Seeing the Forest for the Trees: A Manager's Guide to Applying Systems Thinking

By Dennis Sherwood

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Systems thinking can help you tame the complexity of real-world problems by providing a structured way of balancing a broad, overall view with the selection of the right level of detail, truly allowing you to "see the forest for the trees".

Only by taking a broad view can we avoid the twin dangers of a silo mentality-in which a fix 'here' simply shifts the problem to 'there'-and organisational myopia-in which a fix 'now' gives rise to a much bigger problem to fix 'then'.

Seeing the Forest for the Trees will give you all the tools and techniques you need, with many practical examples as diverse as managing a busy back office, negotiating an outsourcing deal and formulating business strategy.

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Editorial Review

Review
"Rich in detail...a great learning resource. A first-rate book of substance and quality. Highly recommended."
-- *Stern's Management Review*

A practical handbook which explains the basics of systems thinking and shows how to construct causal loop diagrams and computerized -- *The Midwest Book Review*

From the Inside Flap
Drawing on his distinguished background as a scholar, consultant, and business executive, Dennis Sherwood tackles complexity head-on as he demonstrates how systems thinking can provide a structured way of balancing a broad overall view of the issues at hand with specific action steps for dealing with the right level of detail—truly allowing you to 'see the forest for the trees.' With dozens of examples of systems thinking in action, the author details:

*12 Golden Rules for drawing causal loop diagrams
*The role of systems thinking and the power of causal loop diagrams in building consensus, in building high-performing teams, and in exercising one's leadership
*A generic systems thinking model for strategy that can be used as an integral part of scenario planning
*A computer-based simulation modeling technique that harnesses the power of the computer to explore how a system evolves over time

About the Author
Dennis Sherwood was for twelve years a consulting partner with Coopers & Lybrand and was subsequently an Executive Director at Goldman Sachs in London, a partner in Bossard Consultants, and Vice President of SRI Consulting. Educated at the universities of Cambridge, Yale and California, and a Sloan Fellow, with Distinction, of the London Business School, he is now the Managing Director of Organica Consulting which specialised in building competitive advantage through innovation whose clients include Thames Water, Nestle, National Grid, Pearson TV, The Defence Evaluation & Research Agency, Wedgewood, and Yorkshire Electricity. He is a is well-known on the conference circuit and is the author of five previous books including Smart Things to Know About Innovation and Unlock Your Mind. Visit www.organicaconsulting.com for more information.

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