

SBS CERTIFIED: LEADERSHIP THROUGH SYSTEMS THINKING



GENTEX[®]
TRAINING CENTER



Introduction

SBS Certified: Leadership Through Systems Thinking Training Course prepares leaders to see organizations as connected systems rather than isolated departments. Participants learn to map relationships, find leverage points, and prevent the unintended consequences that follow narrow decisions. The program combines systems theory with practical tools for causal mapping, feedback analysis, and strategic intervention design. As a result, learners gain the ability to solve problems at their source instead of shifting them elsewhere. Furthermore, the course strengthens strategic judgement, cross-functional collaboration, and the confidence to lead change that holds.

SBS Certified: Leadership Through Systems Thinking Course Objectives

- Apply systems thinking principles to organizational and strategic problems.
- Map systems using causal loop diagrams (CLDs) and stock-and-flow models.
- Identify reinforcing and balancing feedback loops and their effects.
- Recognize system archetypes such as "Fixes That Fail," "Shifting the Burden," and "Limits to Growth."
- Find leverage points using Donella Meadows' leverage point hierarchy.
- Distinguish events, patterns, and systemic structures in problem analysis.
- Apply the iceberg model to move from symptoms to root structure.
- Use the Viable System Model (Stafford Beer) concepts for organizational design.
- Design interventions that avoid unintended consequences.
- Facilitate system mapping sessions with cross-functional teams.

Course Methodology

- Interactive sessions built on real organizational system cases.

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- Workshops on causal loop diagrams and stock-and-flow mapping.
- Group exercises on system archetypes and leverage point identification.
- Simulation of feedback dynamics and delayed consequences.
- Structured facilitation practice for system mapping sessions.
- Facilitator coaching and peer review on intervention designs.

Who Should Take This Course

- Senior leaders and department heads in complex organizations.
- Strategy, planning, and transformation professionals.
- Program and project leaders managing cross-functional change.
- Operations, quality, and process improvement managers.
- Organizational development and change management specialists.
- Consultants supporting strategy and systems redesign.

SBS Certified: Leadership Through Systems Thinking Course Outlines

Day 1: Foundations of Systems Thinking

- Linear versus systems thinking and why linear approaches fail.
- Systems, boundaries, elements, interconnections, and purpose.
- Events, patterns, and structures: the iceberg model.
- Mental models and their influence on leadership decisions.
- System archetypes: an introduction to recurring structures.
- Systems thinking language and habits of mind.
- Case study: diagnosing a recurring organizational problem.





Day 2: Mapping Systems and Feedback

- Causal loop diagrams (CLDs): variables, links, and polarity.
- Reinforcing loops and exponential growth or decline.
- Balancing loops and goal-seeking behaviour.
- Delays, time lags, and why consequences appear late.
- Stock-and-flow models: accumulations and rates.
- Mapping a real organizational system in teams.
- Workshop: building a causal loop diagram.

Day 3: Archetypes and Leverage Points

- "Fixes That Fail" and short-term solution traps.
- "Shifting the Burden" and dependency on quick fixes.
- "Limits to Growth" and capacity constraints.
- "Success to the Successful" and resource allocation effects.
- Donella Meadows' leverage point hierarchy: from parameters to paradigms.
- High-leverage versus low-leverage interventions.
- Exercise: finding leverage in a stuck system.

Day 4: Systems Leadership and Organizational Design

- The Viable System Model (Stafford Beer) for organizational design.
- Autonomy, control, and coordination in complex systems.
- Distributed leadership and decision rights in systems.
- Cross-functional collaboration and breaking silos.
- Facilitating system mapping sessions with stakeholders.

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- Managing resistance when redesigning structures.
- Simulation: leading a cross-functional systems intervention.

Day 5: Intervention Design and Systemic Change

- Designing interventions that target structure, not symptoms.
- Anticipating unintended consequences before acting.
- Scenario planning for systemic change.
- Measuring system performance with indicators that reflect the whole.
- Building learning loops and adaptive capacity.
- Sustaining systemic change and institutionalizing practice.
- Capstone: presenting a systems-based leadership intervention plan.

Conclusion

By successfully completing SBS Certified: Leadership Through Systems Thinking, participants will gain a practical ability to see organizations as interconnected systems and act on their underlying structure. They will acquire skills in causal mapping, archetype diagnosis, leverage point analysis, and intervention design. Gentex Training Center designs the program to help leaders solve problems at the source and build change that endures.

FAQs

Q1 What is the "SBS Certified: Leadership Through Systems Thinking" course about?



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It teaches leaders to view organizations as connected systems rather than separate departments. The course covers causal loop diagrams, feedback loops, system archetypes, leverage points, and intervention design, so leaders address root structure instead of surface symptoms.

Q2 What are the key benefits of the "SBS Certified: Leadership Through Systems Thinking" course?

You gain the ability to solve recurring problems at their source rather than shifting them elsewhere. The course improves strategic judgement, reduces unintended consequences, strengthens cross-functional collaboration, and helps you choose interventions with genuine, lasting leverage.

Q3 What skills will I gain from the "SBS Certified: Leadership Through Systems Thinking" course?

You will develop four core skills: systems mapping with causal loop and stock-and-flow diagrams, feedback and archetype diagnosis, leverage point analysis, and systemic intervention design with cross-functional facilitation.

Q4 What tools, methods, or standards are covered in the "SBS Certified: Leadership Through Systems Thinking" course?

The course covers causal loop diagrams (CLDs), stock-and-flow models, reinforcing and balancing feedback loops, system archetypes ("Fixes That Fail," "Shifting the Burden," "Limits to Growth," "Success to the Successful"), the iceberg model, Donella Meadows' leverage point hierarchy, the Viable System Model (Stafford Beer), and scenario planning.





Q5 How is the "SBS Certified: Leadership Through Systems Thinking" course applied in real-world practice?

Participants apply it to real challenges such as diagnosing slow approval cycles, reducing silo behaviour between departments, and designing a restructuring that avoids new bottlenecks. The same methods support strategy reviews, process redesign, and organizational change programs.