

Meyer's Management Models

81. Personal System Map

Which elements make up who I am, and can I develop these?

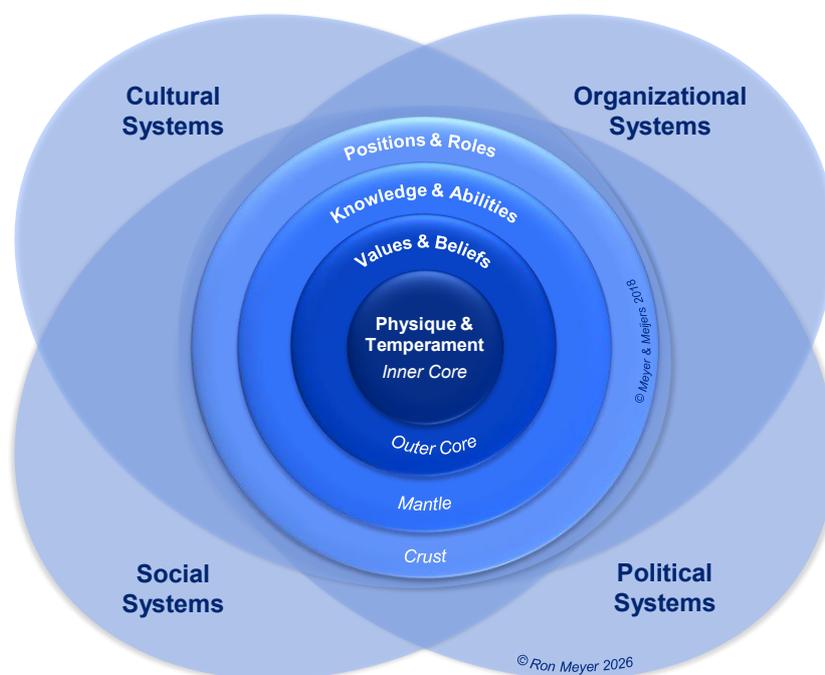
Key Definitions

Each person is a complex *system* of interconnected parts, that defies a simple division into independent building blocks. Still, it can be analytically useful to unravel people into a few key elements, to understand which parts are more susceptible to development than others.

For centuries, philosophers, scientists and amateur psychologists have debated whether people are largely shaped by *nature* (genes) or *nurture* (learning), and to what extent their characteristics are *stable* or can *change* over time. However, it is safe to say that at least some aspects of a personal system have been learnt and can be developed further moving forward.

Conceptual Model

The *Personal System Map* is an analytical framework (building on Meyer & Meijers, 2018) for understanding which elements make up who a person is, and which will be easier to develop over time. Using the metaphor of a planet, the model suggests that each person consists of four layers, with each deeper one being less adaptable. At the same time, each person is embedded in four external systems that, as four linked types of atmosphere, influence the planet from the outside-in. The message is that people are partially shaped by the systems (also called *institutions*) they operate in and that the most effective way to develop is to also change from the outside-in – changing positions and roles first and then working inwards.



Key Elements

The four layers making up each individual are the following:

1. **Physique & Temperament.** Each person's most stable aspect is their physical body (their *hardware*) and their fundamental personality traits (their *operating system*). They might

gain some weight, but they won't get taller, while their "big five personality traits" can shift a bit over the years, but not change radically. Both are strongly influenced by genes.

2. **Values & Beliefs.** On this operating system people run a few basic programs that define what to them is of importance (their *values*) and what is obviously true (their *beliefs*). These principles form the cognitive filter through which they perceive the world. While rooted in their temperament, both were shaped, and can still be influenced, by external factors.
3. **Knowledge & Abilities.** On top of the basic programs, they collect a lot of information and insights, both articulated and tacit (their *knowledge*), while also developing app-like skills and routines that allow them to act (their *abilities*). These are easier to learn, influenced by external factors, but need to fit within the frame of a person's underlying values and beliefs.
4. **Positions & Roles.** Using one's knowledge and abilities, a person can fulfill formal positions in organizations and play informal roles in a variety of external systems. This is the easiest aspect of a person to change, as one can switch jobs ("I was a manager, now I'm a professor") and/or pick up new roles ("I'm now a stepfather").

Positions and roles are part of a personal system (you are your position/role), but at the same time they are also part of one of these external systems:

- I. **Cultural Systems.** A person can belong to various groups who share unwritten behavioral norms, based on common values and beliefs, and expressed in shared customs, symbols and stories. You can be part of a national, professional or even pop culture ("I'm a Swiftie").
- II. **Organizational Systems.** A person can belong to various organizations, which are people structurally cooperating to achieve joint goals. You can work at a business or non-profit organization, but you can also be a member of a sports club or church ("I'm a Catholic").
- III. **Political Systems.** A person can also belong to a web of stakeholders, each with their own power and interests, who interact with each other to decide on important issues. You can participate in governmental politics, but also in networks and associations ("I'm a lobbyist").
- IV. **Social Systems.** A person can also belong to various social groups, that share a sense of relatedness, closeness, attachment and loyalty, such as families, clans, tribes, fraternities and communities ("I'm a Meyer").

Key Insights

- **People consist of four levels.** Each person can be understood as made up of four levels: an inner core of *physique and temperament* ("I am tall and extrovert"), an outer core of *values and beliefs* ("I am liberal and democratic"), a mantle of *knowledge and abilities* ("I am a chess player") and a crust of *positions and roles* ("I am a teacher and husband").
- **People are embedded in four external systems.** Each person's positions and roles are part of four overlapping external types of systems: cultural, organizational, political and social systems. People can be embedded in hundreds of different systems.
- **People are shaped through nature and nurture.** From birth, people develop from the inside-out based on their physique and temperament (nature) and simultaneously from the outside-in, based on the positions and roles that they take (nurture). The result is a mix.
- **People are difficult to change on the inside.** As people mature, the deeper layers become gradually more fixed. Their physique and temperament were already hardly changeable, but increasingly their values and beliefs become engrained, while their knowledge and abilities become entrenched and more difficult to adapt or expand.
- **People can develop best from the outside-in.** By changing positions and roles, people often find it easier to acquire new knowledge and abilities, and even shift/broaden their values and beliefs. Hence, personal development often works best from the outside-in.

Meyer's Management Models

Insightful Tools to Kickstart Your Thinking

Publication Schedule

<i>July 2019</i>	<i>Mind the Gap Model</i>	<i>Change Management</i>
<i>August 2019</i>	<i>Digital Platform Map</i>	<i>Digital Strategy</i>
<i>September 2019</i>	<i>Interaction Pressure Gauge</i>	<i>Interpersonal Interaction</i>
<i>October 2019</i>	<i>Revenue Model Framework</i>	<i>Revenue Model Typology</i>
<i>November 2019</i>	<i>House of Engagement</i>	<i>Organizational Engagement</i>
<i>December 2019</i>	<i>Confidence Quotient</i>	<i>Trust Building</i>
<i>January 2020</i>	<i>Competition Tornado</i>	<i>Competitive Strategy</i>
<i>February 2020</i>	<i>11C Synergy Model</i>	<i>Corporate Synergy Management</i>
<i>March 2020</i>	<i>Leadership Fairness Model</i>	<i>Leader-Follower Interaction</i>
<i>April 2020</i>	<i>Strategic Agility Model</i>	<i>Strategy Process Approach</i>
<i>May 2020</i>	<i>Control Panel</i>	<i>Corporate Control Dimensions</i>
<i>June 2020</i>	<i>Rising Star Framework</i>	<i>Talent Management</i>
<i>July 2020</i>	<i>Strategy Development Cycle</i>	<i>Strategy Process Steps</i>
<i>August 2020</i>	<i>7I Corporate Center Model</i>	<i>Corporate Organization</i>
<i>September 2020</i>	<i>Storytelling Scripts</i>	<i>Leadership Communication</i>
<i>October 2020</i>	<i>Strategic Bets Framework</i>	<i>Strategic Decision-Making</i>
<i>November 2020</i>	<i>Rebound Model of Resilience</i>	<i>Organizational Resilience</i>
<i>December 2020</i>	<i>4C Leadership Capabilities</i>	<i>Leadership Competences</i>
<i>January 2021</i>	<i>Digital Product Model Dial</i>	<i>Digital Strategy</i>
<i>February 2021</i>	<i>Digital Distribution Model Dial</i>	<i>Digital Strategy</i>
<i>March 2021</i>	<i>Empowerment Cycle</i>	<i>Employee Empowerment</i>
<i>April 2021</i>	<i>Innovation Box</i>	<i>Innovation Approaches</i>
<i>May 2021</i>	<i>Knowledge Sharing Bridges</i>	<i>Best Practice Sharing</i>
<i>June 2021</i>	<i>Followership Cycle</i>	<i>Leader-Follower Interaction</i>
<i>July 2021</i>	<i>Everest Model of Change</i>	<i>Change Management</i>
<i>August 2021</i>	<i>Fruits & Nuts Matrix</i>	<i>Priority-Setting</i>
<i>September 2021</i>	<i>Powerhouse Framework</i>	<i>People & Organization Strategy</i>
<i>October 2021</i>	<i>Strategy Hourglass</i>	<i>Strategy-Making Steps</i>
<i>November 2021</i>	<i>Disciplined Dialogue Model</i>	<i>Interpersonal Communication</i>
<i>December 2021</i>	<i>Team Building Cycle</i>	<i>Team Building Process</i>
<i>January 2022</i>	<i>Market System Map</i>	<i>External Analysis Framework</i>
<i>February 2022</i>	<i>Strategic Alignment Model</i>	<i>Business Level Strategy</i>
<i>March 2022</i>	<i>Creativity X-Factor</i>	<i>Creativity Enhancement</i>
<i>April 2022</i>	<i>Organizational System Map</i>	<i>Organizational Analysis</i>
<i>May 2022</i>	<i>Corporate Value Creation Model</i>	<i>Corporate Level Strategy</i>
<i>June 2022</i>	<i>Change Manager's Toolbox</i>	<i>Change Methodologies</i>

<i>July 2022</i>	<i>Sustainable You Model</i>	<i>Personal Sustainability</i>
<i>August 2022</i>	<i>Value Proposition Dial</i>	<i>Business Level Strategy</i>
<i>September 2022</i>	<i>The Tree of Power</i>	<i>Organizational Power</i>
<i>October 2022</i>	<i>Psychological Safety Compass</i>	<i>Team Dynamics</i>
<i>November 2022</i>	<i>Strategic Action Modes</i>	<i>Strategy Process</i>
<i>December 2022</i>	<i>Corporate Management Styles</i>	<i>HQ Management</i>
<i>January 2023</i>	<i>Thinking Directions Framework</i>	<i>Reasoning Skills</i>
<i>February 2023</i>	<i>5I Innovation Pipeline</i>	<i>Innovation Process</i>
<i>March 2023</i>	<i>Resistance to Change Typology</i>	<i>Change Management</i>
<i>April 2023</i>	<i>Ambition Radar Screen</i>	<i>Motivation Analysis</i>
<i>May 2023</i>	<i>Corporate Strategy Framework</i>	<i>Corporate Strategy</i>
<i>June 2023</i>	<i>Cultural Fabric Model</i>	<i>Organizational Culture</i>
<i>July 2023</i>	<i>New Pyramid Principle</i>	<i>Presentation Approaches</i>
<i>August 2023</i>	<i>Activity System Dial</i>	<i>Value Creation Analysis</i>
<i>September 2023</i>	<i>Customer-Centricity Circle</i>	<i>Organizational Design</i>
<i>October 2023</i>	<i>Status Snakes & Ladders</i>	<i>Leadership Branding</i>
<i>November 2023</i>	<i>Stakeholder Stance Map</i>	<i>Stakeholder Management</i>
<i>December 2023</i>	<i>Best Practice Sharing Modes</i>	<i>Sharing Methods</i>
<i>January 2024</i>	<i>Duty of Care Feedback Model</i>	<i>Feedback Method</i>
<i>February 2024</i>	<i>BOLD Vision Framework</i>	<i>Organizational Vision</i>
<i>March 2024</i>	<i>MOVING Mission Framework</i>	<i>Organizational Mission</i>
<i>April 2024</i>	<i>Leadership Circle Map</i>	<i>Leadership Skills</i>
<i>May 2024</i>	<i>Digitalization Staircase</i>	<i>Digital Strategy</i>
<i>June 2024</i>	<i>Time Management Funnel</i>	<i>Personal Time Management</i>
<i>July 2024</i>	<i>Wicked Problem Scorecard</i>	<i>Organizational Decision-Making</i>
<i>August 2024</i>	<i>Hunting & Farming Typology</i>	<i>Sales Management</i>
<i>September 2024</i>	<i>Guiding STAR Matrix</i>	<i>Objective Setting Approach</i>
<i>October 2024</i>	<i>Corporate Synergy Typology</i>	<i>Corporate Level Strategy</i>
<i>November 2024</i>	<i>Self-Centered Thinking Traps</i>	<i>Thinking Styles</i>
<i>December 2024</i>	<i>Sustainability Maturity Ladder</i>	<i>Sustainability Management</i>
<i>January 2025</i>	<i>Top Line Growth Pie</i>	<i>Growth Strategy</i>
<i>February 2025</i>	<i>Innovation Sins & Virtues</i>	<i>Innovation Management</i>
<i>March 2025</i>	<i>Interaction Drivers</i>	<i>Communication Determinants</i>
<i>April 2025</i>	<i>Frictionless Flow Framework</i>	<i>Customer Journey</i>
<i>May 2025</i>	<i>Five Phases of Change</i>	<i>Change Management</i>
<i>June 2025</i>	<i>Courageous Core Model</i>	<i>Leadership Behaviors</i>
<i>July 2025</i>	<i>Integration Zippers</i>	<i>Corporate Strategy</i>
<i>August 2025</i>	<i>Innovation Arena</i>	<i>Innovation Management</i>
<i>September 2025</i>	<i>Conversation Elevator</i>	<i>Communication Approaches</i>
<i>October 2025</i>	<i>5T SMART Plan</i>	<i>Strategic Planning</i>

November 2025	Organizational Diamond	Organizational Design
December 2025	New Learning Curve	Personal Learning
January 2026	Strategic Assignment Matrix	Corporate Strategy
February 2026	Five Company-Centric Forces	Organizational Dynamics
March 2026	Personal System Map	Personal Development
April 2026	Resource Base Dial	Business Level Strategy
May 2026	Low Performance Team Slide	Team Building
June 2026	Leadership Journey	Leadership Development
July 2026	Partnership Distance Model	Interorganizational Relations
August 2026	Triple Diamond Model	Organizational Decision-Making
September 2026	Personal Quick Guide	Personal Effectiveness
October 2026	Synergy Value Matrix	Corporate Level Strategy
November 2026	Dynamic Organization Paradigm	Human-centered Organization