

# Leadership

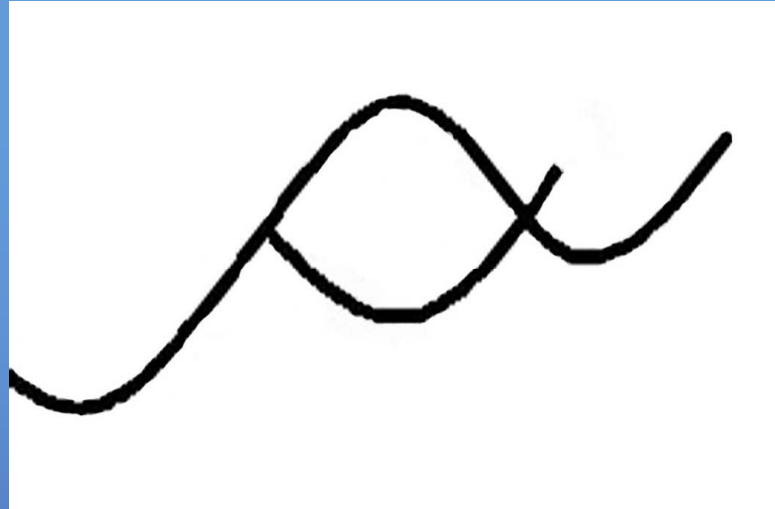
and

# Sigmoid Curves

(Handy, 2002).



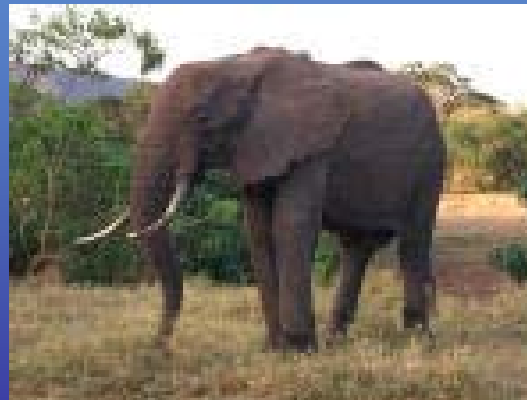
# Sigmoid Curves



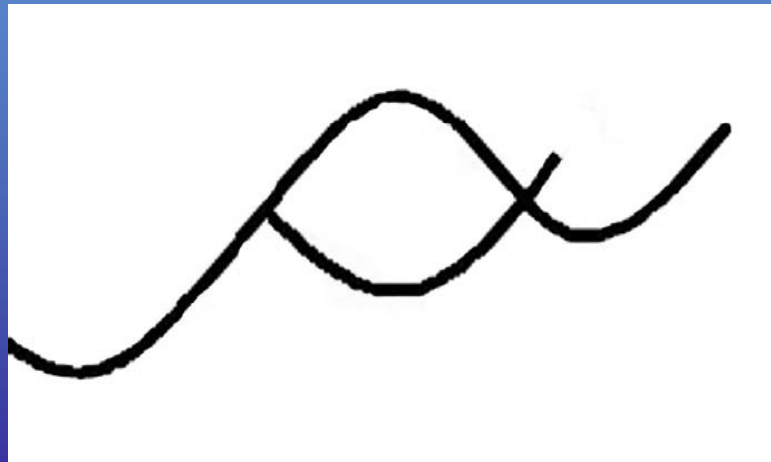
This curve describes the normal life cycle of almost anything: a period of learning or investment, in which inputs exceed outputs, followed by steady growth that inevitably peaks and turns into decline.



Elephants need fleas to  
keep them alive



The only way to prolong the life of the body in question, be it an organisation or career, is to start a second curve – before the first one peaks.

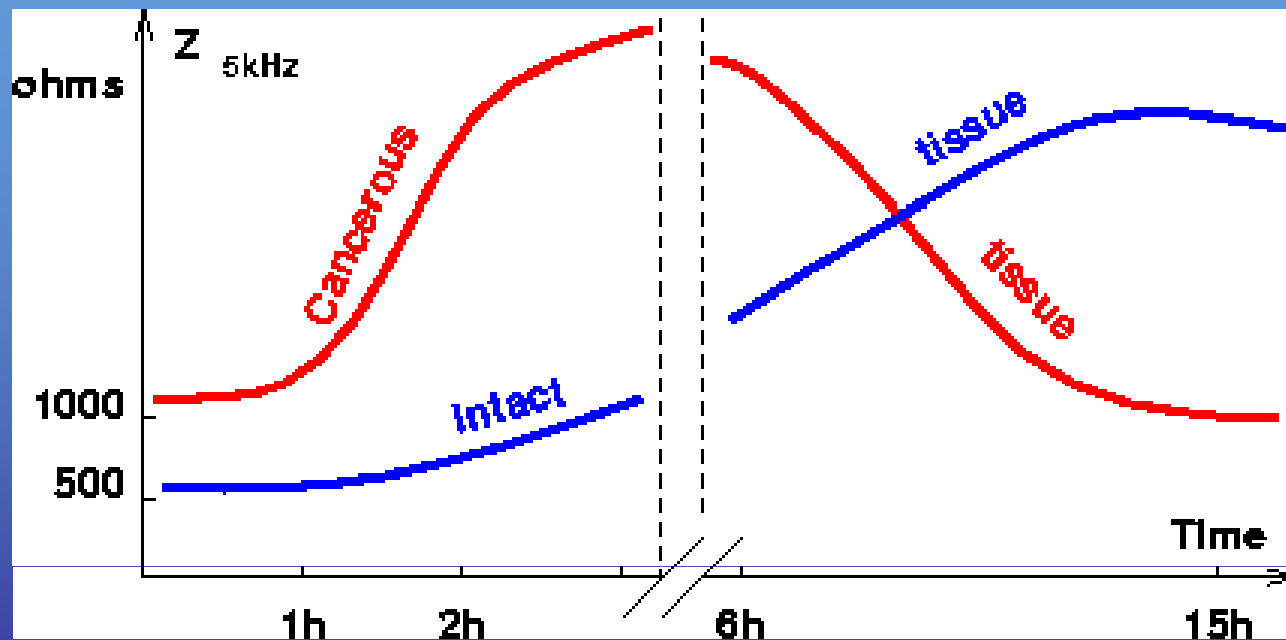


# Charles Handy:

- But to allow time and resources for the initial period of learning and investment, that second curve has to start before the first one peaks. You then encounter the paradox of success -- when things are going well, there seems to be no reason to change.



# Cancerous Tissue



- "We know how to do it now," people feel, so "don't rock the boat or change the formula." That very reluctance to change ultimately turns success into failure. "Why cannot the status quo be the way forward?" one leader asked me. Sadly, he had to learn the answer by hard experience when his organization disintegrated a few years later.



# Time to Change



There are early, often unnoticed, signs that perceptive leaders can use as triggers for starting a second curve.



# Signs

Customer or client complaints, if viewed objectively and not defensively, can point to areas where change is needed.



# Working Together



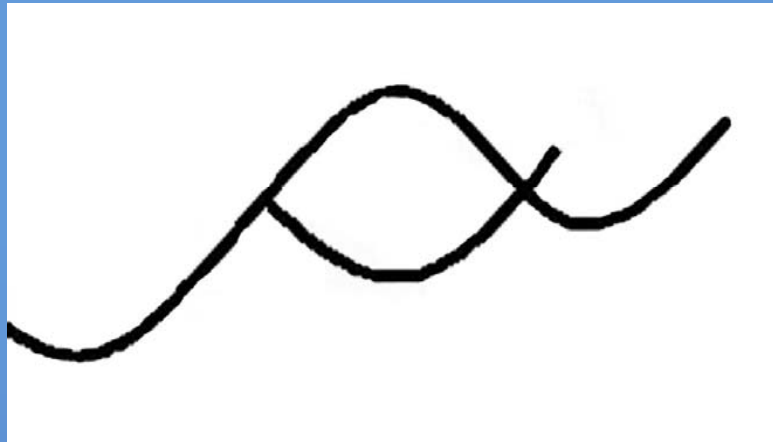
- The two ‘curves’ need to live together because each needs the other if either is to survive – the ‘Young Turks’ and the ‘Old Guard’.



# Downward Slope Doubts

- Operational doubt
- Ideological doubt
- Ethical doubt
- ‘The pits’





Where does my school fit on these curves?

Where is Catholic Education?

Where does our Church sit?

Where do I fit?



# Bibliography

Handy C (2002) 'Elephants and Fleas: Is Your Organization Prepared for Change?

<http://pfd.org/leaderbooks/121/spring2002/handy/html> 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2002

