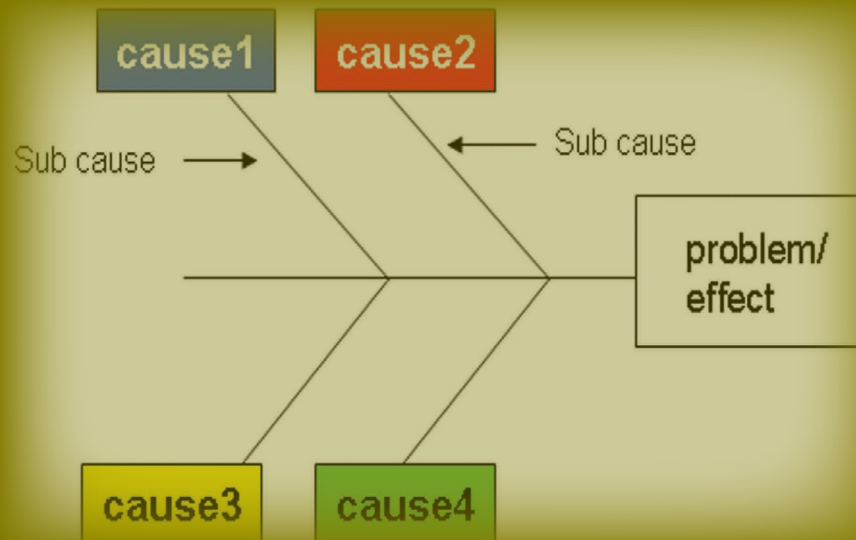


TOUCH OF CLASS ORGANISATIONAL PATHOLOGY ISSUES

Problem Solving Systems Thinking



THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING ONE OF THE ASSESSMENTS.

Please do the following steps to get maximum value out of solving the issues raised in the survey.

STEP 1: REFLECT ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS FIRST

- What does this problem/challenge/issue really mean to you?
- How do you, your team and your organisation behave (current reality) in fulfilling this problem/challenge/issue?
- How should you, your team and your organisation behave (Future reality) in fulfilling this problem/challenge/issue?
- What practical tips can you give to ensure that this problem/challenge/issue is lived out in the workplace?
- Are there any other issues that needs to be addressed or principles regarding this problem/challenge/issue that you would like to propose or personal experience that you would like to share?

STEP 2: COMPLETE THE QUESTIONS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES WITH ABSOLUTE HONESTY

STEP 3: DO A DETAILED ACTION PLAN WITH ACCOUNTABILITIES

STEP 4: PLAN FOR A REVIEW DATE

STEP 5: DO THE ASSESSMENT AGAIN

Dr Mario Denton

TOUCH OF CLASS ORGANISATIONAL PATHOLOGY ISSUES

Problem Solving Systems Thinking

The issue:

Total score

% percentage split

1	2	3	4	5

Questions split

Response	Questions rated in the response category
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Now follow the rest of the process

Never

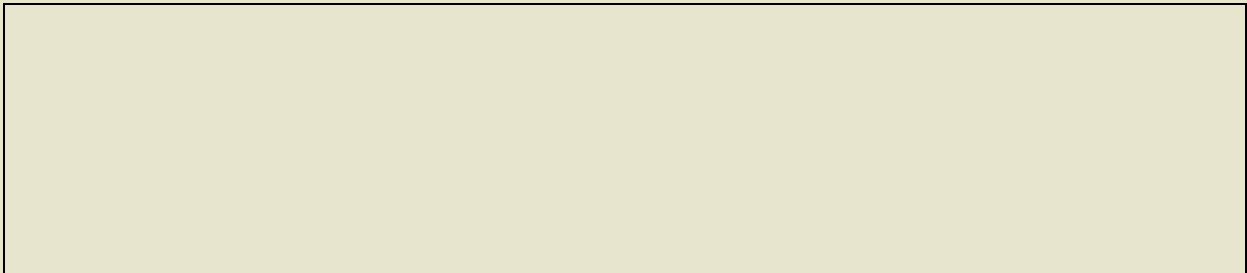


THE SYSTEMIC NATURE OF COMPLEX PROBLEMS

1. **Systemic problems involve multiple causation**

Repeatedly ask yourself the question: What are the co-producing factors (i.e. contributing or co-causing factors) to the problems you experienced.

Write your answers down and arrange them like rays around a circle

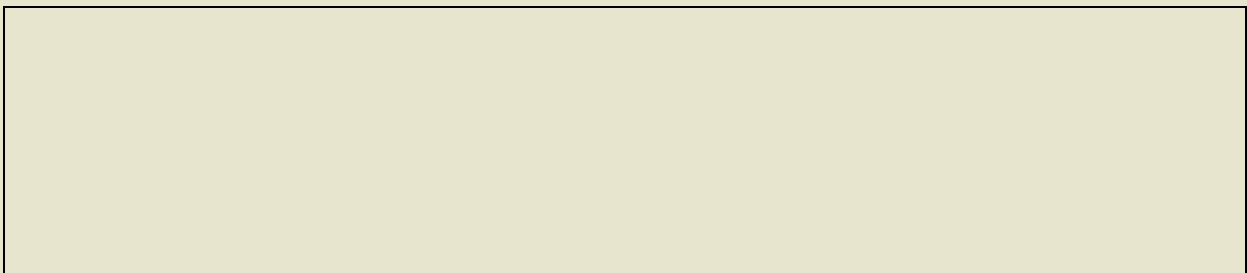


2. **Systemic problems are multi-dimensional**

Complex problems are multi-dimensional. Put simply: there are many sides to a thing. In the context of complex problems this implies that there are many points of view from which to look at a problem, each of which is equally valid.

Different systems thinkers have identified various dimensions. For example:

Revisit your problem and try to add more co-factors.



3. **Systemic problems involve different stakeholders**

A systemic problem involves different stakeholders. A stakeholder is a party (e.g. person, organisation, group, entity, etc) who is affected by or affects the issue under consideration. Different stakeholders have different perspectives (views, interest, concerns, expectations, etc.) about the issue under consideration.

List the different stakeholders of your problem	What are the perspectives (interest, concerns, expectations, opinions, etc) of each stakeholder about the problem?
Yourself	
Different groupings within the staff	
Your boss(es)	
Other departments you are interacting with (e.g. other production sections, maintenance, HR, finance, IT, etc)	
External stakeholders (e.g. suppliers, clients, consultants, etc.)	
Amongst others	

4. Systems problems involve circular causation

Because of the openness of systems and the multi causation of phenomena, complex problems often co-cause themselves. This is called circular causation.

Revisit your problem and identify the co-causing factors for each of your previously identified co-factors.

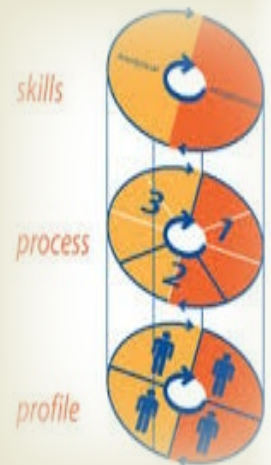
Co factors	Co-causing factors

5. Systemic problems span various levels in the hierarchy of systems

Identify how many levels your problems span. Mark them as level of the problem, its outer and inner level.

For example, your problem could span any or all of the following levels:

- the external stakeholder level (e.g. customers, suppliers),
- the organisational level,
- the departmental level,
- the team level,
- the level associated with the individual members of the department.



6. Systemic problems interact with other systemic problems

Select about 10 co-factors of your problem and draw how they impact on each other

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the student to draw how 10 co-factors of their problem impact on each other.

7. Systems are value and purpose driven

Can you identify some negative values or aims (e.g. conflict, lack of alignment) operating in your problem.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the student to identify negative values or aims operating in their problem.

8. Systemic problems change over time

Based on your analysis so far, consider what could happen in 1, 3 and 5 years, if the problem factors you have identified continue in the way they do now. Write this down as scenarios (i.e. like a story). One or two paragraphs will do.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the student to write scenarios based on their analysis.

9. Understanding current futures

Within any system, there are driving forces that propel the system into its current future. These are:

- Current ethos (ways of thinking, values, beliefs, etc.)
- Current aims (visions, mission, goals, strategies)
- Current courses of action (business processes, behaviour)
- Current organisational structures
- Current resources and infrastructure
- Current regulatory mechanisms (guidelines, rules, standards, norms, evaluation procedure, rewards, etc.)

Considering the continuation of current problems and a changing environment, can you think of an alternative scenario to the one you wrote previously. Write a sentence or two about it.

10. Creating the “ideal future”

Designing an ideal future implies envisioning what “should be” and designing strategies of how the envisioned ideal could be achieved.

The analogy to describe the difference between the problem and the ideal is that of the fairytale “frog” which is transformed into a “prince” by the kiss of a princess. “Kissing the frog” means interacting with/exploring/understanding/accepting the problem. This gives rise to the “prince” (the ideal). The process of replacing “frogs” by their “princes” helps the mid to make the creative leap from focusing on the problem to thinking of ideals.

How to do the “frog / prince” exercise:

The frog/prince exercise is a simple method to use in systemic problem solving.

It involves the following steps:

- Identify the factors that co-cause a problem.
- Replace each factor with an ideal that you would like to see in its place,
- Design a number of strategies to achieve each ideal.
- Determine evaluation criteria for measuring the success of a strategy in achieving the ideal.
- Integrate the above into a few coherent visions and strategies or into an ideal design.

Do the frogs / prince exercise for your problem. Take each co-factor (i.e. frog) and transform it into an ideal (prince). Then think of about three strategies how each ideal could be achieved.

11. Steps in designing an ideal system

Designing the ideal environment

Environment refers to the contextual (global, regional and national) environment as well as the stakeholder environment (inner and outer stakeholders). For example, what is the ideal global, regional, national and industry environment for the design? Who are the stakeholders of the design and what are ideal stakeholder relations, which the design should promote?

1. Designing ethos

Ethos refers to world view, values, attitudes, guidelines, theories, beliefs, traditions, etc. For example, what is the ideal ethos for the design?

2. Designing aims

Aims refer to desired outcomes like vision, mission, objectives, goals, strategies, etc. For example, what are the ideal aims of the design?

3. Designing process

Process refers to the activities of a system, business process, projects, etc. For example, what would be the ideal processes (activities) to achieve the ideal aims of the design?

4. Designing structure

Structure refers to the pattern of interaction between processes. For example, what would be the ideal organisational structure of the design and/or of the organisation in which the design is embedded?

5. Designing resources

Resources refers to human and material resources. For example, what resources (e.g. quantity and quality of resources, availability of resources and resource use) would the design ideally require?

6. Designing governance

Governance refers to regulation of process, as well as planning and decision-making. For example, what are the ideal guidelines, norms, standards, rules, evaluations and rewards of the design? What is the ideal planning / decision-making process regarding the design?

7. Iterative design

The various steps of the idealized design process may have to be repeated iteratively as well as for different levels in the systems (i.e. organisational) hierarchy.

Integrate the output of your frogs / prince exercise into a coherent design, following the steps above.

Source and full acknowledgement: Dr Elisabeth Dostal – Systems thinking



Additional Questions

Please answer the following questions/statements as accurately as you can.

Anything else that you would like to bring under our attention with specific regards to this issue.

Please indicate below

What would help you most to increase your performance and / or the quality of your work?

What changes have you noticed in our organisation over the last year?

Additional Comments:

Positive

Negative.

Thank you for taking the time and effort to complete the survey and the report.

Dr Mario Denton



Mario Denton MBA; M.Econ; PhD

PHASE ONE: OBTAINING CORPORATE EXPERIENCE - LEARNING THE ROPES

Has 17 years' experience in human resources management in the corporate world, started with SANLAM and moved on to METROPOLITAN LIFE in Organisational Development and end this phase as Group Manager: Human Resources PROTEA ASSURANCE, during this period completed a MBA, MEcon as well as **Registered Industrial Psychologist**.

PHASE TWO: ESTABLISHMENT OF BUSINESS SCHOOL ACADEMIC- SHARPENING THE SWORD

- From 1997-2007 teaching in Organization Behaviour and also International Human Resource Management, People and Change Management, High Impact Leadership, Management Consulting, Emotional Intelligence, Executive Coaching at the University of Stellenbosch, Graduate School of Business. During this period completed my PhD and register Strong Message Business Consultancy in 1997.
- Presented People Management practices 44 times consecutively to MBA students without being absent for even one day and trained around 3000 participants in Emotional Intelligence.

- Academic project manager and coordinator for 22 international groups doing their international electives at the USB.
- The area of Advanced Leadership, Making Human Capital the differentiating factor Facilitating perpetual and complex change for REIMS France (11 times), University of Antwerpen, University of Cape Town, UWC, Dortmund and Leipzig HHL Germany (9 times) Aarhus Denmark, Graz, Austria, Maastricht, University of Indonesia, University of Central Oklahoma and the University of Cuttington Liberia, Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), Bangalore Management Academy in Bangalore and Poddar/Wellingker College in India, Leipzig, Mauritius, Marseilles.
- International papers and conferences in London, Amsterdam, Oxford, Antwerp. Geneva Switzerland, Australia, Shanghai and published twelve books, six international articles, two case studies and a chapter in a book, has successfully being the study leader/supervisor for 160 completed MBA research projects.

PHASE THREE: TAKING UP THE CHALLENGE OF BUSINESS CONSULTANT, VISITING LECTURER, IMPACT PLAYER AND EXECUTIVE COACH - PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

- Strong Message Business Consultancy: I am a very experienced business consultant both in private and public sector and recognised impact player in organizational effectiveness and renewal and have been involved in several major strategic and corporate initiatives. Have done business consultancy for organisations including but not limited to Sanlam, Santam, First National Bank, Eben Donges Hospital, Oceana, Department of Health Overberg Region, Western Cape Department of Education, SCIR, APL Cartons, Cape Union Mart, Desmond Tutu TB Centre, Consol Glass, SPAR, Barloworld, XSTRATA, Tiger Brands, SA Navy, Nedcor, Old Mutual, FNB, DE Beers, Government, Kumba, Clickatell, Coca Cola Sabco, Karsten Boerderye, Water and Sanitation of City of Western Cape, City of Windhoek, FNB Namibia, Lumber City, visiting lecturer for Peniel Consultancy. Mario has done 250 radio talks: Programme: Wisdom that Works.
- Have done training in Cairo, Egypt, being trained as a Character First Consultant in Oklahoma and have done this training in Namibia, Ghana, Uganda, Nigeria, Malawi, done a presentation on the 29th FCCI Marketplace conference in Denver, USA, train 400 students including executive students in Kumasi Ghana, talking to the Crown Board in Nigeria, attending a strategic thinking session in Toronto, Canada and FCCI conference in Naples, Florida, Haggai Advanced Leadership Programme, Maui, Hawaii, trained as a Faculty member in Singapore for the Haggai Institute, lecturing in Maui on personal leadership and goal setting 7 times. Have done corporate governance for Kaduna State in Nigeria.