

# Operating Principles of the Cognitive Edge Network

## **Overview**

The network seeks to apply insight from science and the humanities to organisations. The theoretical basis lies in naturalistic sense making, the organisational model is based on the development of an open source approach to consultancy methods and the provision of monetary value to the network through development of software.

## **Sense-making**

Sense-making is defined as *how we make sense of the world so that we can act in it*. Our approach draws primarily on insights from the cognitive sciences and the science of complex adaptive systems along with anthropology and philosophy; not as an academic theory but as a co-evolution of sound theory with practice.

## **Abundance not scarcity**

The network applies the principles of the open source movement to the development and access to methods. No one in the network can seek to take or develop these methods to create proprietary advantage, although network members are encouraged to augment and develop them for common use. The network is open to independent consultants, academics, members of in house and large consultancy organisations. In all cases they participate as individuals who are expected to respect this principle of abundance in all their interactions.

## **A naturalistic approach**

Naturalistic approaches focus on a sufficient and shared description of the current state to allow the creation of interventions the impact of which can be monitored to allow the emergence of an beneficial future state. Naturalism is contrasted with normative or idealistic approaches which start with a desired future state, perform a gap analysis and then seek to close that gap.

## **Descriptive self awareness**

Our research and consultancy methods aim to minimise the need for expert interpretation and recipe style approaches to intervention design. Instead we focus on facilitating the emergence of meaning through and by the members of the organisation or the subjects of the research.

## **Bounded & complementary applicability**

No method or approach has universal applicability, normative methods such as process re-engineering and systems dynamics are all useful, but within boundaries. We develop naturalistic methods for use by the network in conjunction with more traditional approaches

## **Accreditation**

Members of the network are required to attend a basic accreditation programme and to maintain a record of their projects on the Cognitive Edge web site which is available for peer and client review. This record includes auditable statements concerning benefits for clients and mentor involvement in projects. A members status is thus dependent on their practice, not patronage and on proof not certification. All members must make their clients aware of the Cognitive Edge web site, with its directories of practitioners and methods. Network members may make no claims to special status or authority within the network.

## **Use of our name**

The network depends on maintaining the reputation of the Cognitive Edge name. Accordingly it can only be used for methods as published on the web site in their original form

## **Sensemaker™**

Within Cognitive Edge while methods are open sourced, revenue is generated to support the network through the development of software and the sale of software licenses and services.