



Ensemble
Academy

COHORT-BASED LEARNING

The Systems Thinker Course

Think and act together to achieve your goal.

—
Let's
Redefine
What's
Possible
—

"If you change the way
you look at things,



the things you look at change."

—

Wayne Dyer

Why Systems Thinking?

Organisations are complex and naturally interdependent. What any one person believes will improve the organisation is usually limited to their domain expertise.

Individuals typically can't see the impact of their actions on the parts of the system separated from them in both time and place.

Sometimes you need space to gain perspective and appreciate the value and primacy of the systems view. To know how your intervention will leverage possibility and turn mere ideas into additional value and wealth.

How to see more clearly?



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1.0 The Business Challenge



The managerial leadership challenge

Every business leader faces the same twin pressures:

**SAFEGUARD TODAY'S RESULTS WHILE
BUILDING TOMORROW'S GRAND VISION**

These two demands needn't conflict, but they usually do. Managers spend too much time working at the wrong level. It's clear from the metaphors we use: 'I'm spending all my time putting out fires,' or 'I keep getting pulled into the weeds.'

When you're overly focused on delivering what you promised today, you can't design the future state your organisation needs. Ill-defined or misaligned business goals lead to disconnected teams working in silos, and everyone running hard just to stand still.

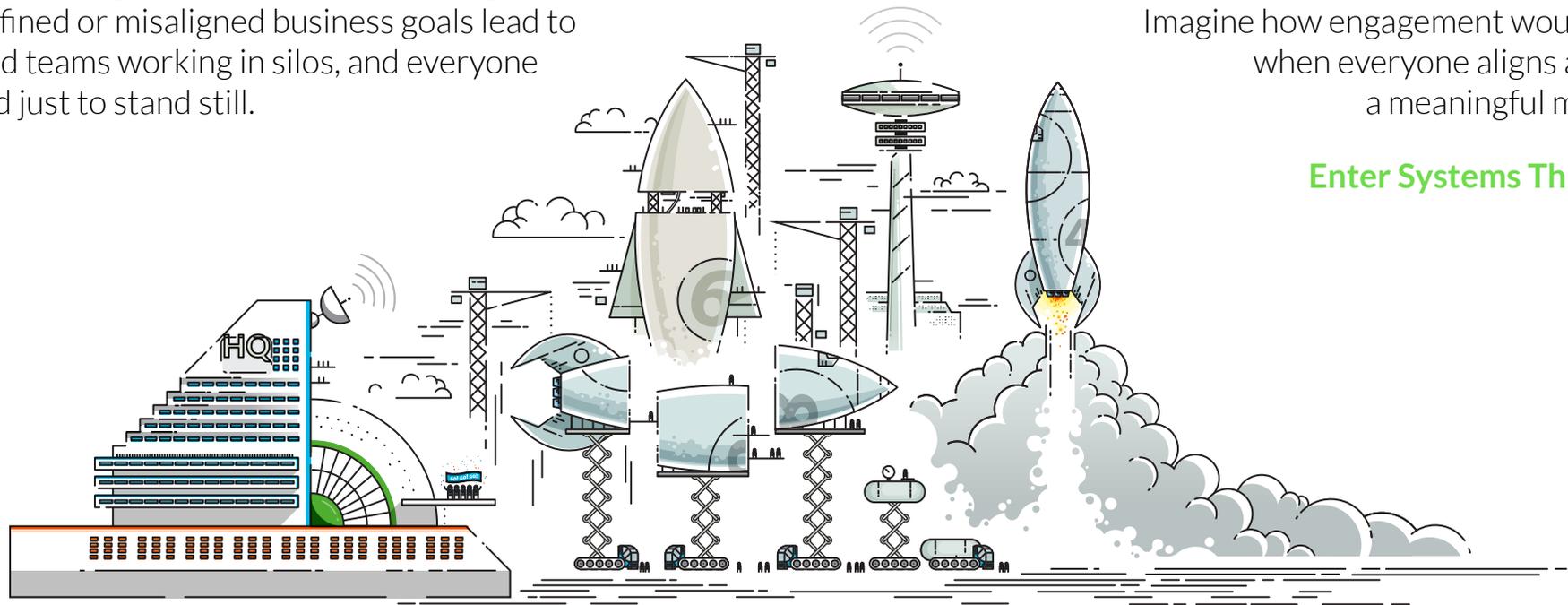
“Why do I spend so much time putting out fires?”

The reality is that today's operating philosophy isn't fit for purpose. To deliver sustainable results in a sharply changing world, managers need a new way to look at the problem – and better ways to manage the solution.

Instead of solving local problems for narrow KPIs, wouldn't it be better to collectively solve the critical business challenges? Imagine if every manager knew where to find leverage. Imagine what you would save in wasted time chasing suboptimal solutions.

Imagine how engagement would soar when everyone aligns around a meaningful mission.

Enter Systems Thinking.



The Ensemble Way

The Ensemble Way is a proven method for achieving outsized business outcomes through systems thinking. Success requires three things: a new way to see, a better way to organise, and a sustainable way to keep learning. Our approach combines all three.

Operations: At its core, our operating philosophy uses the Theory of Constraints. When you know the whole and focus on the constraint, you can achieve a step-change in performance. But it requires a shift in mindset. That change in mindset is one of the key benefits of the course.

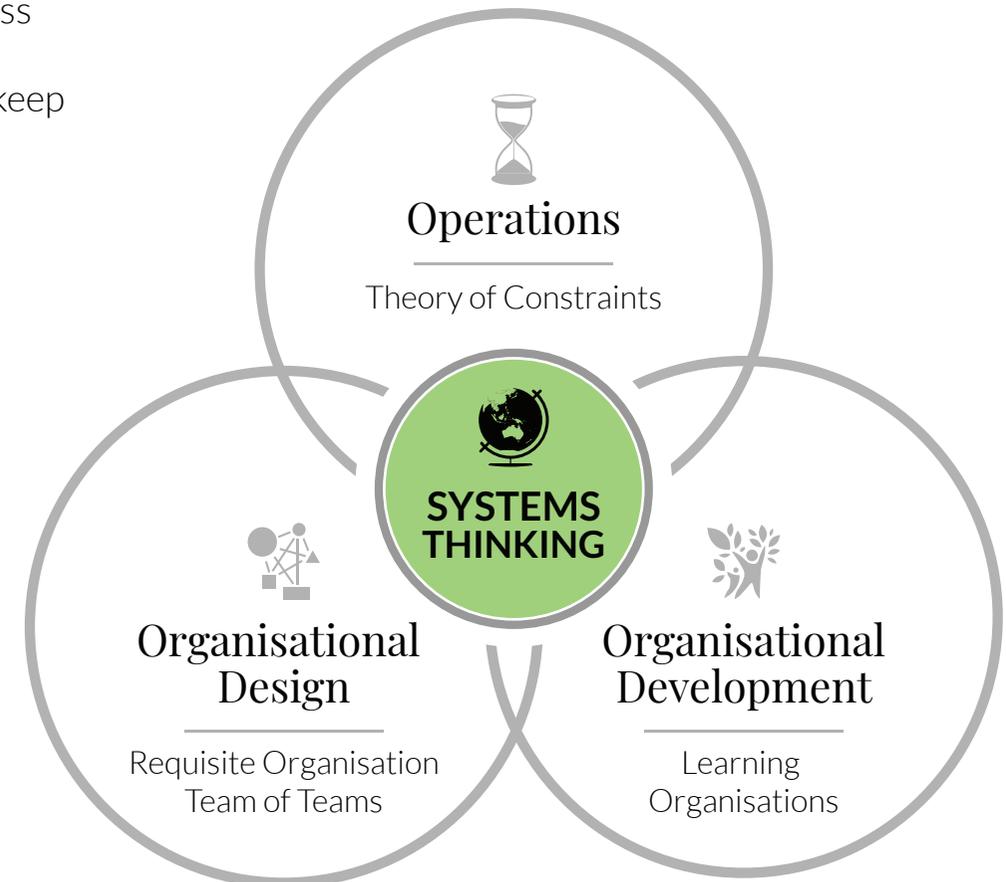
Organisational Development:

We draw on the work of the MIT Organisational Learning Centre, including Peter Senge's Fifth Discipline approach, Edgar Schein on Leadership and Culture and Otto Scharmer's Theory U.

Organisational Design:

Our approach is informed by Elliott Jaques's Stratified Systems Theory. More recently, we've incorporated ideas contained in General Stanley McChrystal's Team of Teams.

The fastest route to sustainable high performance is through adopting better ways to do better work. The Systems Thinker Course teaches your team how.

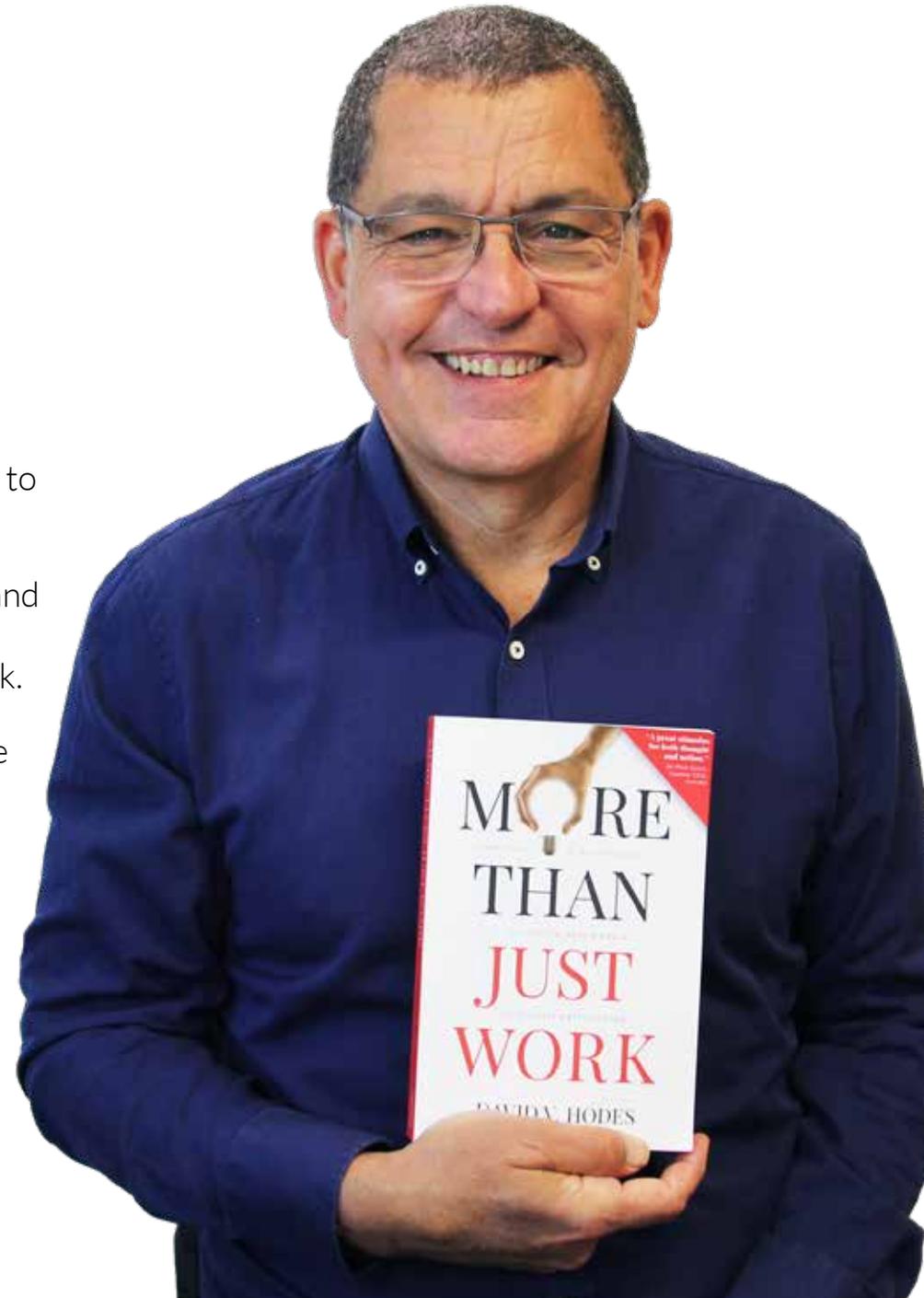


David Hodes

David founded Ensemble Consulting Group in 2000 to bring his experiences with systems thinking to Australia. Under his leadership, Ensemble has helped Tier-1 Australian companies in mining, banking, retail, construction, manufacturing, and aviation to plan and execute billions of dollars' worth of projects.

He developed the Systems Thinker Course to share his method and further serve his mission of enabling organisations to realise remarkable business value through better ways to do better work.

A master Systems Thinker and practitioner, certified expert in the Theory of Constraints, and author of More Than Just Work, David will personally lead your Systems Thinking course.



2.0 The Systems Thinker Course



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What is the Systems Thinker Course?

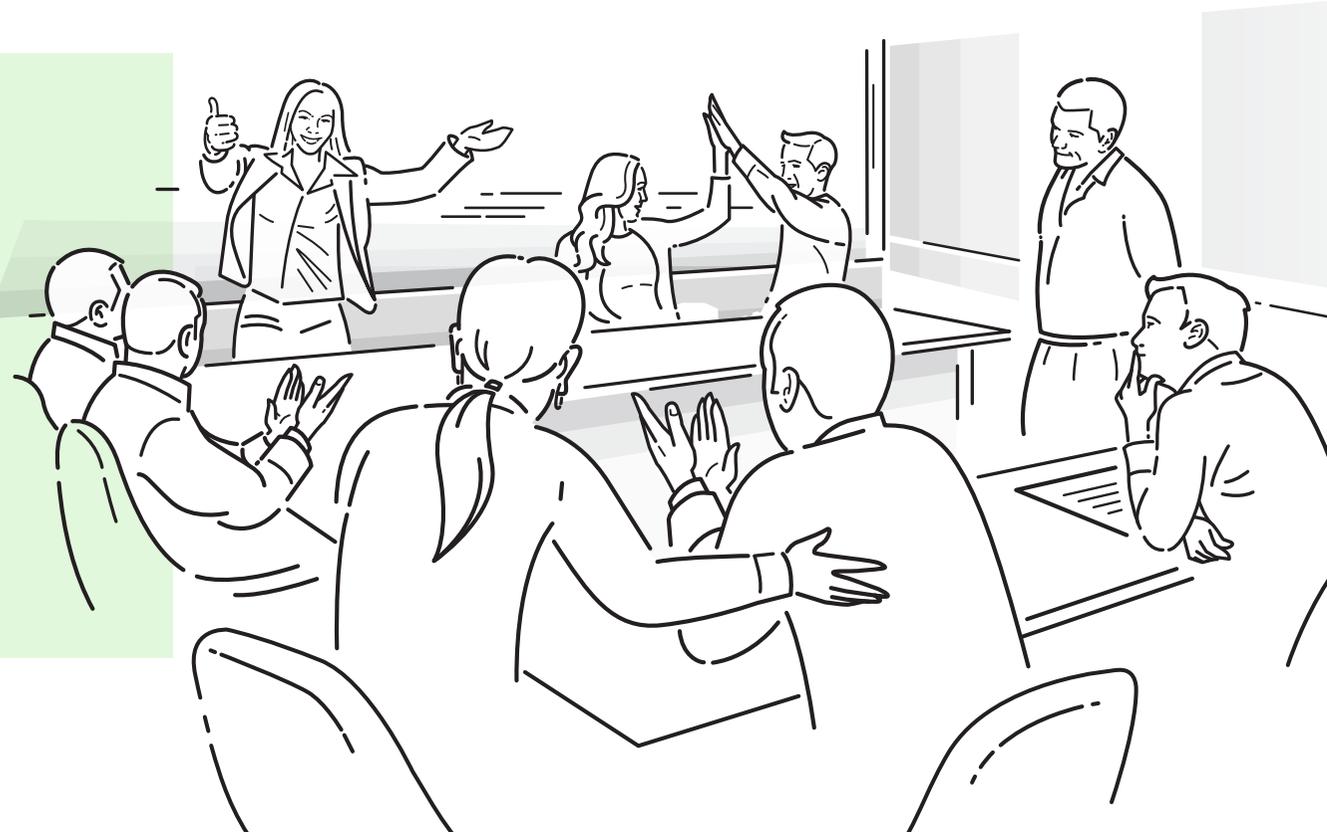
To achieve their highest potential and fulfil the organisation's mission, teams need a gateway to acquiring practical wisdom. The Systems Thinker Course opens the door to a roomful of riches.

In contrast to much corporate training, the course is grounded in your current reality. It helps your team focus on doing the right things—and doing them right.

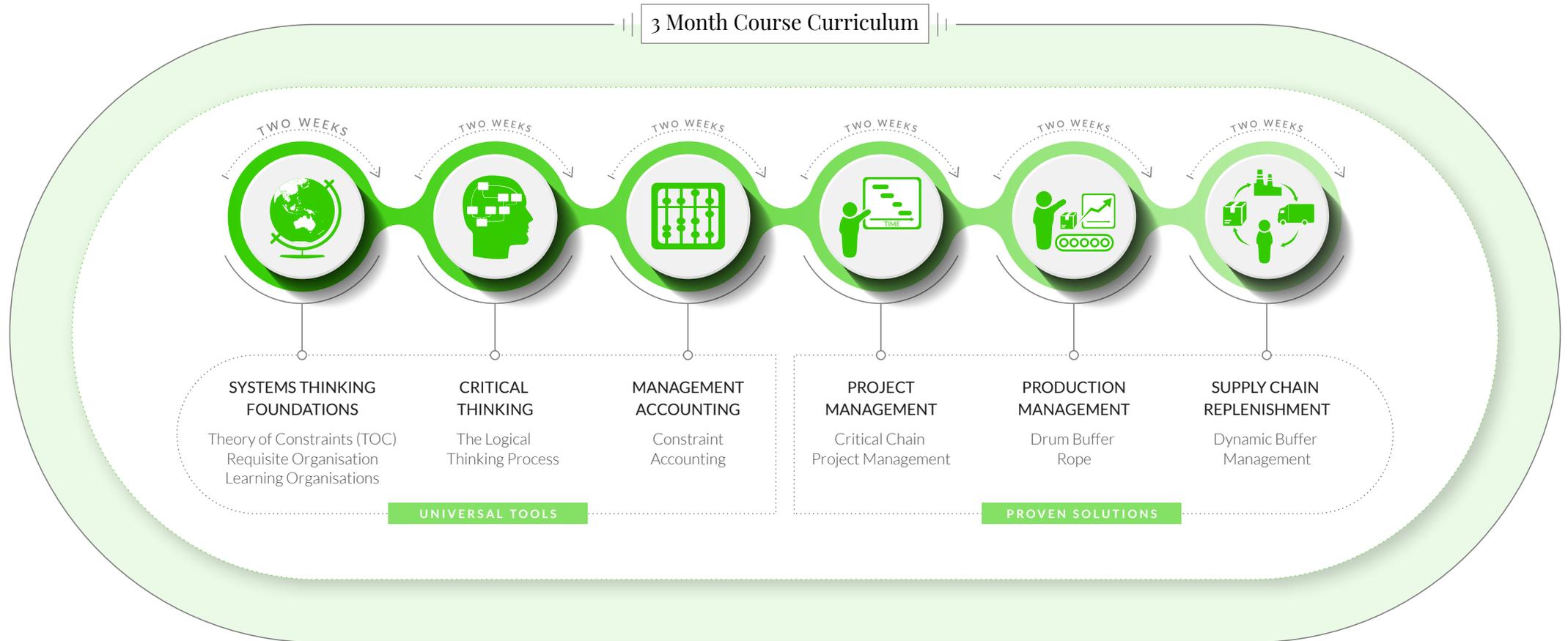
Your selected managerial team will work directly on real business scenarios that they define together. This deepens and contextualizes learning, while providing immediate business value.

THE POWER OF A COHORT

Your organisation gains leverage when people share the same powerful ideas. The course brings together cross-functional teams for greater insight, deeper learning, and more meaningful connections. These cohorts last long beyond the course and act as the nucleus for sustainable positive change.



Course Overview



Your chosen cohort of managers must find a common time for a workshop day, once a fortnight.

This real-time interaction allows them to absorb new ideas together, share learning from field learning, and generate new experiments that apply to their context.

If managers complain they can't find the time for this, it's a clear indication that they are working at the wrong level and need the course more than they think.



"Tell me and I forget.
Teach me and I remember.
Involve me and I learn."

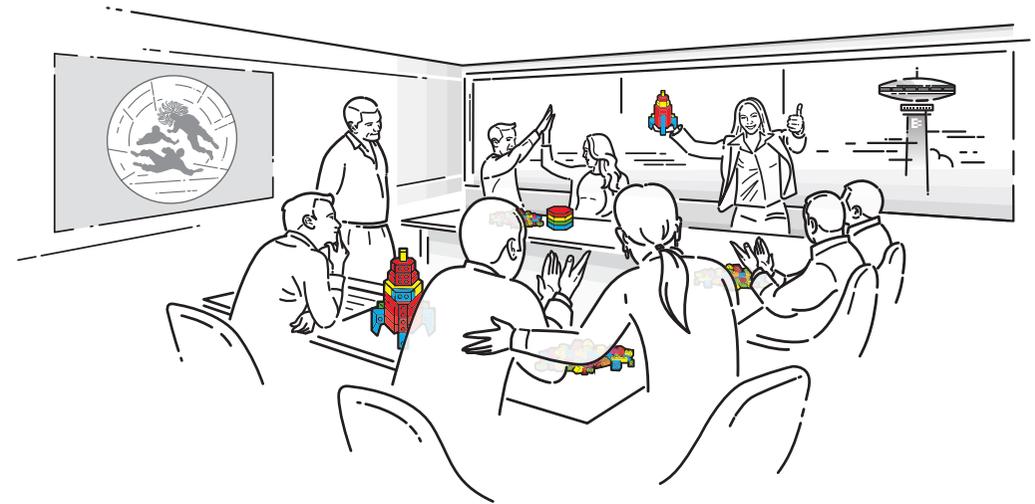
—
Benjamin Franklin

Experiential learning

Systems Thinking means looking at your organisation and the environment in which it operates in a whole new way. We liken it to the Zero-G simulator. You need to experience the feeling of weightlessness—not just read or talk about it.



Participating in the course catalyses the innovations needed for the mission to succeed.



The cohort approach mitigates the anxiety associated with learning new ways of being and doing. Teams also spread the ideas across functional boundaries, expanding the group's sense of what's constraining high performance. Together they co-create new possibilities, help each other grow and share a sense of mission. Aligned around a common goal, the team is empowered to redefine what's possible.

Imagining richer possibilities with peers and colleagues leads to better ways to do better work.

The Foundation Workshop

Anything built for the long haul needs a solid foundation. Hence, the first activity of the Systems Thinker Course is to hold a Foundation Workshop. Its purpose is to bring the learning cohort together to clarify its origin, purpose, principles, processes, core players, and intended results.

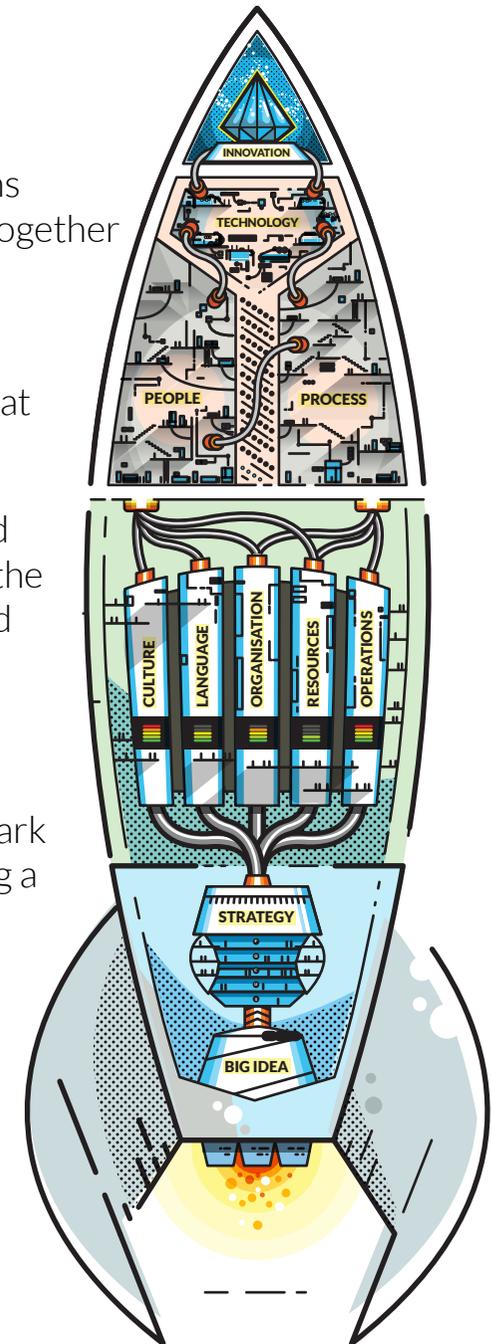
In some instances, it may be the case that the sponsor, from the get-go, has a clear idea of the Capstone Project, around which much of the learning will revolve. In other cases, it could be that the Capstone is left to emerge from the explorations and deliberations of the learning cohort.

Either way, the Foundation workshop aims to inspire learning new ways of thinking, feeling and acting in operations management, organisational development and organisational design. It is the starting point to which we bring a fresh lens and new capabilities for problem identification and solution.

Inspiring confidence, creativity and critical thinking

We will use the Foundation Workshop to inspire confidence, creativity and critical thinking, spark self-reflection and the desire for growth and learning. We will explore what leads to developing a high-performance culture and start the work of building an energised and enthusiastic team.

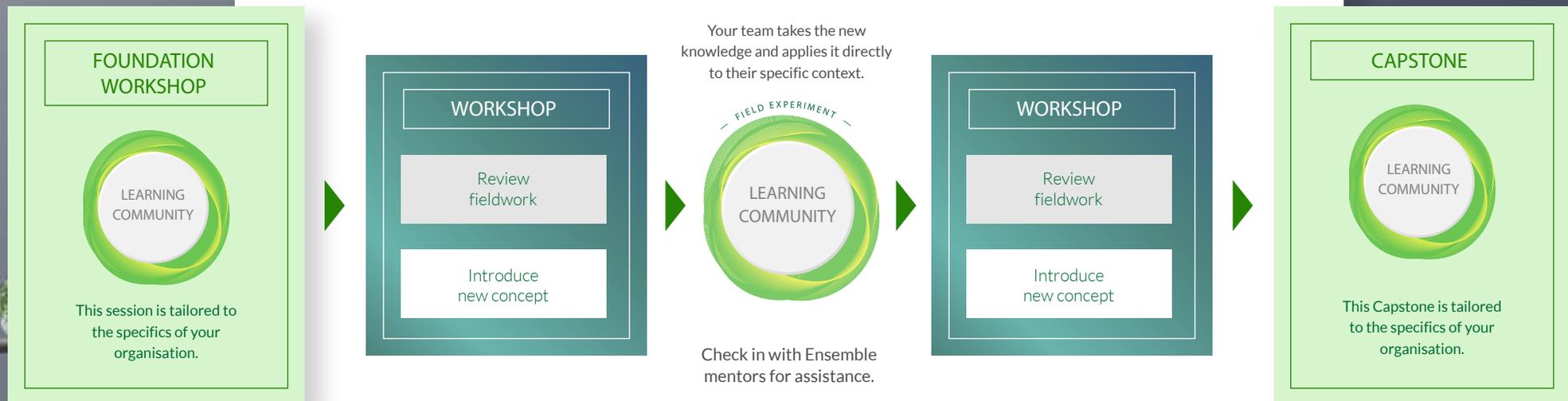
Using our spaceship metaphor, the Foundation Workshop will launch your Big Idea with a strategy to get lift-off. On the journey, we'll learn about the impact of culture, language, organisation, resources and operations as they relate to your organisation and its goal. On the way, we'll harness the combined power of people, process and technology to turn your Big Idea into valuable innovation.



Course Method



SIX CONNECTED MODULES, EACH TWO WEEKS APART



So, what is a Learning Community?

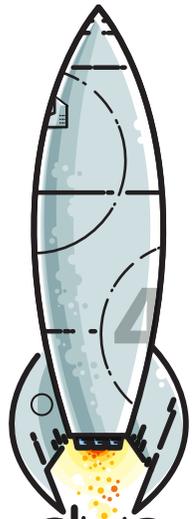
This is a cohort-based course in which participants become part of a learning community, tackling new ideas together and developing enduring relationships under the guidance of skilled Ensemble mentors.

Sessions are designed to work online but may happen in a physical space, if conditions permit.

A carefully curated reading and viewing list challenges preconceptions, tilling the fields of fertile minds such that when they engage in the workshops, they can seed their ideas within the cohort.

Capstone Project

By the end of the course's six modules, your team has gained a solid understanding of systems thinking, the Ensemble Way, and the practical wisdom it enables. Moreover, because we tailor all the concepts to the specifics of your context, you will have amplified the possibility of securing a high-performance dividend by doing better work in better ways.



The field experiments between each module provided a practice field for the team to test their understanding of this new knowledge. Moreover, they will already have applied some of the ideas within the business and enjoyed firsthand experience of their effectiveness.

So what's next?

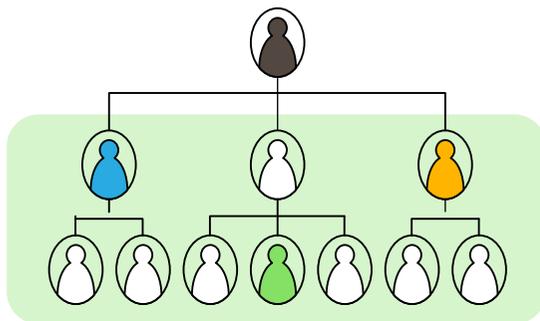
A launchpad to the future

Your team is now equipped with the 'universal tools' and 'proven solutions'. They have deep trust in each other and share a more effective way of looking at the world and their capacity to make a meaningful contribution to it. They have learned, practised and grown together, and are ready to apply their newfound practical wisdom to create additional value and wealth.

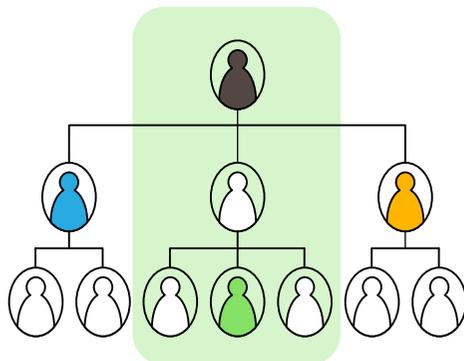
It's time to focus these new skills, insights and relationships on a significant project and ensure that the learning becomes a launchpad for continued success. If we have not already selected it, we will investigate plausible and relevant candidate initiatives for high-leverage intervention during the course. Setting this Capstone Project in motion marks the end of the formal course. At this point, we can consider further collaboration and the form that might take.

Choosing the players

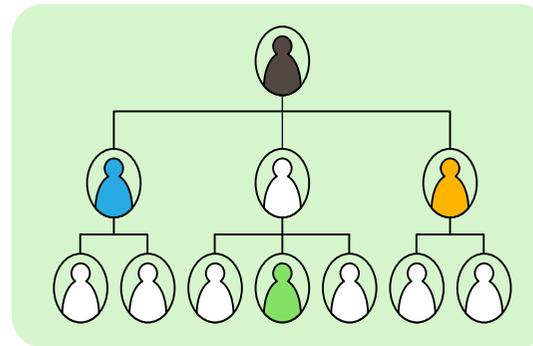
The Systems Thinker Course is for groups within an organisation who recognise the need to find better ways to do better work.



HORIZONTAL SLICE



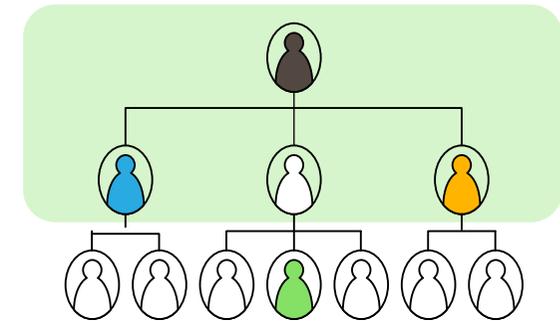
VERTICAL SLICE



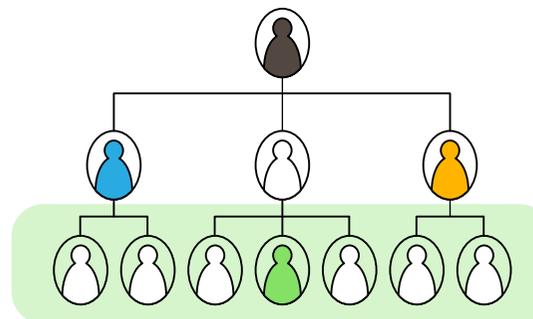
WHOLE TEAM

Which group will benefit most from a new set of thinking and operational tools?

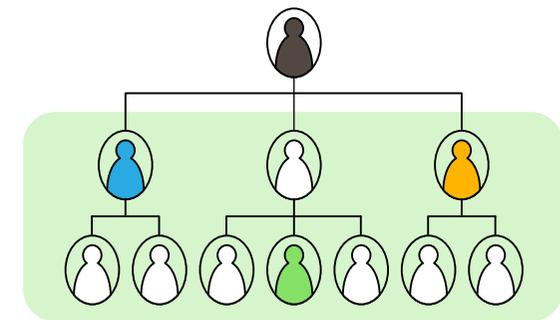
We'll help you choose the right cohort.



LEADERSHIP TEAM



MANAGERS



DIRECT REPORTS

“Teamwork is the fuel that allows common people
to attain uncommon results.”

—

Andrew Carnegie



3.0 Course Curriculum





Module 1

Systems Thinking Foundations

Systems Thinking is a way of looking at an organisation premised on the fact that the whole is always more than the sum of its parts.

By integrating operations, organisational learning and organisational design, teams can understand the whole and focus on the constraint.

Since constraints govern the rate at which organisations deliver value, focusing on them leverages the time and money spent on improvement initiatives.



Theory of Constraints (TOC)
Learning Organisations
Requisite Organisation

THROUGH SYSTEMS THINKING, YOUR TEAM WILL LEARN TO:

1. Gain a deeper understanding of managing complexity, and act on the insights.
2. Continuously improve operations by applying the Theory of Constraints.
3. Overcome the anxiety associated with change.
4. Operate at the appropriate level to avoid getting lost in the weeds.

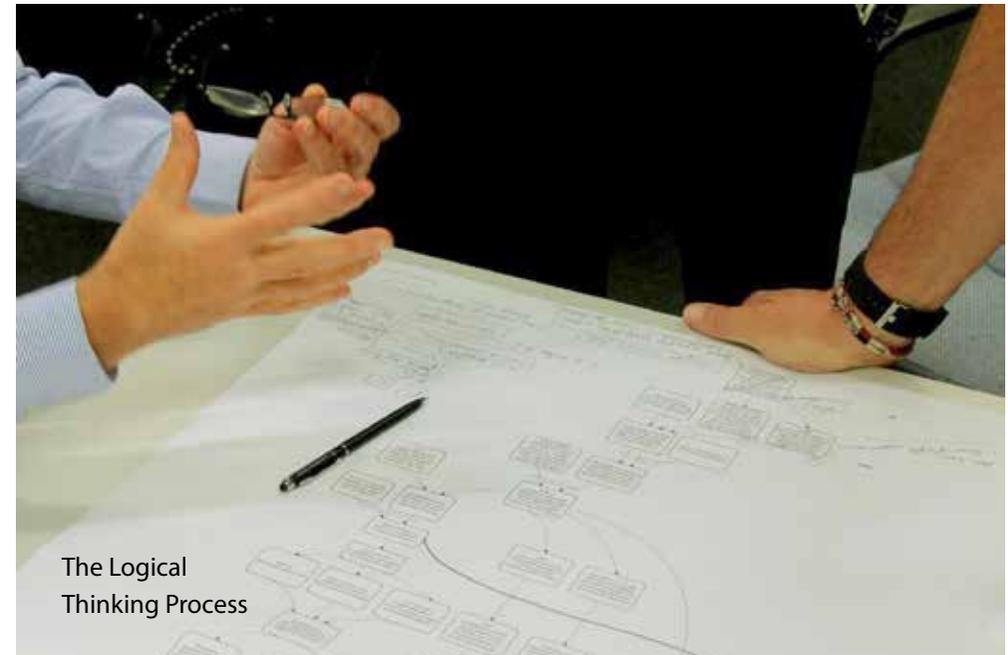


Module 2

Critical Thinking

The Logical Thinking Process, embedded in the Theory of Constraints, is a powerful part of the Systems Thinker toolkit.

The 'logic trees' - help teams align around what to change, what to change to, and how to change. By learning how to use structured reasoning you will individually and collectively be able to understand root causes of undesirable effects, challenge underlying assumptions and exploit the potential to leverage future gains and mitigate future pain.



The Logical Thinking Process

USING THE LOGICAL THINKING PROCESS, YOUR TEAM WILL LEARN HOW TO:

1. Construct a set of tightly reasoned hypotheses.
2. Engage others in rigorously testing the assumptions.
3. Use the 'logic trees' as a tool for cogent communications.
4. Build alignment for change initiatives.



Module 3

Management Accounting

Constraint Accounting is a management accounting framework essential for the optimisation of financial performance.

The standard cost-accounting model focuses on summing the value of activity and weights decisions heavily on costs.

Constraint accounting focuses on increasing flow at the constraint to maximise Throughput (contribution).



Constraint Accounting

USING CONSTRAINT ACCOUNTING,
YOUR TEAM WILL LEARN HOW TO:

1. Focus on activities that improve group profitability.
2. Evaluate which business areas are key profit centres.
3. Compare the profitability of different product and service offerings.
4. Make better investment decisions.



Module 4

Project Management

Critical Chain Project Management (CCPM) is an innovative way of addressing uncertainty in an environment in which resources are scarce.

Given the same resources, CCPM is a proven competitive method for the delivery of more projects on time, in less time, every time.

In the seemingly overwhelming complexity of planning and executing whole portfolios of work, CCPM provides an inherently simple way of bringing orderly performance to otherwise unbridled chaos.



USING THE CCPM METHOD, YOUR TEAM WILL LEARN HOW TO:

1. Use constraints-based criteria for portfolio selection and prioritisation.
2. Account for finite resources, logical dependencies and uncertainty in project planning.
3. Execute projects with data-driven tactical agility.
4. Institute rhythms and routines that support high-performance outcomes.



Module 5

Production Management

The Drum-Buffer-Rope method (DBR) is a production-planning and control system used in a wide variety of make-to-order and make-to-stock environments.

DBR maximises agility and reliability off the lowest inventory levels possible. In reducing lead times by as much as 50 percent, while simultaneously materially improving due-date performance, you are provided with a unique source of enduring competitive advantage.



USING DBR, YOUR TEAM WILL LEARN HOW TO:

1. Focus on the constraint to maximise Throughput for the system as a whole.
2. Improve lead-time performance.
3. More accurately estimate and keep due-date promises.
4. Minimise inventory 'trapped' in the system.

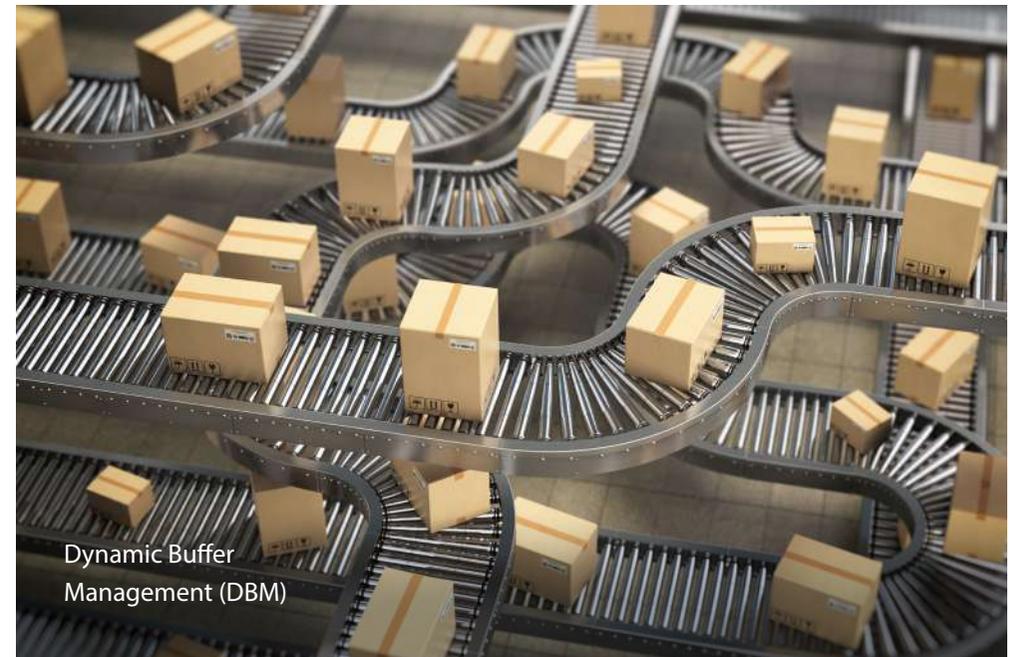


Module 6

Supply Chain Replenishment

Dynamic Buffer Management (DBM) is a supply chain method that optimises logistics for production, distribution and consumption centres.

DBM assures the requisite service level for the minimum amount of cash investment in inventory. It dramatically reduces losses through stock-outs, mark-downs or write offs. Your customers come to appreciate how they can profit from not having to carry the costs of just-in-case inventory.



Dynamic Buffer Management (DBM)

USING DBM, YOUR TEAM WILL LEARN HOW TO:

1. Focus on lead-time rather than forecasting to manage variation in demand.
2. Make decisions based on 'order lead-time', 'manufacture lead-time' and 'transport lead-time' metrics.
3. Harmonise the work of production, distribution and consumption.
4. Optimise lead-time by aggregating variability as far up the supply chain as possible.

Give your people 'The Right Stuff' to succeed with
THE SYSTEMS THINKER COURSE

"It is not enough
to do your best;
you must know what to do,
and then do your best."

—
W Edwards Deming



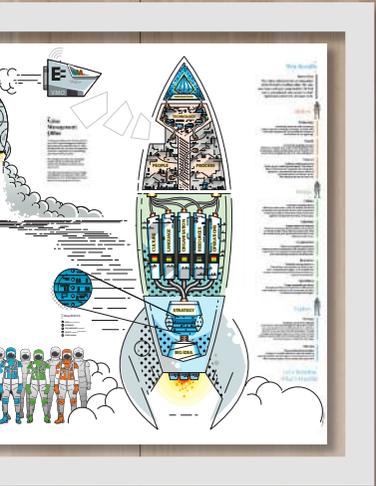
THE
RIGHT
STUFF

4.0 About Ensemble



Ensemble
Academy

Some of our Customers



BHP



coles

onesteel



**Prysmian
Group**

HATCH

BOMBARDIER



Breville

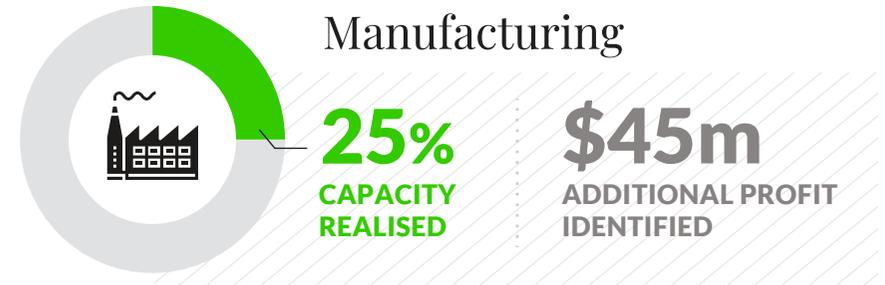
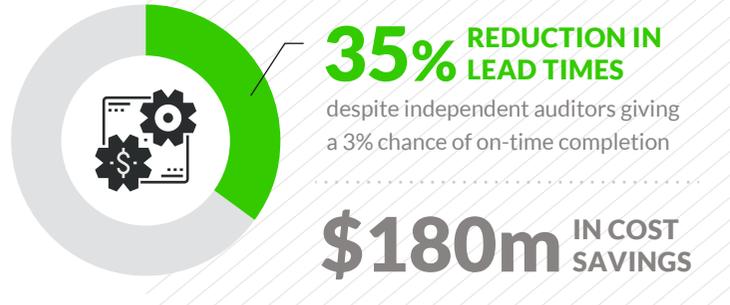


Ensemble
Consulting
Group

—
Let's
Redefine
What's
Possible
—

Our results

Business Management Systems



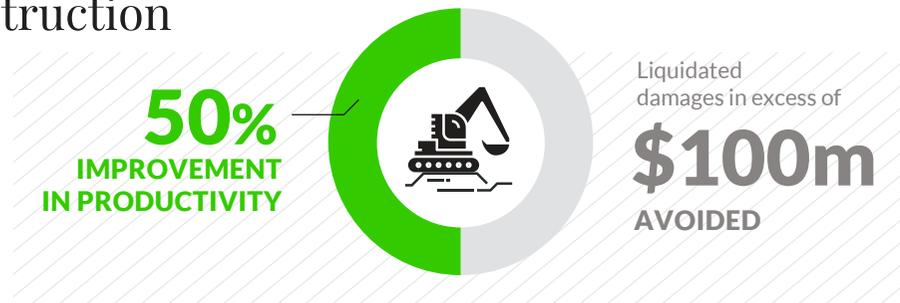
New Product Development



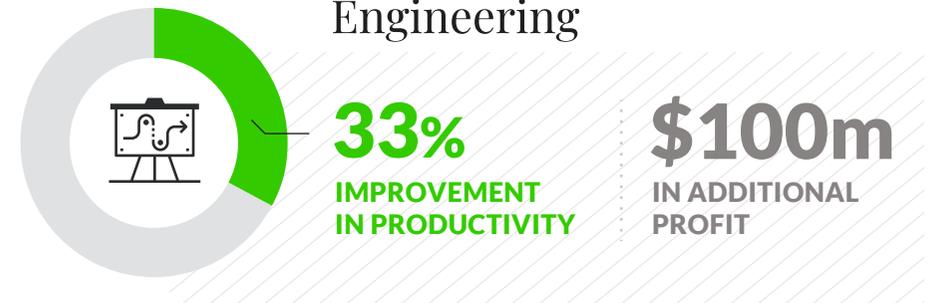
Banking



Construction



Engineering



Our difference

We help organisations create more value for more people—in less time, every time.

Focussed

Our singular focus on 'innovations in productivity' has far-reaching effects. Our management systems can bring you more value than product innovation. Yet when you develop new products, better ways of working will bring those to market faster, too.

Tailored

As a specialist consultancy, we are nimble and dedicated to personal relationships. More Savile Row than off-the-peg, our approach isn't for everyone. But those leaders who engage with us enjoy both the process and its remarkable fruits.

Tested

Our uniquely experienced team knows what it takes to deliver real value in productivity, performance and profit. We've been doing this for blue-chip companies in Australia for over 20 years, with a proven track record in delivering outcomes faster, with greater reliability and agility at lower cost.

Empowering

By helping to build a 'learning organisation', we transfer our capabilities, giving you even greater results that are sustainable well beyond our initial engagement. From initial project engagement to our own Academy, we really do want to seed new ways of seeing the world of work.

True

Simplifying complexity is what makes us tick. We combine an engineer's curiosity with a business owner's obsession with results. We value the courage and particular quality of mind that enables a person to overcome the fear of difficulty or danger and remain true to their convictions.



—
We shall not cease from exploration,
and the end of all our exploring will
be to arrive where we started and
know the place for the first time.

—
T. S. Eliot



Ensemble
Academy

“

Even if I was allowed to mention dollar value numbers,
this is still the first thing I would always write:

**These outcomes are so valuable they literally print
their own money.”**

VP Projects BHP



Are you an ambitious
executive looking to
apply the Theory of
Constraints and other
innovations in
productivity to your
organisation?
Get in touch

—
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—
Let's
Redefine
What's
Possible
—