

Wouter Hart

WITH MARIUS BUITING



LOST IN CONTROL

REFOCUS ON PURPOSE

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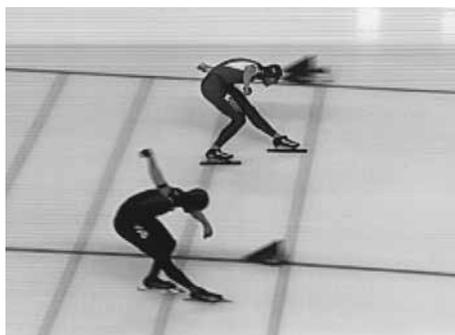
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INTRODUCTION

The American speed skater Shani Davis was the hot favorite. That season he had won almost every 1,000 meter race. Only Dutchman Simon Kuipers had occasionally come close. November 2007: the last race of the tournament, and I'd been looking forward to seeing the two of them in a head-to-head race. After two laps, Kuipers unexpectedly came out of the final bend with a slight lead, and they were neck and neck as they approached the finish. The two commentators were beside themselves with excitement, and as the skaters crossed the line one of them yelled, "Kuipers has won! There was only a hair's breadth between them, but he was faster!" That's what I thought had happened too.

But the other commentator saw the times at the bottom of the screen and exclaimed, "No! Davis has won by two hundredths of a second! Let's see the replay." Holding our breath, we watched the slow motion footage of the last hundred meters. As the skaters neared the finish, the images slowed again, and we watched them crossing the line frame by frame. Our first instincts were confirmed: Kuipers had won. What went wrong?

And then it became clear what had happened. The official finish photo had a bar at the bottom showing the readout from the timing system. The sensor had missed Kuipers' front skate, so Davis' front skate was compared to Kuipers' back one.



ANP Photo/Vincent Jannink

The chief referee that day immediately put this right by adjusting Kuipers' time to when his front skate crossed the line, and signed the form confirming him as the winner. The commentators and I were placated, Kuipers was feted on the podium and justice had been done.

But what we didn't know was that the chief referee then discussed the event with the other referees. They spent five hours studying the rules, poring over the pictures, and wondering whether they'd taken the right decision. It was almost as though they were trying to prove that the pictures had somehow been tampered with during the live coverage.

At the end of the day, the chief referee appeared at a press conference, holding the photo in one hand and the rulebook in the other. He declared that after lengthy discussion the medal had been awarded to Davis, because the rules stated that the timing system was the ultimate arbiter when it came to deciding the winner. Kuipers promptly appealed to the International Skating Union, which six weeks later named him as the winner – not because this was abundantly obvious from the pictures, but because the rules stated that the referee couldn't change the result after he'd signed the form.

I found it both sad and ridiculous that an organization like the ISU should respond in such a bureaucratic manner. But my first thought was for the chief referee, who'd stood up and explained to the world why the skater who came second had beaten the one who had crossed the line first...

I pondered that someone at this level of arbitration had probably spent a lot of time playing sports himself when he was a kid. He had probably been keen to be faster than the other kids, and he would know what it felt like to win – and to lose for that matter. Becoming a chief referee must have been a long and arduous journey, and he must have felt a huge commitment to maintaining justice.

So where along the line had this changed? How could he stand in front of the world's cameras and confidently assert that the second skater had won? What does it say about his logic that he was able to deny the truth of the photograph, and what does it tell us about the age we live in?

What does it say about the people he reports to, and those who assess his performance? Is he convinced he's doing a good job?

It later emerged that the chief referee claimed the system had failed because Kuipers had lifted his skate off the ice. But anyone could see from the pictures that this wasn't the case: he had put his foot down well before the finish, and anyway, there's nothing in the rules that says you can't lift your skate (2012). The referee was making up reasons for denying the reality of the photograph and preserving the reputation of the system!

The flaw in the way we manage

In itself, this event was no big deal. But I saw it as symbolic of a flaw in the logic by which we do business, and how this affects managers, workers and customers. Was it this one man's bureaucratic attitude that affected me so much, or was it the faulty procedure that had to be rectified by the ISU? Ultimately, the system had worked well, so why was I so upset by this chain of events?

I felt sorry for referee the chief referee, which I probably shouldn't have, because I'm sure he has a great life. But I saw this solitary man facing all those lights and cameras, and selling his soul to protect his place in the system and his status as a chief referee. And he made me feel sorry for all the nurses, lecturers, police officers, help desk employees, and everyone else caught up between common sense on the one hand, and the rules of the system on the other.

And through to Simon Kuipers, I felt for all the patients, students, citizens and customers who face apathy and inertia from the system, and for the workers caught up in it, holding the photograph, and telling them that their reality is not the system's reality.

I saw all this as a cry for freedom from overmanagement. From a way of thinking and organizing which lies deep inside us – maybe even deeper in each of us than we realize. It results in inefficient management, poor customer service, and people being declared winners when they're not. It prevents teachers from really looking at children for who they are and what they truly need. It prevents nurses from seeing patients, and customer services from servicing customers. The overregulation turns professionals into marionettes, driven away from their dreams, their full potential and their common sense. As a society we become lost in control...

It's like slowly squeezing a handful of sand: the harder we squeeze, the more sand slips through our fingers. But doing nothing is not an option, because then the wind will just blow away the sand, grain by grain.

The quest for a new way of managing

Marc Rouppe van der Voort is the innovation manager at St Elizabeth Hospital in Tilburg, the Netherlands. I first heard the term 'the myth of manageability' from him, and have since borrowed it.

Calls for a less management-like style of organizing are nothing new: people have been speaking and writing about it for years. Countless new approaches to leadership have mushroomed. Their names may be different, but all are about motivating people, so we have terms like servant leadership, binding leadership, heart and soul leadership, and authentic leadership.

I welcome all these concepts and movements, and believe the positive response they're receiving shows how much demand there is for a new way of managing. But we still grasp the essence insufficiently, as though there's a pattern and a dynamic behind all these discussions, documents and concepts, that we can't quite put our finger on. Until we can find this pattern and translate it into a new way of doing things, we cling to the old certainties that have brought us so much success.

So I went on a quest for the thought pattern underlying our current style of management. This book describes the my findings. Offering a very simple and practical thought model presented in chapter 1, surrounded by principles such as 'flipping the arrow', 'high trust, low tolerance', the 'performance circle', 'working from variation', and 'the purpose as a magnet'. It shows how we can achieve much better results while saving a lot of money.

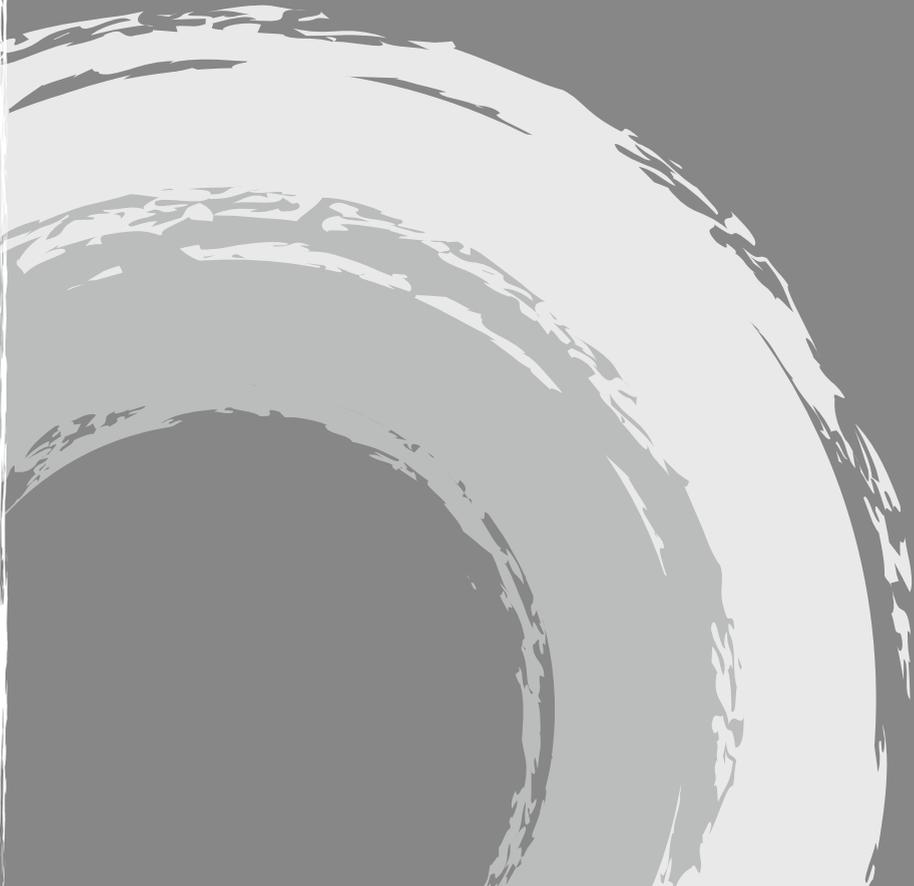
One person I met during this journey of exploration was Marius Buiting. He has spent his working life on improving quality in care homes, and is currently director of the Dutch Society for Supervisory Boards in Healthcare and Social Care (NVTZ). Our first discussion was followed by many others, and the thoughts in this book are as much his as they are mine. That's why I often talk about 'we' and 'our' rather than 'I' and 'my'. The book has been written from the perspective of my quest, but the ideas are ours.

I hope you enjoy reading it!

Wouter Hart

Part one

**THE CORE
OF THE ISSUE**





'The intuitive mind is a sacred gift, and
the rational mind is a faithful servant.
We've created a society that honors the
servant and has forgotten the gift.'

Albert Einstein

THE MYTH OF MANAGEABILITY, UNMASKED

In the summer of 2010, I took three months off in order to accelerate my search for the thought pattern behind our current style of management. In order to allow myself space for ideas, I needed to be entirely free of obligations. I collected examples, tried reading some books, and got my thoughts in order, but when those three months were over I still couldn't encapsulate them in a simple image.

On Thursday September 9th, when I'd been back at work for a week, I finally succeeded. I was at home with my seven-month-old son Jasper, cleaning the kitchen and thinking about something else entirely. Suddenly, I saw the pattern in my mind's eye. It was an incredibly simple one, and I'll describe it in the following sections (see figure 1.5).

I realized that it was the essence of all the anecdotes, examples and ideas that I'd collected over the years.

1.1 The basic model

The basic model consists of three circles, the first of which represents the *life domain* (see figure 1.1).



Figure 1.1 The life domain

The life domain is the world as we perceive it in the here and now. It's about perceived behavior: a waiter serving soup, a nurse putting on a bandage, a police officer chasing a bad guy. It's the world in which we breathe, reflect, fear, and so on.

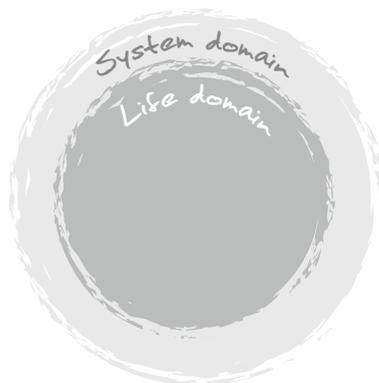


Figure 1.2 The system domain and the life domain

To ensure that our work in the life domain is successful, we've created another world around it, which we can call the *system domain*. This is the outer circle (see figure 1.2).

In this book, the word 'system' does not have the regular meaning. Such as, when it refers to an ecosystem, or the organizational systems thinking described in Peter Senge's book *The fifth discipline*. These are about the 'systemic', meaning that separate components together form a coherent

whole, interacting with one another so that they're no longer independent. And in systems psychology, the system is the family or organization.

The system domain as referred to in this book is a reproduction of the life domain, just as a map is a reproduction of the earth beneath our feet. It's a set of agreements about how we should operate in the life domain, which come in various forms, such as policies, procedures, instructions, targets, responsibilities, formats, and patterns.

These elements in the system domain tell us something about the here and now in the life domain, without really 'knowing' the here and now. We've created the system domain because it makes our work in the life domain easier, just as a map can help us to find a route, and communicate it to other people. The system domain is not just valuable, it's even indispensable.

But the system needs to come with a warning. A warning that underlies the whole foundation of this book. It's important to remember, as René Magritte reminded us with his famous painting '*Ceci n'est pas une pipe.*', (French for 'This is not a pipe. '), that the map is not the same as the ground beneath our feet.

The idea is that if we manage to complete the system domain within our organization, the right things will be done in the life domain.



Ceci n'est pas une pipe.

Magritte: 'This is not a pipe. It's only a picture of a pipe. How do we know this? Just try putting tobacco in it.'

This allows us to achieve the purpose for which our organization exists, represented by the innermost circle of the model we use in this book (see *figure 1.3*).

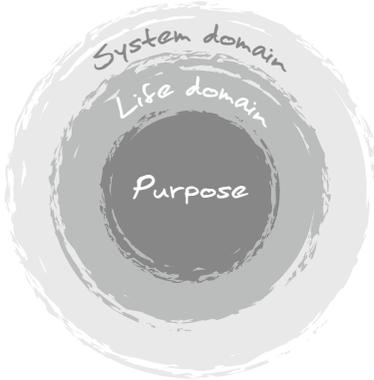


Figure 1.3 The life and system domains, and the purpose

The purpose of a hospital is to heal sick people, and that of an elementary school is to teach children.

For the reasons mentioned above, it follows that the model's direction of thought flows inwards, from the system domain towards the purpose (see *figure 1.4*).

Interestingly, many great leaders (of successful organizations) and successful managers tend to think in the opposite direction. Everything they do starts with their purpose. They enhance its meaning and add guiding principles (see chapter 4). Around this, they create a powerful life domain in which employees feel a strong sense of ownership, and are willing and able to take responsibility (see chapter 5). Additionally they create a system domain that fully supports this, and continues to provide support (see chapter 6). The direction of thought of these leaders has precisely the opposite direction: outwards (see *figure 1.5*). Time and again, this management style leads to increased customer and employee satisfaction, and much better financial results.

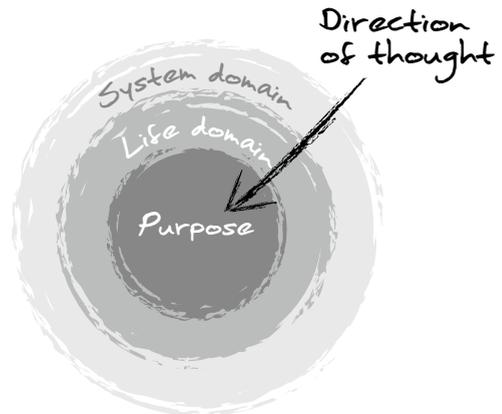


Figure 1.4 Direction of thought: from the system domain towards the purpose

This is not surprising, since nature behaves as an outward-pointing arrow, and so does human nature. In our personal lives, for example, we almost always think outwards in line with our own purpose. Customers too look at organizations as though the arrow is pointing outwards. If we turn our direction of thought inwards there are all kinds of unintended consequences. Things don't turn out as we expected (see chapter 3).

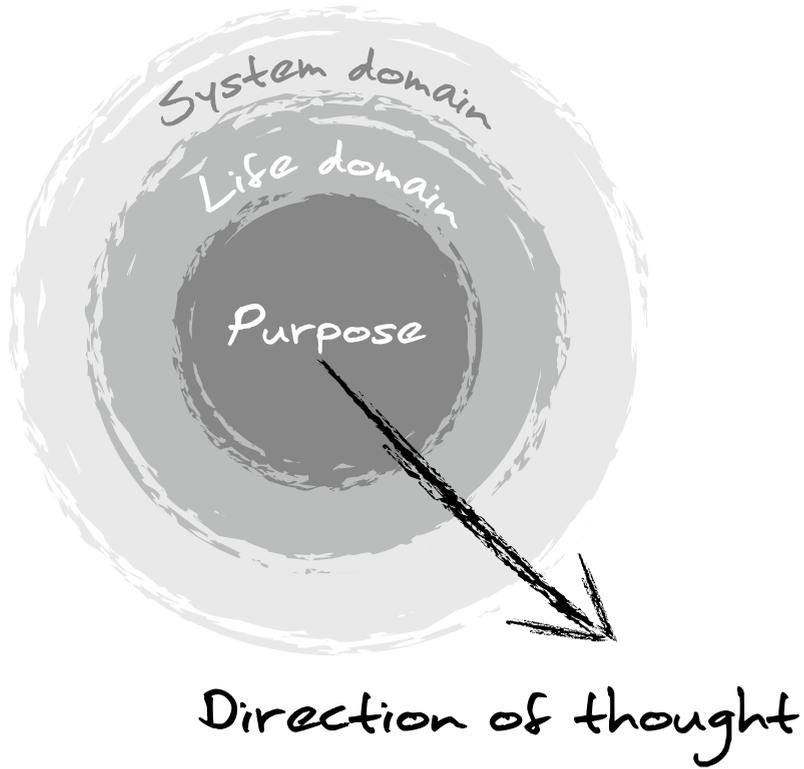


Figure 1.5 Direction of thought: from the purpose towards the system domain

In a logical, linear world, the direction of the arrows should not matter. But it does, and the referee who assigns more reality to rules or procedures than to photos is just the beginning. In fact many organizations have (unwittingly) turned their arrow inwards. However it is an illusion that this has no consequences. We call this the myth of manageability. This book explores the myth, and shows how the inward-pointing arrow is woven into management thinking. But more importantly, it explains why the ‘outward arrow’ results in increased customer and employee satisfaction and better performance, financially and otherwise. This book offers insights and guidelines to help turn the arrow around in people’s personal lives and in organizations, and consequently significantly increase efficiency and effectiveness, as we see in high-performance organizations.

In a moment, we’ll explain the circles using the speed skating example from the introduction. But before we do that, here’s a brief summary of the basic concepts in *figure 1.6*.

| Circle | Characteristics |
|---------------|--|
| Outer circle | <i>System domain:</i> A reproduction of the life domain, just as a map is a reproduction of real terrain. It consists of rules, procedures and so on, and says something about the here and now in the life domain, but it does not 'know' the here and now. |
| Middle circle | <i>Life domain:</i> The 'here and now'. This is about actual behavior and its inter- and intrapersonal dynamics. The life domain is where professionals and customers meet. |
| Inner circle | <i>Purpose:</i> This is the anchor for everything that happens in the system and life domains. Organizations have a single purpose that is their <i>raison d'être</i> . Every tool and action in the organization also has a purpose. |
| Arrow | Represents dominance between the circles, and thus the direction of thought. |

Figure 1.6 The circles and their characteristics

1.2 Example: the chief referee

The referee's purpose – the inner circle – is to give an fair and accurate assessment of who is the fastest skater.

In the life domain, he was in close contact with the competitors, and his key action verbs were 'perceive' and 'decide'. We could actually see him doing it. Other elements of the life domain at the time were his discussion with his fellow referees and the cup of tea he was having at the time.

In the system domain, the referee had a timing system to support his perceptions, and rules to support his decisions. This shows the importance of the system domain, because he wouldn't have gotten very far without these two means. Not only do skaters sometimes cross the line within milliseconds of each other: more importantly, they start in different heats so it's actually impossible to compare their performance just by watching them.

This shows that the problem with organizations does not lie in the system domain, though an inward-pointing arrow often makes this domain excessively large and complex. On the contrary, a good system domain is a necessity, and a

major success factor for any organization. The problem lies purely in the direction of the arrow. The question is whether the system domain is supporting the life domain and the purpose or dominating it.

The term hierarchy has a strong connotation in organizations: people need to know who is the boss and who reports to whom. The word ‘hierarchy’ comes from the Greek for ‘sacred order’, which implies one should not disturb the order. Such a hierarchy exists between the circles. The purpose is of a higher order than the system domain.

In theory, one could say it’s great that the referee was able to achieve his purpose without observing events in the life domain. And in the life domain, the best way to do this would have been without the timing system. Once again, this wouldn’t work, but it does demonstrate the hierarchy between the circles, and thus the desired direction of thought for organizations.

Let’s look at a management style that you’ll undoubtedly recognize, working along the inward-pointing arrow from the system domain to the purpose.

1.3 The system domain again and again

Following the inward-pointing arrow results in an indirect way of working. Problems in the life domain, and thus in people’s behavior, are often almost automatically tackled via the system domain by imposing rules and ensuring that they are followed. If this becomes the dominant form of intervention, managers soon become more interested in getting things right from the perspective of the system domain than in improving the performance of the professional in the life domain. People often assume that we can exert a positive influence on behavior via the system domain, but this is not as effective as we might think, and often has adverse effects. Here’s two examples.

Example 1 The ticket targets

Before the Dutch police introduced ticket targets, officers would look at each situation and decide on the best response to each offender. Should he give them a lecture, arrest them, may be even shoot them or... issue a ticket. Their job was to choose the best course of action in the ‘here and now’. Their purpose can be described as creating a safe and honest society.

Ticket targets were introduced so that officers’ performance could be quantified and compared. There was a lot of criticism from some opposition parties, and the targets were taken out of the national performance agreements. Still the minister continued to support them, claiming in parliament on 16 November 2009 that the police had



too little authority, and writing tickets was the best way of asserting it. Each officer was given an annual target, which was an intervention in the system domain. As a result, the targets became the guiding principle in their assessment of every situation they encountered, instead of what was happening in the here and now. Introducing the ticket targets had reversed the arrow (with the arrow in the reversed position police officers were now thinking from the system domain towards the purpose). The interest of the officers had shifted from the most adequate response in the 'here and now' to the question of what they needed to achieve their target. This was reinforced by the fact that their paycheck was now linked to the target. There was a big temptation to ticket every pedestrian who didn't use a crosswalk. This became particularly acute in November, when many police forces realized they hadn't issued enough tickets for the year, and there were reports that one senior officer took his whole team out into the streets to catch up on their targets in one day.

The targets were supposed to give the police more authority – but it's debatable whether they achieved this in the eyes of the pedestrians concerned.

Example 2 Learning behavior

Another example of turning the arrow around concerns attitudes towards learning in organizations. Often, managers decide that employees are not sufficiently interested in learning, which is a problem in the life domain, and respond by requiring them to set up personal development plans and review these regularly. This can work very well in the system domain as long as the arrow points away from the purpose. But, as with police ticket targets, managers often combine this with quantitative monitoring, focusing on the number of review meetings held, rather than their quality or their effect on employees' learning attitudes.

Like the referee and the police officers, these managers are managing on the basis of quantitative data, making sure that personal development reviews take place and that forms are completed on time, instead of creating a pro-learning environment.

One of my managers once said to me with a smile, "Ah, those annual performance appraisals ... I usually get the employee to come in and help me fill in the form. It would feel a little weird filling it in without them... (wink, wink)"

System interventions like these can have adverse effects, because they provide neat solutions to problems in the system domain without resolving the real behavioral issue. It's easy enough to hold personal development reviews, but they may create an illusion of control that diverts attention from whether the team as a whole has an adequate attitude towards learning.

Of course, many managers make very effective use of such tools. Consciously or unconsciously, they point the arrow outwards from the purpose to the system, but they

also risk underestimating how quickly system solutions can become counterproductive. This is partly because people often choose the easiest route themselves, and partly because this behavior is strongly encouraged by the quantitative responsibility attached to it, and because the real conversation does not take place. How does this affect the professional's behavior?

1.4 The professional's interest

If a professional is to provide a good service to a patient, student, customer, or member of the public, his full attention must be with this person. The encounter between the professional and the customer is central to their relationship. In other words, the professional's interest in the customer is a result of the organization's purpose (see *figure 1.7*). The term 'inter-est' derives from the Latin words for 'be' and 'between', so in this context it's a colorful term: the interest basically lies halfway in between the professional and the customer.

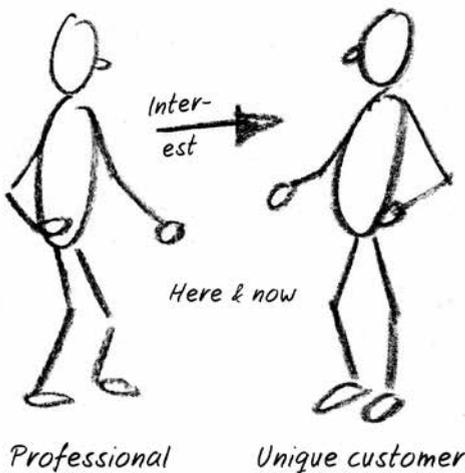


Figure 1.7 The professional's interest in the customer

One crucial characteristic of the encounter is the professional's love for their job, and for the people who need their help. If the professional has a strong interest, the customer feels he is being listened to and is receiving the service they need. But it also means that the professional is energized by his ability to be useful to others.

If we try to influence this behavior via the system domain, we are asking the professional to give up some of his interest in the customer, and replace this with interest in the system. If this stays within bounds and the professional is encouraged to see the system as supporting, this is no big deal. But the more dominant the

system domain becomes within the organization, the more the professional is lured into finding this domain interesting. He is tempted to exchange his interest for the customer in the here and now, for interest in the system domain which claims to say something about the here and now but actually 'knows' nothing about it (see *figure 1.8*).

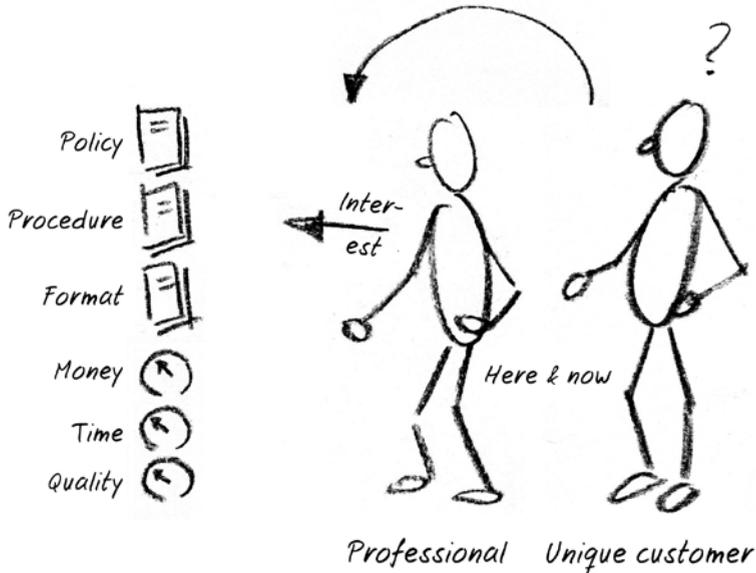


Figure 1.8 A professional with an interest in the system domain loses interest in the customer

This is like putting a padlock on the professional’s heart. The system domain has little interest in feelings, because they’re neither tangible nor quantifiable. But what happens to the professional’s satisfaction if they’ve traded much of their interest in the customer for interest in the system domain?

I was in a pharmacy recently, and overheard an elderly woman in a wheelchair with an open wound on her arm asking for a certain medicine. The pharmacist said that in this particular case he couldn’t dispense it because it was funded by social services, who were scheduled to visit her the following day. She pleaded to no avail for several minutes, but eventually he turned her away.

Was this really why the pharmacist had chosen healthcare as a profession? He could easily have changed his mind and pointed the arrow outwards by showing some sympathy for the woman. He could have called social services himself, or given her the medicine she needed and settle it with social services later.

It’s not the system domain that made the pharmacist more interested in the rules than in the woman’s welfare. It was his choice. The problem was that his working environment made him less likely to help, just like the referee in the introduction: his interest had shifted away from the uniqueness of the ‘here and now’, and the customer’s needs, towards compliance with the system.

The consequences may be more obvious in some cases than in others, but it's a situation we're all familiar with: calling a helpdesk, getting tangled up in government red tape, having a child who learns differently to others or doesn't fit neatly into a diagnostic pigeonhole. The result for us as the customer is that we receive a bad service. But this also raises other questions: how does it affect the professional's motivation, and the organization's financial results?

1.5 The power of ownership

There's a huge difference between a professional who is passionate and one who isn't. I know from my own experience that we can move mountains if we feel challenged, involved and responsible, but we can also put things off for hours or even months if we don't feel inspired or enthusiastic. This difference is so great that unmotivated professionals can cost organizations a lot of money because they're not encouraged to feel involved. During our search, one word that came up time and again was 'ownership'. The more ownership and responsibility people were given, the better they did their jobs. And the more they worked with the arrow pointing inwards, the more dispossessed they felt (see section 5.4).

Of course, paying attention to people's motivation is nothing new. But it's important for this book, because the direction of the arrow has so much effect on it. The inward-pointing arrow takes the ownership from the professionals and gives it to the system domain instead, turning professionals into performers of tasks. But how do we achieve motivation by serving the system domain?

Teachers don't become teachers to commit themselves to skill sets. They become teachers to reach out to students and help them to develop. The system is such that history teachers often aren't allowed to answer students' questions about current developments because they have learning goals to achieve and lesson material to work through. Where are they supposed to draw their inspiration from if they don't have the freedom to digress sometimes?

Nurses don't become nurses to fill in forms. They become nurses because they care about people, and therefore they want to help them get well soon and leave the hospital as quickly as possible. But the system is often such that they can't build connections with patients because the healthcare of patients has been split up in too many small elements divided over too many nurses, seeing too many patients too superficially. If the patient has a healthcare need that is easily met, but the system does not allow this, nurses have to say no all the time. So where are nurses supposed to get their inspiration?

At times of scarcity, we need passionate, committed professionals who put their hearts and souls into their work. Non-managerial professionals usually don't

find their inspiration in the system domain, but in their purpose and the customer who needs help. Following the rules of the system domain undermines their expertise and makes them much less motivated, so it's not surprising that fifty percent of healthcare workers want to leave their jobs, Dutch fire services are running short of volunteers, and not enough young people are choosing teaching for a career. Professionals everywhere say their main reason for wanting to leave is the dominance of the system domain, in the form of suffocating rules and bureaucracy. They are energized by being able to help customers successfully, and this makes them want to work harder.

The amount of hours recorded in a time sheet has limited meaning. What matters is whether in these hours a passionate professional was engaged in realizing the purpose, or whether he was doing what was minimally required.

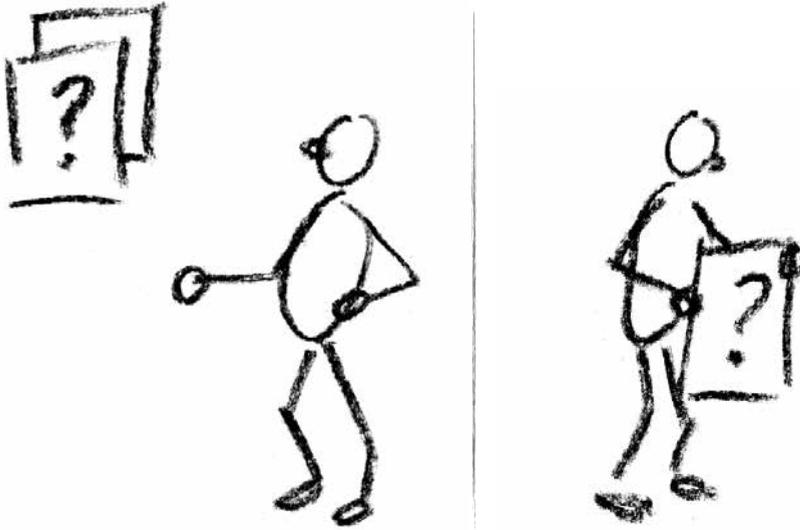
Of course, this is a very black and white view. We can see in our own lives that we do a better job if we feel noticed, involved, challenged and inspired, and are contributing to the right purpose. This is far more important than sticking to the letter of the rules.

Working from the system domain reduces the feeling of ownership that professionals need in order to feel passionate and provide a good service.

Today's professionals have been working with the existing system for so long that many have started to lose interest in customers, and become used to meeting the requirements of the system domain. This also gives them security and clarity: as long as they follow the rules, no one will question them. It is this type of management that yields this type of employee. Once management points the arrow outwards professionals are encouraged to do the same. Not just because it is better for customers and more profitable for the organization. But also because it is part of being a professional, and it will give professionals a greater sense of enjoyment and entrepreneurship in their work.

1.6 The effect on (the sense of) ownership

When the arrow points inwards long enough, professionals evolve into followers of rules. This reduces their feeling of ownership. Conversely, an outward-pointing arrow continuously addresses the professional judgment of the professionals, thereby stimulating ownership among the professionals.



If we look at the different roles in and around the organization, we will see that directing the arrow doesn't just affect the professional's feeling of ownership.

The customer

Working with the arrow pointed inwards makes people think in terms of supply rather than need. The customer can buy just what the organization offers, and may be happy or unhappy with it. If they're unhappy, they can complain, but over the years their feeling of ownership continues to dwindle. Healthcare professionals are expected to perform more and more tasks for the client that could be performed by unpaid or untrained people. Police officers are expected to resolve minor neighbor disputes that people would have sorted out themselves in the past. Parents expect schools to take over the role of raising their children. In short, this is a good way to create scarcity in society, and expand the role of healthcare professionals, police officers, and teachers.

The outward-pointing arrow puts us in the shoes of our customers because thinking about the purpose means thinking about how we can add value for them. In this sense, the first group that has ownership when it comes to adding value is the customer and his natural environment, also sometimes referred to as 'the customer system'. The customer, or the customer system, has the primary responsibility for looking after his own healthcare and personal development, and for preventing and resolving security problems, provided they do this in a reasonable and legal manner. Since the customer himself should take on an important role, organizations with outward-pointing arrows help them enhance their sense of ownership (see section 4.5 for details of how Humanitas achieved this, making the purpose the starting point for action).

Support

In June 2012, I went on vacation to Germany with my wife and two children. To get out of the cabin we were staying in, we had to go down the stairs with seventy steps. Jasper, aged two and a half, walked down them himself, holding my hand firmly. I also grasped his hand, at just the right height for him to hang on and get downstairs as quickly as possible.

I suddenly realized that I wasn't helping Jasper by giving him so much support, so instead of holding my hand up high, I brought it down into a lower and more relaxed position. He immediately tried to use my hand for support, which it didn't provide. His whole posture immediately changed, and he found his own balance. It was a wonderful sight, and he paid more attention to the steps, taking them one at a time. At first this was a slow process, but he soon got the hang of it.

The professional

If the arrow points outwards, the employees' professional maturity is addressed. This doesn't happen overnight, their maturity grows over time. The other way around, if the arrow points inwards, professional maturity will decrease.

Given what we've just said about the customer's sense of ownership, the professional's primary task is to increase this feeling. This will be done differently in a healthcare institution than in a candy factory, but in both cases professionals will put themselves in the customer's shoes, and search for ways of working with the customer to add value. This process involves drawing on the customer's experience, while providing one's expertise and resources.

The customer develops from a passive buyer into an active and responsible participant, while the professional stops being a task performer and becomes an entrepreneur with delegated powers. A task performer who has spent a long time working in an organization where the arrow points inwards won't be able to make the switch to delegated entrepreneur overnight. Once again, this is about the fact that management along the line of an outward-pointing arrow, encourages and grows entrepreneurship in the long term.

The manager

If the arrow points inwards, managers will gradually become guardians of the system domain – after all, the word 'manage' derives from the Latin word manus (hand), meaning 'to handle'. But if the arrow points outwards, managers are encouraged to take on more of a coaching role, supporting professionals by providing them with what they need in order to excel. This can even mean the proverbial kick up the butt. In section 5.4, the 'performance circle' is used to describe how coaching can lead people to excel in daily practice.

Staff

When the arrow points inwards, the number of 'non-production staff' increases. These employees, responsible for the internal operations, tend to take other people's monkeys onto their shoulders, and that's exactly how it feels for them. The quality department becomes the 'owner' of quality, and the shop floor employees start resenting quality. Other departments, such as human resources, communication, finance and audit, acquire ownership of their particular areas, thereby significantly reducing the shop floor employees' sense of ownership. For this reason, staff who should be playing a valuable supporting role can have an adverse effect on the organization if the arrow points inwards (more about this in section 3.4, The patient information leaflet on unwanted side effects).

If the arrow points outwards, the role of this staff is 'to do nothing' whenever the ownership should be left with the shop floor employees. Whenever there's a lack of necessary skills on the shop floor, staff can facilitate the required growth. Solving their problems for them weakens the business. The expertise this staff provides should be of such a high level of expertise or specialism, which shop floor employees cannot be expected to have: things like monitoring legal and regulatory issues, scientific research, and 'good practices'. Staff also has a separate role as interpreter, connecting the language of senior management with that of the shop floor – though this should not become an excuse for senior management and shop floor employees not to talk to each other.

The director

If the arrow points inwards, there is a risk that the director's agenda will become swamped with projects and other activities from the system domain. Getting and keeping this domain in order is hugely time consuming. The director will also devote time to the purpose of the organization however, by way of the mission, vision and strategic objectives, this often results in a major preoccupation with the system domain.

But if the arrow points outwards, the director's primary task is to fill the organization with purpose from within (see chapter 4), and protect it against outside distractions (see section 5.4, element F, 'Building a heat shield'). The director must do this from the center of the life domain. He or she does not have less or more ownership, but ownership is transferred from the system domain to the purpose.

1.7 Talking about manageability

The question in our longing for manageability, translated into the model, is 'what domain are we trying to control?' Is management seeking to improve professional performance, or to master the system domain? Often, it is the latter: we master the system domain and try to sort everything out and get it working.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The original Dutch version of 'Lost in control' was first published in November 2012. Since then, many people in and outside of The Netherlands have responded to the book. Here is a selection of their comments (see more on pages 11 and 12).

YUMI STAMET, AUSTRALIA, National Workforce Adviser, National Disability Services

“The healthcare and social assistance sector will be the fastest growing Australian industry for the next few years. With this growth, questions are being asked how to ensure high quality service, not the least by service providers themselves. Many already realize that quality often means something different from one person to the next. The challenge then becomes to deliver high quality tailored services to a growing diverse client base.

In Lost in control Wouter Hart and Marius Buiting explain why organizations struggle with this, whether their customers are patients, the elderly, people with a disability, children or the community. They describe in detail how traditional working environments actually make it less likely that frontline staff can deliver a quality service.

The best thing about this book is that the authors also share the key principle used by those organizations that have successfully tackled the challenge above. It is inspiring to read how they found a way of working that achieves better outcomes for their customers, staff and the organization by refocusing on their purpose. After reading the original Dutch version of this book, I started to use and share these principles in my work with Australian disability providers who enthusiastically adopted them to transform their service. They tell me that they are now better able to support their clients and staff in a truly purpose-driven way. With this English version, the rest of Australia can now be inspired to do the same.”

G. SUNDARRAMAN, INDIA, Executive Vice President, Godrej & Boyce Mfg Co Ltd, India

The ‘Three circle model’ of Purpose, Systems and Life Domain by Wouter and Marius is simple, elegant and universal in appeal. The relevance of the model transcends organizations – it is equally powerful for individual leaders, aspiring entrepreneurs of start-ups and responsible parents. It is valuable for every individual in steering his or her own life journey towards a purpose!

The central message to the leaders – be the custodians and trustees of the purpose of the organization! And desist from being the guardians or czars of the system and structures.

The Three circle model is particularly useful for start-up leaders in scale up phase, when partnerships and organizations become critical. Externally imposed bureaucratic processes and structures often add overheads in cost and become speed break-

ers on the path to scale and agility. 'Lost in control' offers some excellent suggestions (obviously not prescriptions) for start-up leaders to govern their organizations through minimal critical rules – and free up the organizational energies for growth.

It is an excellent guide to parents in bringing up their children in this volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world. The wicked problems of this emerging world need explorations and experimentations in the life domain of here and now and strategies of win-win in a co-created opportunity space - very different from the competitive landscape and winner archetype of the past! Getting children to navigate with intrinsic purpose as a guide – kind of inertial navigation system – and taking courageous explorations and experiments to expand the boundary are vital to their success. In a lighter vein, when the computers supported by artificial intelligence take over almost everything standard and everything repetitive, the future generation can create value only on unique and creative domain – can hardly ever survive on repetitive and standard!

And finally, for me as a leader shaping my own destiny, I am extremely inspired to become adept at the purpose rather than getting buffeted by the turbulence in the life journey of here and now, often amplified by my own adherence to self-created rules. Rules are good only when you can break them to see beyond! This is the essence of the Three Circle Model of Wouter and Marius.”

JENS BUCH NIELSEN, DENMARK, Chief Financial Officer of the Capital Region of Denmark, and: BIRGITTE RAV DEGENKOLV, DENMARK, Chief Executive Officer at Amager Hvidovre Hospital in the Capital Region of Denmark. The Capital Region of Denmark is providing healthcare for 1.7 mln inhabitants and has about 40.000 employees.

“In 'Lost in control; refocus on purpose' Wouter Hart and Marius Buiting are pointing out how organizations out of need for security and to minimize risk, build a huge system of bureaucracy by producing policies, procedures, instructions and so on. The system is getting out of hand complex because it seeks to prescribe general procedures to answer very specific needs. In the attempt to tame the system everybody loses sight of the purpose and the fact, that quality is created in the care process in interaction with the patient and not by measuring or mapping risks.

In healthcare much variation is needed. Even so we try to standardize, which is perfectly meaningful in the production sector, but not in the meeting with a patient. The authors suggest that we ask ourselves which elements of our organization should be standardized, and which should not? And even more specific – which aspects of your work should be erased.

The authors make it clear. The answer and the difficulty are to make everybody in the organization constantly focus on the purpose of our existence – the patient. We need to create an internal compass for everyone in the organization. The purpose is the anchor of every action taken.

This book is an important reminder of where to focus.”

PROFESSOR DEREK BELL OBE FRCP EDIN, SCOTLAND, President – Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, and PROFESSOR MICHAEL DEIGHAN FRCP EDIN, SCOTLAND, Quality Governance Collaborative Lead – Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh

“A complementary academic manuscript to Good Practice Governance in organizations. A document which should encourage the Non-Executive Board Directors to understand the “skill and importance” of questioning corporate decisions to ensure the essence of good team working within an organization.

This is the fundamental challenge organizations face on a daily basis but often fail to answer. This book challenges us to ask the question, “how do we encourage internal good practice as an organization board, in order we may get the institution we deserve or need?”

HERMAN WIJFFELS, THE NETHERLANDS, Senior lecturer sustainability and social change, University of Utrecht

“A crucial work. In Lost in control, Wouter Hart vividly describes a management philosophy that provides answers to one of the major challenges of our time.”

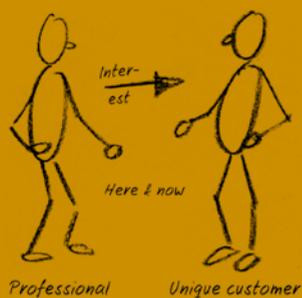


Wouter Hart
Speaker on leadership
and change

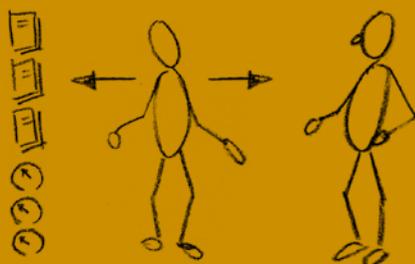


Marius Buiting
Director of the
Dutch Association of
Supervisory Bodies in
Care Institutions.

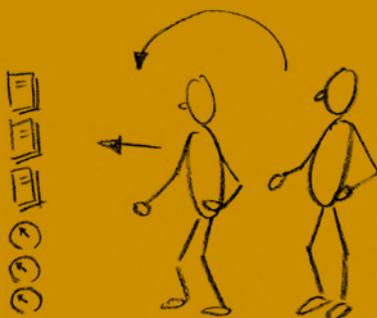
We want to help our customers
in the best way we can.



In order to improve our work we create a system
of policies, procedures and KPI's.



And as a result, we start serving this very
system. Losing customer perspective,
ownership and common sense.



Causing us as professionals, our organizations
and our society to be *Lost in Control...*

But there's a way out.

**It's time to refocus on purpose and
make the system serve us again.**

