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Beyond Problem Solving

Business TRIZ as a Framework for Rethinking the System Itself



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We usually start with an unwanted result

Current result ≠ Desired result

So we ask:

- What prevents the desired result?
- What should be changed?
- How can the system be improved?

But what if the same unwanted result keeps coming back?



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What is the system actually doing?

Instead of asking only:

"Why can't the system produce the result I want?"

- What is blocking the result?
- What should be changed?
- How can the system be improved?

We can also ask:

"What function might be performed through the result it keeps producing?"

- What does the system receive from this result?
- Why does it keep appearing?



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A persistent result may perform a function

we have not explicitly recognized



It does not mean

that every problem has a hidden purpose.

It means

that before eliminating a persistent result, it may be useful to ask:

What does the system receive from continuing to produce this result?

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A familiar example: owner-dependent business systems



Declared goal

- Delegate decisions
- Reduce operational involvement
- Build an autonomous organization
- Scale the business

Persistent result

The owner remains central to almost every important decision.

What if this result is not only a failure of delegation?

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Result ≠ Function

The observed result and the function it performs may be different.

Observed result

The owner remains involved in every important decision.

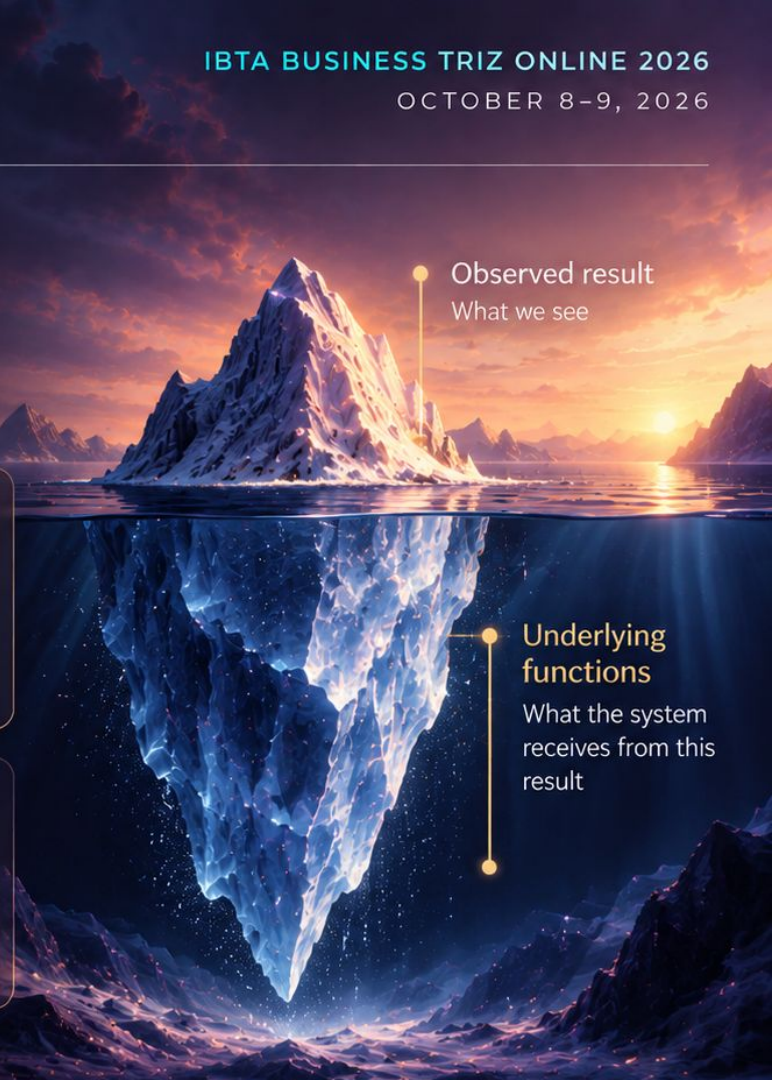
≠

Possible functions

- Control
- Reduced uncertainty
- Indispensability
- Significance

Before eliminating a persistent result, it may be useful to ask:

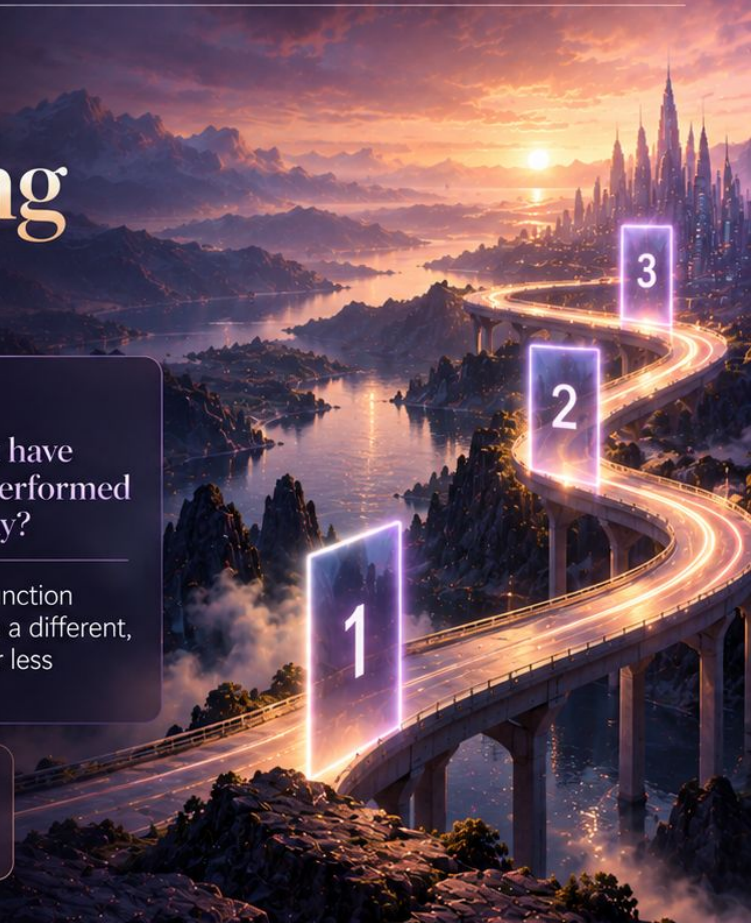
"What does the system receive from continuing to produce it?"



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From eliminating the result to understanding the function



1 Which function is being performed?

What does the system receive from continuing to produce this result?

2 Do I need this function?

Is this function important?
Do I want to keep it in the system?

3 Does it have to be performed this way?

Can the same function be performed in a different, more efficient or less restrictive way?

The problem changes when we shift the focus from the result to the function.

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Function ≠ Implementation

A useful function can have an outdated implementation.

A function may remain valuable while the way it is currently performed becomes:

- **Inefficient** — Takes too much time or resources
- **Expensive** — Consumes unnecessary costs
- **Restrictive** — Limits flexibility and future options
- **Unnecessary** — No longer needed given current context

Separating function from implementation expands the design space.



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Then I changed the object of analysis

What if I apply the same perspective to my own activity?

Instead of asking:

"What should my next professional identity be?"

I asked:

"What function keeps appearing across very different activities?"

The same analytical lens can reveal a deeper, more stable function behind different roles and formats.



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Many identities, one system under observation

The labels kept changing.

- English Teacher
- Trainer
- Psychologist
- Consultant
- Business TRIZ Practitioner
- Writer
- AI Creator



Each label described what I was doing
at a particular moment.
None of them explained what persisted across all of them.

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Profession ≠ Function

A profession is one possible implementation.

- A **profession** is not a function.
- A **job title** is not a function.
- A **product** is not a function.

They are **configurations** through which functions are performed.

So what remains when the configurations change?



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12 A POSSIBLE INVARIANT

What kept appearing?

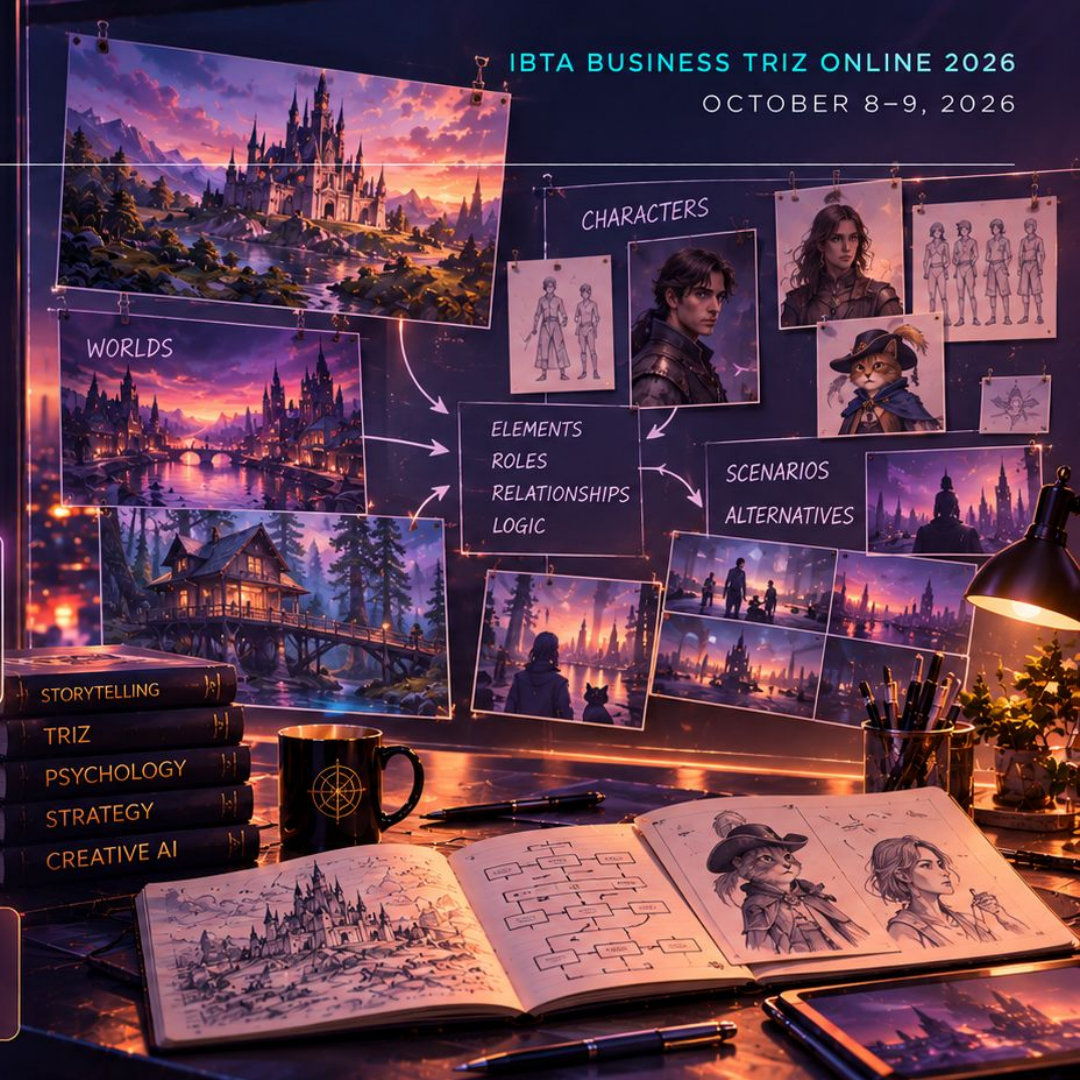
Across very different activities, I repeatedly found myself doing something similar:

Constructing models of possible realities — defining their elements, roles, relationships and logic — and finding ways to make those models tangible.

Sometimes it started with an **existing system** to be understood or changed.

Sometimes it started simply with an **imagined possibility.**

The recurring function was not a profession.
It was designing "what could be."



13 THE SAME FUNCTION, DIFFERENT FORMS

Different systems. The same underlying pattern.

Childhood play	→	worlds, roles, rules and scenarios
Writing	→	characters, relationships and narrative worlds
Psychology	→	models of people, behavior and causal relationships
TRIZ	→	systems, functions, contradictions and alternative configurations
Narrative experiments	→	alternative future and past scenarios
Generative AI	→	making imagined models perceptible

The tools became more sophisticated.
The underlying activity remained surprisingly stable.



14 FROM IDENTITIES TO RESOURCES

What happens when I stop treating a competence as an identity?

A previous professional identity can become a **resource** in another system.

Previous configuration

- English
- ↓
- Professional service
- ↓
- Teaching

New configuration

- English
- ↓
- Communication resource

Communication resource:
- International projects
- Creative work
- Conferences

The competence did not disappear.
Its role in the system changed.



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FROM IDENTITY TO SYSTEM DESIGN

A different design question becomes possible

Instead of asking:

"**Which profession** should I choose — and how can I become **more successful** in it?"

I can ask:

"**What function** do I actually want to perform — and what **configuration of available resources** can perform it best?"

The question shifts from choosing an identity to designing a system.

FUNCTION
↓
AVAILABLE RESOURCES
↓
POSSIBLE CONFIGURATIONS
↓
NEW SYSTEM



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ONE EXPERIMENT: NARRATIVE SIMULATION

What happens when a possible future becomes a story?

I began writing detailed narratives of:

Possible futures
turning abstract goals into detailed lived scenarios

Alternative scenarios
exploring different developments of the same situation

Alternative narratives of past experience
exploring how a different interpretation or storyline changes the model

An interesting effect appeared:
Some goals that looked attractive in abstract form **became much less attractive** when developed into detailed narratives.

This suggested a new question:
Can narrative become a space for exploring possible realities before choosing them?

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PERSONAL FUTURE CINEMA

An emerging concept

The narrative experiment suggested a new configuration:

PERSONAL FUTURE CINEMA

Personalized AI-generated narrative experiences for exploring:

- Possible **futures**
- Alternative **scenarios**
- Alternative **narratives** of **past experience**



NARRATIVE DESIGN + GENERATIVE AI + PERSONALIZATION

A possible system for making personally meaningful "what could be" perceptible.

WHAT IS THE SYSTEM ACTUALLY FOR?

Exploring a possible reality before accepting it

Personal Future Cinema can work in **two directions:**

FUTURE

What if I get what I think I want?

A desired future becomes a detailed narrative reality.



Abstract goal → Detailed possible world → Experiential simulation → **Do I actually want this?**

PAST

What if a different past creates a different future?

An alternative narrative of past experience changes the conditions from which the next possible reality is constructed.



Past experience → Alternative narrative → Different present model → **Different possible futures**

The purpose is not simply to visualize another reality.
It is to explore what changes when a different reality is made experientially accessible.

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RESULT OR FUNCTION?

What will I actually be doing in this reality?

A desired result and the activity it enables are **not always the same thing.**

A declared goal
is often still an abstraction.

"I want to scale my business."
"I want to move abroad."
"I want a different career."
"I want to be more successful."

↓

Narrative simulation
turns the abstract goal into a detailed possible reality.

Recurring function
What am I actually doing in this reality?

Each person tends to repeatedly transform the world in a certain way. Examples:

- **Creating order** from complexity
- **Building** and expanding systems
- **Connecting** people and elements
- **Discovering** hidden patterns
- **Creating** new possibilities
- **Transforming** ideas into tangible forms
- **Stabilizing** unstable systems
- **Giving meaning** and coherence

The simulated reality
shows what this activity actually looks like when the goal is achieved.



A desired result may create the reality we asked for — while removing the activity we actually keep trying to perform.

Narrative simulation makes it possible to test not only "Do I want this result?" but **"Who am I — and what am I actually doing — inside the system that produces it?"**

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THE CORE CONTRADICTION

Personalization ⟷ Scalability

The system should provide a deeply meaningful personal experience — **and be scalable.**

More individual / expert involvement

- **Deeper** understanding of the person's context
- **More relevant** and meaningful narratives
- Ability to ask the **right questions** and guide the process
- **Higher quality** and coherence of the experience

↓

LOWER SCALABILITY



More automation

- Greater **scalability**
- **Lower cost** per user
- **Faster** generation and delivery
- **Does not require** a human expert for every user

↓

RISK OF GENERIC OUTPUT AND LOSS OF MEANING

How can the system provide both deeply meaningful personalization and scalability without loss of relevance and quality?

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IDEAL FINAL RESULT (IFR)

What would the system ideally do?

The user experiences a deeply personalized and relevant possible reality before creating it in the real world — **with minimal external resources and expert intervention.**

USEFUL FUNCTION IS ACHIEVED

Relevant possible reality
becomes experientially accessible to the user.

Deep personalization
adapts to the individual's context, goals and patterns of activity.

Consequences become perceptible
the user can see, feel and understand what this reality actually implies.



THE SYSTEM APPROACHES MINIMUM

- Expert intervention — Minimal or none. ↓
- Production resources — Minimal. ↓
- User effort — Minimal. ↓
- Cost and complexity — Minimal. ↓

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BACK TO THE ORIGINAL QUESTION

Why does a system keep producing a result its owner says they do not want?

A possible explanation: the unwanted configuration **preserves an implementation of a recurring function.**



RECURRING FUNCTION

A stable pattern of activity that a person repeatedly tries to perform across different systems and situations.

IMPLEMENTATION

A specific way of performing this function using available resources, elements and interactions (e.g. a business, a role, a project, a team).

PERSISTENT PROBLEM

The current implementation may include or reproduce unwanted results (dependencies, crises, chaos, limitations), which are repeatedly observed over time.

KEY QUESTION

What activity would disappear if the problem were permanently solved?

Would I still be able to perform the function that matters to me?

A persistent problem may survive because the existing configuration provides a way for a recurring function to be performed.

The recurring function may need to remain.
The current implementation **does not.**

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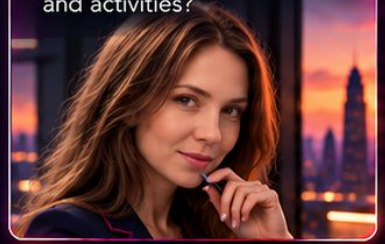
FROM INSIGHT TO PRACTICE

Keep the function. Redesign the implementation.

A practical sequence for rethinking the system.

1 IDENTIFY THE RECURRING FUNCTION

What do I repeatedly try to do across different systems and activities?



2 RECOGNIZE THE CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION

How is this function being performed now?



3 IDENTIFY THE COST

What problems, dependencies or unwanted results does this implementation reproduce?



4 RECONFIGURE THE RESOURCES

What other elements, resources and interactions could perform the same function?



5 DESIGN ANOTHER IMPLEMENTATION

How can the function remain while the unwanted configuration disappears?



The function may be worth preserving.
The system that currently performs it may not be.

Beyond problem solving means asking not only how to eliminate a problem — **but what must remain when the problem disappears.**