

FLOW SYSTEM

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

Complexity Thinking

Workbook 1: Weak Signal Detection



getflowtrained.com/playbook/wsd/

Weak Signal Detection Workbook 1

First, a summary

Weick (2009) presented four basic conditions for successful sensemaking in which people are required to



1. stay in motion,
2. have a direction,
3. look closely and update often, and
4. converse candidly.

The third basic condition of “Look closely and update often” highlights the stage of identifying weak signals.

Weak Signal Detection, Feedback, and Safety

Weak signal detection relates to alertness, attending, and seeing without order. This requires you to remove any pre-existing structure or biases.

Is your organization capable of practicing the steps of “looking closely” and “updating often”? What barriers or constraints are preventing your organization from performing these essential steps? What artifacts in your organization’s culture, if any, show that weak signal detection is valued?

If team or organizational members are discouraged from speaking up or raising concerns, they are unable to pull the Andon cord, and external threats will catch organizations unaware. Weak signal detection practices and techniques provide organizations with the opportunity to detect threats before they are capable of impacting the organization. Action can be implemented in advance to thwart these threats, providing an advantage over the competition.

Self-Coaching

For each of the WSD techniques listed in the first column (see following table), identify examples showing how your team/organization supports or constrains each technique.

The first column of the table identified each of the WSD techniques.

In the second column, provide an example showing how these WSD techniques function in your team/organization. If these techniques cannot be practiced, identify the constraints for barriers to these techniques.

Next, in the third column, provide an artifact showing how your team/organization’s culture supports the listed WSD techniques. If there are not artifacts supporting these techniques, identify artifacts that discourage these behaviors.

WEAK SIGNAL DETECTION TECHNIQUES		
WSD TECHNIQUES	Example - Describe an example of how a technique is practiced or identify a Constraint that prevents the technique from being realized.	Culture (Provide an artifact in the team/organization culture that either Promotes or Discourages the WSD technique from occurring).
Tapping local intelligence.		
Leverage extended networks.		
Mobilize search parties.		
Always test multiple theories or hypotheses.		
Canvas the wisdom of the crowd.		
Develop a number of potential scenarios.		
Continuously seek new information		
Encourage, and accept, constructive criticism.		

WEAK SIGNAL DETECTION TECHNIQUES (CONT.)		
WSD TECHNIQUES	Example - Describe an example of how a technique is practiced or identify a Constraint that prevents the technique from being realized.	Culture (Provide an artifact in the team/organization culture that either Promotes or Discourages the WSD technique from occurring).
Trust seasoned opinions.		
Broaden your perspective and assure that all team members broaden theirs.		
Use the largest possible space, the big picture perspective, with limited boundaries.		
Include the customer, or customers, both internal and external.		
Be cognizant of what doesn't or will not work.		
Always view things from different perspectives.		
Remember that no one tool or technique can be used for all problems.		