Systems Thinking
A framework for solving intractable problems

Systems Thinking is a discipline to help people understand how things work in the real world. It involves defining an area of interest, its boundaries, and within that area of interest working out what influences what, and how. Rather than breaking the system down and working with each component, Systems Thinking prompts us to see how the whole system works.

It provides a framework for solving intractable problems. This requires key skills in leadership, partnership, customer insight and a whole-systems approach to problem solving. Systems Thinking supports the concept of creating value across the public sector, generating innovation and enabling stronger engagement with all stakeholders.

"Wicked problems" often constrain progress in important, high impact areas and can obscure the solution or even the right questions to be asked. Systems Thinking can address these in a way that enables causes to be identified and understood rather than focusing on symptoms and avoiding hasty decisions leading to further unforeseen problems and issues.

Too often, solutions that ignore the wider system are implemented and these are unlikely to work in the long term. In a similar fashion, tackling systemic change once and creating adaptive solutions and designs is more productive than repeated interventions. And finally, defining markets, products and services in systems terms opens up fresh opportunities.

Many people whose role it is to think are not really thinking or even being encouraged to. Organisations often see themselves as dysfunctional, siloed and self serving. Systems Thinking provides an opportunity to solve a large number of business and other issues by changing the way people think and work. Using Systems Thinking to plan its strategic direction will help an organisation mitigate the risks of unexpected impacts, as well as putting itself in a better position to manage those that do arise.

Our range of programmes includes one day awareness training, leaders' briefings, and implementation programmes supported by coaching. Dependent upon your requirements the programmes:

- Provide an awareness and understanding of Systems Thinking and the key tools and techniques.
- Demonstrate their use by practical application in the working environment (drawing on projects that teams are familiar with).
- Explain why the cultural context is equally important to enable sustainable implementation.

For More Information

See our website www.tealconsulting.co.uk or e-mail us at info@tealconsulting.co.uk.

> "To manage a system effectively, you might focus on the interactions of the parts rather than their behaviour taken separately."
> **Russell Ackoff**

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