

# Building Effective Project Problem Solving and Trouble Fixing Skills

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## Introduction

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Build exceptionally effective project teams through skilled problem resolution. Use a problem solving approach that improves project results or improves the project process. Practice problem solving skills of detecting, recognizing, investigating, developing, implementing and mentoring. Apply project fundamentals and the project system in problem solving practice. Recognize and diagnose deviations wherever and whenever the symptoms appear. Locate the performance variance within the project process, resources control metrics, teams, work methods, leadership, beginning situation, or in the results.

Deviations from expected performance create challenges for all people. What was detected? Did it change? What was expected? Is that expectation realistic? What caused the change or the difference in expectation? How critical is that difference? What is the impact or magnitude of the problem? What will restore the expected performance? Does it really need to be fixed? How to implement the correction? How do you know if the performance meets expectations? These are the questions of good problem solving. Learn that the symptoms may not be the problem and the resolution may not need to fix the problem. Hone skills so that detecting trouble, identifying trouble cause, and fixing the trouble become second nature.

## Learning Outcomes

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Participants will improve their skills for solving problems and fixing trouble by using this intentional process:

- ◆ Detecting Deviation
- ◆ Recognizing Change
- ◆ Investigating Causes
- ◆ Developing Solutions
- ◆ Implementing Fix

Problems are fixed, stay fixed, and do not reoccur in future projects.

## Learning Objectives

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- ◆ Compare and contrast the skills of good problem solvers, of good trouble fixers, and those not so good.
- ◆ Know your problem solving style with its strengths and challenges.
- ◆ List the “Rules of Thumb” of effective problem solvers and trouble -shooters

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- ◆ Demonstrate understanding of similarities and differences in the problem solving skills of detection, recognizing, investigating, developing, and implementing.
- ◆ Detect deviation by looking, listening, touching, hunching.
- ◆ Recognize change between observed and expected.
- ◆ Investigate causes both root and secondary.
- ◆ Develop solutions to leverage this fix.
- ◆ Implement fix and prevent future failure.
- ◆ List and explain the project system.
- ◆ List and explain the project fundamentals.
- ◆ Use the problem to grow the team and its members.
- ◆ Learn tools of problem solving: Clarification Models, Cause -Effect, Root Cause, Event Trees, Decision Grids, Force Field, Action Planning.

## Outline

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- ◆ Introduction. 0.25 hours
- ◆ Participants recall situations of crucial project problem solving. They discuss what was learned and how they have generalized the learning. Write 'rules of thumb' used by effective problem solvers. . 0.75 hours.
- ◆ Define problems and trouble. Compare and contrast effective problem solvers with less effective. Compare and contrast effective trouble shooters with less effective. 0.75 hours.
- ◆ Introduce problem solving process. Have each team recall examples for one phase of the problem solving process. What tools, techniques, processes did they use? 0.75 hours.
- ◆ Introduce the tools of problem solving used by each phase. Have each team apply the tool set to one phase of an example problem. 0.75 hours
- ◆ What are problems in problem solving? The Symptom Syndrome, Analysis Paralysis, The Solution Fixation, "Bite the Bullet" Paranoia. Introduce the project system. What are personal confidences in solving different kinds of problems. 0.75 hours
- ◆ Introduce project fundamentals and the project system as tools for problem resolution. 0.5 hours
- ◆ Have each team take one of their problems to be solved and run through the problem solving process. 1.0 hours.
- ◆ Practice problem solving in a simulated project environment. 1.5 hours.
- ◆ Plan changes in personal problem solving and in project problem solving. 0.5 hours
- ◆ Closure and celebration 0.5 hours

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## ProjectLEADER® Problem Resolution Model

<b>Problem Solving and Trouble Fixing</b>	<b>Symptoms What?</b>	<b>Causes How?</b>	<b>Solutions What?</b>	<b>Fix Who and When?</b>
<b>Mission</b>	<i>Detect Deviation and Recognize Change</i>	<i>Investigate Possible Causes</i>	<i>Develop Opportunities for Fix</i>	<i>Implement Fix</i>
<b>Planning</b>	<i>Expectation for Performance. Detecting and Recognizing Change</i>	<i>Use Structured Approach (Resources, System, Fundamentals, or Dimensions)</i>	<i>Opportunity Generation and Decision making techniques</i>	<i>Developing Courses of Action and Action Planning</i>
<b>Executing</b>	<i>Detect Deviation and Identify Change</i>	<i>Ask Why Five Times.</i>	<i>Developing and Selecting Solution</i>	<i>Deploying the Fix</i>
<b>Controlling</b>	<i>Verify Expectation, Deviation, and Recognition</i>	<i>Is this the root cause? Is this the only cause?</i>	<i>Velocity and Impact of Change and of Solution</i>	<i>Measure Efficacy of Problem Solving</i>