

1-day Systems Thinking Primer Course

Course Description

Systems Thinking is an incredibly powerful approach to handling the complexity we face in the in the modern world. It provides insight and understanding that cannot be gained by more traditional analysis or problem approaches. Most humans, however, are not natural systems thinkers. The way in which our brain works is an evolutionary necessity to survive our early existence. In consequence Humans are object-oriented and linear which militates against Systems Thinking. Occasionally, individuals transcend this natural state of mind and they are able to perceive the world differently and make truly significant advances. One could include people such as Newton, Einstein, Keynes, Dirac and Darwin as natural Systems Thinkers. This does not mean that the rest of us cannot do “Systems Thinking”; just that they were able to do it unconsciously while the rest of us have to consciously set out to “Systems Think” .

The beauty of Systems Thinking is that it can be applied anywhere to anything and at any time and therefore there are plenty of opportunities to practise. Moreover, a great deal can be achieved with very little.

The purpose of this 1-day taster session is to introduce some simple devices that can help you “Systems Think”. Our experience in helping industry and governmental organizations has shown that a great deal can be obtained with the understanding of a few systems concepts combined with the use of simple systems tools.

Course Numbers and Who Should Attend?

The course has been designed for minimum numbers of 8 and maximum of 16. This course applies to anybody. It is a universal skill for the 21st century.

Benefits to the Individual and Business

The Systems Thinking Primer course is an intensive day of teaching and practical ‘hands on’ exercises, participants will be challenged to develop the skills and mind-set that can be applied to any situation irrespective of context.

At the end of the course participants will:

- Have an understanding of some of the key concepts and principles of Systems Thinking.
- Be able to think about problems and opportunities in a new and exciting way.
- Be provided with a common language and approach to addressing complexity.
- Be able to use a number of simple systems tools in a systematic manner to analyse complex situations and address problems and opportunities in a logical evidence-based way.

Learning Approach

The learning approach is based on the Kolb learning cycle with a significant proportion of the course set aside for exercises to reinforce the learning. Indeed, the course employs a number of small group exercises involving a case study to provide a practical focus for the course which enables the delegates to practise the methodology and tools.

Course Structure

- Introduction and Delegate Expectations
- Why Systems Thinking?
 - Emergence – desirable and undesirable
 - Complexity
 - Mind-set
- Systems Concepts and Tools
 - Systems Purpose
 - The Quad of Aims – a tool to clarify System Purpose
 - System Context
 - Context Diagram – a tool to explore system context
 - System Behaviour, interconnections and structure
 - Multiple Cause Diagram (aka Causal Loop Diagram) to explore non-linear cause and effect
 - Systems Map to system structure
 - Functional Modelling to explore system behaviour
- Systems Thinking in Practice
 - Hard and Soft Systems Methodologies
 - Unified Systems Methodology
- Using Systems Thinking

Course Costs

The cost of delivering the 1-day course, excluding delivery tutor-consultant accommodation and expenses, but including all courseware, is **£2,500**. VAT will apply at the prevailing rate.

The course can be tailored to suit individual customer's operations.



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