Systems Thinking:
A Crucial BA Skill in an Uncertain World

Course logistics	
Duration	1 day
Professional Development Hours	**7**

Course Description

It has often been said that we live in an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world. The external business environment is moving fast, and the ability to create organisations that can adapt and learn is crucial.   Yet, so often our stakeholders are blindsided by sickly-sweet silver-bullet solutions that assume a neat linear relationship between cause and effect. The trouble is that things are rarely that simple, and in trying to navigate the organisational 'spaghetti', so often we find it hard to get beyond short-term fire-fighting. Sound familiar? Then this course is for you!

Why Attend

In this practical and hands-on one day course, you will hear about the importance of systems thinking in a business analysis context and will have the opportunity to practise using a range of tools that can be used to systemically analyse a problem situation. The course contains a wide range of exercises which are used to ensure that the learning translates to real-world scenarios. It is suitable for beginners who have little or no formal knowledge of systems thinking techniques, and can act as a useful refresher for those who have some existing experience.

Learning Outcomes

Attendees who successfully attend the course will:
- Understand the danger of 'silver-bullet' solutions that are pursued without sufficient analysis.
- Understand what 'systems thinking' is, why it is important for business analysis and projects, and the consequences of applying linear/siloed thinking.

- Be able to differentiate between 'difficulties' and 'messes', and use this differentiation to select appropriate problem solving tools for a given context.
- Be familiar with a technique for examining the external business environment.
- Be familiar with a range of relevant tools and techniques:
  - Rich Pictures
  - Multiple Cause Diagrams
  - Causal Loops

Course Content

1. Introduction

The nature of an interconnected world, definition of a 'system' and an introduction to systems thinking and practice

2. Considering a Situation of Interest

Introduction to techniques and concepts that are useful when initially considering a problematic situation, including:

- Differentiating between a 'difficulty' and a 'mess'
- The traps of linear thinking
- Introduction to systems concept of 'feedback' and 'emergence'
- A BA technique for external environment analysis

3. Techniques and Concepts

A range of systems techniques and concepts including:

- Rich Pictures
- Multiple Cause Diagrams
- Causal Loops
- Discussion of 'appreciation' and organisational learning

4. Systems Thinking in Business Analysis

Aligning systems thinking to typical BA activities, using IIBA®'s BABOK® Guide

5. Reflection

The opportunity to reflect and consider where new knowledge gained on the course will be applied

Audience

This course is well suited for anyone needing to understand how to analyse tricky problems early in the project lifecycle. It will be of particular interest to BA teams that are seeking early business engagement, or those that are working with multiple stakeholder groups.

This is likely to include:

- Business Analysts
- Consultants
- Requirements Engineers
- Business Systems Analyst
- Product Owner
- Requirements Manager

Inclusive Material:

Each delegate receives a printed copy of the **Blackmetric Course Manual** which contains a concise summary of the course.