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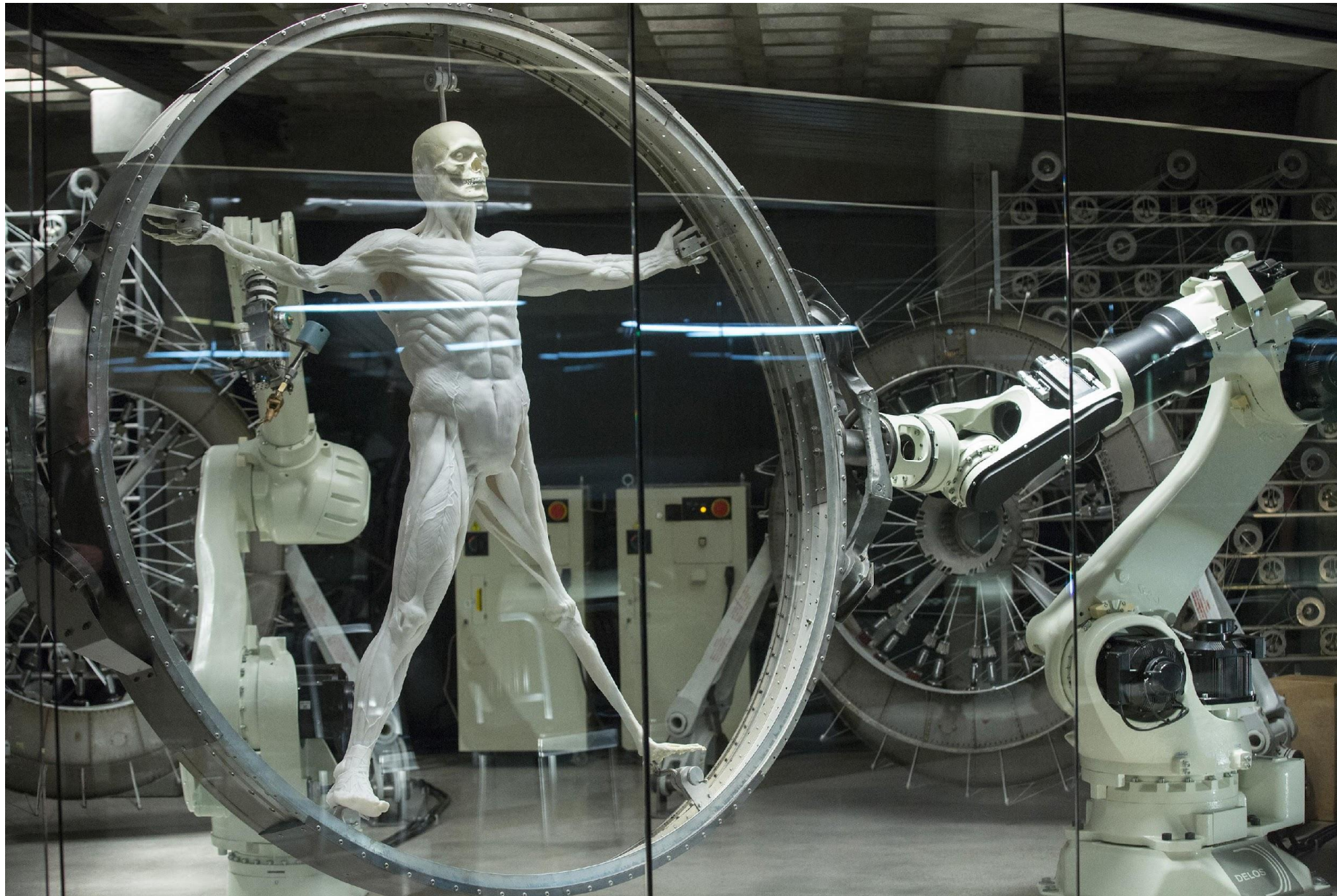


Anatomy of a Problem Solver

CincyDeliver 2022

July 29, 2022

Joe Combs – Principal Consultant



WHY IS PROBLEM SOLVING SO HARD?

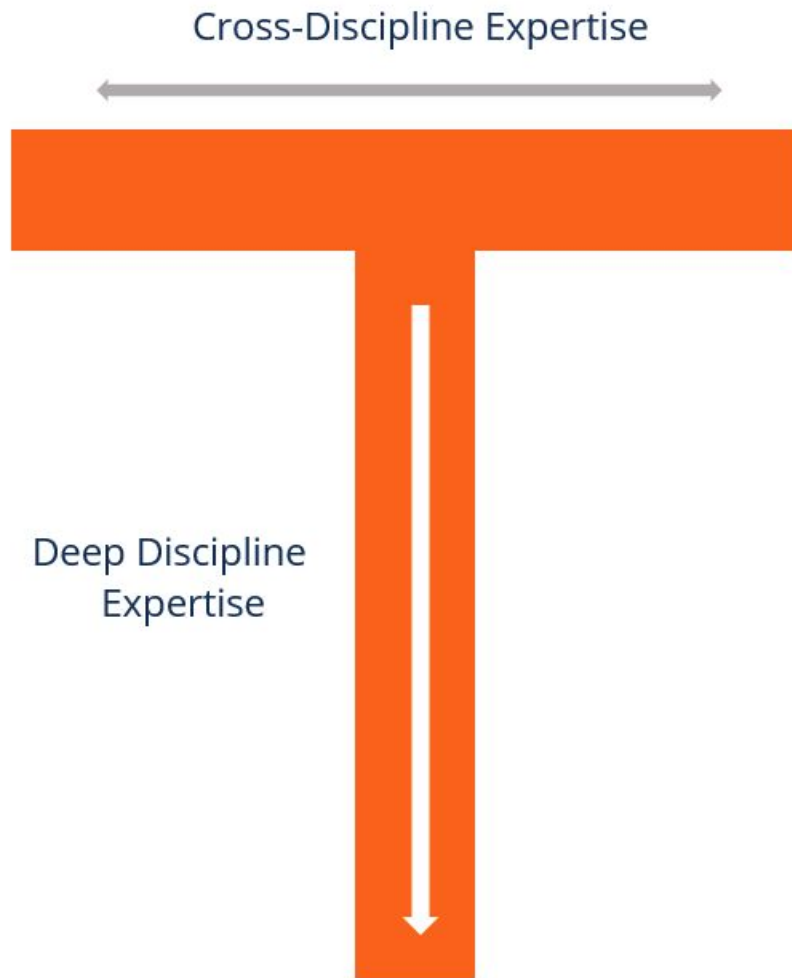
- ❑ **Recognizing That There IS a Problem in the First Place**
- ❑ **Lack of Clarity**
- ❑ **Lack of Familiarity With the Problem Domain**
- ❑ **Complexity**
- ❑ **Competing Priorities**
- ❑ **Analysis Paralysis**



Problem Solver Characteristics



T-SHAPED PEOPLE



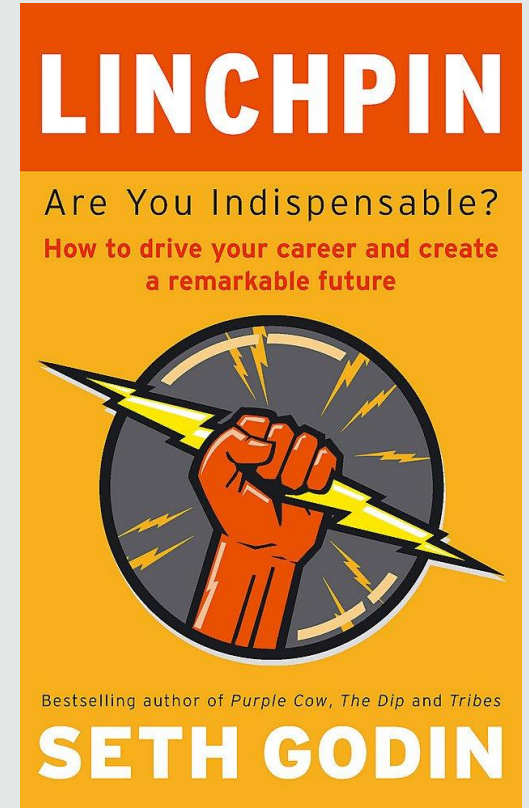
Cross-Discipline Expertise

Deep Discipline
Expertise

T-Shaped Skills

LINCHPINS

- ❑ The Indispensable People Your Project Can't Survive Without
- ❑ Quick to Share What They Know
- ❑ Willing to Ask Difficult Questions
- ❑ Always on the Lookout for the Next Opportunity to Make Things Better

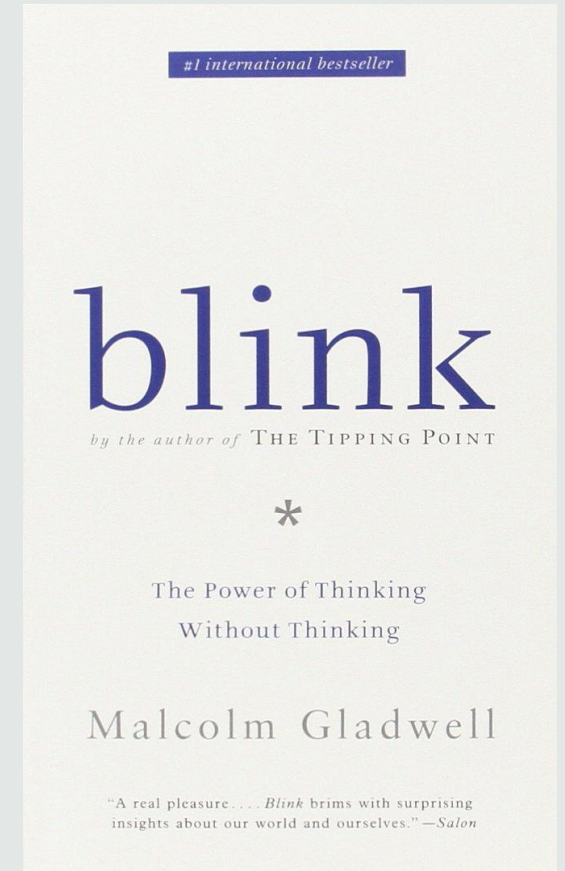


SYSTEMS THINKING

- ❑ **Able to Decompose the Problem & Recognize the Connections**
- ❑ **Asks the Right Questions**
- ❑ **Understands the Tradeoffs**
- ❑ **It's No Mistake That So Many Problem Solvers in Our Industry have Engineering Backgrounds**
- ❑ **Ability to Frame the Problem in Terms Stakeholders Can Understand**

BIAS FOR ACTION

- ❑ Problem Solving Isn't an Academic Exercise
- ❑ Most Problems Worth Solving Have High Stakes
- ❑ Learn To Trust Your Gut
- ❑ Can't Ignore Risks And Tradeoffs
- ❑ Or Priorities For That Matter



ARDENT LEARNERS

- ▣ Always Seeking To Add Breadth To Their T
- ▣ Informal Education Can Be As Important As Formal Training
- ▣ Leaders Are Readers
- ▣ The Greatest Investment You Will Ever Make Is An Investment In Yourself

EXCELLENT COMMUNICATORS

- ❑ **Problem Solvers Have A Mastery All The Elements Of Good Communication:**
 - ❑ Verbal Versus Non-Verbal, Restating For Clarification
- ❑ **Communication Is A Two Way Street**
- ❑ **High Levels Of Emotional Intelligence**
- ❑ **Framing Deeply Technical Matters In Terms Stakeholders Can Understand**
- ❑ **Experts At Using Data To Support Their Recommendation**
- ❑ **Problem Solving Is A Team Sport**



Putting It Into Practice



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE: FOR YOU AND YOUR TEAM

- **Practice, Practice, Practice**
 - Actively Seek Out Problem Solving Opportunities
- **Take A Course**
- **Create Learning Opportunities For Your Team**
- **Read**
- **Celebrate Problem Solving Successes**
- **Go To Lunch – well connected teams lay the groundwork for future problem solving**

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE: FINDING PROBLEM SOLVERS

- ❑ **Forget The HR Playbook**
- ❑ **Do your research**
- ❑ **It takes More Than One Conversation**
 - ❑ Deep Dives On Both Hard And Soft Skills
 - ❑ How They Talk About Past Challenges Is A Strong Indicator Of Problem Solving Aptitude

THANK YOU!



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