BLACKBIRD FOR TRAINING

Systems Thinking for Complex Problem Analysis & Resolution

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Amsterdam (Netherlands)

UK Traininig
PARTNER



Systems Thinking for Complex Problem Analysis & Resolution

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Why This Course

Many organizational challenges are not caused by one isolated issue. They often emerge from connected processes, behaviors, decisions, structures, and feedback loops that influence one another over time. When problems are approached only through traditional linear analysis, teams may treat symptoms while missing the deeper patterns that keep the problem recurring.

Systems thinking helps professionals look at the bigger picture. It enables them to understand relationships, identify root causes, recognize patterns, and design interventions that create lasting improvement rather than short-term fixes.

This 1-week course equips participants with practical systems thinking tools and methodologies to analyze and solve complex organizational problems. Through mapping exercises, case studies, group discussions, and applied problem-solving activities, participants will learn how to view challenges holistically, identify leverage points, and develop more effective solutions.

What You'll Learn and Practice

By joining this program, you will:

- Understand the core principles and concepts of systems thinking.
- Compare traditional problem-solving with systems-based analysis.
- Identify key system components, relationships, patterns, and dependencies.
- Use systems thinking language to describe complex organizational issues.
- Create causal loop diagrams and systems maps.
- Understand feedback loops and how they influence system behavior.
- Explore stock and flow diagrams for visualizing change over time.
- Recognize common system archetypes and recurring patterns.
- Identify leverage points for effective intervention.
- Design systems-based solutions and evaluate potential consequences.
- Apply holistic decision-making to organizational challenges.
- Promote systems thinking as a practical mindset within teams and organizations.



The Program Flow

Day 1: Introduction to Systems Thinking

- Fundamentals of systems thinking and holistic problem-solving.
- Understanding systems, boundaries, relationships, and interdependencies.
- Comparing traditional analysis with systems thinking.
- Systems thinking language and key terms.
- Why complex problems require a broader view.
- Benefits and applications of systems thinking in organizational problem-solving.
- Practical exercise: Reframing a workplace problem as a system.

Day 2: Systems Mapping and Visualization

- Introduction to systems mapping and visual thinking.
- Creating causal loop diagrams.
- Understanding reinforcing and balancing feedback loops.
- Introduction to stock and flow diagrams.
- Identifying system components, connections, and influence patterns.
- Creating systems maps for complex organizational problems.
- Workshop: Building a systems map for a real-world challenge.

Day 3: Analyzing System Behavior

- Understanding system behavior over time.
- Identifying patterns, trends, delays, and unintended consequences.
- Exploring common system archetypes.
- Analyzing feedback mechanisms and their effects.
- Predicting possible system behavior under different conditions.
- Recognizing why well-intended solutions sometimes create new problems.
- Practical exercise: Diagnosing system behavior using archetypes and feedback analysis.

Day 4: Intervention Strategies

- Identifying leverage points in complex systems.
- Designing effective interventions that address root causes.
- Evaluating potential consequences before implementation.
- Prioritizing interventions based on impact, feasibility, and risk.
- Implementing systems-based solutions in organizational settings.
- Monitoring system response and adapting interventions over time.
- Workshop: Designing a systems-based intervention plan.



Day 5: Applying Systems Thinking in Organizations

- Organizational learning and systems thinking.
- Embedding systems thinking into decision-making and problem-solving.
- Overcoming resistance to change and new ways of thinking.
- Facilitating systems thinking conversations with teams and stakeholders.
- Fostering a systems thinking culture.
- Case studies and practical applications across organizational contexts.
- Final activity: Presenting a systems thinking analysis and intervention strategy.

Individual Impact

- Strengthen your ability to analyze complex problems with greater clarity.
- Improve decision-making through a holistic and structured approach.
- Build confidence in using systems thinking tools and visual models.
- Enhance your ability to identify patterns, root causes, and leverage points.
- Improve your capacity to design interventions that create lasting improvement.
- Develop a practical mindset for dealing with uncertainty and complexity.

Work Impact

- Improve organizational problem-solving and decision quality.
- Reduce repeated issues caused by short-term or symptom-based fixes.
- Strengthen cross-functional understanding of complex challenges.
- Support better planning, change management, and continuous improvement.
- Improve collaboration through shared visual models and systems language.
- Build a culture that understands interdependencies and thinks beyond isolated actions.

Training Methodology

This program combines systems thinking concepts with practical application to help participants use the tools confidently in real organizational situations. Learning methods include:

- Interactive discussions and guided facilitation.
- Systems thinking case studies.
- Causal loop and stock-flow diagram exercises.
- Systems mapping workshops.
- System archetype analysis activities.
- Group problem-solving simulations.
- Intervention design and impact assessment exercises.
- Peer feedback, facilitator coaching, and practical action planning.



Beyond the Course

Upon completion, participants will be equipped to apply systems thinking to complex organizational challenges with greater confidence and structure. They will return ready to:

- Analyze complex problems using systems thinking tools.
- Create systems maps that reveal relationships and feedback loops.
- Identify leverage points for effective interventions.
- Design and implement systems-based solutions.
- Improve decision-making through a broader, more holistic perspective.
- Promote systems thinking within teams, projects, and organizational improvement initiatives.

