Tools for SMALL Businesses

Level 3 Question X:

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| **Title** | Issue solving |
| **Why** | Issues and problems occur all the time in a growing organization. The challenge is to find the right format for systematic problem solving, that can move your organization forward. |
| **What** | An “issue” is defined as a problem, obstacle, barrier, idea or opportunity. Basically anything unresolved that needs to be discussed. |
| **How** | Starting with your issues list, identify the top three issues, then follow the Issues Solving Track**Step 1: Identify*** The stated problem is rarely the real issue.
* You have to dig down to find the real issue.
* Don’t move forward until you clearly identify the real issue.
* Once you have identified the real issue, then move to discuss and stay laser focused on the real issue until it is solved (no tangents).

**Step 2: Discuss*** In an open and honest environment, everyone must share their thoughts, ideas, concerns, and solutions regarding the real issue.

Discuss and debate.* Everyone needs to get it all out on the table, but only say it once. If you say it more than once, you are politicking.
* Once everything is on the table and things are getting redundant, it’s time for the solution.
* With the greater good in mind, the solution is always simple, though sometimes not easy and sometimes very hard.

**Step 3: Solve*** It’s more important that you decide than it is what you decide ... so decide!
* Sometimes you will have to go back to the discussion step after the solution is stated because you haven’t truly solved it.
* Once everyone agrees, or at least can live with the decision, the action step(s) must be owned by someone and put on the To-Do List, which then are confirmed complete in next week’s meeting.

**Rule of thumb:** On a healthy team, eight out of ten times everyone will agreewith the solution. However, two out of ten times they won’t, and theIntegrator needs to make the final decision. Consensus management doesnot work and will put you out of business faster than anything. Noteveryone will be pleased in these situations, but as long as they have beenheard and the team is healthy, they can usually live with it and mustsupport the decision. From there, there must be a united front movingforward. |
| **Template** | See next page |

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| Priority | Issue | Short term fix | Long term solution |
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Fishbone Diagram

A Fishbone Diagram, also called a cause and effect diagram or Ishikawa diagram, is a visualization tool for categorizing the potential causes of a problem in order to identify its root causes



Five Why’s

The Five Whys tool consists in repeatedly asking “why” in order to drill down from the symptoms of an issue to the root cause. This tool will prevent a team from being satisfied with superficial solutions that won’t fix the problem in the long run.

