

**Just one person trying single-handedly to bring an entire organization into the 21<sup>st</sup> century...  
Using the Whole System Event to Solve Problems and Resolve Conflict**

Because engagement is essential to improving performance results, both the “Expert” and the mandated “top-down” models for change often result in a failure to implement (if not downright sabotage) and, when the results are hurtful or disastrous, loss of trust and morale. Walk away from this workshop knowing how to use the Whole System (Critical Mass) Event - a powerful, effective process - to convey a compelling case for change and to leverage community wisdom to identify and solve complex problems.

## Using the Whole System Event to Solve Problems and Resolve Conflict

**Overview:** Organizations have become more and more convinced that ground-floor engagement with labor is critical, but that teams and process take too long, are too disjointed, and lack the information critical to effective decision-making. Whole system events are not a panacea, but they do provide one of the most powerful and potent means of creating a level playing field from which to leverage community wisdom and solve increasingly complex problems.

**Session Format:** The presentation will simulate a Whole System Event so participants can actually experience first-hand what one is like. Participants will receive hand-outs during the presentation that they can use as templates for their own use. The principles and material can readily be adapted for immediate use for a range of issues that need to be addressed mutually by labor and management.

**Learning Objective #1:** At the end of this workshop, participants will have a new tool for true L/M collaboration – the Whole System Event – that they can readily apply to a variety of issues in their workplaces.

**Learning Objective #2:** Participants will understand what is necessary to achieve a critical mass of support in order to implement the changes necessary to create and sustain an effective workplace.

### Content Outline:

1. Creating effective workplaces is an ongoing process. Two critical success factors:
  - A critical mass of people who understand and accept the need for change.
  - Engagement of the whole system to formulate the change and solve the problem.
2. Engaging a large number of both labor and management in an ongoing relationship to identify opportunities and improve performance:
  - Engagement is not an altruistic venture. It is a practical (if sometimes initially difficult) strategic approach to doing business, ensuring the best solutions and the greatest chance of implementation.
  - Increased Organizational Performance: In our work with Kaiser Permanente those business units in the top 25% in employee engagement were 50% more likely to achieve customer loyalty; 44% more likely to achieve above-average profitability; 29% higher in revenue; 10% lower turnover
3. Why a whole systems approach?
  - Parts are interdependent.
  - Trying to change one part has consequences throughout the system.
  - Failure to change entire system has consequences for each part.
  - In a Whole System Event everyone sees the same picture at the same time.
  - Grassroots involvement is critical for acceptance of future actions.
  - Easy to capture the pulse of the whole community.
4. Basics of the Whole System Event
  - Four principles: whole system (labor, management, all levels) in the room, think globally, act locally, work common interests rather than concentrating on differences and contentious areas, self-manage the table work and discussion.
  - Four critical success factors: A commitment to explore. A commitment to engage. A commitment to change and be changed. Courage.
5. Specifics and How-To
  - Work done prior to event
  - Mixed group seating/Stakeholder groups/Each table reflects the whole system
  - Instructions and handouts for each table/Roles at each table
  - Follow-up work
6. Adaptability: Real-life examples – creating new L/M relationships, strategic planning, budgeting process, redesigning organizations, organizational pulse checks and feedback
7. Wrap-up and Lessons Learned