

# Sarah Cornally

*Evolving Leaders • Transforming Organisations*

## What do we mean by systems?

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A system is a collection of elements that are interdependent on each other to serve a purpose – that's a very simple definition.

There are various terms used in this field, which have different meanings, such as *systems thinking*, *system dynamics*, and *systemic intelligence*.

The term *systems thinking* has come from the engineering sciences. It's scientific based, and is about looking at the interaction of dynamics in systems and mapping that. This mapping is very accessible to systems engineers, they can range from very simple to highly complex, but are not particularly applicable for everyday situations especially where there are a lot of indirect cause and effect relationships.



*Systems dynamics* is really an exploration of what occurs in systems, the relationship between elements and systems. Its origins are in the family systems therapy field, and looks at human systems and humans' interactions with systems.

*Systems thinking* and *systems mapping* are scientific, mind-based approaches. But *systems dynamics* and *systemic intelligence* are applied experiences, where we draw on all of our senses, not just our mind. You can almost think of the

two areas marrying together and being complementary to each other. The big value of *systemic intelligence* and *systems dynamics* is they are used in an applied experience. It can be done intellectually, but the felt sense of how the system is operating is usually much more profound. When we feel something and we have a lived experience of it, we know it differently than if we know it with our mind.

The purpose of systemic work is to understand the system in a way that leads to change, or to movement or action.

So, while a *system* is simply a composition of elements, *system dynamics* looks at the interaction within and between systems and the corresponding dynamics. This enables us to influence the system through the *intelligence* that we gain through our sense perception that we otherwise can't detect. If we go just with the mind, we can't detect the invisible aspects. If we go with our body, we can detect the invisible aspects. Those are the differential distinctions that give us new information, new awareness and new insight.



**Sarah Cornally** was sought out by C-suite executives to provide consulting services in the area of leadership, culture change and issue resolution as a result of her reputation in resolving complex and challenging issues in the field of Occupational Rehabilitation and Occupational Health & Safety.

For over 30 years she has consulted to and advised leaders in many of the top 100 companies, federal and state organisations in Australia including AMP, Allens, APRA, AstraZeneca, CBA, the Dept of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Coca Cola Amatil, King & Wood Mallesons, KPMG, Macquarie Bank, Microsoft, NSW Department of Human Services, PWC, NAB, Woolworths and multinationals in the Asia Pacific region.

She is best known for her work with executive teams, senior leaders and boards creating the adaptive leadership environment that enables organisations to perform and the people to thrive.

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