

Systems Thinking, Systems Analysis, and Systems Planning: Leading to Organizational Effectiveness



Course Length: 8 hours

Organizational theory discusses the ways in which people work together to create open dynamic systems. In addition to knowing oneself as a leader, it is also imperative that we understand systems and how they function and interact with other systems to ensure organizational effectiveness and responsiveness to customers. This workshop teaches learners the key concepts and skills necessary to analyze, assess, and make recommendations for system improvement.

Course Objectives

After completing these sessions, participants will be able to:

- Define terms associated with organizational theory and systems thinking
- Explain the characteristics of open systems and the subsequent challenges and opportunities for an organization
- Apply organizational assessment approaches in different case scenarios and examples
- Identify incongruent organizational behavior(s)
- Chart, assess, and explain their current operations and offer recommendations for systems improvements

Course Agenda by Topics:

Module One - Intro to Systems Thinking

- Definitions – organizational structure, design, and theory
- Organizations as systems
 - Closed versus Open Systems
 - Characteristics of open systems

Exercise – several models will be presented to participants. They will do some as a whole group and then some in pairs. Small group work will be shared and discussed in the whole group.

Module Two - Organizational Assessment Approaches

- Goal-attainment approach
- Competing-values approach
 - Emphasis on flexibility vs. control
 - Emphasis on well-being and development of people vs. well-being and development of organization
 - Emphasis on means (process) vs. ends (final outcomes)
- Systems approach
- Strategic-constituencies approach
- Lean initiatives
 - Identify and eliminate waste in programmatic and operational processes
 - Improve efficiency and effectiveness
 - Improve the quality, transparency and speed of their processes
- Exercise – participants will be coached through a process of mapping their organization. Then in small groups, they will discuss the similarities and differences and come to consensus on an agreed upon diagram of their organization.

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Module Three - Congruency Model of Organizational Behavior

- Introduce the Congruency Model and “fit (Nadler and Tushman)
- Diagnose organizational behavior using the model
 - Analyze organizational components – task, individual, formal organizational arrangements, and informal organization

Combine this with information gathered about individual and leadership behavior gathered from previous classes and practice conducting fit assessments 2 part exercise. Part one, do a fit assessment on their organization. Part two, break into small groups and share one fit assessment. Group will provide feedback. Using discussion in small group, prepare group presentation to class of discussion highlights and findings.

Module Four - Leadership in a Matrix Model

- Introduce Matrix Management
- Review Management Structures
- Review Matrix Management
- Discuss benefits and challenges of Matrix Management
- Matrix Management and Conflict

Exercise – Individually identify areas of matrix management within the organization. In small groups, come to agreement on an area and assess how it is working. Prepare report for entire class. Review the learnings from the day and preview topics for next day – change management and conflict resolution.