

3-day Systems Thinking for Foggy Situations Course

Course Description

Systems Thinking is where real-world situations are treated as systems to learn more about them. Treating situations as systems provides a viewpoint to explore the situation in a subtly different but powerful way, hereby affording insight and understanding that would remain hidden by traditional reductionist analytic approaches. The beauty of Systems Thinking lies with its universality; it can be applied to anything, anywhere and at any time. In consequence, Systems Thinking is seen as a powerful framework for understanding complex situations and issues' leading ultimately to their elucidation or resolution.

How Systems Thinking is applied is situation or context sensitive but it is possible to provide guidance and a set of tools to help the "systems thinker" put the principles and concepts into practice. A useful model¹ here is shown below which describes situations in terms of knowledge of what has to be done against how to do it. The four situations are:

Knowledge of HOW	High	Making a Movie Know exactly how to do it, but don't know exactly what has to be done.	Painting by Numbers Know exactly what to do and how to do it	Painting by numbers: We know what has to be done and we know how to do it is clearly known. It's just a question of following the recipe and the solution will emerge. Quest: What has to be done is known precisely but there is no knowledge of how to do it.
	Low	Do not know what is to be done or how to do it Foggy	Know exactly what has to be done but do not know how to do it Quest	Making a movie: How to do it is known because it has been done many times before, but there is a lack of clarity on what has to be done. Foggy: This situation is where we don't know what to do or how to do it.
		Low	High	
		Knowledge of WHAT		

By far the most challenging is the foggy situation. All organizations face foggy uncertain and unknown situations especially when they look to the future, however Systems Thinking provides a way to explore and begin to understand possibilities leading to the formation of strategies.

The aim of the 3-day course is to educate and train participants in the concepts, principles and practice of Systems Thinking and how it can be applied to address foggy situations.

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 faced with a foggy situation.

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.

¹ This model has been derived from 'All Change: The Project Managers Secret Handbook' by Eddy Obeng

Benefits to the Individual and Business

During an intensive three days of teaching and practical 'hands on' exercises, participants will be challenged to develop the skills and mindset that can be applied to any situation irrespective of context.

At the end of the course participants will:

- Have an understanding of the concepts and principles of Systems Thinking and how it can be applied through the appropriate blend of people, process and tools.
- Be able to explore and understand foggy situations in a new and exciting way.
- Be provided with a common language and approach to addressing complexity.
- Be able to use a number of systems tools in a systematic manner to analyse complex situations and address problems and opportunities in a logical evidence-based way.

Course Structure

Day 1: 0900 to 1700	Day 2: 0900 to 1700	Day 3: 0900 to 1500
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions and Delegate Expectations • Why Systems Thinking? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Emergence—desirable and undesirable • What is a System? • System Purpose • System Context • System Boundary • Subsystems and super-systems • Events, Patterns and Behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Balancing and Reinforcing Feedback ◦ System Stock and Flows Variation • Doing Systems Thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Divergent and Convergent Thinking Affinity Diagram • Systems Thinking in Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Situation Types <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making a Movie Painting by Numbers • Quest Foggy • Hard and Soft Systems Methodologies • Systems Dynamics Approach • Unified Systems Methodology (USM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 1 Review • The Systems Thinking Tool Box • Tools for Foggy Situations • USM for Foggy Situations • Foggy Situation Tool Map • Tools for Understanding Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Spray Diagram ◦ Multiple Cause Diagram ◦ Rich Picture ◦ Stakeholder Influence Map ◦ Context Diagram • Tools for Understanding Purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 18 Word Statement ◦ Tree Diagram ◦ Quad of Aims ◦ Root Definition • Tools for Understanding What is Inside and What is Outside <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Systems Map • Tools for Understanding System Behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Function Flow Diagram 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 1 and 2 Review • Tools for Understanding Systems Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ N² Analysis ◦ Conceptual Model ◦ Matrix Diagram • Tools for Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Change Table ◦ Function Means Analysis ◦ Pugh Matrix ◦ Ease Benefit Matrix • Using Systems Thinking • Summary and Close

Course Costs

The cost of delivering the 3-day course, excluding delivery tutor-consultant accommodation and expenses, but including all courseware, is **£6,500**. VAT will apply at the prevailing rate.

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



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