

The Fifth Discipline

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Senge, P.M. 2006. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, 2nd ed. New York, NY, USA: Doubleday Currency.

Usage

This source is considered a primary reference for the following article:

- Systems Engineering Organizational Strategy
- What is Systems Thinking?
- Overview of the Systems Approach

Annotation

Peter Senge is a respected authority on systems theory especially with respect to organizational systems. In this book Senge describes how systems thinking is translated into the systems approach.

Senge identifies "the fifth discipline" of the learning organization (hence the name of the book) as systems thinking, which Senge sees as the core learning capability for "understanding complexity". The other four disciplines are to do with **aspiration** - "personal mastery" and "shared vision" - and "reflective conversation" - "mental models" and "dialogue". Teams and organizations work much more effectively and efficiently when all activities are "aligned to purpose". The five disciplines are used together to develop a shared vision the organization's purpose, and to understand how different functions and people contribute to the organization's goals, and can further their own goals in doing so. The book contains a useful listing of systems thinking archetypes and explains how these can be used to diagnose, explain and resolve

organizational blockers to improvement. The first edition was published in 1990 and was considered groundbreaking at the time. The second edition, published in 2006, includes additional material on experience of these methods in use.

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