

Problem Solving: structured & creative



Overview:

Creative problem solving and effective decision-making have a significant impact on an organization's growth and profitability. Knowing how to approach the range of problems you face daily with proven techniques in identifying and resolving problems will increase and enhance your own and your organization's performance.

Learn:

This program will equip participants with the skills to better clarify and define problems, generate potential solutions, and analyze risks and benefits. We will address such questions as: When should I make a decision on my own? How will others react to a decision and what are the implications? How and when should I implement a solution? You will gain a better understanding of how the mind works, a greater capacity for generating creative solutions, and a discovery of ways to cultivate creative problem solving in others.

Objectives:

- ❖ Learn skills to better clarify and define problems while generating potential solutions.
- ❖ Distinguish the difference between symptoms and causes to better clarify your problems.
- ❖ Know how to the important questions that will help you analyze the risks and benefits of a solution.
- ❖ Understand the factors to take into account when selecting solution alternatives.
- ❖ Discover techniques for introducing creativity into the problem solving process.
- ❖ Learn to analyze the social and physical restraints in the workplace that effect problem solving and decision-making.
- ❖ Assess your own decision making style and its strengths and weaknesses.
- ❖ See how to study behavior patterns in group decision-making and determine which ones you should counteract.
- ❖ Translate what you learn into action.

AESCHWARTZ & ASSOCIATES

13 Conservation Way • Stoughton, MA 02072

EMAIL: aes@aeschwartz.com

TEL: 781-436-5033

www.aeschwartz.com

www.aespeaks.com

www.schoolformanagers.com

Outline:

Problem Solving And Decision Making Basics

- A. Identifying The Problem
 - 1. Specifically describe your data
 - 2. Reporting your interpretation and feelings -- "own" the problem
 - 3. Understanding the impact to both you and your organization
 - 4. Clarification -- bring everyone to a clear understanding of the problem
- B. Identify The Cause
 - 1. Symptoms vs. causes: look for factors which are "distinctive" to the problem
- C. Soliciting Alternatives -- The Search For New Solutions
 - 1. Brainstorm -- collect as many ideas as possible before making any judgment
 - 2. Recording all ideas and suggestions using visual aids
- D. Planning For Implementation
 - 1. Selecting alternatives
 - a. consider cost effectiveness, opportunity costs and acceptability
 - 2. Deciding everything that must be done
 - a. who does what, when, where and how
 - b. drawing up and clarifying the contract
 - c. who needs to be informed?
- E. Evaluation, Accountability, And Follow-up
 - 1. Has everything been carried out?
 - 2. Assessing effectiveness
 - a. is the solution working? -- Does it require revision work?

Introduce Creativity Into The Problem Solving Process

- A. Linking Personal And Organizational Needs For Creativity
- B. Thinking Of Problems As Opportunities For Groups To Grow Creative Muscles
 - 1. Encouraging participation -- unlock some creative potential
 - 2. Creating a comfortable, enthusiastic climate -- use feelings and attitudes
 - 3. Involving the group in the planning and implementation of the plan
 - 4. Allowing for unconstrained creativity
 - 5. Even with critical situation (lighten-up) -- H A V E F U N!
- C. Blocks To Creative Problem Solving
 - 1. Perceptual and environmental blocks
 - a. what are they? (vertical vs. lateral thinking)
 - b. analyzing social and physical restraints in the work place

Making Effective Decisions

- A. Understanding The Decision Maker -- How Do Individuals Make Decisions?
 - 1. Important factors to be considered to ensure a successful decision
 - 2. The do's and don'ts of decision making
 - 3. Evaluating risks and benefits
- B. Assessing Your Own Personal Style
- C. Understanding Behavior In Group Decisions
 - 1. Lack of response -- "The Plop"
 - 2. Minority vs. majority rule
 - 3. Authority rule -- when the boss is in complete control
 - 4. Decision by unanimous consensus -- everybody is pleased

Action Plans And Summary