

SYSTEM THINKING PRINCIPLES¹

Assistant Professor Dr Tadeja Jere Lazanski
University of Primorska, Slovenia

1. The »Big picture«
2. Long term, Short Term
3. Dynamic, Complex and interdependent
4. Measurable and no measurable Data
5. We are Part of a System

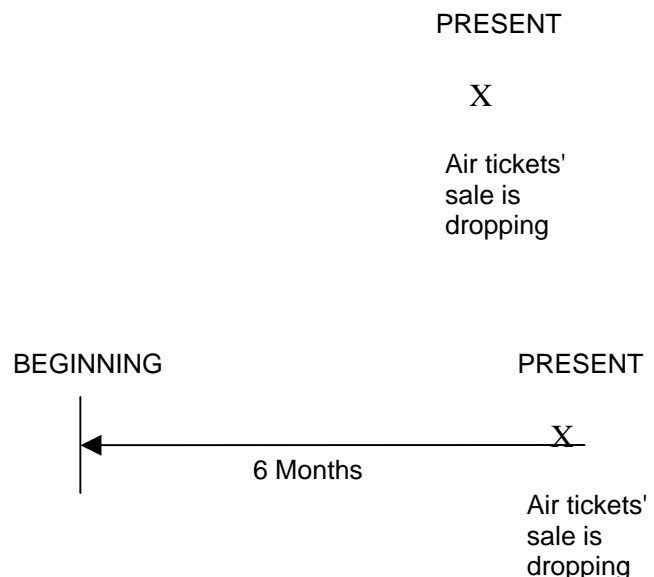
System thinking emphasizes looking at wholes rather than parts, and stresses the role of interconnections. It is a circular and focuses on closed interdependencies, where x influences y, y influences z, z influences x. It has precise set of rules that reduce the ambiguities and miscommunications that can crop up when we talk with others about complex issues. It offers causal loop diagrams, which are rich in implications and insights. It opens a window on our mental models, translating our individual perceptions into explicit pictures that can reveal subtle yet meaningful differences in viewpoints.

System thinking offers a whole different way to communicate about the way we see the world, and to work together more productively on understanding and solving complex problems.

ACTIVITY 1: STRETCHING THE TIMELINE

Purpose: To think a "big picture" terms, to consider both short-term and long term perspectives on a problem, to practice seeing patterns and trends in a problem, to identify the roots if a current problem

Outcome: A timeline showing a history of a current problem, insights about recurring patterns in an organisation.



¹ Anderson, V., Johnson L. (1997) *Systems Thinking Basics: From Concepts to Causal Loops*. Pegasus communication. Williston. ISBN 1-883824-12-9

