



CHOOSING YOUR PUZZLE

All of Palladium learning orients around a central leadership puzzle each participant defines at the outset of the program. This document will walk you through how to choose and scope a puzzle that will help you get the most out of your Palladium experience and strengthen your leadership practice.

What is a Puzzle?

A puzzle is a practical and dynamic challenge that is significant to you and meaningful for your performance, contribution, and your company's healthcare impact over time.

Why are Puzzles Important?

Palladium puzzles are designed to offer “real-case” learning that allows you to work through the issues and challenges that are most pressing for you in the here-and-now.

A good puzzle will:

- Expedite your ability to move concept into practice by keeping a hands-on, real-time challenge in front of you as you learn, grow, and engage with others around new ideas;
- Keep care-minded objectives top of mind;
- Amplify insights and clarify where more learning, resources, or counsel is needed;
- Strengthen your connection to, and investment in, other leaders in your cohort;
- Ensure your investment in Palladium returns optimal value and impact for you and your company.

In Palladium's two beta cohorts, participants who put in the work to identify and refine a strong, well scoped puzzle at the outset reported 70% higher impact ratings than participants who struggled to define or stick with a clear challenge from the start. It takes time to think and reflect on where you want to leverage your leadership for the greatest impact - we encourage you to use this exercise to do just that.

How to Choose Your Puzzle

Because of the nature of modern healthcare and the reality of the fast-paced, complex environments in which it is delivered, it is understood that your puzzle will change - often considerably - from session to session. This is to be expected.

That said, as you think about your puzzle, try and think about something at a scope that will require substantial and sustained effort on a 1-2 year time horizon.

Below are steps to walk you through a thoughtful selection of your puzzle.



Step 1: Brainstorm

Ask: What is something imminent on your leadership horizon that is taking up a lot of your mental and emotional real estate?

You might have several ideas or one clear, obvious challenge. Either is great. A good puzzle should feel a little (or maybe even a lot) out of reach from where you are today.

Stretch your imagination beyond the next few quarters and ask:

What is something you are facing - or could take on - that has the potential to really improve your delivery or care model in a meaningful way? What change could you advance that might improve the lives of patients and/or providers?

Even if you have one clear puzzle in mind, try and brainstorm at least three challenges or quandaries that feel important within your broad leadership scope over the next few years. Note them on a separate piece of paper.

Remember this preparatory work is just for you. You will not be asked to share or present it. It is only intended to help guide your thinking to identify a strong puzzle.

Step 2: Filter for Purpose

Purpose speaks to the "Why?" of your puzzle. Think about the options you brainstormed in Step 1. Now, consider how you might answer the following questions:

1. *Is it purposeful? How does solving this puzzle align to my company's mission and vision?*
2. *Who will be impacted or well-served if we succeed? Who will lose if we fail?*
3. *Do I feel personally invested in seeing this puzzle succeed?*

Take time to really think on these questions. Jot notes. See what comes to mind that may refine or amplify your initial ideas.

Step 3: Filter for Necessity

Working on a puzzle for which you have some real accountability is important. Continue working through the issue(s) you're considering and ask:

1. What is at stake for my company/division if we fail to address this challenge?
2. What is at stake for me personally as a leader if this challenge is not adequately addressed?
3. What core functions or deliverables suffer if this fails to be addressed?

Necessity speaks to the need for your puzzle. A puzzle that is both purposeful and necessary is what compels others to join you. It is what makes it worth caring about.



Step 4: Filter for Complexity

As you further refine your choices for a puzzle, consider if at least one of the options would require you to stretch your current capabilities. Ask:

1. Will it require me to access new skills or resources that are outside my current wheelhouse?
2. Does it require some measure of cross-sector/cross-disciplinary collaboration?
3. Is it large enough to be broken into sub-puzzles or components over time?

In adaptive territory often the best resource available is to have good questions in hand. Strong puzzle will have clear adaptive dimensions that reach outside what is addressable with existing skills or resources.

Step 5: Filter for Achievability

Working on a puzzle that can get meaningful traction matters, so it is important to consider if this is a problem on which you can make meaningful and accountable progress in the near-term. Ask:

1. Are there natural benchmarks or check-ins that will help drive your puzzle forward?
2. Do you have the necessary authority and/or support internally to advance this puzzle in a meaningful way?
3. Are there dimensions of this challenge that are measurable or trackable?

Too small puzzles will get boring. Too large puzzles can be abstract and hard to make actionable. Just-right puzzles allow space and accountability to practice the critical skills of adaptive, creative, and care-minded leadership.

Step 6: Filter for Accessibility

Finally, you need to check and be sure your puzzle is accessible to those in your organization who can help bring about change. Ask:

- With clarity and support, can others easily understand the crux of the issue?
- Is any part of your puzzle highly technical, classified, or otherwise challenging for a layman to access or understand?
- Does your puzzle touch some sense of common felt need or priority, or is it a bit "in the weeds"?

Step 7: Connect with John and Kate for Coaching

Set up a call to talk through your puzzle and surface key elements.

Step 8: Format your Puzzle for Presentation

Use the template provided and present your puzzle to the cohort in Nashville!