

# ➤ BUILDING THE PLANE WHILE FLYING IT.

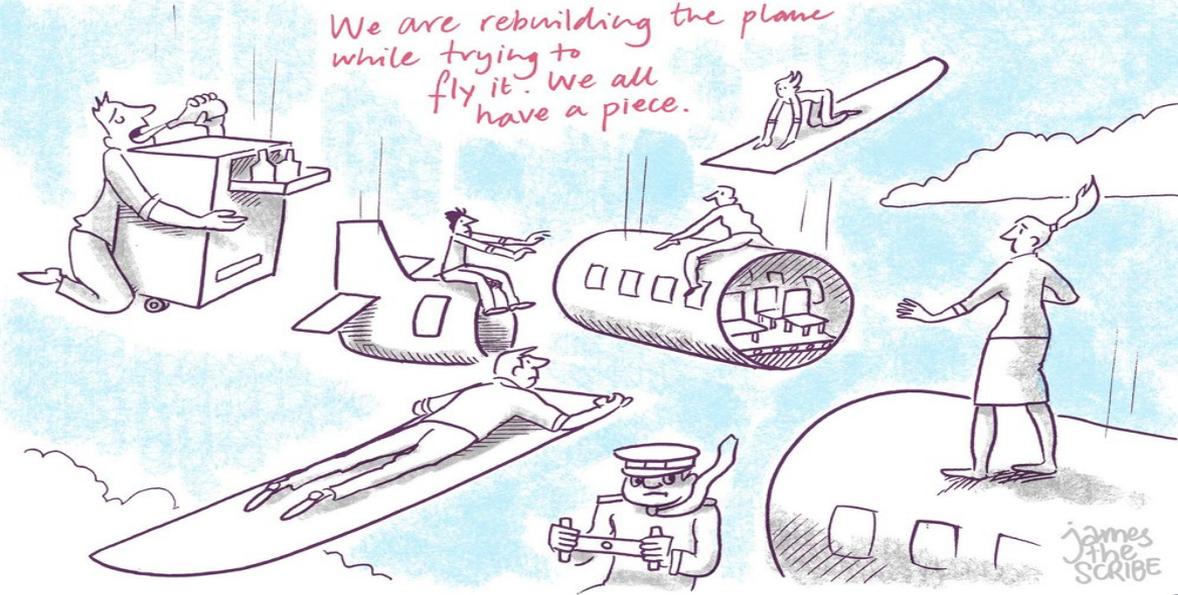


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We are rebuilding the plane  
while trying to  
fly it. We all  
have a piece.



# Building the plane while flying with Figs

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FIG 1.

Tree



FIG 2.

Strangler Branch



FIG 3.

Strangled Tree



FIG 4.

Strangler Fig

The **Strangler Fig Pattern** is a technique that was introduced by Martin Fowler as an effective way to modernize legacy applications and manage risks. The same concept can also be applied to organizations that are undergoing a transformation.

# Multi-layered Transformation

- Existential crisis brought on by over-confidence in market position and disruptive innovation
- Going through a transformation, but even leaders are not on the same page (or book) in terms of what they were transforming and why
- Multi-layered paradigm shifts taking place concurrently (hardware to software; on-prem to cloud; waterfall to agile; etc)
- Critical need to modernize legacy tools, data, processes, and talent
- Cultivate a customer centered unified experience across Cisco and reflect that in the organizational structure and culture

# Headwinds

- **Instapost leadership team** (*"Leaders don't model the behaviors they want to see and lead by example. They turn the transformation on, walk away, and come back 6 months later to check the results"*)
- **Making change stick** (*"We've transformed so many times before, what will be different this time?"*)
- **Culture eats strategy for breakfast** (*"We are a great place to work, so why should we change our culture and transform?"*)
- **Disciplined execution** (*"We don't have a planning process. We just deliver when we can and hope that it works"*)



"The bad news is we're slightly delayed. The good news is our mechanic is addressing the issue."

# Tailwinds

- **Alignment** on a bold, aspirational vision and shared goals are equivalent to a flight plan
- Strategy and execution plans are reflective of the organizational culture within which they are created
- Any plan can be easily “grounded” by cultural resistance just as a plane is due to inclement weather conditions
- Movement in any direction is progress; the right direction can be affirmed by a periodic review of priorities and progress much like the Air Traffic Control

# Building the engine in mid-flight with the Strangler Fig pattern

- 8 months
- 2000 people
- 8 coaches

- Transformation program with an army of volunteers
- A simplified and unified customer lifecycle across all Cisco as the basis for new customer experience, products, and services (OneEx)
- Talent upskilling to meet cloud and agile needs
- Portfolio of products and services
- Agile, Product, Technical, and Change coaching
- Team topologies based organization design
- Periodic reviews of priorities and progress
- Continuous discovery to elaborate on product capabilities
- Continuous delivery with test automation and path to production (DevSecOps)



**In theory, there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice, there is.**

**Questions?**

**Thank you!**

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As a Digital Transformation and Agility leader, Sangeeta brings 25+ years of experience in coaching executives on designing fit-for-purpose organizations as they shift their paradigms in the digital era. Sangeeta counsels leadership teams as they transform their organizations to improve performance, organizational health, innovation, speed and agility.

Much of Sangeeta's work focuses on helping large distributed organizations achieve transformational change with organizational design, leadership development, culture and change adoption, team effectiveness and capability building. She serves clients across several industries, including financial services, automotive, health/life sciences, and technology, having led transformations at PayPal, eBay, Salesforce, Cisco, and many other organizations.