Insight Trading
Collaborating to transform the infrastructure that shapes society
by Nick Fleming and Susanne Cooper

Achieving a sustainable shift in productivity
Greater demands are being placed on the world’s cities, infrastructure, and the resources that underpin economic development and prosperity. Risk factors and measures of value are changing, so organisations, projects and their leaders must evolve to remain successful. Delivering more of the same or even incremental business improvement is inadequate. A step change in productivity is required. New solutions are called for, solutions which are more effective, not just more efficient.

Why Insight Trading is a must-read
Conceiving and implementing smarter solutions doesn’t require significantly more effort, just better placed effort. Smarter, cheaper, lower risk and more sustainable infrastructure can be delivered now. Insight Trading offers proven methods to achieve collaborative, strategic thinking that delivers better results, time after time. And this competitive edge is available to anyone prepared to examine and challenge the way they think and partner.

For more information on Insight Trading go to:
http://insighttrading.globalskm.com
If you would like to contact the authors, or for all other enquiries, please email: insighttrading@globalskm.com

“Incremental solutions will not deliver sustainability: we need system change. And effective system change demands new infrastructures, hard and soft. In Insight Trading, Nick Fleming and Susanne Cooper provide hard-won insights on how we can rise to the challenge.”

John Elkington,
Executive Chairman, Volans Ventures; co-founder of SustainAbility, and author of 18 books, most recently The Zeronauts: Breaking the Sustainability Barrier

“This book really strikes a chord with me and is sure to for others. It offers some great insights and case studies, emphasising the need for us to join the dots to achieve innovation and better outcomes that the authors so eloquently demonstrate are possible.”

Ben Waters,
Director of ecomagination,
GE Australia & New Zealand
A book for practical, progressive leaders

The insights and methods contained in *Insight Trading* are relevant and repeatable in all industry sectors and organisations, large or small.

*Insight Trading* offers immediate, practical value to progressive leaders from the executive levels to roles in asset management, project leadership and procurement. Investors, owners and operators of public and private infrastructure will be equipped to find solutions that achieve more with less, are fit for purpose, cost effective and enduring.

Simple methods powerfully applied

The concepts and tools in *Insight Trading* go to the heart of the complex infrastructure challenges facing government and business – negotiating the evolving regulatory landscape while striving to maintain a social licence to operate and enhancing returns on investment.

The how to approach emphasised in the book is underpinned by practical tools that enable a deeper, systemic appreciation of the situation being tackled. They focus effort on the problems that really matter and find smart, elegantly simple yet profoundly effective solutions.

In particular, the authors observe that:

- **Systems thinking** is key to understanding important factors and relationships that shape the operating context for an organisation, project or asset
- An **integrated approach** is needed to understand related risks and issues, and to conceive smart solutions
- Asking the **right questions** can reframe the problem, shift thinking and play a profoundly important role in generating transformative solutions
- Genuinely **collaborative approaches** provide the basis to gain valuable insights and competitive advantage
- Effectively putting these ideas into practice – to gain the benefits – requires **change management** and strong leadership
- **Innovation** needn’t be left to chance; good processes will enhance its value and repeatability
Each chapter is structured to provide a mix of practical insights, informative diagrams, meaningful examples and probing questions. Combined, they offer a powerful approach for purposeful innovation and substantive change at the organisation, program or project level. The snapshot from Chapter Six below shows how these elements combine in a logical structure and engaging format.

**Using the power of questions**

Good questions get everyone involved. Spend time working out what questions really matter. Powerful questions provide new insights, ideas and solutions.

**Questions that build a reason for change**

The initial reaction of the water company CEO providing the ‘case study’ in the previous chapter was to move beyond business as usual and to challenge the status quo. To understand the possible impacts of innovation, the Thinking Team were asked to define the major assumptions and conditions for this project. Participants were then asked more than ten more “deliberate” questions without discussion. Only after a consolidated summary was the group asked to share “assumptions and conditions” for the real-world experience: the development of the project and the team’s particular project.

A team member summarised the feedback: “Well, if they’re not assumptions, then they’re questions. What’s consistent? What’s variable? And what could be reframed for more enduring and valuable change.” This figure provides a simplified view of the kinds of thinking that is needed. It’s important to challenge the underlying beliefs that are at the root of our choices and actions. It’s important to burrow beneath the surface of issues to understand the assumptions that are influencing people’s thinking and actions. Asking open questions with a genuine intention of inquiring and learning can allow people with widely varying knowledge to legitimately contribute to discussions. Variable answers and discussion can shift perceptions of risk and uncertainty and can make space for collaborative conversations, which can translate into productive solutions for complex and changing situations.

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International peer review has confirmed the relevance, portability and value of the insights and methods set out in *Insight Trading*.

“Insight Trading is an enjoyable and convincing book, with a suite of excellent case studies.”

**Stephen Selwood,**
Chief Executive,
New Zealand Council for Infrastructure Development

“This is an authoritative book. It’s based on many years of practical experience, and the case studies give concrete backing to the opinions and recommendations. It’s going to be a very useful tool.”

**Professor John Thwaites,**
Chair of the Monash Sustainability Institute and ClimateWorks Australia

“Insight Trading makes numerous compelling points, including that sustainability concepts are core to good business management. Challenging questions that trigger reflection are complemented by useful planning and project design tools and very good examples to demonstrate the key principles.”

**David Loggia,**
Director,
Carmignac Gestion asset management

“This book takes the concept of sustainability, presents it in simple language, and provides a true and important bridge from knowledge to behaviour. It’s concise and will reach many readers with a variety of interests, educational backgrounds and professions.”

**Pedro Rodrigues De Almeida,**
Head of Infrastructure and Urban Development Industries, World Economic Forum

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**The authors**

**Nick Fleming** has been a leading contributor to sustainable development for more than 20 years, utilising his background in engineering, a PhD in sustainable water infrastructure, and qualifications and experience in strategic business leadership. He is widely published and a recognised speaker. Nick is currently the Chief Sustainability Officer of Sinclair Knight Merz, and sits on several industry bodies fostering sustainable infrastructure.

**Susanne Cooper** has 25 years of experience leading multi-disciplinary teams and senior levels of organisations to achieve practical but innovative change for better outcomes, backed by technical rigour and incisive thinking. She is a recognised facilitator of innovative approaches to complex problems. Susanne is currently the Sustainability Practice Leader for Sinclair Knight Merz.

The authors’ combined expertise provides an impressive depth of hands-on experience and insight that gives a confidence and credibility to their work.

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