



Governing Whole Systems: The New Work of Leadership

Strategic Foresight 2.0 Training Workshop

We in modern/Industrial societies deal with pieces better than wholes. We tend to see, understand and act in siloed and piecemeal ways. And, it is slowly dawning on us that in the 21st Century business as usual will no longer lead us to sustainable and deeply satisfying success.

What to do?

Learn the art of whole systems governance!

Easier said than done. But it is possible.

Foresight Canada has developed, tested and put to use several tools for the mind that make it easier to see, think, organize and act in ways that create systemic coherence, not fragmented chaos. This two day workshop will introduce you to these tools. You will get enough practice in their use to take them home with you as part of your own tool-kit.

First, we will explore the fact that until the mid 20th Century, we governed our organizations at only one level of conscious thought and work – the operational. Senior people were known as "Senior Administrators" and acted as such. The work we now know as "management" – goal-setting, strategy and policy development – did not exist then as a part of the cognitive work of leaders. Now, of course, everyone assumes that, in order to be successful, all organizations must be consciously governed at two levels – those of Management and Operations.

Second, we will explore the insight that more and better management will not save us; that something that lies beyond management is required; that the "something is imagination. This insight leads to the view that the major issues of the 21st Century demand three-level (or "whole systems") governance – Operations, Management and Imagination.

Third, we shall explore the work of the Imagination. How is it different from that of Management and from that of Operations? What is it to see with the eyes and mind of a whole systems governor, as opposed to those of a manager or operator? Why does it matter? Further, we will note that the vast literature about leadership and most leadership programs are almost wholly devoid of serious consideration of this new cognitive work of leadership.

Fourth, we shall work with the three levels by applying them to a wide range of issues, failures and situations in hands and minds on exercises.

Inquiries to:

Ruben Nelson
888-673-3537

foresightcanada@shaw.ca

Who should attend?

Persons who carry a Board of Directors or senior management responsibility; forecasting and foresight practitioners, persons who sense that many of today's complex and swampy problems (wicked issues) require something more than better management and strategic planning; persons who are struggling to connect futures research to vision-articulation, direction-setting, corporate strategy, policy formulation and operational plans.

Facilitated by

Ruben Nelson, Executive Director, Foresight Canada. Ruben is Canada's most widely-experienced foresight practitioner. He is a pioneer and teacher of the next generation of strategic foresight. He has advised persons at all levels from Prime Ministers and CEOs to administrative assistants and new hires.

We believe the 9/11 attacks revealed four kinds of failures: in imagination, policy, capabilities, and management.

Imagination is not a gift usually associated with bureaucracies. It is therefore crucial to find a way of routinizing, even bureaucratizing, the exercise of imagination.

Ways of doing business rooted in a different era are just not good enough. Americans should not settle for incremental, ad hoc adjustments to a system designed generations ago for a world that no longer exists.

9/11 Commission