Interim Executive Leadership
division of Patricia Doon Group LLC

Curious CFO : Key Ideas & Action Items

Chapter 1: When Systems Outlive Their Purpose—What Happens Next

Key Ideas:

1. Outdated systems reflect poor oversight.
2. Curiosity uncovers hidden inefficiencies.
3. Autopilot management creates risks.
4. Systems must align with organizational goals.
5. Care fosters lasting improvements.

Action Items (Paint It Done Checklist):

- **Discover:** Evaluate current systems and their performance. Identify redundancies and inconsistencies.
- **Envision:** Define what the system should achieve—research potential updates.
- **Create:** Develop an updated timeline, engage vendors, and implement improvements.

Chapter 2: Breaking Free from Inefficiency—Finding What Was Missing

Key Ideas:

1. Inefficiencies can become invisible over time.
2. Silos drain time and resources.
3. Workarounds delay meaningful progress.
4. Behavior and culture play a critical role in efficiency.
5. Efficiency improves user experiences and outcomes.

Action Items (Paint It Done Checklist):

- **Discover:** Map workflows and identify bottlenecks and redundancies.
- **Envision:** Imagine streamlined processes and unified collaboration.
- **Create:** Implement cross-departmental solutions and measure their impact.

Chapter 3: Spotting the Invisible Drain—Reclaiming Hidden Costs

Key Ideas:

1. Hidden costs quietly add up over time.
2. Automatic renewals often go unnoticed.
3. Assumptions about costs are risky.
4. Regular audits align expenses with priorities.
5. Small adjustments reclaim significant resources.

Action Items (Paint It Done Checklist):

- **Discover:** Audit recurring expenses and identify outdated services.
- **Envision:** Reallocate resources saved by eliminating unnecessary costs.
- **Create:** Cancel outdated subscriptions and create a review process for expenses.

Chapter 4: Navigating Stakeholder Expectations—Balancing Priorities with Precision

Key Ideas:

1. Alignment ensures stakeholder goals are met.
2. Open communication builds trust.
3. Balancing growth and sustainability is key.
4. Empowered stakeholders find creative solutions.
5. Clear criteria reduce decision-making conflicts.

Action Items (Paint It Done Checklist):

- **Discover:** Gather stakeholder input and align it with financial realities.
- **Envision:** Create a shared decision-making framework.
- **Create:** Facilitate conversations and empower stakeholders.

Chapter 5: Communicating Financials Effectively—Turning Numbers Into Stories

Key Ideas:

1. Financial transparency builds trust.
2. Data must be actionable and insightful.
3. Multi-year budgets enable scenario planning.
4. Storytelling helps connect numbers to decisions.
5. Clarity empowers stakeholders.

Action Items (Paint It Done Checklist):

- **Discover:** Review financial systems for gaps in reporting.
- **Envision:** Build tools for scenario planning.
- **Create:** Reorganize systems and present data clearly.

Chapter 6: Building a Trustworthy Team—From Weak Links to Strength

Key Ideas:

1. Leadership shapes team culture.
2. Weak links must be addressed.
3. Empowered teams foster innovation.
4. Collaboration builds trust.
5. Strategic focus drives long-term success.

Action Items (Paint It Done Checklist):

- **Discover:** Assess team dynamics and skills.
- **Envision:** Define the ideal culture and roles.
- **Create:** Provide feedback, training, and collaboration opportunities.

Chapter 7: Leveraging Technology and Data—Modernizing for Insight and Efficiency

Key Ideas:

1. Outdated tools hinder accuracy and efficiency.
2. User experience should be prioritized in technology upgrades.
3. Dashboards make data accessible for decision-makers.
4. Training ensures technology is used effectively.
5. Modernization creates opportunities for growth.

Action Items (Paint It Done Checklist):

- **Discover:** Evaluate current technology and user feedback.
- **Envision:** Define desired metrics and align tools with organizational goals.
- **Create:** Implement integrated systems and dashboards. Train staff to maximize new tools.

Chapter 8: Overcoming Cultural Resistance to Change—Paving the Way for Progress

Key Ideas:

1. Resistance reflects underlying concerns, not defiance.
2. Empathy and communication are critical to addressing resistance.
3. Involving the team creates buy-in and ownership.
4. Training and support ease transitions.
5. Celebrating wins builds momentum for change.

Action Items (Paint It Done Checklist):

- **Discover:** Engage with stakeholders to understand resistance points.
- **Envision:** Align changes with the organization's mission and goals.
- **Create:** Develop training programs, involve teams in decisions, and celebrate early successes.

Chapter 9: Balancing Risk and Sustainability—The Foundation of Long-Term Success

Key Ideas:

1. Risks and sustainability are interconnected.
2. Deferred maintenance creates future vulnerabilities.
3. Reserves strengthen financial health.
4. Long-term planning aligns resources with goals.
5. Monitoring ensures adaptive risk management.

Action Items (Paint It Done Checklist):

- **Discover:** Assess risks and deferred maintenance. Review reserve policies.
- **Envision:** Develop a multi-year budget to address vulnerabilities and support sustainability.
- **Create:** Prioritize risks, update policies, and engage stakeholders in risk management.

Chapter 10: Rethinking Revenue Generation—Beyond Tuition Dependency

Key Ideas:

1. Revenue diversification reduces risk.
2. Mission-aligned ventures attract support.
3. Partnerships with local businesses create mutual benefits.
4. Authentic engagement inspires loyalty.
5. Testing and iteration refine strategies.

Action Items (Paint It Done Checklist):

- **Discover:** Assess revenue streams and identify strengths.
- **Envision:** Brainstorm mission-aligned initiatives and partnerships.
- **Create:** Pilot small initiatives, track results, and scale successful programs.

Chapter 11: Pivoting Under Pressure—How Disruption Sparked Innovation

Key Ideas:

1. Disruptions reveal opportunities for growth.
2. Adaptability ensures resilience.
3. Role restructuring aligns strengths with needs.
4. Cross-training reduces reliance on key individuals.
5. Collaboration fosters innovative solutions.

Action Items (Paint It Done Checklist):

- **Discover:** Identify gaps caused by disruptions and gather team input.
- **Envision:** Visualize a more adaptable and resilient structure.
- **Create:** Restructure roles, implement cross-training, and test creative solutions.

Chapter 12: Navigating Board Dynamics and Governance—Strengthening Strategic Leadership

Key Ideas:

1. Clear roles improve governance.
2. Financial literacy empowers the board.
3. Active recruitment addresses skill gaps.
4. Balanced perspectives enhance decision-making.
5. Transparent communication builds trust.

Action Items (Paint It Done Checklist):

- **Discover:** Assess board dynamics and bylaws for clarity.
- **Envision:** Define an ideal governance framework and recruit strategically.
- **Create:** Provide training, streamline financial reporting, and clarify roles.

Chapter 13: Strategic Planning—A Living, Breathing Tool for Growth

Key Ideas:

1. Strategic plans should be dynamic and adaptable.
2. Community engagement fosters ownership.
3. Living dashboards provide real-time updates.
4. Quarterly reviews ensure relevance.
5. Strategic planning aligns the organization's goals and actions.

Action Items (Paint It Done Checklist):

● **Discover:** Evaluate current strategic plans and gather stakeholder input.
● **Envision:** Develop a flexible framework tied to actionable metrics.
● **Create:** Build dashboards, schedule regular reviews, and maintain community engagement.