



The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat
Le Secrétariat de la littératie et de la numératie

The Coaching Clinic™

"working intelligence"

Coaching Chip Number 7

This Coaching Chip:
[Determining the Causes of Problems](#)

Determining the Causes of Problems

Knowing the causes of problems leads to better ideas for solutions. Causes answer the 'why' question.

Determining the Causes of Problems

1. Determine the Cause of the Problem.

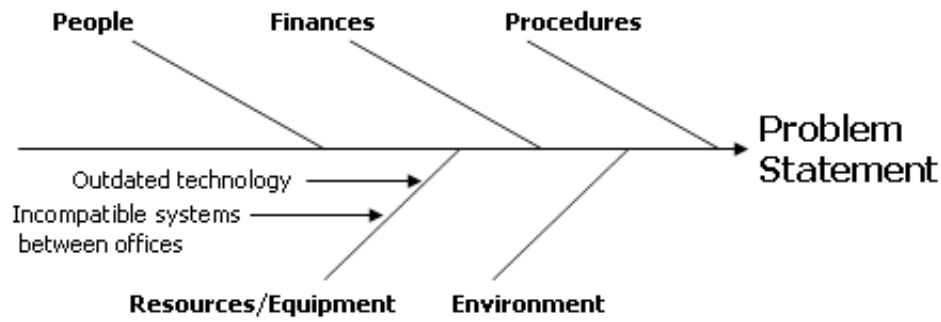
Don't skip this step. It will help you understand the problem better. It will lead to a more accurate problem identification and solution.

2. Brainstorming comes first.

As with all brainstorming exercises it is important to ensure that all ideas get on the table. If you're a leader make sure that every participant has a chance to put in their own ideas and to build on the ideas of others. Do what you can to stimulate out-of-the-box thinking. One way is to make sure that everyone feels comfortable speaking up.

3. Two step brainstorming phase.

Stage one of brainstorming is developing all the categories in which the causes could go. For example, the causes could be divided into: money, people, policies, resources and environment. Stage two is to brainstorm a list of possible causes for each of the categories. You can think of this as a fishbone. The problem statement is the head of the fish. Each bone represents a category of causes. For example:



4. Identify the most likely causes before moving to solutions.

While there are potentially many causes, it is important to identify the most likely cause. Solutions are then generated in relation to this cause.

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