



Dr. Clifford S. Saunders

BSc Engineering, MSc Psychology, Ph.D Cybernetics, OFAE

Managing Partner - Too Serious!  Limited

*Creative Genius
Master Facilitator
Speaker
Teacher
Author
Futurist
Humorist
Raconteur
Bon Vivant*



Cliff Saunders received his BSc in Electrical Engineering at the University of Aston in Birmingham, England. He worked as a Systems Engineer at British Aircraft Corporation (BAC) for several years before returning to Aston for his MSc in Applied Psychology. Upon returning to BAC as an Ergonomist, Cliff worked on a variety of weapons systems. During this period, he was awarded a number of patents on products he developed for BAC.

In 1977, Cliff moved to Ottawa, Canada to work in the emerging field of Human-Machine Interface with the Department of Human Factors at Bell Northern Research (now Nortel Networks).

Subsequently, he was seconded by Bell Canada to manage part of the Saudi Telephone Company's training operation in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. During his five years in Saudi, Cliff researched the impact of this training on the local Saudi population. This formed the basis of his doctoral work in Cybernetics.

When he returned to Canada, he continued his work with Nortel in the areas of product design, training and marketing. It was during this time that he made contact with, and was influenced by Professors Michael Porter of Harvard University and Robert Cooper of McMaster University.

For the next three years, Cliff headed the Nortel Innovation Centre. The Centre encouraged the company's inventors to have their personal ideas and inventions evaluated in a safe environment. Cliff was instrumental in bringing a number of these inventions successfully into the marketplace to the benefit of both the inventor and the company.

Throughout this period, Cliff observed, with increasing concern, that impediments to success in the corporate environment often lay in group processes. For groups to be effective in solving complicated problems, they need to be provided with new tools and processes. In searching for solutions, he discovered the work of Professor John Warfield.

Warfield's work in Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) provided the theoretical underpinnings for Cliff's development of The Resolver System, a user friendly management expert system which combines behavioral techniques with world class software for a group decision-making process that has proven to be among the best and most robust on the market.

In conjunction with this powerful tool, Cliff has evolved a number of behavioral methods for facilitating group interaction, based on his own expertise and that of other key specialists in the field of group decision support.

He is now a Partner at Too Serious!  Limited, a Facilitation, Speaking and Social Engineering Games Company in the U.S. and Canada. He also co-owns and manages barrettSaunders & Associates, a group decision support software company with clients worldwide.

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His professional activities span the following range:

Facilitation

Cliff Saunders has designed and facilitated hundreds of successful executive workshops during his career. His client list is a who's who of Fortune 500 corporations. He is recognized as a top level facilitator by his peers and clients alike.

He specializes in the really hard stuff that many facilitators shun, like getting groups to design and implement their end-to-end web strategy, accelerate their product-to-market velocity, increase their product profitability, anticipate and plan for an unpredictable future, and make sense of ANY mindnumbing organizational issue.

Speaking

For some years now, Cliff has inspired a heterogeneous mix of audiences to think outside of the proverbial box. He challenges groups to get the most out of their interactions, to learn new skills for looking at the way they do business, and to bring the magic of human interaction to a practical level. He uses his own interactive methods and software tools to involve, educate and entertain his audiences. His topics of choice cover two main spheres of human activities:

Complexity and Cybernetics

- ◆ Simplicity – a practical approach to handling complexity
- ◆ The Internet as Gold Rush – from a man-machine perspective
- ◆ Trumpetology – the art of dealing with an unpredictable future

Tactics in a Chaotic World

- ◆ Successful New Products to Market in 'Internet' Time
- ◆ Cleaning up the Organizational 'Mess'
- ◆ Cost Reduction for High Tech Products
- ◆ Electronic Commerce Boot Camps – defining your way to e-commerce

Teaching

With an extensive background in Training, Course Development and Teaching, Cliff has developed and delivered a comprehensive range of technical and management courses to his client organizations.

For Cliff, knowledge transfer is key, and through it, so is the empowerment of his clients to skillfully resolve their own interdepartmental needs. To that end, he has created a number of courses in the areas of:


- ◆ Resolution of Complex Issues through Simplicity
- ◆ Cost Reduction at the Source
- ◆ Anticipating the Future through Scenario Planning

New Product Development

Cliff Saunders has been intimately involved in new product development since his engineering days at British Aircraft Corporation and Nortel Networks. He continues today to evolve the proprietary software tools he has designed to help groups handle highly complex and equivocal decisions.

In line with the Too Serious! philosophy, he is at work on a new suite of edutainment tools and games to turn complex organizational tasks into simple, fun, painless processes.

On a Personal Note

Cliff and his wife and partner, Anne-Marie, are passionate about helping people feel better about themselves, and function better in their everyday personal and professional lives. They feel that life is way too serious as it is, and getting more complicated by the day, and that humour is the key to successfully address and manage those nasty bits of 'problems' that never seem to stop testing us. They have named their new company, Too Serious!  Limited, to reflect and emphasize this increasing need for simplicity in the face of complexity.

They currently live in Toronto, and travel extensively to counsel individuals and groups in the art of living rich, productive and rewarding lives - the NOT Too Serious! way.

Too Serious!  Limited

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