

## The Systems Approach to Planning

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One of the fundamental functions of management is planning, yet the current planning process often produces poor plans that are incomplete, unusable, and do not build prevention and risk management into the project. After all, if something did not happen, one cannot be sure if it would or would not have happened after the fact.

My research finds that one reason for poor planning is that the process, as currently taught, is defective and needs to be modified. We can formulate the problem of modifying the teaching paradigm as outlined below, using the template from a previous blog video <sup>[1]</sup>:

- **The undesirable situation:** Planning is not performed well resulting in plans that are incomplete and unusable.
- **The feasible conceptual future desirable situation (FCFDS):** Plans are complete, comprehensive, and useable.
- **The problem:** To figure out a way to realize the FCFDS and teach it; not just create a new template.
- **The solution:** The systems approach to planning.

The systems approach to planning produces more complete and useable plans by working backward from the end of the project to the start of the project. This approach builds prevention and risk-management into the project.



## **Dr. Joseph E Kasser, CM**



Dr. Joseph Kasser was a practising systems engineer and manager for 30 years before joining academia. He is a recipient of NASA's Manned Space Flight Awareness Award (Silver Snoopy) for quality and technical excellence for performing and directing systems engineering and many other awards and commendations. He is an INCOSE Fellow, holds a Doctor of Science in Engineering Management from The George Washington University, and is both a Chartered Engineer and a Certified Manager. He is currently a Visiting Associate Professor at the National University of Singapore. His previous academic positions include being a Leverhulme Visiting Professor at Cranfield University, England and the Deputy Director and an Associate Research Professor at the Systems Engineering and Evaluation Centre in the University of South Australia.