

THOMPSON ORGANISATIONS

The practice of
Adam Thompson
Organisational Consultant

Founded 2012

I help results-oriented, reflective leaders achieve their goals. We work together to get to the heart of what is holding back their team or organisation, then embed new ways of working that all can understand and sustain.

Organisational Design
Culture | Strategy | Leadership

Some Testimonials

“Adam has been working with the Automotive Services management team since January 2018, helping us reset, reorganise and refocus, following a major successful technology change implementation.

During several initial workshops, the senior management team unpacked a range of issues and concerns, and clarified the fundamental purpose of the work being done across the business unit of nearly 300 employees.

The formation of “Circles”, is how we are organising to improve understanding of the business, gain clarity and visibility of business unit priorities, and ultimately, educate and empower our frontline managers to improve work systems to enhance customer value, improve our financial performance or increase the end-to-end customer experience.

The “Circles” are already having a number of positive effects in relation to engagement of front-line managers, improving awareness of priorities and understanding of resource allocation decisions, shaping conversations with a focus on our customers, encouraging greater visibility and use of data, and encouraging greater co-operation and collaboration amongst those involved in critical processes.

- **Dominic Jacob, GM Automotive Services, RAA**

“Structure, capability, and accountability and unlocking an organisation’s design to achieve its intent. Sounds simple, but generally isn’t. Adam has been a significant part of both my personal development and that of our business and team.

In a challenging and fast paced SME environment, Adam has been integral to our transition from an owner / founder model to a highly capable and organised model for the future. And Adam will continue to support our journey with his unique skill set and ability to evaluate a challenge and navigate a pathway to an outcome. He makes things work.”

- **Marc Taintey, Chief Executive Officer, Rivergum Group**

“Adam has been available to access his definitive style across much of my professional life.

From staff structures, to strategies, accountability of staff members and how to have them realise their importance to an organisation, to most recently pivotal in our attempt to overhaul a culture and have it continue.

Adam has a down to earth, every-person approach to the topics we wanted to discuss and a very impressive way of connecting with the tone of an audience. His style has translated across the business requirements we had and moved into the sporting side of our culture creation or identity.

Adam provided access to change across multiple levels of our organisation, with players on our team and also with management providing solutions and methods around how we could be the most effective managers and builders of all important relationships.

There is no doubt in my mind that our work with Adam last year directly contributed to the fast tracking of team camaraderie and the integration of new team members, recruited from multiple countries around the globe.”

- **Nathan Davison, GM Baseball, Adelaide Football Club**

“Adam is a conceptual thinker who has the ability to cut through complex issues and discussions to identify both the core issue and a number of possible paths to the solution. Adams open style of questioning encourages all to participate and therefore full value is gained from any forums he is involved in”

- **Steve Murray, Manager Strategy & Projects, IAG**

About Me



I help practical, reflective, results-oriented leaders who care about **both** results **and** people to achieve their goals. We work together to get to the bottom of what is holding back their team or organisation so we can create clear, shared understanding of the situation for everyone involved. We then move forward by designing and embedding new ways of working that all can understand, apply and sustain that see tangible results, individual development and vastly improved group functioning.

Based in Belair, in Adelaide, South Australia, I serve clients around Australia and the globe. My speciality is working with growing organisations that have reached a size where 'just enough' structure is needed to avoid chaos...or with established organisations who can feel that their current conditions are going to require real internal change to once again become responsive, agile and creative...while still delivering today.

With over 20 years of organisational leadership experience, including 8 years as an organisational consultant and founder, the trademark of my work is engaging expertise with a touch of humour (because real change needs it!) I bring together a vast and evolving knowledge of strategic, organisational, systems and people models to create insight and understandings that are bespoke for each situation. This then leads to personal and organisational changes that just make sense. And work.

My clients are in both the social sector and the for-profit sector, and also include membership and sporting organisations. Drawing on disciplines of strategic thinking, work and system design, behavioural and cultural change along with individual development, my work creates a virtuous circle of engaged people..... leading to more valuable outcomes.....leading to engaged people..... and we spiral up.

Prior to establishing my consulting practice, I was part of the Executive at RAA in South Australia, creating the transformation in both staff engagement and profit of a struggling business for it to become a 'pillar' product. I also held roles overseeing group strategy and major projects, creating a 10-year timespan strategic approach that continues to this day, and was foundational in developing the organisation's acquisition capability. Earlier work saw success in senior roles in the insurance, finance, education and legal industries, with the pattern of my work being the regeneration of morale and the delivery of improved outcomes be it projects, teams, business areas or full profit and loss.

My formal qualifications are in Economics and Law (with Honours), and I am a qualified Barrister and Solicitor in South Australia (while successfully avoiding actual working as one!) I also hold a Certification from the Institute For Development Coaching.

Outside of work and my busy family, I am the convenor of the Australian Human Resources Institute SA Organisational Design & Development Network, have been on my children's school Governance and Education Committees, and an advisor to the Adelaide Bite baseball team which is a part of the Adelaide Football Club.

And between all of this, you'll probably find me reading! Either about organisations, or a good piece of narrative non-fiction.



Who I've Helped



Australian Government
Services Australia



Government of South Australia
Department for Education



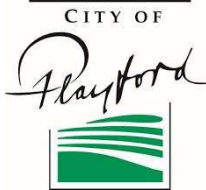
Government of South Australia
Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure



Renmark Paringa Council



DesignInc



Rachis



Government of South Australia
Department for Energy and Mining



UNITY HOUSING COMPANY



rivergum group



the table & chair co

Services Pt I – Examples of how I help

Strategic Facilitation and Development

From initial discussions, to facilitation of sessions creating involvement and insight, to designing and setting up initiative and operational leadership structures to see it delivered.

What's different? Deliberate techniques to raise the level of dialogue beyond context into new domains combined with a clear focus on what strategy is NOT!

Organisational Design and Restructures

First...a discussion to ensure there is not another way (restructures are surgery!), to facilitating a process with sufficient involvement to create a new design of roles that is required for the work then setting up ongoing practices to see results through.

What's different? The level of involvement in combination with deep knowledge of how structures impact behaviours which allows the team to be part of the journey as much as possible.

Cultural and Mindset Change

From initial scans to identify the range of value systems, to engagement and involvement to ensure change 'with' not 'to', then changing systems, structure and behaviours to create movement toward the new value systems.

What's different? A deep view of the 'values code' that sits behind behaviours, then integration of systems structures and behaviours seeing change on a fundamental level well beyond the standard truisms on the corporate posters.

Cross-Functional Integration

Particularly useful for support areas such as P&C, IT, Strategy and Improvement/Innovation, this process allows the surfacing of both the necessary role relationships to create a foundation, along with mindset changes to improve personal relationships and working together.

What's different? Expertise applied in a common sense way in terms of cross-functional organisational design at the same time as gaining a deeper knowledge of what needs to happen to form genuine working relationships

Work Design and Management: 'Circle Work' and the 'Project Factory'

Tailoring and implementation of an operational and initiative management approach that creates agility, integration and buy-in throughout a Division or organisation. This creates a regular cadence for optimising today, improving the whole system, and moving toward tomorrow is created. End result? Increased throughput of both projects and operational outcomes.

What's different? The methodology is designed to create mindset and cultural changes as it creates better decisions around the work itself. And works within the existing org design.

Organisational Talent Reviews

Tailoring of a process designed to create a wide view of the current and future talent available in the organisation, with subsequent conversations and creation of development plans to ensure future capability needs are in place.

What's different? Use of deep and validated models of human ego maturity along with an understanding of ability to handle complexity to create a simple yet powerful view of organisational talent.

Services Pt II – More examples of how I help

Individual Leadership Coaching

From initial discussion to establish underlying need and reason for change, to providing deep insight and reflection on current and potential value-add to identifying and supporting the implementation of changes that see better work delivered by a team that is more committed. I use a powerful tool known as the Leadership Maturity Profile to kick-off focussed and lasting change.

*What's different? A focus on **both** internal mindset shifts as well as design and application of external leadership systems and structures to create both internal and external changes.*

Divisional, Organisational, Team Reviews

Starting from an initial discussion on what's just 'not right' in a given area and the possibilities that could be realised, the review provides recommendations and actions based on deep insight gained from interviews and analysis of performance information, structure and capability.

What's different? An all-quadrant approach covering mindset, behaviours, systems, structure and culture provides holistic solutions that integrate tangible and intangible needs.

Team Performance Lift

Working directly with a team, this process provides insight and reflection onto the very dialogue the team is having, the nature of the problems it is solving, and how they get in their own way. Changes that are surfaced sees authentic dialogue from differing thought patterns emerge, leading to better and more supported decisions.

What's different? Using the Leadership Maturity Profile tool creates deep insight into personal and team values, coupled with latest thinking on dialogue types and complexity thinking.

Leadership Programs

Most recently designed program included the modules:

- Personal organisation and accountability
- Authentic working relationships
- Team leadership practices
- Work system improvement
- Team and cross-functional structure
- Facilitating change in work and culture
- Developing and managing projects

Course feedback

Ratings on overall workshop, facilitator, making difference to work and recommend to others are consistently >4.5 out 5

Examples of comments:

- *A great mix of introspective, relationship building and practical elements that you can put into use quickly*
- *I found it very helpful in my workplace already, but I believe that moving forward, it will be used daily*
- *This was a wonderfully mind-opening exercise. A great way of enabling us to learn but also think practically about our own situation*
- *Adam was fantastic. Wealth of knowledge but most importantly, very real*
- *He made sure that everyone was involved and felt valued. His knowledge was exceptional.*
- *This made so much sense! Adam took us through theory fast but skillfully in a way that did not feel like he was pushing through a list of content*
- *The workshop was amongst the most valuable uses of time that I can remember of late. Very engaging, thought provoking and insightful*
- *There are many tools (learnings are diverse) providing opportunity for people from all levels at the organisation and different work experience backgrounds to add value within their area/team/personally*
- *It helps you understand managing people, it helps you navigate difficult conversations, self-awareness and tools to use in everyday life*

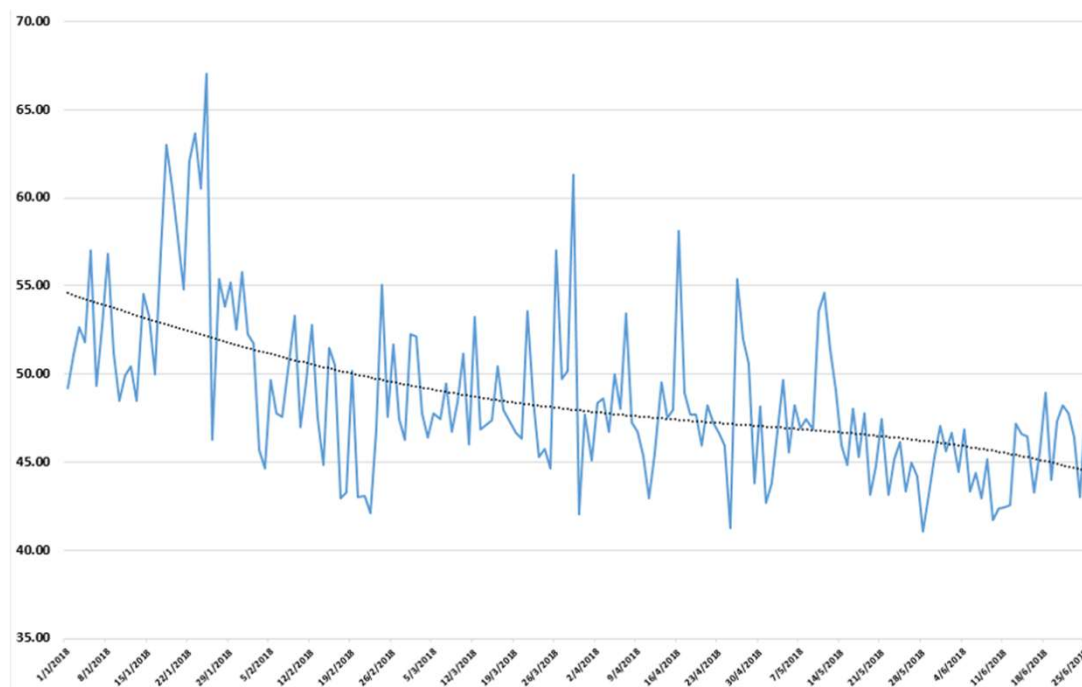
Integration of largest division within multiple business organisation

Case Study

The situation: years of attempting to create a truly integrated Division had not seen success, this was seen to be holding back both service delivery and natural innovation. I was asked to look at the structure to resolve this.

What we did together: Team discussions surfaced that the issue was not with the structure, it was to do with a combination of relationships, information and meeting structures that didn't create a focus on the 'whole system' of the Division. We changed the primary measures of performance to reflect the holistic view, then commenced a series of workshops to build stronger relationships using discussion of business issues themselves. Once comfortable, the senior team expanded these forums to their direct reports, quickly creating an instant communication channel and buy-in from all managers. We then 'spun off' sub-forums from the main forum aligned around processes rather than departments, and designed an approach to initiative program management that allowed all full visibility while better sequencing work into the key area.

Outcomes: The diagram shows the impact on the Division's key performance indicator (lower is better). What is of note is these improvements were surfaced and implemented within the staff themselves (not by me) through the combination of work design and building relationships around a common goal. The 'throughput' of initiative delivery has increased as undue pressure was relieved from the key area, and a 'one Division' culture has been naturally created.



Case Study

Mindset and Cultural Change: New System and Process

The situation: after a rough and unpopular implementation of a new Enterprise Resource Planning system, the finance module was going to be switched on at the same time a new budgeting process was going to commence. This would need to be driven from a Finance area which had lost morale during the system implementation. Promises had been made to the Board on the savings that would be surfaced from the new budgeting process and system which were at risk due to understandably negative views across the organisation toward the new way.

What we did together: I was hired to work *alongside* the project manager specifically on the culture, knowledge and mindset aspects of the project as these were seen as the biggest risk to the benefits. Initial work with the Finance team started the rebuilding of trust through providing space for listening, understanding and developing plans together. Forums and messaging to the organisation were then designed to respect the deep value sets around stability and human connection which included both delivering the bare truth, then supporting people in what this meant. Design of key visuals and meeting structures were then created, with ongoing regular and ad hoc communication put in place.

Outcomes: The expected benefits were doubled. Quoting from the project manager I partnered with: 'these projects usually have significant noise and resistance throughout which just weren't a part of this project'. Key people from the Finance area were subjected to high levels of stress as they had to 'learn to be an expert' alongside their internal clients; they were able to come through this process. Ongoing changes from the Board throughout were handled in a responsive fashion, allowing the initially scheduled completion date to be brought forward, and the third iteration of the process saw time taken halved as people had quickly gained familiarity and expertise.



Cross-Departmental Organisational Redesign

The situation: The levels of hand-offs, confusion and general frustration of both internal customers and staff involved had shown that the structure of the department was a major source of pain. I was asked to review the structure and make recommendations.

What we did together: We reviewed the structure together. Multiple sessions were organised with all across the department to surface the real issues that were causing frustration, but also to rebuild the culture by reminding people that they are active participants in their work. The sessions led to a significant widening of the scope as it was realised that the underlying issues were not coming within the department, but from the structural tension built in between departments. This then allowed multiple designs to be considered, which were analysed and discussed by a wider group, by which time people were comfortable in voicing concerns, both personal and business. A final design was then reached.

Outcomes: Implementation of the new design flowed naturally as all had been involved in its creation. The process led to one comment of “I don’t think I’m going to like this structure, but I can’t argue that it’s not the best thing for the business”. An increase in internal customer satisfaction then followed. Importantly, ongoing revisions and tweaks continue to occur to the design as the involved no longer see it as only the General Manager’s responsibility to consider.

Strategic Development and Work Organisation

The situation: Division lacked a clear strategy and was suffering from initiative overload causing a drop in staff engagement and delivery.

What we did: A process was designed which saw the coming together of multiple levels to go through the ‘life conditions’ that were being faced in combination with the fundamental purpose of the organisation. With clarity then gained on the direction required, subsequent sessions then saw the surfacing of all the current work underway (345 initiatives!), with a thorough process then undertaken to then cull, match work in progress to capacity and to put into an effective sequencing. Finally, managerial practices were developed and an ongoing forums were put in place to both monitor delivery and rapidly resolve issues.

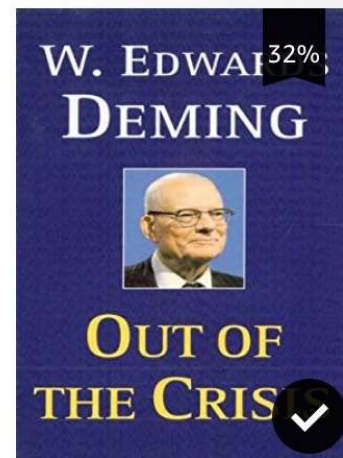
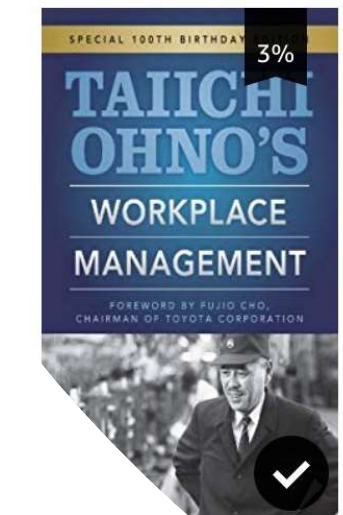
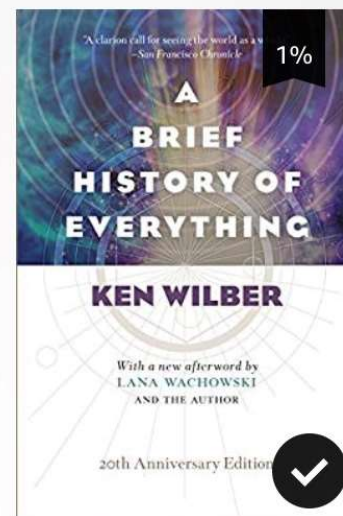
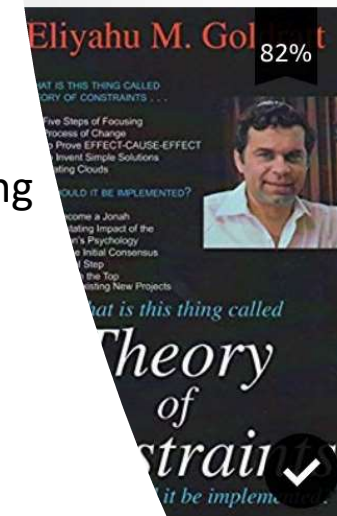
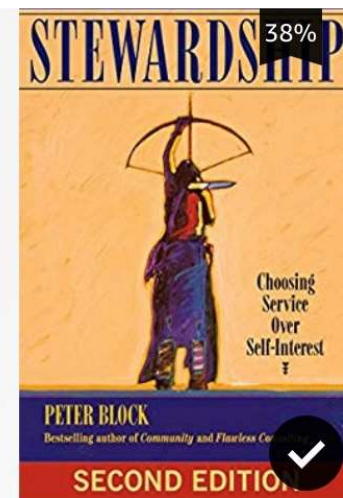
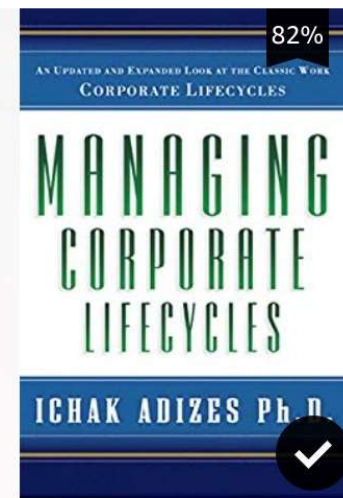
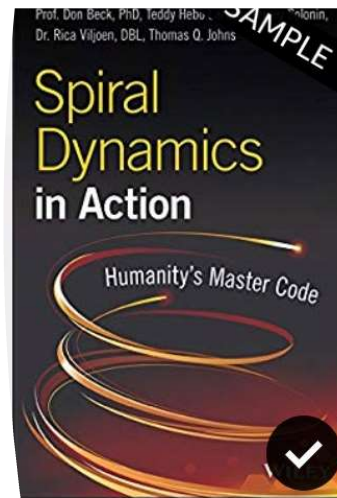
Outcomes: The work started moving again, and engagement increased from the first session as the bigger picture became clear for all involved, the underlying cause of the current culture was surfaced, and clear actions were put in place to address. Rate of delivery of initiatives increased due to the ability to now focus on work-in-progress that was limited to actual capacity to delivery. For the Executive, a new-found ability to focus on future work and ensure strategic value being delivered was discovered as the necessity to continually resolve priority issues lessened.

My influences

Combining deep and wide knowledge and applying it in a way that keeps things practical and understandable is the hallmark of my work. Some of my major influences are...

Don Beck (Spiral Dynamics)
 Ichak Adizes
 Peter Block
 Eli Goldratt
 Luc Hoebeke
 Ken Wilber
 Peter Koestenbaum
 Edgar Schein
 Marshall Rosenberg
 Maja Stanojevic-Andre
 Carol Sanford
 Eckhart Tolle
 Thich Nhat Hanh
 Kent Hoffman
 Peter Senge

Taiichi Ohno
 W. Edwards Deming
 Elliott Jaques
 Russell Ackoff
 Roger Harrison
 Gillian Stamp
 Henry Mintzberg
 Marvin Weisbord
 Jack Stack
 John Seddon
 Jim Collins
 Atul Gawande
 Brian Robertson
 Geoffrey Moore
 Roger Martin



Articles and Presentations

I continually write and present ideas on organisational design, culture, strategy and leadership. Why? For the enjoyment of always questioning what I see to be foundational concepts of work and people, and for testing of new thinking that, if it is able to make a difference, can be absorbed into the options I can use to develop bespoke solutions for clients.

Among the over 70 articles I have published online, some of the most popular have been:

[The Underlying Killer of Accountability](#)

[Self-Management: A New Study?](#)

[Five Decisions: The Simple Way To A Better Organisational Design](#)

[Eliminate Change Management](#)

[Behaviours Are Bulldust](#)

[New to Management? Read This](#)



What's Next?

If you are results-driven **and** reflective, if you enjoy conceptual thought **and** applying it, then we would enjoy working together to get your team or organisation to what's possible.

First – subscribe to my blog so you get my latest thinking: zenorganisations.com

Then, email me at adam@thompsonorganisations.com.au and fill me in on your situation. If I think we can be successful together, my assistant Amanda will be in touch to schedule a meeting which will either be in Blackwood, South Australia, or by video.

And...I appreciate you reading my bio – it's always an honour that people take the time. Thank you.