advantage. This can lead you into a commodity trap, where in order to compete you end up pursuing ever-lower-cost inputs and endanger quality.**

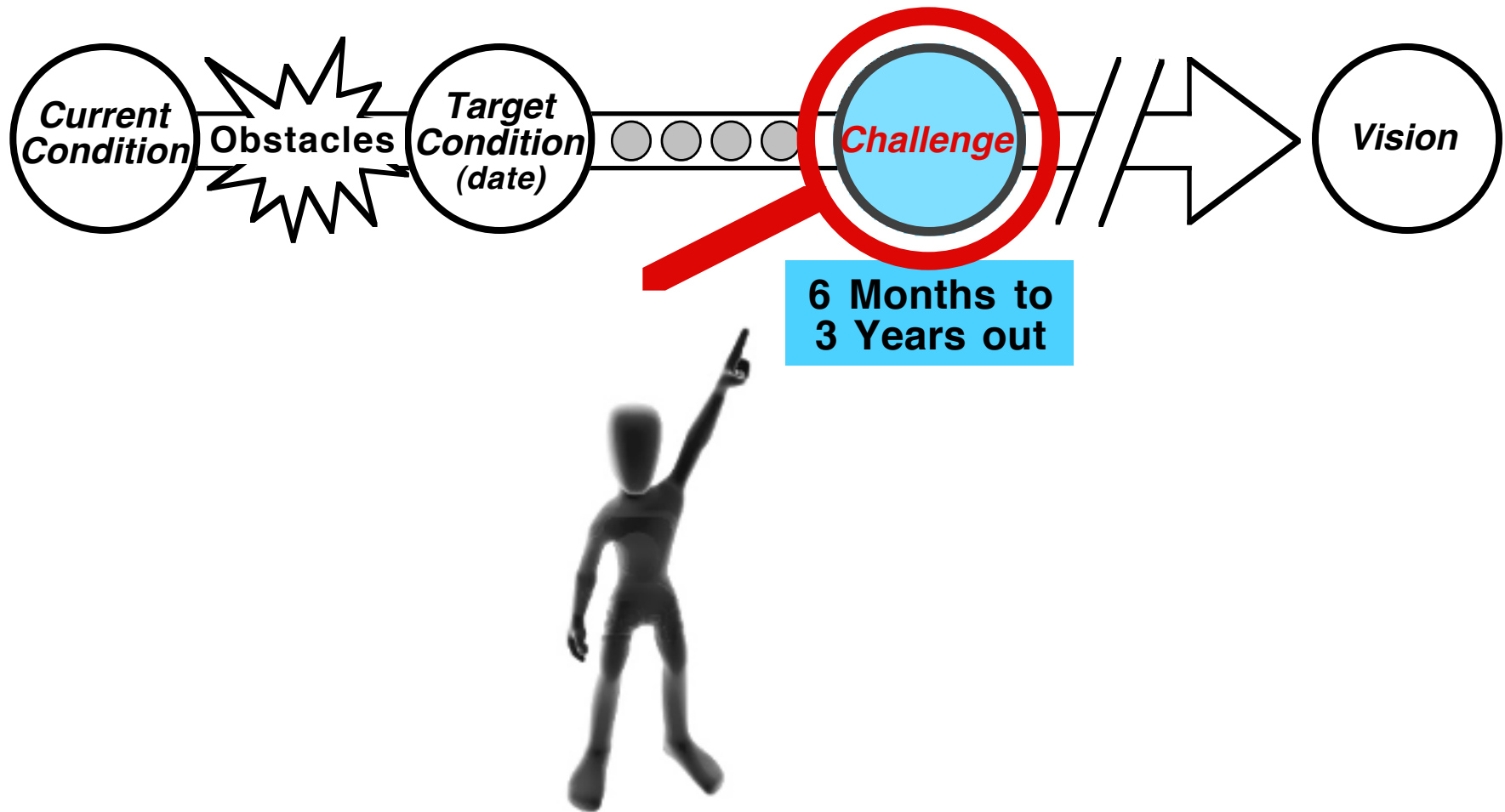
**Rather than managing the operational side of the business simply to be efficient, with the Improvement Kata approach managers guide activities that support a strategic purpose that grows and differentiates the business (which can include efficiency, of course).**

**Defining a vision or strategic purpose is about building unique value; i.e., distinctive differences that are valuable to customers. This provides qualitative directional guidance for the organization.**

# A STRATEGIC VISION BY ITSELF IS NOT A GOOD GUIDE FOR DAILY IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS



# THE MOST IMPORTANT OVERALL DIRECTION GIVER FOR THE OPERATIONAL SIDE OF THE ORGANIZATION ARE CLOSER, MORE SPECIFIC, WELL-STATED BREAKTHROUGH CHALLENGES







# WHAT IS A CHALLENGE?

Think of a challenge as a sentence beginning with the words:

*“Wouldn’t it be great if we could...”*

- It’s a non-negotiable stretch goal -- a theme -- related to better serving the customer. It’s an inspiring description of a new level of performance that will distinguish your team from competitors.
- It’s a business imperative that the organization can’t achieve with its current system or process.
- Typically 6 months to 2 years in the future.
- Is defined by leaders or by persons with value-stream responsibility.
- Not easy, but not impossible. Achievable, but we don’t know in advance how we’ll achieve it. Takes a series of target conditions to achieve.

# A CHALLENGE IS A TEAM OR ORGANIZATION RALLYING POINT

A challenge should describe a desired state that people can rally around, and should be measureable in some aspect. But the challenge is not just a number. It should be personally relevant to the members of the organization. A good challenge focuses a team's attention and effort, and is often published as a punchy, inspiring *challenge statement*.

<b>Example Challenge</b> <i>Wouldn't it be great if we could...</i>	<b>Example Challenge Statement</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ...have every customer calling in immediately get a live person.</li><li>• ...machine parts 1x1 directly in the assembly process.</li><li>• ...paint parts 1x1 directly in the assembly process.</li><li>• ...build one customer kitchen at a time and put it right on the truck.</li><li>• ...have lab-test results done in 45 minutes, with no errors.</li><li>• ...take 7 days from new patient referral to evaluation.</li><li>• ...assemble the day ordered, and ship the next day.</li></ul>	<p><i><b>"Customers first time live"</b></i></p> <p><i><b>"Machine to assemble"</b></i></p> <p><i><b>"Paint to assemble"</b></i></p> <p><i><b>"Build to truck, kitchen at a time"</b></i></p> <p><i><b>"Know in 45"</b></i></p> <p><i><b>"Just a week"</b></i></p> <p><i><b>"Same day, next day"</b></i></p>

# WHY AN OVERARCHING CHALLENGE IS SO IMPORTANT

**A challenge guides every day's work. Without it:**

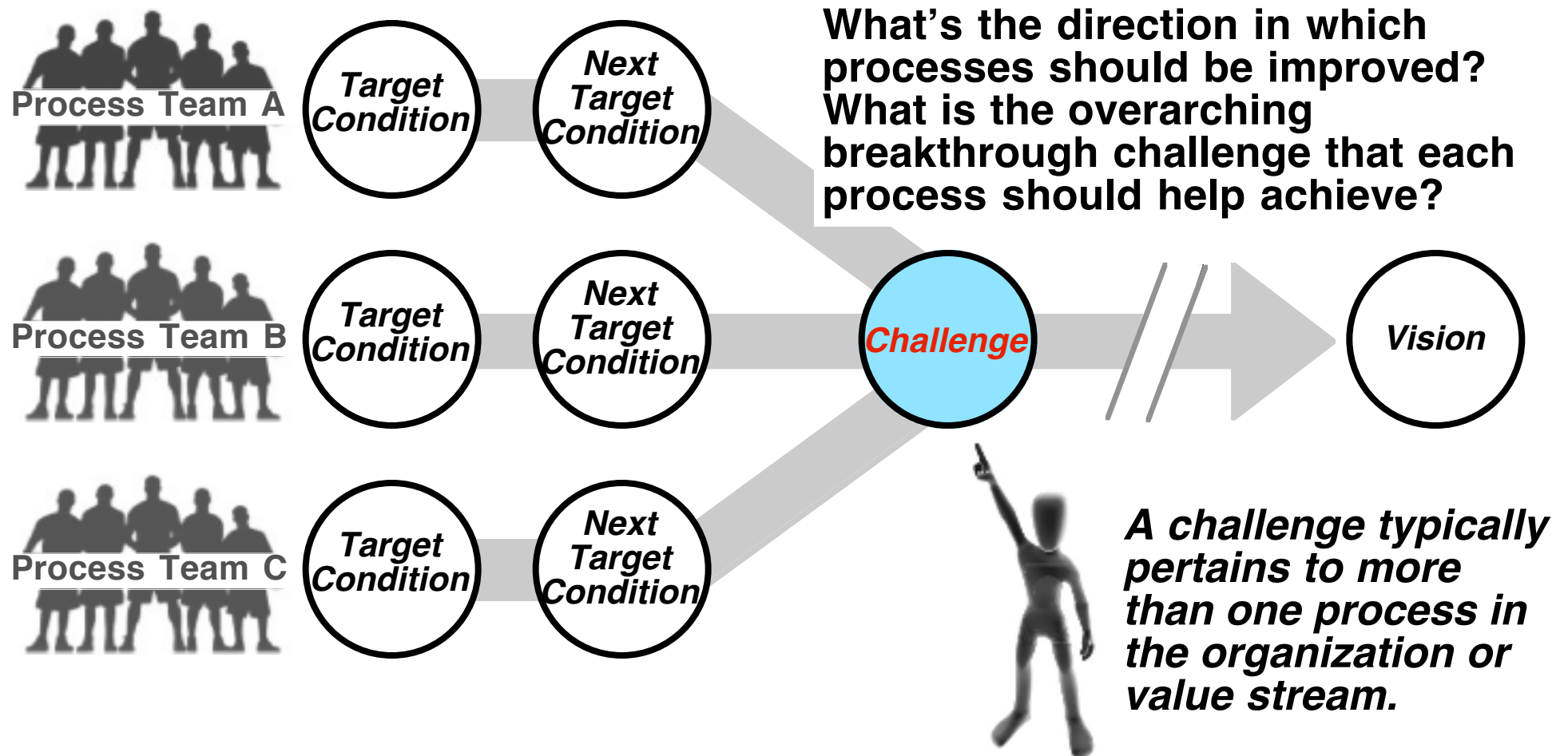
- **An organization is unaligned. Improvement efforts and proposals get ROI-evaluated independently, instead of as part of reaching for something. We tend to use short-term cost/benefit analysis to choose what steps to take, which dangerously keeps us inside our current knowledge threshold.**
- **We tend to jump from one direction to another in trying avoid obstacles, rather than struggling through the obstacles to achieve the innovations and important competencies of tomorrow.**
- **Improvement becomes reacting to problems (“troubleshooting” to maintain the status quo) rather than reaching for a new level of performance.**



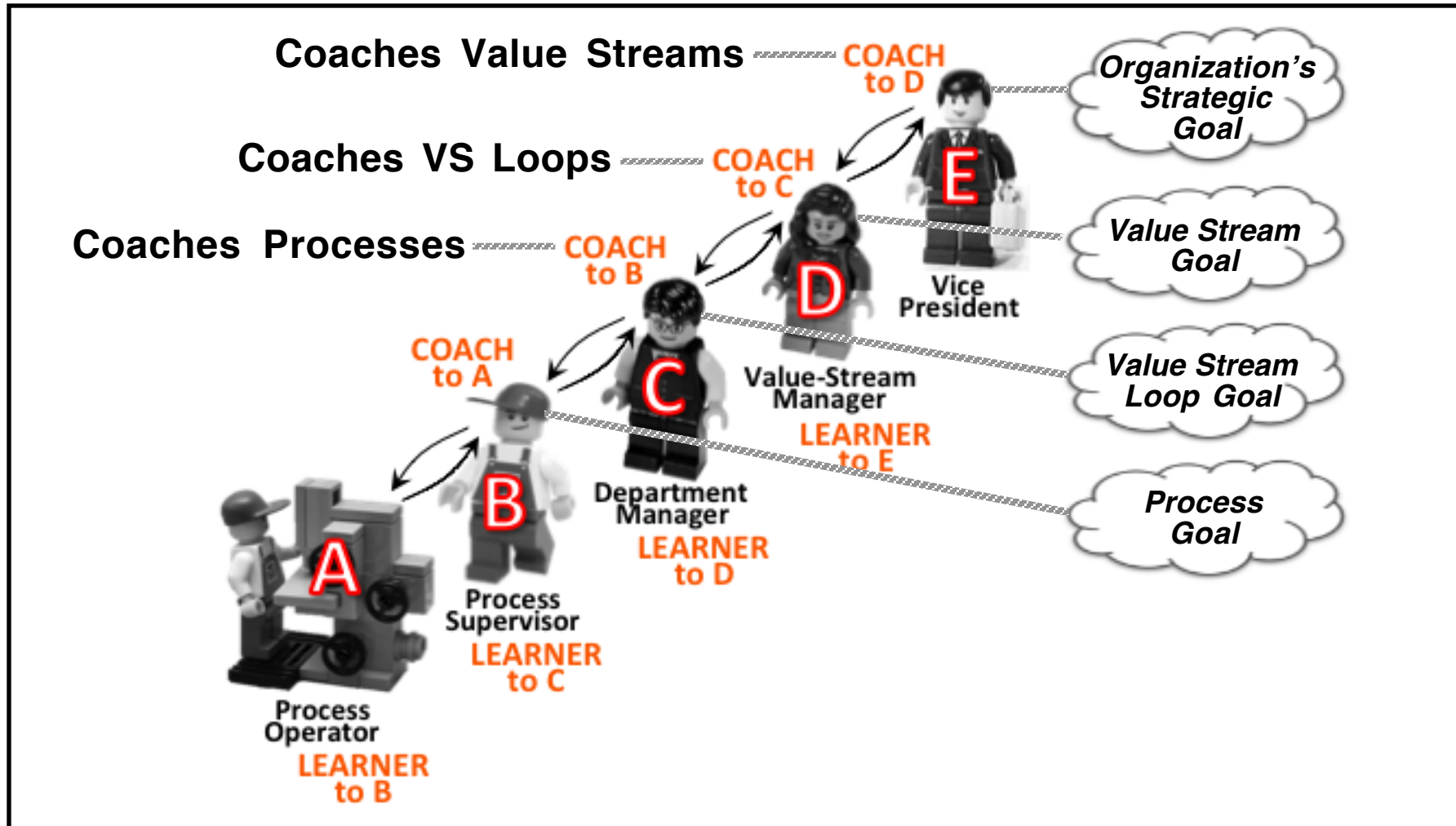
(Note: It's acceptable for a *beginner* to do some initial practicing of the Improvement Kata pattern without a challenge, just to start learning the pattern. But a challenge will soon be necessary for the Learner's practicing to be meaningful and effective.)

# A CHALLENGE HELPS TO ALIGN AND CONNECT PROCESS-LEVEL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

The challenge is used to help ensure that process-level improvement efforts have a focus and fit together



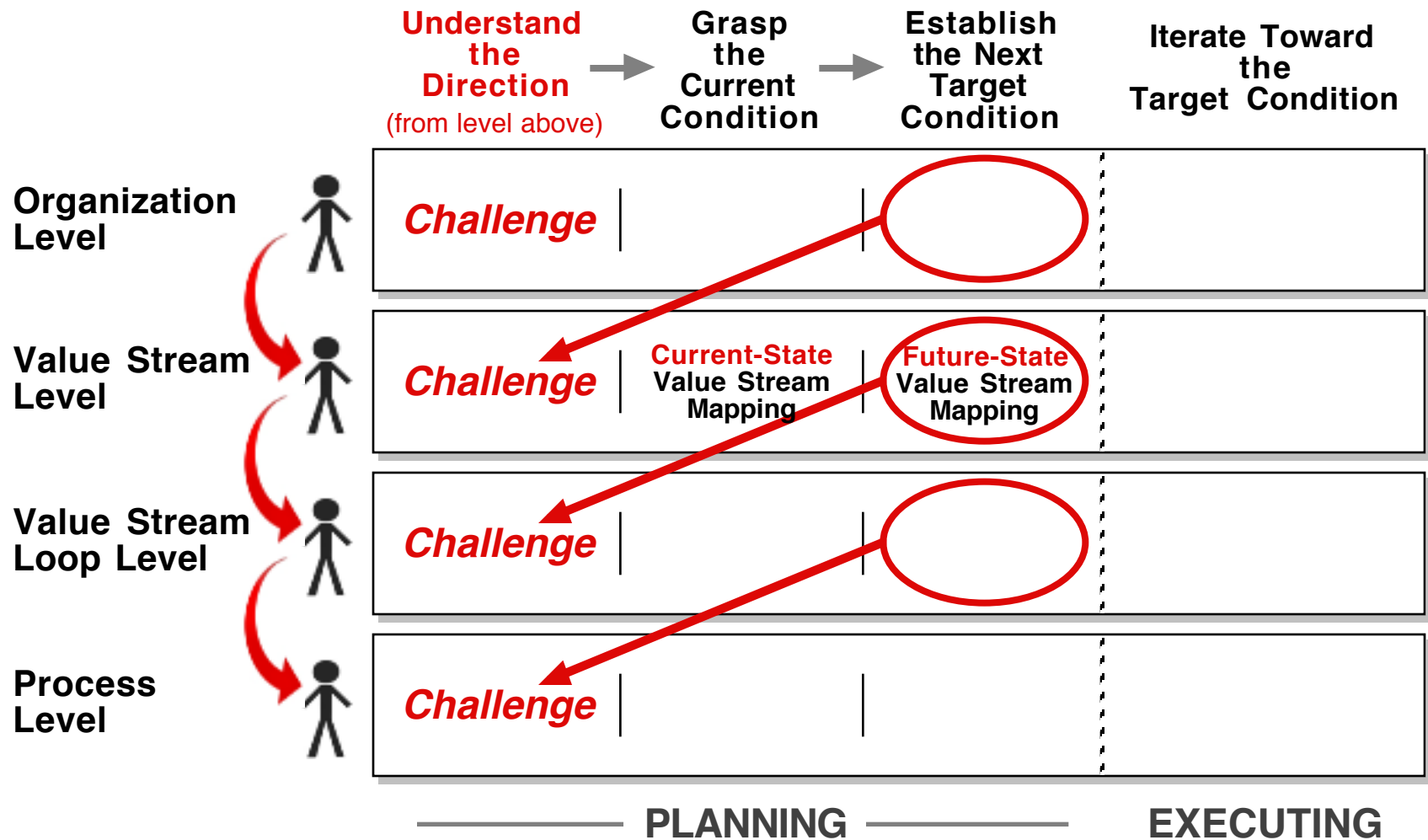
# WHAT COACHING TO A CHALLENGE LOOKS LIKE



Leadership coaches the next level down in defining an overall Challenge in the direction of the vision. Below that, the *Target Condition* from the level above becomes the *Direction* or *Challenge* for the level below.

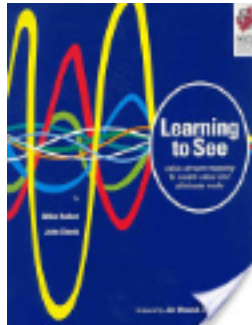
# IN PRACTICE

## YOUR SPECIFIC CHALLENGE MAY COME FROM THE TARGET CONDITION ONE LEVEL ABOVE YOU



# ONE WAY TO DEFINE THE PROCESS-LEVEL CHALLENGE IS WITH FUTURE-STATE VS MAPPING

**A useful tool for the first step of the Improvement Kata**



You can get going with the Improvement Kata by defining a challenge theme with future-state value stream mapping. A future-state VS map is sometimes called a “Challenge Map.”

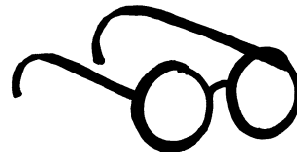
Challenges based on future-state value stream mapping often relate to shortening lead time.

**Understand  
the  
Direction**

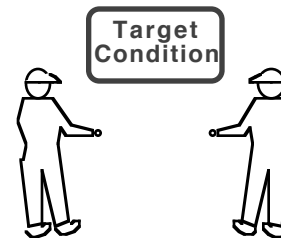


***What challenge  
are we striving  
to meet?***

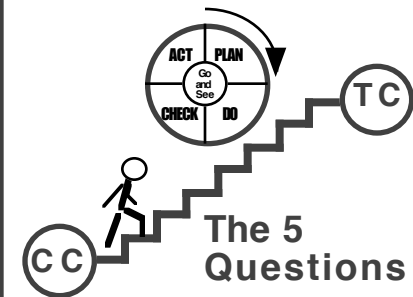
**Grasp the  
Current  
Condition**



**Establish the  
Next Target  
Condition**



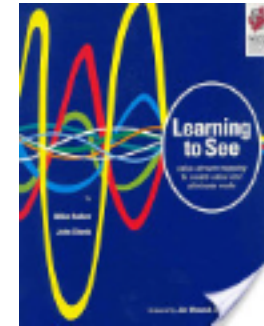
**PDCA Toward the  
Target Condition**



# A FUTURE-STATE VALUE STREAM MAP COORDINATES IMPROVEMENT AT INDIVIDUAL PROCESSES

A future-state map describes in a graphic format how you want a value stream to be functioning in 1-3 years.

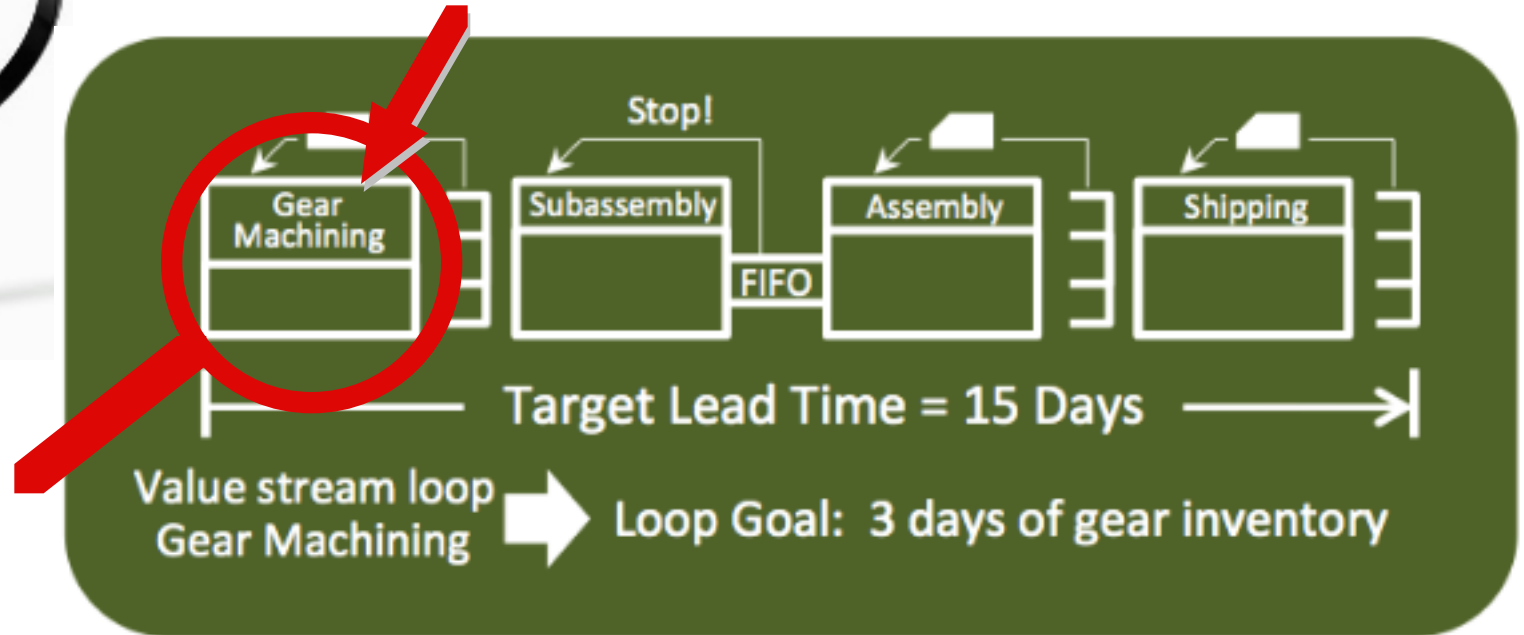
The future-state value stream map provides an overarching challenge & coordination for establishing target conditions at the individual work processes inside a value stream.



See p.86 in  
*Learning to See*



**What does this *process* need to do to help achieve the future-state *value stream* design?**





# ESTABLISHING CHALLENGE WITH VSM

## *DEFINING THE CHALLENGE*

### Value Stream Mapping

Org Level

At the value-stream level



**Understand the Direction**

Confirm the organization's strategic objective.



**Grasp the Current Condition**

Select one value stream and map the current state.



**Establish the Next Target Condition**

Consense on a future-state for this value stream, in the direction of the strategic objective. What does this value stream need to deliver?



## *ITERATE TO GET THERE*

### Improvement Kata & Coaching Kata

At each loop & process in the value stream

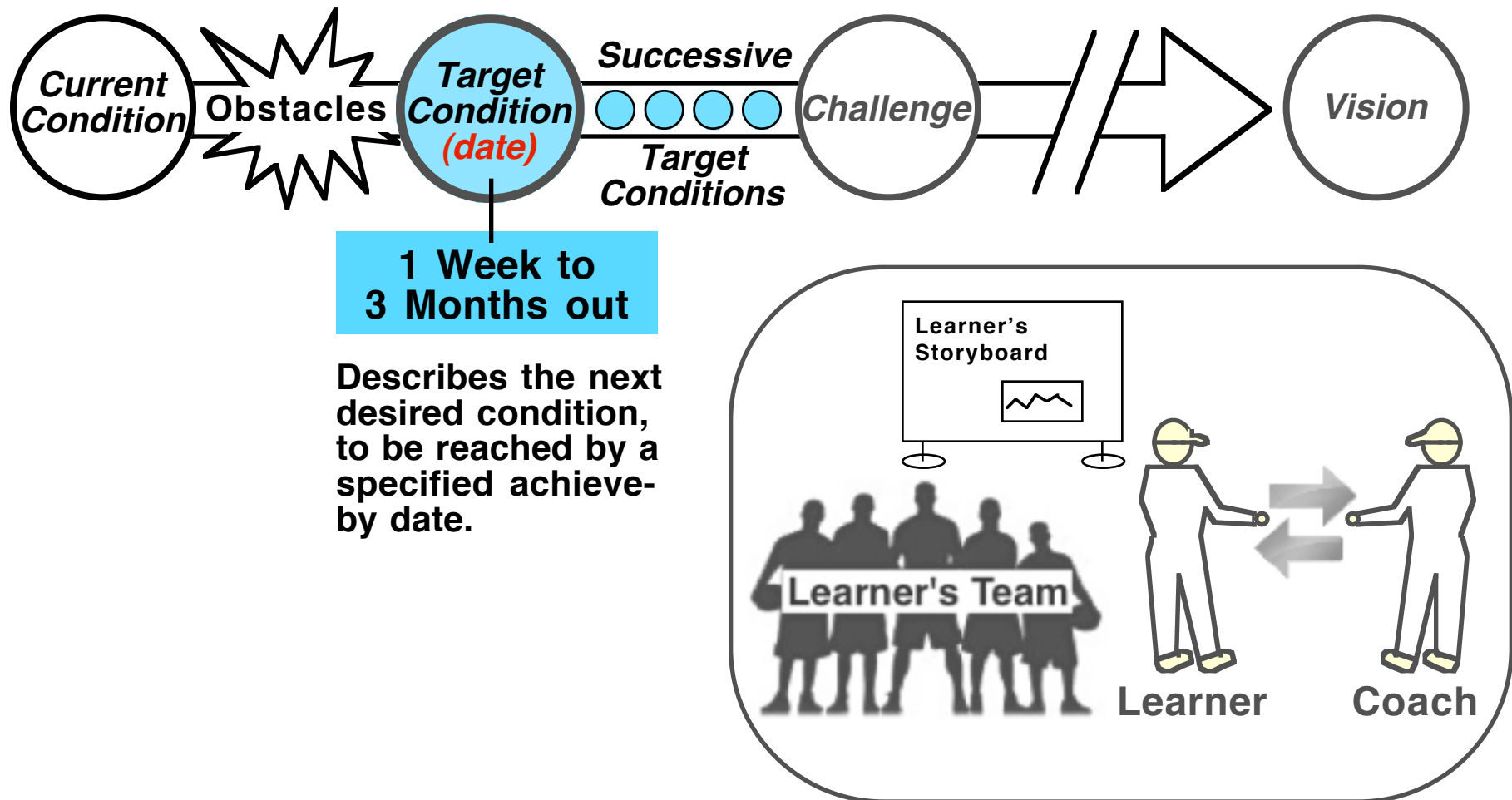


Determine the loops of the future-state value stream and define each loop's inventory and lead-time goals.





Of course, having a challenge without the ability to execute would be ineffective. Looking ahead to the rest of the Improvement Kata (where execution takes place)... It's a series of **Target Conditions** that day-to-day improvement efforts at each level will be aiming for.



# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TARGET CONDITION AND A CHALLENGE?

TARGET CONDITION	CHALLENGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At the individual-area or individual-process level</li><li>• Developed by the Learner, guided by the Coach (manager)</li><li>• Achieve-by date is 1 week to 3 months out</li><li>• Describes in measureable detail how you want a particular work process to function in the <i>near</i> future</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At the value-stream or organization level</li><li>• Developed by a leader or a person with value-stream responsibility</li><li>• 6 months - 3 years out</li><li>• A verbal or graphic picture of a future state that is measureable in some aspect</li></ul>

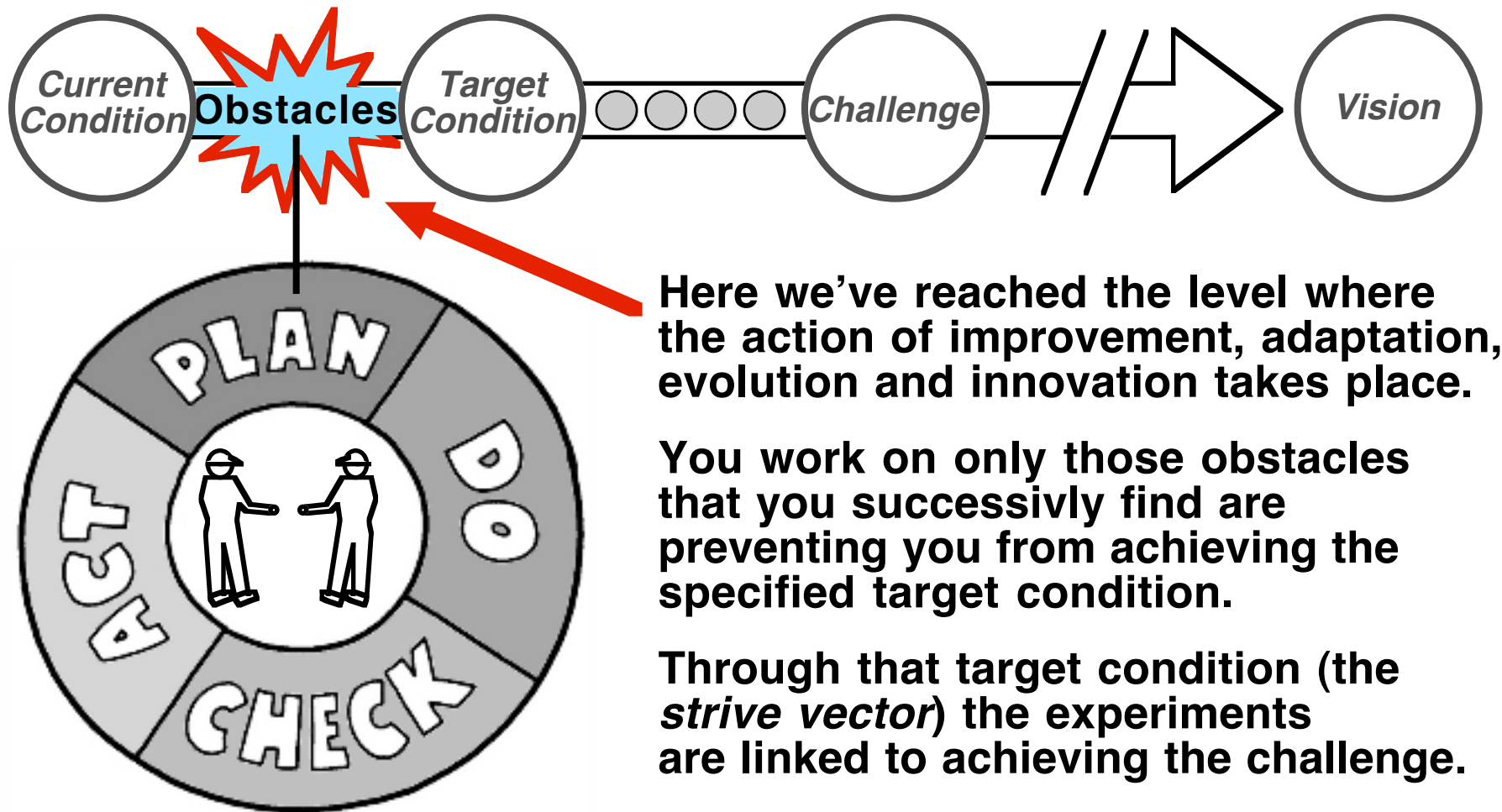
These are developed by two different groups. The challenge is defined by leaders. Target conditions are developed by the Learner in dialog with the Coach and the process team.

A series of successive target conditions is necessary to meet a challenge. When you achieve one target condition you set the next target condition, and so on.



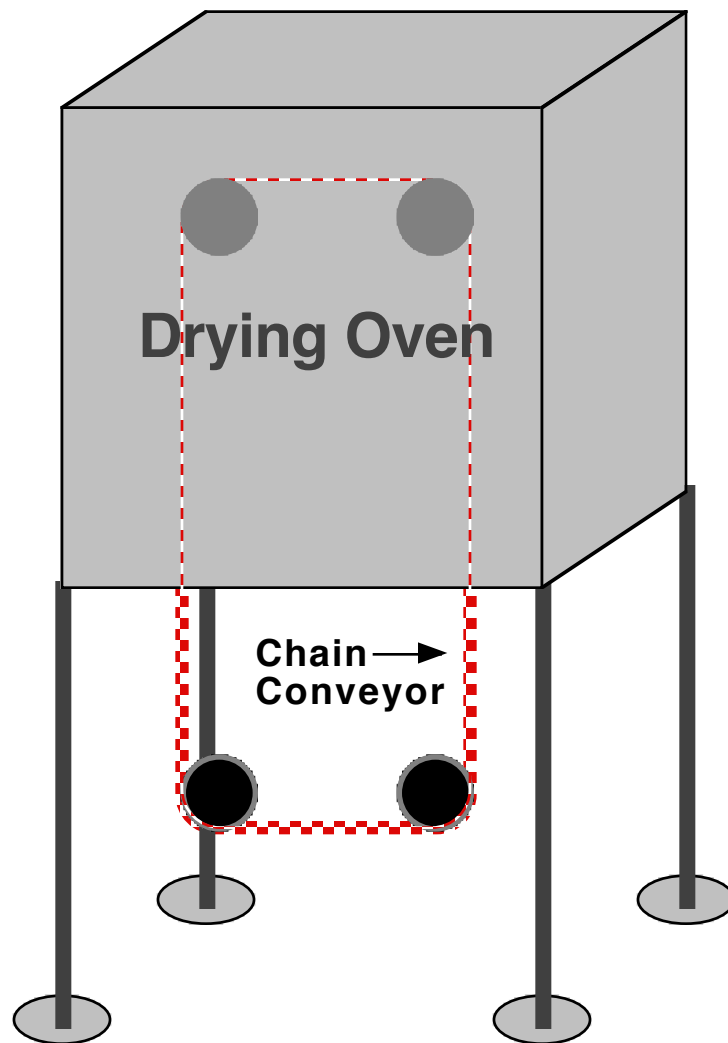
Finally... **Obstacles** to each target condition are where **rapid experimentation** takes place

This = iterating (experimenting) toward the target condition



# A MANUFACTURING EXAMPLE

A team is following the Improvement Kata pattern to develop an in-line paint-drying oven



VISION	<i>1x1 Flow</i>
CHALLENGE OR THEME	<i>Paint in Line</i>
NEXT TARGET CONDITION	<i>In-Line Oven (attributes defined)</i>
CURRENT OBSTACLE	<i>Chain conveyor is derailing</i>

*More General*



*More Specific*



***Detailed Experiments are here***

***Current Obstacle:***  
***The chain conveyor derails when parts are hung on it.***  
***The team is now experimenting here.***

# SUMMARY

This trajectory goes from more specific & measurable on the lower left, to less specific & measurable on the upper right.

