

D B A

STAGE 1

STRATEGIC THINKING AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

MODULE PORTFOLIO

**LSC
LONDON**

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Welcome to this DBA Module !

The pillars upon which the DBA has been designed have **Three Themes** :

- ☐ **Value**
- ☐ **Strategy**
- ☐ **Leadership**

as the critical core competencies required for business management sustainability.

This module, devoted to Strategic Thinking and Critical Analysis, will have content embedded for each of these themes, but the main focus will be upon classical theory reinforced with case applications using Soft Systems Methodology from which Strategic Thinking and Critical Analysis will be explored for organisational applications.

Lectures, Focus Group Discussions and Presentations will be used as the core learning methodology to encourage interactivity among course members and module tutors.

The outcome from the two-month learning cycle for this module will be a significant learning experience summarised through the completion of a 6000-word assignment.

The DBA design Figure 1 will put this module into context for you.

We trust that you will find this subject of module inspiring with very real corporate payoff potential as well as a platform for career building through problem analysis methodologies.

Good Luck.

DBA DESIGN

STAGE 1 TAUGHT MODULE THEMES – VALUE, STRATEGY, LEADERSHIP

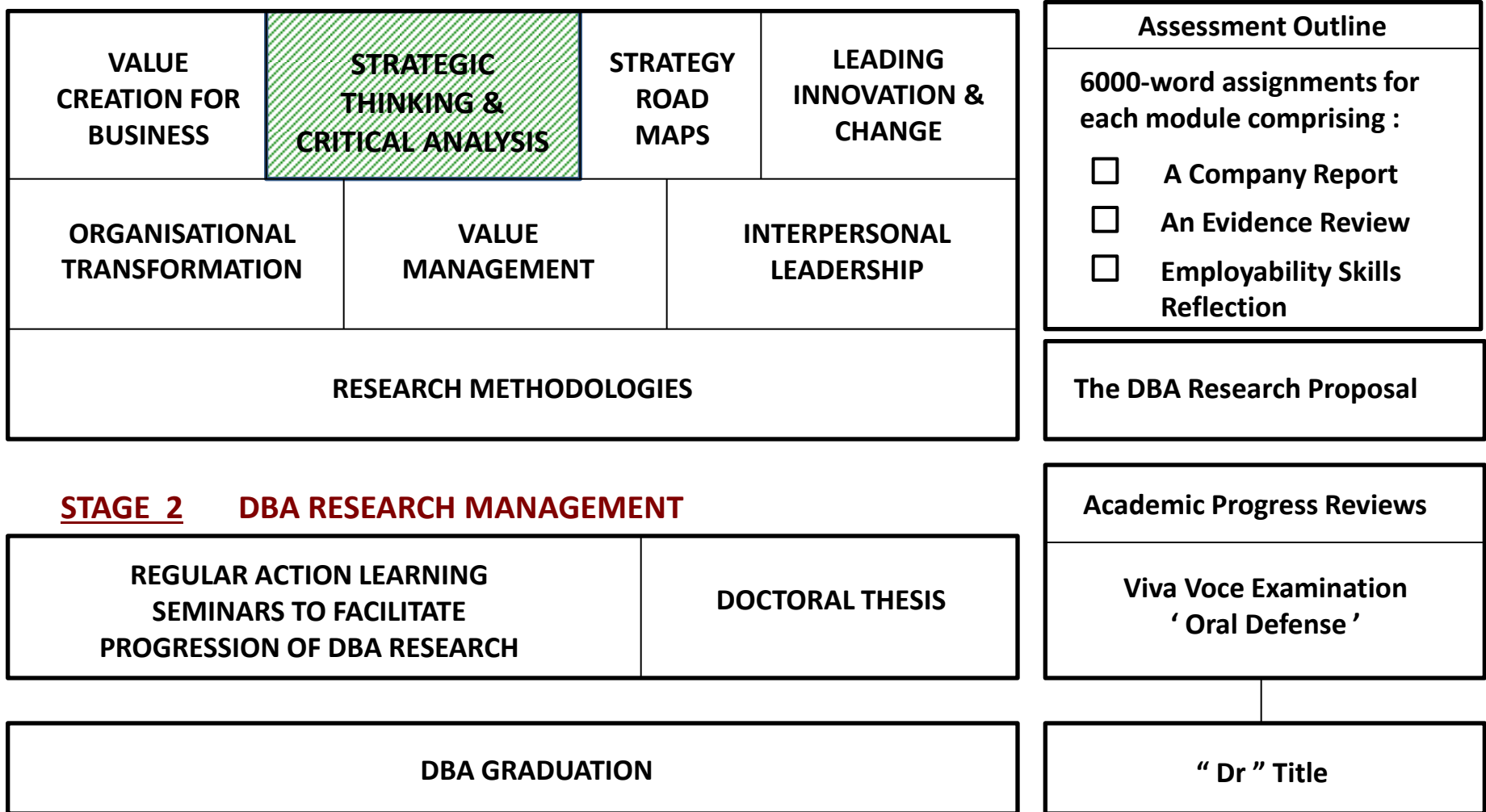


Figure 1

- ☐ **MODULE SYNOPSIS**
- ☐ **AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**
- ☐ **INDICATIVE CONTENT**
- ☐ **RECOMMENDED AND REQUIRED READING**

STRATEGIC THINKING & CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Module Synopsis

This module is devoted to providing a toolkit of “ Thinking Skills ” for organisational complexity analysis which in turn will influence strategy determination and leadership decision taking.

DBA students will acquire specialist skills for managerial problem analysis by applying unique methodologies to achieve critical analysis and resolution. There will be a direct focus upon Systems Thinking and Strategic Thinking. This is intended to influence managerial mindsets towards the proposal of carefully assessed change strategies.

Detailed attention will be given to the classical work of Peter Checkland’s Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) which is an acclaimed approach to understanding complex issues, problems and challenges in order to achieve a planned systematic agenda for change.

Through guided case based focus group workshops, DBA students will gain new knowledge and consultancy skills for critical analysis as a key employability outcome from this module.

AIMS

The aim of this module is for students to assess, apply and discover through critical analysis the contemporary knowledge contributions to systems thinking to understanding the complexities of human activity systems in selected organisations.

Through this learning the insights & reflections achieved will enable confident application to propose organisational change with direction, purpose and contextual relevance.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, the students will be able to :-

- **Contextualise a significant organisational contribution in a professional or consultancy role by proposing innovative strategies for resolving organisational situations considered problematic by employing contemporary methodologies for systems thinking.**
- **Through reflection, recognise the need for personal development through the inherent challenges faced when applying systems thinking at a critical stage for proposing appropriately assessed organisational interventions.**
- **Critique the origins and developments of theoretical discourses and advocacy for systems thinking approaches & applications.**

STRATEGIC THINKING AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Indicative Content

- Readings on Soft Systems Methodology (SSM), Checkland & et al, 1999 – 2006
- Systems Thinking and Strategic Thinking
- Containing Problem and Opportunity Situations & Messes conceived as problematic
- Critical Analysis and Interpretation of the SSM Rich Picture
- Root Definitions for Purposeful Activity
- Validation for Root Definitions
- Conceptual Modeling and Model Validation
- Tensions and Alignment between Problem & Issue Resolution and Real World Challenges
- Taking the Strategic Perspective
- The Agenda for Change Agency as a Decision Outcome
- Dynamics of Strategic Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Design Thinking, Counter Intuitive Thinking, Operational Thinking and Ambiguity
- Emergent Properties from Strategic Thinking & Critical Analysis

RECOMMENDED AND REQUIRED READING

- Checkland, P. (1981), ***Systems Thinking, Systems Practice***, New York, John Wiley.
- Checkland, P. (1999), ***Systems Thinking, Systems Practice : A 30-year Restrospective***, New York, John Wiley & Sons.
- Gharahedaghi, J. & Kaufman, M. (2011), ***Systems Thinking, Managing Chaos & Complexity***, 3rd Edition.
- Meadows, D. (2008), ***Thinking in Systems***, Chelsea Green Publishing, White River, Vermont : Sustainability Institute.
- Reynolds, M. & Holwell, S. (2010), ***Systems Approaches to Managing Change – A Practical Guide***, The Open University, Springer-Verlag London.
- Kaplan, R. S. & Norton, D. P. (2004), ***Strategy Maps : Converting Intangible Assets Into Tangible Outcomes***, Harvard Business School Press. 9781591391340.

Indicative Journals

- The International Journal of systems Science
- Journal of Systems Management

☐ **STRATEGIC THINKING AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT**

PART 1 THE COMPANY REPORT

PART 2 THE EVIDENCE REVIEW

PART 3 REFLECTION FOR EMPLOYABILITY ENHANCEMENT & LEADERSHIP

☐ **ASSIGNMENT MARKING GUIDE WITH THE ASSESSMENT MATRIX**

STRATEGIC THINKING AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT

PART 1 THE COMPANY REPORT

Based upon discussions held and conclusions drawn from evidence based research, you will now adopt the role of a Strategy Consultant for a selected organisation.

You are required to lead a new strategic initiative to propose and implement organisational change through the adoption of Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology to inject value creation opportunities for your client and their key stakeholder groups.

Your brief is to :-

- 1. Complete a critically evaluated situational analysis for the selected organisation to thereby establish a comprehensive understanding of current performance, productivity, competitive position and key challenges faced against their strategic ambitions for shareholder value gains.**
- 2. Propose a progressive resolution through the intervention of an agenda of feasible and desirable change to achieve incremental value addition. Assess the impact upon current business practices as well as the organisational learning challenges to be addressed as part of a business transformation agenda.**

3. Against the enduring value propositions for your client's business to adopt your proposals, using your own judgement, review the wider implications if the client organisation does not accept your proposals.

3000 words

THIS PART OF THE ASSIGNMENT IS A MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR THE BOARD OF YOUR CLIENT ORGANISATION.

PART 2 EVIDENCE REVIEW

1. Prepare a critique of selected literature focused upon the domain of Soft Systems Methodology, then support your perspectives with other contemporary evidence of applications deemed relevant to achieve meaningful managerial insights and conclusions.
2. From the evidence, outline potential DBA research perspectives which could be adopted to explore client business transformation for future sustainability.

2000 words

THIS PART OF THE ASSIGNMENT SHOULD BE SUBMITTED IN THE FORM OF A LITERATURE REVIEW WITH POTENTIAL DBA RESEARCH INDICATIONS.

PART 3 **REFLECTION FOR EMPLOYABILITY ENHANCEMENT**

Complete your individual learning log of employability skills readiness, through self-reflection on current practice, to : -

- 1. Realise the critical thinking and core capabilities needed to achieve this consultancy task for the client organisation.**
- 2. Evaluate your current knowledge, skills and competencies to thereby assess your ability for completing this consultancy assignment.**
- 3. Review the consultancy related leadership skills now required for future personal development and career accession.**

1000 words

THIS LEARNING LOG IS A ROLLING RECORD MAINTAINED THROUGHOUT THE DBA MODULES AND WILL BE SUMMARIESED AT THE END OF PART 1 OF THE DBA.

DBA ASSIGNMENT PORTFOLIO FOR EACH MODULE

MARKING GUIDE

Each module has 3 components for assessment : -

- 1. The Company Report**
- 2. The Evidence Review**
- 3. Reflection Upon Practice / Application for Employability and Leadership Skills**

Standardised Assessment Criteria are provided in an Assessment Matrix. These criteria are intended to ensure that the academic rigour for each module is achieved. Marking of each module will be against the assessment criteria and then supplemented with an overall statement of performance with a clear explanation given for areas of future improvement needed as appropriate.

THE COMPANY REPORT

This is intended as a consultancy report for a defined organisation. It is intended for a board level consumption to outline the justified changes required as a result of applying a selected framework for value, strategy and leadership to bring about meaningful outcomes for stakeholders.

The consultancy report is not an academic document, it is a stand-alone report intended for top management review and potential endorsement. This report should reach professional consulting standards, a skillset which all DBA students should aim and achieve.

THE EVIDENCE REVIEW

The purpose of the evidence review is to establish the academic underpinning for the company consultancy report. It requires the student to source, screen and select appropriate sources of literature and other contemporary evidence that will anchor a critique to be achieved from which specific academic frameworks related to value, strategy and leadership.

Academic research evidence must be apparent and adequately focused so that emergent themes may be considered for DBA research in Part 2 of the DBA programme.

Quality 'in text' references will be expected together with a supporting bibliography.

REFLECTION UPON PRACTICE / APPLICATION

This section of the assessment is to establish an awareness of the learning which has been achieved in each module. It will be summarised at the end of Part 1 of the DBA. The purpose is to build employability skills from the reflection undertaken so that personal skillsets are assessed together with an agenda for individual development in accordance with leadership, value creation and strategy implementation.

This ' log ' will be retained in each module so that students can assess their competency development needs and assess the progress being made before commencement of Part 2, the DBA Research.

THE DBA MODULE GENERIC ASSESSMENT MATRIX

- 1. THE COMPANY CONSULTANCY REPORT**
- 2. THE EVIDENCE REVIEW**
- 3. REFLECTION UPON PRACTICE / APPLICATION**

(1) THE COMPANY CONSULTANCY REPORT

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Less than Satisfactory
1. Clear Introduction to the Organisational Context	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Report Structure and Flow	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Industry / Company Research Applied	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Situational Analysis and Evaluation in Content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The Need for Change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Direct Application of Explicit Frameworks for Value, Strategy and Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Explicit Value Propositions for Change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Concise Action Plans Proposed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Clarity of Judgement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Less than Satisfactory
• How the Change will be lead	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Stated Outcomes / Benefits for New Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Report Style	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Appendices				
Technical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Situational to Company / Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(2) EVIDENCE REVIEW

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Less than Satisfactory
• Academic Research Evidence related to explicit frameworks for Value, Strategy & Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Direct 'in text' citation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Quality of Critique	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• New Insights Gained	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Formation of Judgements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Logical Conclusions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Emergent Themes for Potential DBA Research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Appendices				
• Quality of Bibliography	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Quality of In Text References	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(3) REFLECTION UPON PRACTICE / APPLICATION

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Less than Satisfactory
• Ability to form Judgements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Mindset Change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Personal Skillsets Assessment for Leadership, Value Creation and Strategy Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Self Critique of Competencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Challenges Experienced	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Overcoming Difficulties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• New Knowledge Acquired	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Theory Modification to suit Organisational Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Emergent Conclusions for Employability Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The Personal Development Agenda	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(4)

OVERALL COMMENTS

STRENGTHS

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

OVERALL GRADE

The initiation of this workshop meeting is for the focus group to achieve clear outcomes from their team work within time constraints given.

THE TASK STAGE 1

- ① Review the statements extracted from quantitative research conducted for a Multinational Organisation in the Finance Industry. Their Head Office is situated in London with subsidiaries throughout South East Asia.
- ② Review the statements made by key managers in the respective South East Asian countries.
- ③ Critically assess the situation and report your findings.

THE TASK STAGE 2

As a group, you are required to :-

- ① Define strategic thinking for the Group CEO and then propose appropriate routes to explain how this management competency can be improved to evolve as a core competency for competitive advantage.
- ② How will you overcome the concerns raised in the middle management statements from the South East Asia subsidiaries.

THE TASK STAGE 3

From this focus group meeting identify the common essential skills required for Strategic Leadership at European Board Level and also at Head of Country level in South East Asia.

The leadership requirement is to progressively build organisational cohesion.

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

STATEMENTS MADE BY THE NEWLY APPOINTED GROUP CEO FROM THE LONDON HEAD OFFICE

- Statement ① “ I would like our key people in all countries to be able to think move strategically --- they lack strategic thinking skills ”
- Statement ② “ We do not have people who can think out of the box ”
- Statement ③ “ I am surrounded by people who don't know what they don't know --- this displays incompetence ”

COMMON STATEMENTS MADE BY KEY LOCAL AND EXPATRIATE MANAGERS

WORKING IN SINGAPORE, HONG KONG, MALAYSIA, THAILAND AND JAPAN

Statement ① “ We lack a clear sense of direction ”

Statement ② “ Communication is often misleading ”

Statement ③ “ There is an absence of multinational shared values ”

Statement ④ “ We don’t know what the strategy is ”

Statement ⑤ “ We wait for instructions from Europe because we don’t want to rock the boat ”

Statement ⑥ “ Individual self-interest constraints effective team work ”

Now to move forward to achieve a more critical assessment of these research statements.

- ① What questions would need to be asked to establish a clear set of PERSPECTIVES about the New European CEO and the South East Asian subsidiaries management ?
- ② What EVIDENCE will you need to confirm these perspectives ?
- ③ What types of Argument or Statements could you propose based upon the quality of evidence provided ?
- ④ What role does Truth or Validity play in establishing an argument ?
- ⑤ Why do we make inferences ?
- ⑥ Why do we become sceptical ?
- ⑦ What are the implications of the potential risk which may arise if action is not taken ?

SOME GUIDELINES FOR CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Critical thinking should achieve **GOOD REASONING** for the beliefs held or arrived at. Good reasoning requires a search for **RATIONALITY**.

SOUND argument is needed which is based upon a set of premises or beliefs (which should be true) which lead to a conclusion.

Such conclusions when based upon a true (or valid) premises are considered to be **deductive**.

Sometimes it **IS** difficult to achieve well-anchored deduction in which case the conclusion(s) can only be probable.

NOTE THIS SIMPLE MESSAGE WILL HAVE A DIRECT INFLUENCE ON YOUR DBA JOURNEY.

PROVIDING A CRITIQUE FOR LITERATURE UNDER REVIEW

As a core part of the DBA Assessment your ability to review the literature is essential.

The following criteria may be applied for you to achieve an argument or a set of deductive conclusions.

- ① Evidence of alignment of thought among thought leaders
- ② Weaknesses in the contributions made to-date
- ③ Gaps in the literature to your chosen topic
- ④ Contrasting views among contributors
- ⑤ Prevailing views
- ⑥ Emergent themes
- ⑦ Questions that are being currently addressed through the literature?
- ⑧ Justification for further research

Just to remind you, a literature review is a focused evaluated assembly of thought on a topic of interest to you.

A literature review will therefore describe, summarise, synthesise, clarify, integrate and also differentiate the most interesting and important contributions to your chosen topic.

These contributions will be obtained from a **selected bibliography** of authors known to the field, so that you can explore the views that have been and are now currently held.

The literature review is intended as a **critical assessment** of those who have contributed to your chosen topic (or field of inquiry).

This review will be presented as **your** collective **critique** upon work that was previously completed and published.

It should be an **evaluation**, not just a summary, it is **‘ a review ’** !

FOR EACH DBA ASSIGNMENT AND THE FINAL DBA DISSERTATION THIS IS AN ESSENTIAL COMPETENCY TO BE ACHIEVED.

- ☐ **SOFT SYSTEMS METHODOLOGY (SSM) --- THE UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION**
- ☐ **DISTINCTIVE BENEFITS --- SELECTED VIEWS OF CLIENTS AS ADOPTERS**
- ☐ **THE EXPERIENCE-ACTION CYCLE --- MAKING A START TO SSM**
- ☐ **THE BASIC SHAPE OF SSM**
- ☐ **CHECKLANDS CLASSICAL MODEL --- SSM**
- ☐ **SSM GUIDANCE FOR FOCUS GROUP APPLICATION**

SOFT SYSTEMS METHODOLOGY (SSM) --- THE UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION

Today, business and managerial complexities become increasingly challenging at senior and top management levels ; the demands on the individual are more diverse and the pressure for performance escalates year on year.

The ability to achieve a balanced view in decision-taking for the benefit of the organisation as a whole and also to give a targeted return to shareholders becomes of paramount importance.

Achieving an understanding of the ‘ big picture ’ is not easy, it requires holistic thinking so that issues can be viewed and treated in context with the right priorities needed.

These demands on management at a strategic level are not often supported with the best tools with which to assess problems or even opportunities – yet rational, balanced decisions must be taken which appear equitable to all stakeholders groups.

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

A management tool is required which :-

- Enables the Big Picture to be seen.
- Allows an understanding of how the parts of the organisation work together as a whole and where change is needed.
- Extracts problem themes, issues and challenges in relevant contexts.

- Achieves a concise, comprehensive, yet complete consensus of what needs to be done to address prevailing challenges.
- Delivers a road map to manage through Strategic Challenges to achieve tangible outcomes.
- Achieves clarity and commitment for future strategic moves with an overall image to be conveyed to stakeholder groups.

The management tool to achieve this is SSM.

SSM

Soft Systems Methodology is a creative yet powerful tool for Strategic Analysis which allows the user to conduct a complete enquiry to understand the 'big picture' and then to deal with the challenges faced from a systemic viewpoint.

Through the process of SSM, problems and challenges can be viewed in relation to each other by those involved and in a complete context. This overcomes taking a piecemeal approach to future development needs.

Through the application of this management tool, a more rational, sequential process can be achieved for more effective planning, strategy determination and decision making.

THE SSM APPROACH

SSM, as a consulting tool can be applied individually or facilitated in teams through focused workshops to deliver to the users : -

- (1) A powerful system for conducting an enquiry or situation analysis into the current position.
- (2) A way through complex even messy problem situations.
- (3) A logical set of proposals from which key decisions can be taken.
- (4) A Strategy Road Map for the future.

**SSM OPENS THE EYES TO NEW HORIZONS AND THEREBY CAN LEAD TO MORE RATIONAL,
METHODOLOGICAL, PRODUCTIVE PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING FOR STRATEGY RENEWAL.**

DISTINCTIVE BENEFITS --- SELECTED VIEWS OF CLIENTS AS ADOPTERS

“ SSM provides a Powerful System of Enquiry ”

“ SSM achieves Visualisation of a Complex Problem or Opportunity Situation ”

“ SSM avoids the Trap of Dealing with Symptoms but establishes Root Causal Systemic Relationships ”

“ SSM expresses Part / Whole Relationship ”

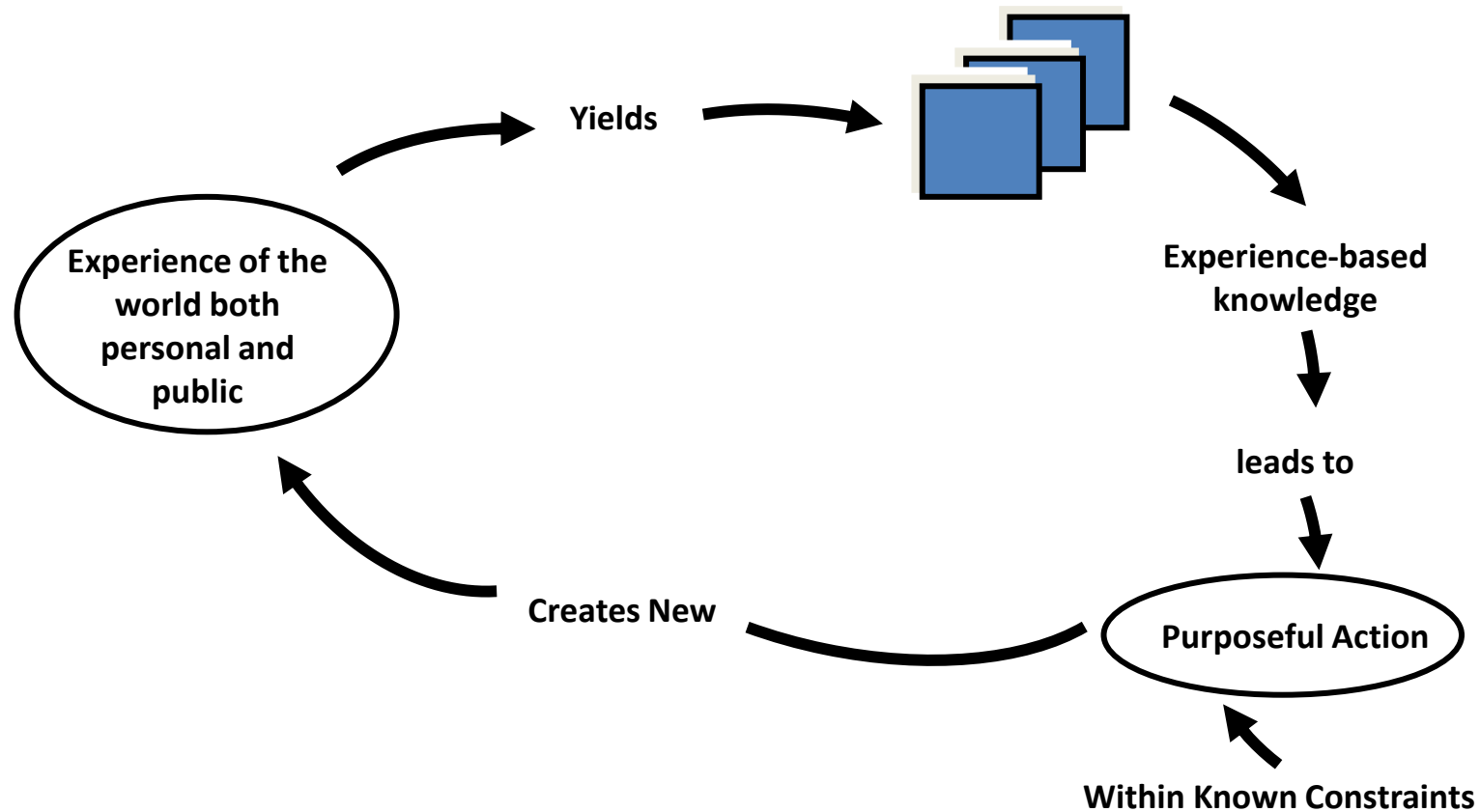
“ SSM secures Team Involvement, secures Motivation and Shared Commitment for the Entire Process of Problem Analysis ”

“ SSM achieves Focus and a Rationale for Needed Change ”

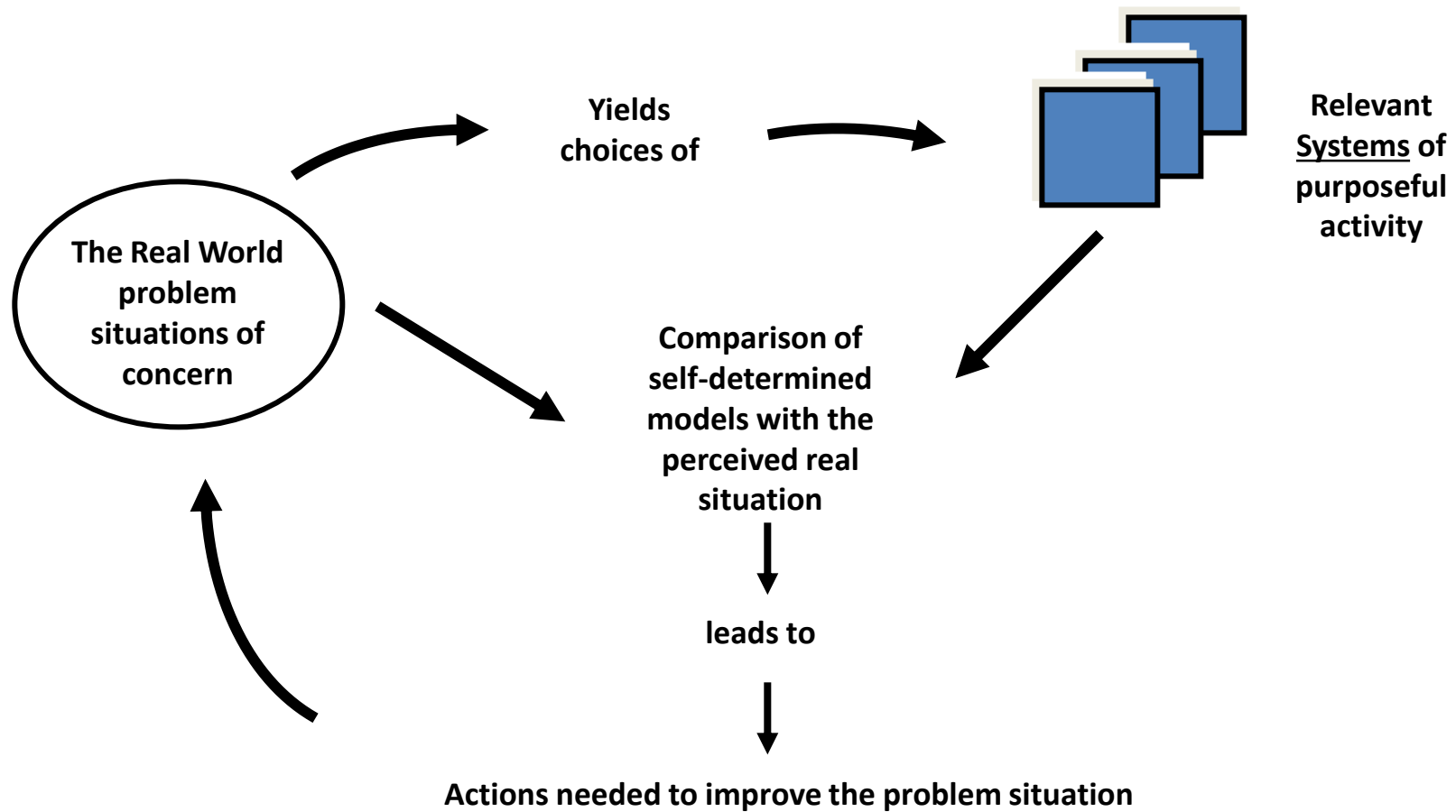
“ SSM has Opened Our Eyes ”

THE EXPERIENCE-ACTION CYCLE ----- MAKING A START

Let us consider How the Experience-Action Cycle works, in perpetuity, from the diagram below.



THE BASIC SHAPE OF SSM



SSM seeks to provide help in articulating and operating the learning cycle from problem situation, to meaning, to intention to purposeful action, without resorting to a step-by-step approach common to most “ **HARD** ” (*As Distinct To Soft*) methodologies.

It is to be recognised that “ **Soft Systems** ” involve people and people cannot help but attribute meaning to their perception of the world and its problem situations. These meanings constitute interpretations of the world derived from experienced-based knowledge.

NOTE : These precepts are important to grasp as they underpin the design of the SSM Methodology.

TWO TERMS : SYSTEMIC AND SYSTEMATIC

Two terms, derived from the noun -- **SYSTEM**, yet two different interpretations should be appreciated : -

Systematic implies a step-by-step procedure.

Systemic relates to the ' body ' as a whole.

SSM is a systematic methodology, considering the whole and how the parts relate to that whole.

From the idea of systemic, we need to consider the term **system** as something that has emergent properties (outputs) and resources (inputs). To be **purposeful**, the system must “ **do something** ” and achieves this through a transformation process, usually with a sense of hierarchy.

A system, which is dynamic in nature, therefore brings about **CHANGE**.

A **relevant system** will be **relevant** to the problem situation discovered in the real world (i.e. to bring about the needed change).

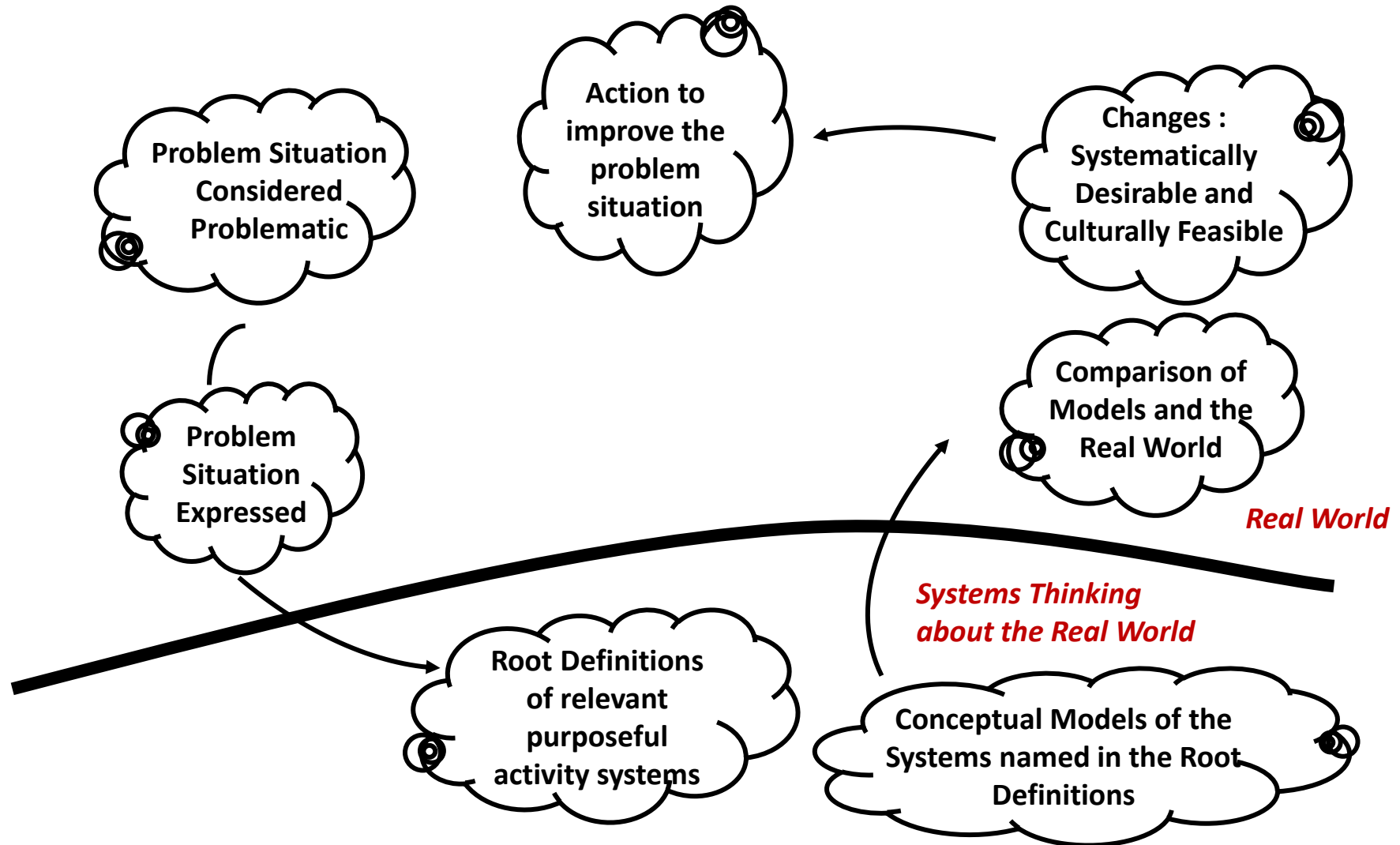
A relevant system would have inherit properties of communication and control in order to relate to and adapt to the changes in the environment.

NOTE :

Reflect upon your country's -- legal system, healthcare system, political system, for example to see how these ideas may apply.

But usually we do not think about systems as such, our world is perceived through ideas and maybe concepts and for this reason a more powerful and creative approach may be needed to understand real world problems, issues and challenges.

CHECKLANDS CLASSICAL MODEL --- SSM



SSM when applied is a insightful methodology achieving an inquiry which aims to bring about improvement in **soft messy problem situations.**

It involves people in a learning cycle (which ideally is perpetual).

The learning takes place through the literature process of using systems concepts to reflect upon and debate perceptions of the real world, taking action in the real world and reflecting again on the outcomes using systems concepts.

SSM in this sense can be applied as an interactive process which progressively improves real world problems through the application of systems thinking about the real world. Each stage in the SSM process must be guided to be understood. The next section of this orientation into SSM is designed to give such guidance to DBA Focus Groups.

SSM GUIDANCE FOR FOCUS GROUP APPLICATION

REAL WORLD

- | | |
|---------|--|
| STAGE 1 | THE PROBLEM SITUATION CONSIDERED PROBLEMATIC |
| STAGE 2 | THE PROBLEM SITUATION EXPRESSED --- BUILDING AND INTERPRETING A RICH PICTURE |

THE SYSTEMS THINKING DIMENSION

- | | |
|---------|---|
| STAGE 3 | WRITING ROOT DEFINITIONS
THE CATWOE CRITERIA
TESTING ROOT DEFINITIONS |
| STAGE 4 | CONCEPTUAL MODEL BUILDING |

BACK TO THE REAL WORLD

- | | |
|---------|--|
| STAGE 5 | COMPARISON OF CONCEPTUAL MODEL WITH REAL WORLD IN THE RICH PICTURE |
| STAGE 6 | FEASIBLE AND DESIRABLE CHANGE |
| STAGE 7 | THE CHANGE AGENDA |

SSM --- THE REAL WORLD DIMENSION

STAGE 1

THE REAL WORLD

GETTING STARTED

**THE PROBLEM SITUATION CONSIDERED
PROBLEMATIC**

**FOCUS
GROUP
TASK**

Discuss the problem situation generally.

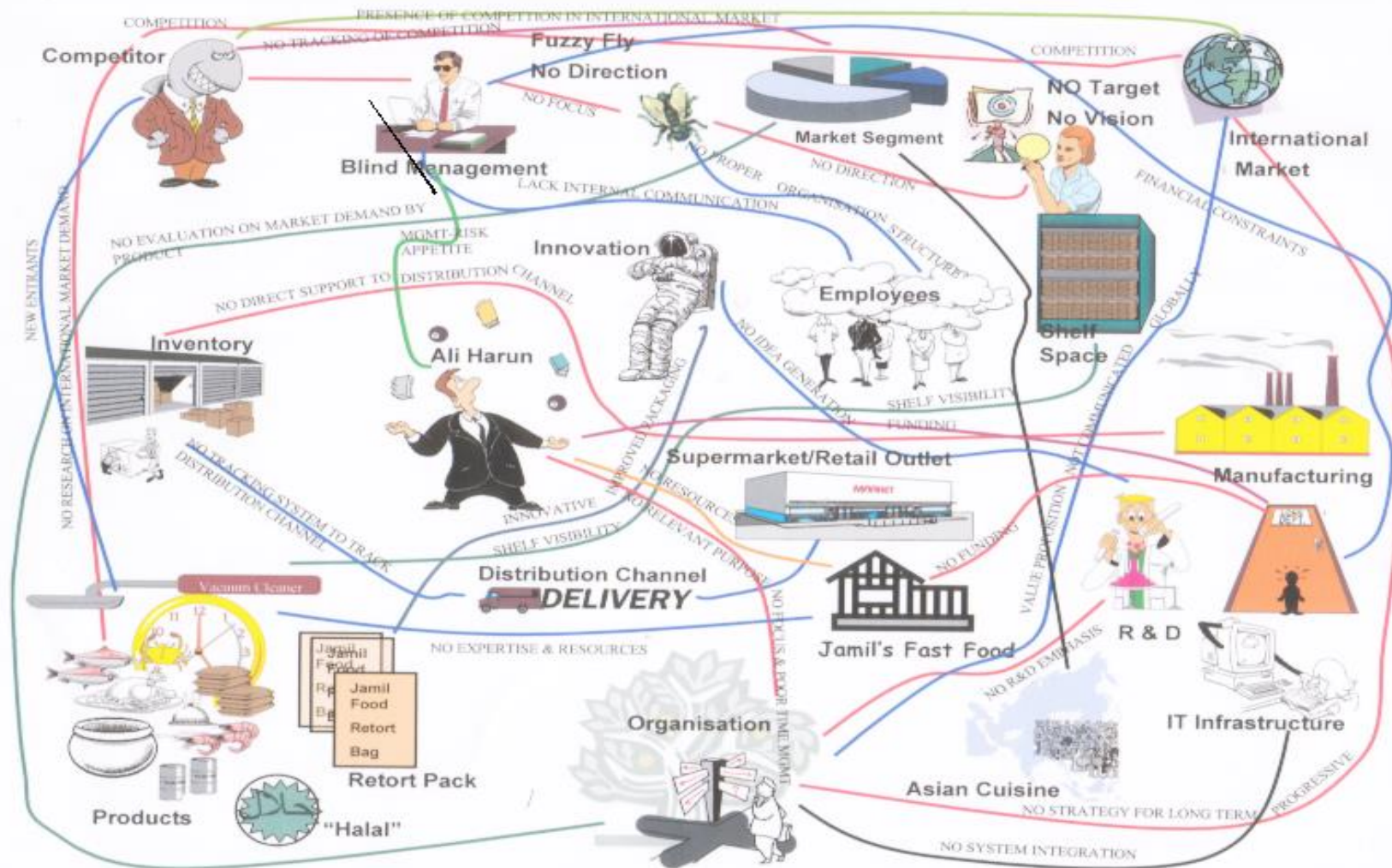
GUIDE :

- Treat this discussion as the opening of the inquiry.
- Ideas should be random, free flowing and should not be solution oriented, or judgmental.

THE REAL WORLD	VISUALISATION
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STAGE 2	THE REAL WORLD
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**THE PROBLEM SITUATION EXPRESSED ---
USING A RICH PICTURE**



STAGE 2

THE REAL WORLD

**THE PROBLEM
(& OPPORTUNITY) SITUATION
EXPRESSED**

**GROUP
TASK**

Draw a Rich Picture to express the situation.

GUIDE :

STEP 1 -- STRUCTURE

- 1) Identify and list the elements of **STRUCTURE**.
- 2) Decide visual icons to represent each element of structure.
- 3) Draw these together in a random way.

RICH PICTURE GUIDE

STEP 2 --- PROCESSES

1. Identify 'PROCESSES'.

Which connect the elements of Structure by using lines and annotations.

2. Problem (& Opportunity) themes may start to emerge at this stage – capture these.
3. Consider the nature of the general environment, describe it and reflect this in the Rich Picture.

RICH PICTURE GUIDE

STEP 3 --- INTERPRETATION OF THE RICH PICTURE

1. Extract **FROM THE PICTURE** the obvious
 - * Challenges
 - * General Problem Themes.
2. Look again at the Processes, are there any which are missing – which could be added to the list of Item 1 above.
3. Are there structural elements absent which may also be added to the list in Item 1 above.

RICH PICTURE GUIDE

STEP 4 --- PRESENTATION

To reinforce the consensus achieved a short presentation is needed to summarise the General Problem Themes and Challenges which have been extracted from this case or client situation.

STAGE 3	LEAVING THE REAL WORLD AND ENTERING THE SYSTEMS THINKING DIMENSION
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**THE AIM : TO DECIDE WHAT, HOW AND WHEN TO REACT TO THE
DISCOVERIES FROM THE RICH PICTURE**

STAGE 3	LEAVING THE REAL WORLD AND ENTERING THE SYSTEMS THINKING DIMENSION
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THE ROOT DEFINITIONS WILL DESCRIBE WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO EMBRACE, CONTAIN AND POTENTIALLY RESOLVE THE PROBLEM SITUATION CONSIDERED PROBLEMATIC.

FOCUS GROUP TASK :

- 1) Give the system a name to describe its purpose.
- 2) Compose a series of Root Definitions to describe the system you have named.
- 3) Refine, test, retest and then select the idealised root definition.

NOW CONSIDER EXAMPLES OF ROOT DEFINITIONS TO ORIENTATE YOUR THINKING.

ROOT DEFINITION ---- EXAMPLE

A shareholder owned Private Healthcare system to enable business development outside the country, which in light of current information on future healthcare provision and the developments in healthcare technology and other ad-hoc issues, drives the enterprise to provide new target markets with new opportunities for preventative healthcare and surgery so as to strengthen brand equity in the international market place and in so doing, provide sustainable returns to shareholders and future investors.

WHAT ARE YOUR FIRST THOUGHTS ?

ROOT DEFINITION (RD)

A Jamil Foods owned dynamic business re-engineering system, led by a focused and dedicated entrepreneur to lead through a strategic vision, develop (1) and empower (2) a professional team within a learning organisation and by implementing (3) relevant technologies within a favourable and innovative environment in preparation (4) towards a sustainable (5) growth and profitable (6) business entity for stakeholders participation through its commitments (7) on continuous innovative ideas and feedback amongst employees and strategic partners to generate (8) an outstanding market orientation by establishing (9) an equilibrium linking the company's core competencies with customers' values to enhance (10) a global 'halal' brand recognition, endorsement and acceptance of convenient and quality Asian cuisine known as "Jamil Foods" within a highly competitive environment by providing (11) an amicable (12) partnership with supply chain and strategic alliances.

REFLECTION ON THESE ROOT DEFINITIONS

- 1. What are your overall impressions ?**
- 2. How are the components of the root definition determined ?**
- 3. Do you consider that the determination of a root definition requires a methodology ?**

..... it is now appropriate to appreciate the potential value of THE CATWOE CRITERIA.

WRITING ROOT DEFINITIONS

Guide :

STEP 1 : FOR THE NAMED SYSTEM APPLY THE NMEMONIC 'CATWOE'

C

CUSTOMERS ; THOSE AFFECTED BY THE OUTCOME OF THE SYSTEM PROPOSED

A

ACTORS INVOLVED IN RESOLVING THE GENERAL PROBLEMS & CHALLENGES

T

TRANSFORMATIONS CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL

W

WORLD VIEW (OR IMAGE) TO BE CREATED IN THE MINDS OF STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

O

OWNERS ; THOSE WITH RESOURCING AND CONTROL POWER

E

ENVIRONMENT WITHIN WHICH THE SYSTEM HAS TO FUNCTION, INTERNALLY & EXTERNALLY

Guide :

STEP 2

: THE IDEAL SEQUENCE FOR USING CATWOE

- T
- W
- C
- A
- O
- E

STEP 3**: WRITING AND TESTING ROOT DEFINITIONS**

1. PREPARE NOTES AGAINST ALL ELEMENTS OF CATWOE.
2. TRY TO ASSEMBLE A ROOT DEFINITION.
3. REMEMBER THIS IS THE VERY ESSENCE OF WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE !!!

STEP 4**: TESTING THE ROOT DEFINITION****USING THE '5 E' TEST****FIRSTLY**

HAVE ALL ELEMENTS OF CATWOE BEEN EXPRESSED ?

C	A	T	W	O	E
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECONDLY

CAN THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES MEET THE TESTS OF :-

Efficacy	--	Can it work ?
Efficiently	--	Can they use resources well-utilised ?
Effectiveness	--	In meeting owners' expectations ?
Being Ethical	--	In a moral sense ?
Being Elegant	--	Will this be pleasing ?

3. THIRDLY

To justify the transformations into the actual organisational context specific criteria may also be needed to test the proposed transformations, for example :-

- **Alignment with Future Vision & Mission**
- **Respect for Core Values**
- **Fulfillment of Unmet Needs**
- **Sustainability**
- **Organisational Gap Analysis**
- **Human Capital Competencies**

NOTE :

This cautionary step will help to prevent rejection of your proposals by the client.

STAGE 4

CONCEPTUAL MODEL BUILDING

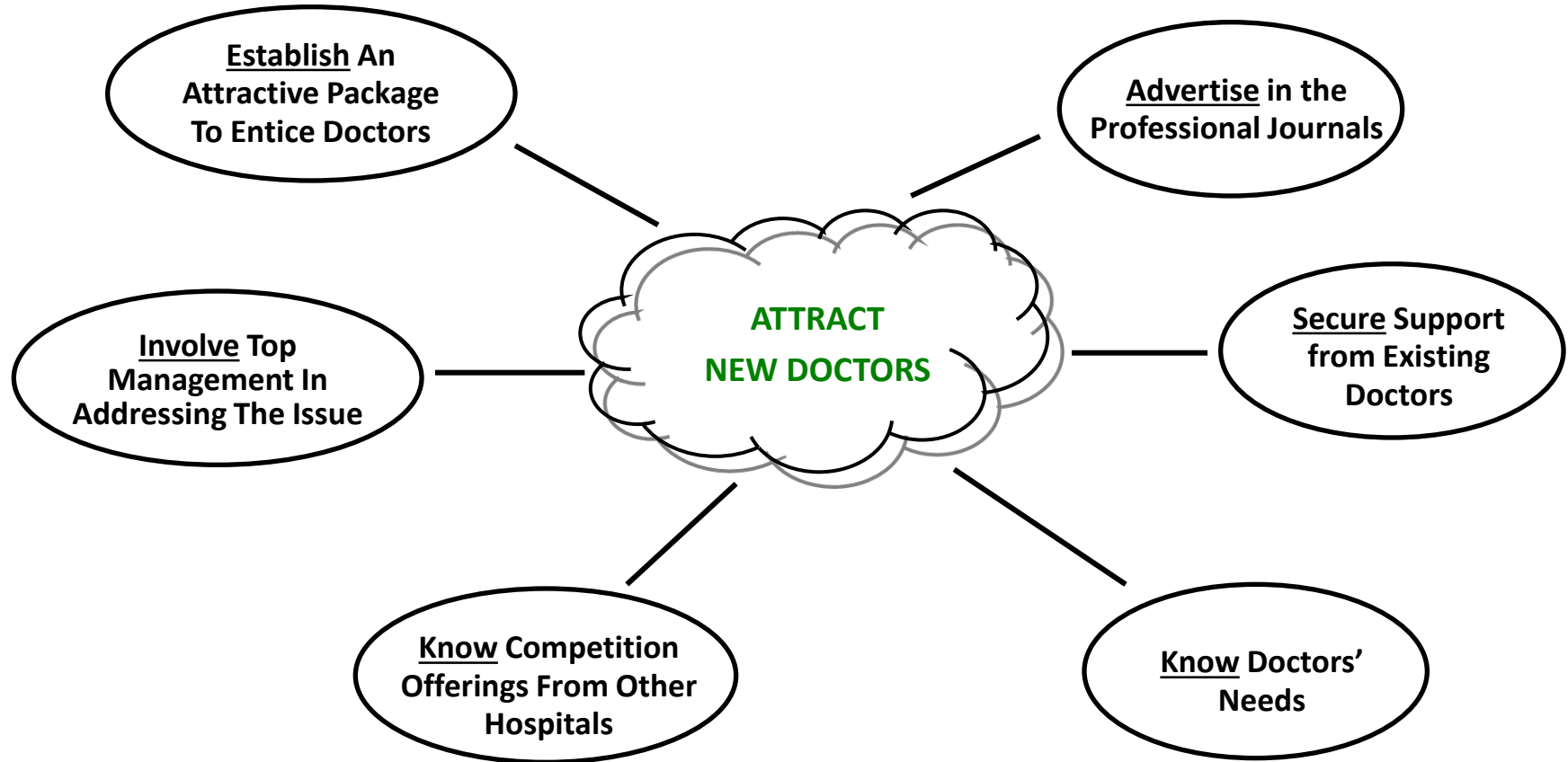
DECIDING “ HOW ” AND “ WHEN ” BY USING ‘CONCEPTUAL MODELS’ TO BUILD A ROAD MAP OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FOR CHANGE

GUIDE STEP 1 :

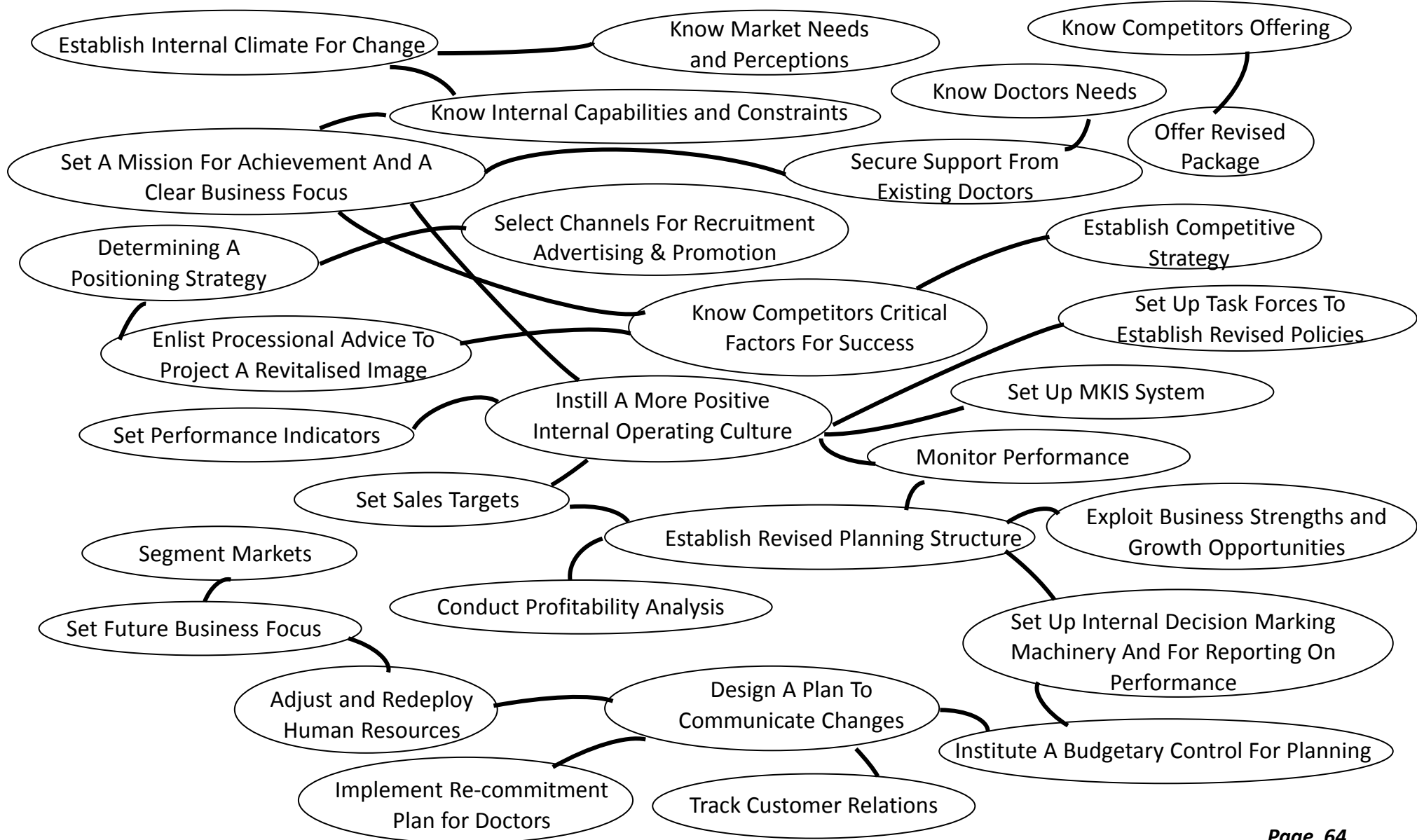
- Using the Root Definition, firstly identify all the actionable elements.
- For each element, use a brainstorming technique to build a Mind Map of HOW each element will be achieved.
- These initiatives should be specified as actions to be taken, therefore start each action with a ‘verb’.

FROM ROOT DEFINITION TO CONCEPTUAL MODEL BUILDING

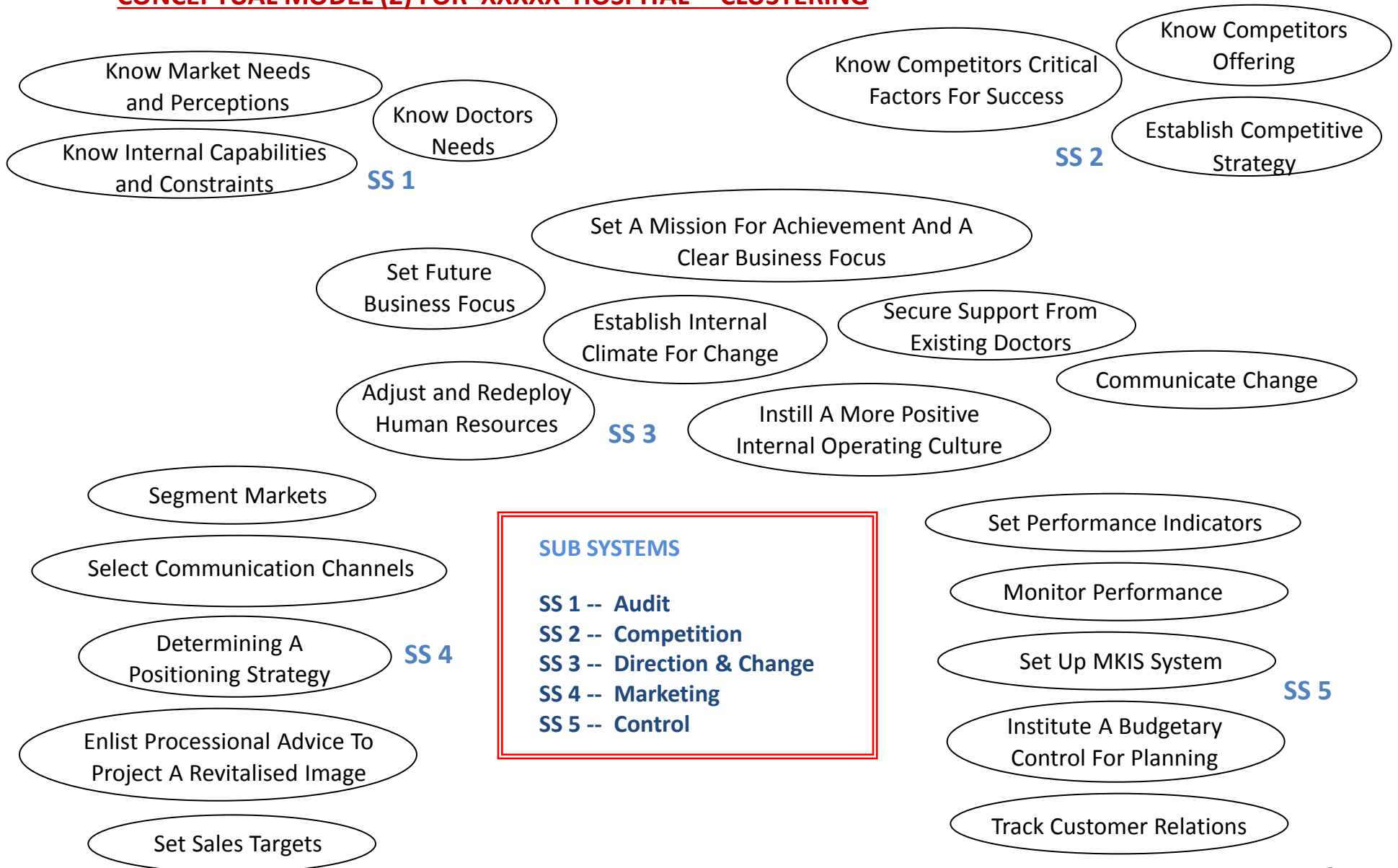
BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN “ WHAT ” AND “ HOW ”



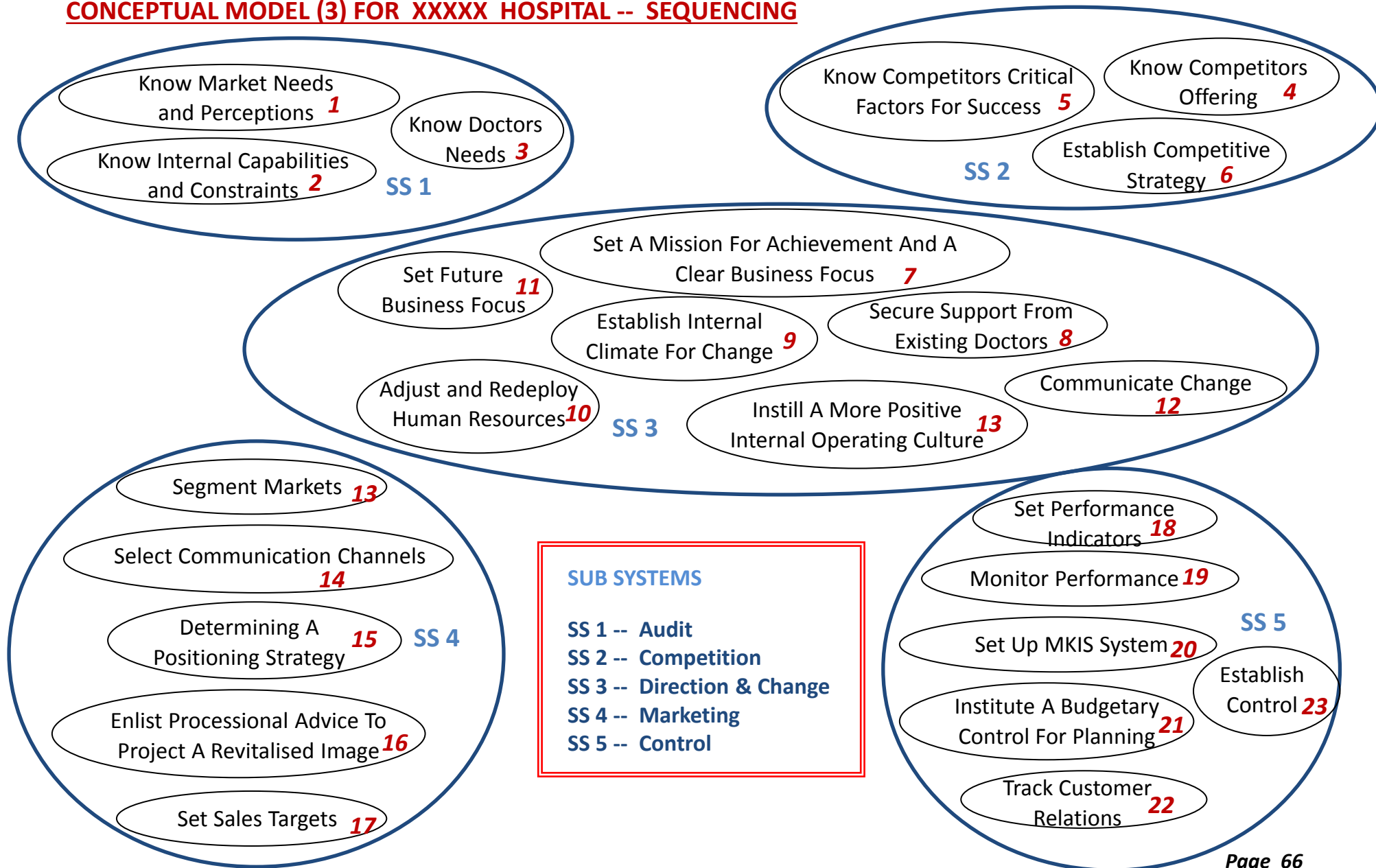
CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF XXXXX HOSPITAL



CONCEPTUAL MODEL (2) FOR XXXXX HOSPITAL -- CLUSTERING



CONCEPTUAL MODEL (3) FOR XXXXX HOSPITAL -- SEQUENCING



STAGE 5	BACK TO THE REAL WORLD
----------------	-------------------------------

THE PROPOSALS ACHIEVED USING A SYSTEMS THINKING APPROACH NOW NEED TO BE REFLECTED BACK INTO THE REAL WORLD WHERE CLIENTS, OWNERS, CUSTOMERS AND ACTORS RESIDE.

THE PROPOSED ACTIONS NOW : -

1. **NEED TO BE COMPARED WITH THE REAL WORLD POSITION IN THE RICH PICTURE TO CONSIDER, REACTION, CONSTRAINTS, TENSIONS AND RESISTANCE, HENCE THE FUTURE CHALLENGES IN MANAGING PROPOSED CHANGES.**

STAGE 6	FEASIBLE AND DESIRABLE CHANGES
----------------	---------------------------------------

FOR EACH ACTION PROPOSED, IN DISCUSSION AND CONSULTATION

WITH 'OWNERS', 'ACTORS' AND 'CUSTOMERS' THE DESIRABILITY AND

FEASIBILITY SHOULD BE DETERMINED

FOR ACCEPTANCE AND ADOPTION INTO AN ACTIONABLE CHANGE AGENDA.

STAGE 7	REAL WORLD CHANGES
----------------	---------------------------

AN ACTION PLAN WILL BE AGREED FOR PRIORITISED STEPS TO BE TAKEN TO FACE THE KEY CHALLENGES AND TO PROGRESSIVELY RESOLVE PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN SSM STAGE 1 AND VISUALISED IN STAGE 2.

THIS IS THE PLAN FOR CHANGE.

THIS WILL BECOME THE CONFIRMED ROAD MAP FOR THE FUTURE.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE ADOPTED CHANGE PROGRAMME BE PROJECT MANAGED TO ENSURE SUSTAINED SUPPORT, MOTIVATION, PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT.

This is the end of the journey through SSM, although to master this entire methodology will take practise to capture the full value of what can be achieved.

SSM is a very useful methodology and can even become a mindset for introducing and achieving transformational change.

SSM make the best of immense benefit when formulating your DBA Dissertation Proposal for the commencement of Stage 2 of the DBA programme.

STC 7

LEADING SSM INTERVENTION --- THE PROPOSITION FOR A NEW CLIENT (CASE EXAMPLE)

The following document offers an insight into how SSM could be offered to a client organisation following an initial discussion about the need for organisational change for future business sustainability.

The clients name and location has been removed to preserve confidence.

This correspondence preceeded for a formal consultancy proposal.

“From our recent conversation and subsequent discussion with key staff, I understand you require some clarifications on the expected benefits of the SSM processes. Perhaps you would permit me to explain.

The client must have a felt need for SSM inquiry, in your case, I can recall our discussions about : -

- **An under-achieving organisation**
- **Non productive corporate culture**
- **Impending threat of low cost competition entering the market**
- **Growth ambitions yet to be realised**
- **Results are far below expectations**

These were the issues to be addressed.

You can either treat these as facts of commercial life, OR decide to craft a contextually relevant corporate level strategy to improve and resolve, as far as is possible, the situation discussed.

The tendency for most organisations facing such challenges is to treat symptoms, not root causes, and hope that things will improve -- this rarely happens !!

Commercial life will continue and “expedient solutions” are created, for example : -

- Internal re-organisaton
- Periodic celebrations for employees
- Increased advertising expenditure
- Technical training
- CRM Systems
- Customer Loyalty Schemes

Each of these **tactics** will have only a short-term impact, and moreover new ideas have to be created, again, each year !!

SO HOW CAN SSM HELP ?

The first step is to look at the company as a whole and then extract, **with** the management team, the real issues and challenges to be faced collectively for which shared ownership can be achieved.

This stage in SSM is known as the “ **Problem Situation considered problematic .** ”

This is a rare experience and gets the ‘**buy in**’ from all concerned. This is immensely important.

This will probably take 1 day of explanation and to get their confirmation of what we have shared together in our private discussions, but this time it comes from your own management team, not just yourself.

The SSM processes then addresses ‘**WHAT**’ needs to be done using a special methodology known as a ROOT DEFINITION. Essentially, this is a set of changes to the way in which the company is working, but with a clear purpose in mind.

Collectively, the Management Team will produce this ROOT DEFINITION. Once again this builds commitment to the tasks ahead.

This stage will probably take no more than one to two days to determine. The company then has taken the first positive step forward.

Having determined ‘**WHAT**’, a creative leap is needed to move the corporate strategy forward to determine ‘**HOW**’ the needed changes can be introduced.

This process will build a conceptual model for the company's future corporate strategy.

Then the company should be able to achieve a proposed Road Map for the future. This Road Map has then to be signed off by the Board as being actionable, desirable and feasible within market, environmental and resource contexts.

The Management Team then will need a board mandate for change from a total corporate perspective.

Thereafter, an implementation plan is required which uses a project management based system to ensure responsibility, authority, empowerment and action is taken and monitored, controlled and reviewed.

The initial SSM process can be achieved within 3-5 days. Thereafter, it will depend upon the content of the Strategy Road Map to determine the nature of external help that would be required.

My sincere advice, based upon experience, is that the best way to provide the 'follow through' from SSM is to design to design a Management Development programme to develop the organisation to develop the business. We could then, if desired, work alongside your organisation to achieve this process.

The timing of SSM will depend on current priorities, but thought should be given to the budgetary cycle of the company. If strategy moves of substance are anticipated, these should be factored into budget planning.

In summary, therefore the outcomes from SSM, a methodology which as management consultants we used for the past 25 years, would be :-

- 1. A thorough Inquiry into the Current Position your business faces.**
- 2. Clarity for and commitment to what needs to be done from the Management Team who will have the responsibility for change.**
- 3. A Road Map containing the new strategic moves to be taken to address the current position and bring about needed transformation.**
- 4. Board level sign off for the strategy with authorisation for change.**
- 5. Culture change to the way the organisation works and thinks.**
- 6. Management Development for future Business Development.**

This is rather a long explanation, but I hope will answer your enquiry. Our consultancy team will facilitate the entire process and have no hesitation in commending SSM to you.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future. ”

As a consultancy team, you are required to make a presentation to the board of the outcomes from applying Checkland's SSM Methodology.

Your specific agenda for a professional Powerpoint presentation is :-

1. State the name of this project as a system for change.
2. Clarify the challenges currently faced by your client organisation.
3. Justify a contextually relevant transformational change strategy to improve the challenges facing the organisation.
4. Critically assess the potential time based value creation outcomes for key stakeholder groups.

NOTE : Your client organisation is unaware of SSM and would not expect you to present the methodology – **THIS IS YOUR TOOLKIT.**

The client is only concerned with your assessment of their current position, and your proposals for change and the tangible benefit for key stakeholder groups.

INSTRUCTION : THE CASE STUDY IS A SEPARATE FILE.

STC 9

**SELECTED READING FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION
(Separate File)**

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- Checkland, P. (1975), *The Development of Systems Thinking by Systems Practice – A Methodology from an action-research based* . In Trappl, R., and Hanika, F. (eds), *Progress in Cybernetics and Systems Research*, Hemisphere, Washington ,DC, Vol. II, pp 278-283.
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- Checkland, P. (1985a), *Achieving “Desirable” and “Feasible” Change : An Application of Soft Systems Methodology* . J. Operat. Res. Soc. 36, 821-831.
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- Kabacoff, R. (2014), *Develop Strategic Thinkers Throughout Your Organisation*, Harvard Business Review.
- Kartowisastro, H. and Kijima, K. (1994), *An Enriched Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) and Its Application to Cultural-Conflict Under A Paternalistic Value System*. *Syst. Pract.* 73(3), 241-253.
- O'Connor, A. D. (1992), *Soft Systems Methodology -- A Case Study of Its Use Within An Australian Organization*. *Austral. Comput. J.* 24(4), 130-138.
- Tsouvalis, C., and Checkland, P. (1996), *Reflecting on SSM : The Dividing Line Between 'Real-World' and "Systems Thinking World"* , *Syst. Res.* 13(1),35-45.
- Walkins, M. (2007), *How To Think Strategically*, Harvard Business Publishing.
- Walsh, P. (2014), *Are You A Strategic Thinker ?*, Harvard Business Publishing.

- Bowell, T. & Kemp, G. (2014), *Critical Thinking : A Concise Guide*, 4th Edition, Routledge.
- Checkland, P. and Poulter, J. (2006), *Learning For Action : A Short Definitive Account on Soft Systems Methodology and Its Use For Practitioners*, John Wiley & Sons.
- Checkland, P. (2012), *Four Conditions for Serious Systems Thinking and Actions*, Syst. Res., 29:465-469. doi:10.1002/Sres.2158.
- Cottwell, S. (2011), *Critical Thinking Skills, Developing Effective Analysis and Argument*, Palgrave MacMillan.
- HBSP (2010), *Thinking Strategically*, Harvard Business Publishing.
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STC 11

**DBA REFLECTIVE WORKSHOP FOR EMPLOYABILITY
AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS**

At the end of this module, as a group, you are required to reflect upon the learning achieved which may in turn influence employability & leadership skills. Therefore consider the following when making a Reflective Assessment.

- **Insights gained**
- **Value of these Insights**
- **Application Potential**
- **The Challenges of Introducing the Learning Acquired into the Workplace**
- **Where the Most Significant Impact can be created**
- **The Main Benefits to be derived from Adoption of SSM**
- **Your Overall Assessment of the Contribution of Peter Checkland and associate authors**
- **How would you introduce Soft Systems Methodology to your employing organisation in your role as an Internal Consultant**

PREPARE FOR A 'ROUND TABLE' DISCUSSION IN WHICH YOU ALL WILL PARTICIPATE.

- ☐ **INTRODUCTION**
- ☐ **APPROACH**
- ☐ **STYLE**
- ☐ **DBA ASSESSMENT FOR EACH MODULE**
- ☐ **CONFIDENTIALITY**
- ☐ **LENGTH AND FORMAT FOR SUBMISSIONS**
- ☐ **USE OF LITERATURE PROTOCOLS**
- ☐ **PLAGIARISM AND COLLUSION**
- ☐ **GENERAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**
- ☐ **ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES FOR ASSIGNMENTS**

INTRODUCTION

These notes are intended as a set of simple guidelines for course members who are aiming to complete the DBA through a series of progressive stages, each of which has the requirement for type-written original assignments to be submitted for Part 1.

A separate document will be available for Part 2 the completing of the DBA Dissertation.

DBA ASSIGNMENT GUIDANCE -- CONTENTS

- 1. Approach**
- 2. Style**
- 3. The DBA Assessment Portfolio**
- 4. Confidentiality**
- 5. Length and Format for Submission**
- 6. Format for Submission**
- 7. Use of Literature and Online/Offline Sources**
- 8. Plagiarism and Collusion**
- 9. Assessment Criteria**
- 10. Assessment Procedures**

This organisational scenario will then be used to : -

Demonstrate application in context

Provide an opportunity for insight learning

Improve capacity for personal development by re-aligning individual patterns of thinking

Broaden and **deepen** knowledge as well as managerial skills for value creation strategy and leadership

Appreciate the potential for corporate pay-off

Produce a platform for potential DBA research

Each assignment is designed to provide a connection between theory and practice to enable the writer to reflect upon how practice should be modified or even how theory can be developed to support practice.

Remember that the best theories are grounded in best practice and best practice progressively modifies and also creates new theory.

2. **STYLE**

A well-structured style is required throughout. Managerial report format is appropriate, but should not be limited to bullet points alone. The style should : -

Describe briefly the models, concepts and methodologies to be used as deemed appropriate. Basic ideas can be treated as assumed common knowledge.

Use the literature to connect the contributions made from relevant sources to your own thoughts.

Discuss the potential application to your employing organisation, where possible, and where appropriate develop sound arguments.

Produce a justified outcome or set of insights from the applications made for each component of the assessment module.

IT IS

An opportunity for each DBA Course Member at their current stage of managerial progression to make sound connection between the business environment by using frameworks for thinking delivered in each subject module.

In general, a good assignment will : -

Have an Introduction to the company, the industry and the market place

Involve each individual student through the submission of independent views, from the various perspectives taken

Have supportive appendices about the company, industry, market information and data relevant to the question being attempted

Use third party sources to form an evaluation and set of opinions

3. THE DBA ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIO FOR EACH MODULE

Each taught module has 3 components for assessment.

1. The Company Report

This is a consultancy report for a selected organisation directed for board level attention based upon applied core models and methodologies which have been delivered and discussed during the module.

2. The Evidence Review

This part of the assessment portfolio requires a critical review of the literature and other contemporary evidence directly related to the body of theory which has been applied in the company report. It is the supporting evidence which will relate to the themes of value strategy and leadership.

Harvard Academic Referencing Protocols will be expected throughout this evidence review, for which an independent document will be provided to each students as a guide.

3. **Reflection Upon Practice / Application**

This is an employability skills review which is intended to highlight the learning which has been achieved during the learning cycle of each module.

Through this process, progress can be logged and competency needs highlighted on a progressive basis.

These reflection reports will be summarised at the end of **Part Two** so that personal skillset acquisition and residual needs can be captured.

Employability Skills and Leadership Development should be the main focus of this part of the assessment.

4. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All assignments will be treated as confidential as a matter of policy and will not be released to third parties.

Any release must be supported by written approval of the author.

This is a code of conduct strictly adhered to, to enable course members to maximise the benefits of submitting course assignments through an applied learning approach.

5. LENGTH AND FORMAT FOR SUBMISSION

Course assignments are intended to be 6000 words, allocated to these components : -

- 1. The Company Consultancy Report**
- 2. The Evidence Review**
- 3. The Employability Skills Reflection Report**

Part of the assessment process is designed for students to be able to assemble and present their work within a word constraint, even though they may be tempted to continue writing out of pure enthusiasm !

The coversheet as well as words in tables/charts/diagrams and the appendices are NOT included in the word count.

6. **FORMAT FOR SUBMISSION**

Submission is on-line, using the **‘turn it in’** system.

The following format is suggested : -

Document

Page Margins	:	Top 2cm, Bottom 2cm, Left 3cm, Right 2cm
Header/Footer	:	Top 1cm, Bottom 1cm
Wordcount	:	6000 words

Text Blocks

Font	:	Times, Times New Roman, or similar Serif font
Font size	:	12 pt
Line spacing	:	1.5

All other layout aspects, such as headings, are up to the student to implement as desired.

7. USE OF LITERATURE AND ONLINE/OFFLINE SOURCES

Correct protocols for academic referencing must be applied to conform with established international standards. Each student is required to adopt the Harvard System, the explanation for which is available on the student portal as well as in supplementary course notes.

8. PLAGIARISM AND COLLUSION

Students who fail to acknowledge the contribution of third parties and/or sources of information commit plagiarism. This is a very serious offence.

Notes on Plagiarism will appear on each module assignment.

Students who are in any doubt about how to handle certain materials are asked to seek the guidance of the Course Director or his appointed nominee.

9. GENERAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The assessment criteria applied will depend upon the type of assignment being set, but **in general** for written assignments, the following criteria will provide a guide : -

- 1. Research and Analysis**
- 2. Academic Sources Applied**
- 3. Linking Theory to Practice**
- 4. The Quality of Written Conventions**
 - Introduction
 - Concise content
 - Effective Coverage of the subject
 - A Structured sequential flow
 - Clear Outcomes & Conclusions
- 5. Protocols for academic referencing**
- 6. Supporting Appendices**

7. The word count to be within limits prescribed

8. Copies of assignments and marks are kept at each campus office and are aggregated for each examination board.

9. The process of achieving DBA PART ONE will pass through a process of assessment by : -

The Module Tutor and Module Markers

The Director of the DBA

London School of Commerce

The final Examination Board

The External Examiner

10. Each DBA taught module will be assessed using a series of assessment criteria within a template referred to as “ The Assessment Matrix ”. (See SRM 3)

10. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

The process of assessment is as follows : -

1. Assignments are to be submitted by the set deadline, late submissions will not be allowed, no request for extension will be entertained. Assignments handed in late will not be accepted.
2. Assignments are marked and the assessment grade is returned to the course member in after an examination board has confirmed the marks awarded.
3. The Course Director will monitor tutor grading of assessed work.
4. Any marks released before an examination board will be treated as provisional because they must be subjected to moderation at the London School of Commerce and also by the Final University Examination Board.