Visiting Professor:
John Seddon, Vanguard Consulting Ltd

John Seddon is a British occupational psychologist and author, specialising in the service industry. He is the managing director of Vanguard, a consultancy company he formed in 1985 and the inventor of ‘The Vanguard Method’. Vanguard Consulting Ltd has franchisees in Scotland, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden, New Zealand, Australia, Croatia and The Netherlands.

Vanguard helps service organizations change from a conventional command-and-control design to a systems design, using a proprietary method - The Vanguard Method.

John Seddon is an occupational psychologist, researcher, professor, management thinker and leading global authority on change, specialising in the service industry. His prominence grew following attacks on current British management thinking including: the belief in economies of scale, quality standards such as ISO9000 and much of public sector reform including ‘deliverology’, the use of targets, inspection and centralised control of local services. The Daily Telegraph described him as a “reluctant management guru”, with a background in occupational psychology.
He adapted the Toyota Production System and the work of W. Edwards Deming and Taiichi Ohno into a methodology called ‘The Vanguard Method’ for improving performance in service industries. He is critical of target-based management, and of basing decisions on economies of scale, rather than “economies of flow”.


Seddon won the first Management Innovation Prize for ‘Reinventing Leadership’ in October 2010.

**Publications**

- Seddon J 2014 ‘The Whitehall Effect: How Whitehall became the enemy of great public services and what we can do about it’ Triarchy Press: Axminster
- Seddon J, O'Donovan B (eds) 2014 Special Issue of the journal Systemic Practice and Action Research (SPAR), including 5 articles about the Vanguard Method:
  - O'Donovan B 2014 ‘Editorial for Special Issue of SPAR: The Vanguard Method in a Systems Thinking Context’
  - Dunnion J and O'Donovan B 2014 ‘Systems Thinking and Higher Education: The Vanguard Method’
  - Gibson J and O'Donovan B 2014 ‘The Vanguard Method as Applied to the Design and Management of English and Welsh Children’s Services Departments’
  - Wilson R 2014 ‘Living the Life You Choose: The Introduction of the Vanguard Method into an Organisation Providing Support to People with Learning Disabilities’
  - Watts J 2014 ‘The Perils of Command and Control’
- Locality/Vanguard 2014 ‘Saving money by doing the right thing: Why ‘local by default’ must replace ‘diseconomies of scale’’
- Seddon J 2013 ‘Submission to House of Commons Public Administration Committee: the Citizen and Public Services inquiry’
- Seddon 2012 ‘Submission to Scottish Parliament’s Local Government and Regeneration Committee: call for evidence’
• Seddon, J and O’Donovan, B 2010 ‘Why aren’t we all working for Learning Organisations?’ AMED e-Organisations and People Vol 17 No 2
• McQuade, D (2008) ‘Leading Lean Action to Transform Housing Services’ Public Money and Management Vol 28 no 1