

## ***Business Management Institute***

# ***Difficult Decisions: Problem Solving in Changing Times***

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## **Greetings and Introduction**

- Greetings
- Ice Breaker
- Take Aways
  - ✓ Problem Solving Process
  - ✓ Management's Role
  - ✓ Problem Solving Tools
  - ✓ Problem Solving Applications
- "10 Things to Remember"



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## **Course Outline**

- I. Problem Solving Overview**
- II. Management's Role**
- III. Problem Solving Process**
- IV. Problem Solving Techniques**
- V. Problem Solving Exercises/Application**



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## 10 Things That Require Zero Intelligence and Talent

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|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. Attitude        | 6. Being on Time |
| 2. Passion         | 7. Energy        |
| 3. Body Language   | 8. Work Ethic    |
| 4. Being Prepared  | 9. Doing What    |
| 5. Being Coachable | 10. Doing More   |



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## I. Problem Solving Overview

### A. Observations:

- “We might have solved the wrong problem”
- “We realized at the end of our deliberation that we acted too quickly with too little information”
- “We shouldn’t have jumped to a decision so quickly”
- “Our decision did not prove to be in support of our organization’s mission & vision”
- “Let us never forget – there are always 3 or more opinions/stories/views to conflicts & problems”

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## I. Problem Solving Overview

### B. Problem Solving Essentials:

- Determining the “TRUTH”
- Adopting a positive/growth attitude vs. a negative/fixed attitude
- Beginning at the end with the desired outcome in mind
- Practicing skills effective leadership/manager skills
- Listening and communicating effectively
- Employing creative thinking – asking the “Why,” “Who,” “What,” “When,” and “How Much”
- Dividing the problem & conquering smaller aspects
- Monitoring and modifying strategies as necessary

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## **I. Problem Solving Overview**

### **C. Dimensions of Problems**

- Institutional
- People
- Internal
- External
- Unforeseen



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## **I. Problem Solving Overview**

### **D. Types of Problems**

- Conflict within the individual
- Conflict between individuals
- Conflict between individuals and groups
- Conflict between organizations



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## **I. Problem Solving Overview**

### **E. Problem Solving in Higher Education is Different**

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| • Faculty are independent contractors | • Long term alumni/donor relationships |
| • Diverse population                  | • Betterment to society                |
| • Governance Issues                   | • Relationship to workforce            |
| • Freedom of Speech                   |  |
| • Visible/accountable outcomes        |  |

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## **I. Problem Solving Overview**

### **F. Problem Solving Tips**

#### **1. Employ the “Fire” Model**

**F = Facts**

**I = Interpretations**

**R = Reactions**

**E = Ends**



Source: “Try Using the ‘Fire Model’” by Mark Murphy.

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## **I. Problem Solving Overview**

### **F. Problem Solving Tips**

#### **2. Ask these 5 helpful words**

**“What are the facts here?”**

• Listen Carefully

• Confirm the situation by repeating the problem and the desired solution

• Summarize

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## **I. Problem Solving Overview**

### **F. Problem Solving Tips**

#### **2. Ask these 5 helpful words (continued)**

• Provide a response to the problem

○ “Noted” and move on

○ If you know, say so

○ If you don’t know, say when you’ll respond

○ Follow through and up

**3. Remember: Every response to a problem will not be accepted**

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## I. Problem Solving Overview

### E. Problem-Solving Survey

- A. What is the *Number One* Problem in your workplace that you would like to change?  
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- B. Identify the factors to be considered.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- C. Who should be involved?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- D. Identify 3 alternatives.  
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- E. Select the best alternative.  
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## II. Management's Role

### A. Focus on "True North"

- Know your purpose and passion
- Employ the highest ethical standards
- Treat others with respect and kindness
- Have a plan and work your plan every day
- Demonstrate humility and servant leadership



Source: The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Business News Publishing, 1989.

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## II. Management's Role

### A. Focus on "True North"

- Think positive and envision successful outcomes
- Be an active listener and participate
- Exhibit high energy and a sense of urgency
- Be a problem solver and not a problem maker
- Give others credit for success and assume responsibility for failures
- Possess a forgiving heart and give others a second chance
- Stay focused on the most important and never stop learning and teaching others
- Live for something greater than self and always give back

Source: The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Business News Publishing, 1989.

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## II. Management's Role

### B. Avoid Management Flaws

- Betraying of "TRUST"
  - Management functions on the basis of trust "Integrity"
  - Trust is the foundation upon which all relationships are built
  - Keep balance between 3 forces
  - Character always intelligence & success
- Losing touch with your people
- Forgetting that people are the only appreciable asset
- Failing to realize that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care



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## II. Management's Role

### C. Be Consistent in What you say and What you do?

- ("M" "P" "M")
  - "M" – Management must practice what they preach
  - "P" – A pint of example is worth a gallon of advice
  - "M" – Management By Example is the key "saying and doing is paramount"

Source: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqkm788-Jk8&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqkm788-Jk8&feature=player_embedded).  
www.leadingpotential.com.

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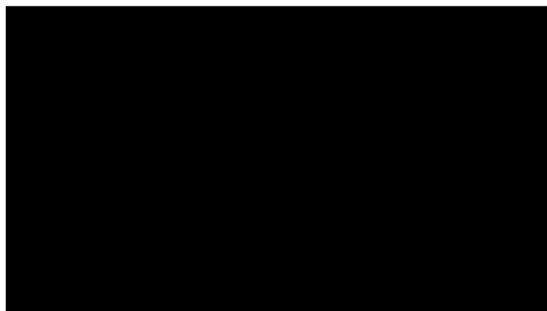
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## II. Management's Role

### D. Management Tips for Problem Solving



Source: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqkm788-Jk8&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqkm788-Jk8&feature=player_embedded).  
www.leadingpotential.com.

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### III. Problem Solving Process

- Identify the right problem
- Define the problem
- Develop & analyze alternatives
- Select the best alternative
- Implement the best alternative
- Monitor & modify the process



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### III. Problem Solving Process

#### Emotional Trigger Words

##### Triggers

- Policy
- Can't
- Sorry
- No, I don't
- But
- You should have
- The only thing we can do

##### Calmers

- Here's what we can do
- Can
- Thank you
- I can find out
- And
- I understand why you
- Let's identify alternatives

Source: "Exceptional Customer Service" by Ford, McNair and Perry.

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### IV. Problem Solving Techniques

- Cost Benefit Analysis
- Nominal Group Technique
- Delphi Technique
- SWOT Analysis
- GAP Analysis
- "6 Thinking Hats"



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## IV. Problem Solving Techniques

### Nominal Group Technique

- Members meet as a group (in person or by Zoom), but before any discussion takes place, each member independently writes down ideas
- Each member presents one idea to the group, taking turns presenting a single idea until all ideas have been presented and recorded (on a flipchart or electronically); No discussion takes place until all ideas have been recorded
- The group discusses and evaluates ideas
- Each group member silently and independently assigns a rank to each idea; The final decision is determined by the idea with the highest aggregate ranking

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## IV. Problem Solving Techniques

### Delphi Technique

- Problem is identified and members are asked to provide potential solutions through a series of carefully designed questionnaires (using SurveyMonkey, etc)
- Each member anonymously and independently completes the first questionnaire
- Results of first questionnaire are compiled at a central location, transcribed and reproduced
- Each member receives a copy of the results
- After viewing results, members are again asked for solutions  
Results typically trigger new solutions or cause changes in the original position
- Steps 4 and 5 are repeated as often as necessary until consensus is reached

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## V. Problem Solving Exercises/Applications

- “6 Thinking Hats”



- Put Your Thinking Hat on and Have Fun Solving Problems!

Source: The Six Thinking Hats of Edward de Bono

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## V. Problem Solving Exercises/Applications

### “Assuming a Role – Colored Hat Thinking”

*Objective: Develop an understanding of how team members think*

In order to improve our effectiveness as team members, we need to develop an understanding of how we and others think. Wearing colored hats when role-playing helps to overcome defense mechanisms. We can envision and say things that we could not otherwise say without appearing foolish. The use of the colored hats allows the wearer to focus on one aspect of a thought process. The wearer does not have to be concerned with objectivity when expressing his/her viewpoint. The wearer is simply portraying the thinking represented by the colored hat.

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## V. Problem Solving Exercises/Applications

### “Assuming a Role – Colored Hat Thinking”

Using the Colored Hat Technique, ONE team will tackle the “*Teamwork in a Crisis*” problem, assuming the personalities indicated by the colored hats. The remaining class participants will offer their observations following this group presentation.

#### Hat Colors and Functions:

White Hat = Mr. Clean:	White is neutral and objective. The white hat is concerned with objective facts and figures
Red Hat = The Alarmist:	Red suggests alarm, anger, rage, and emotion. The red hat gives the emotional viewpoint
Black Hat = The Judge:	Black encourages people to think cautiously and critically -about dangers, problems, obstacles
Purple Hat = The Pessimist:	Purple covers the gloomy and negative aspects. The purple hat reflects why something cannot be done
Yellow Hat = Susie Sunshine:	Yellow is sunny, positive, and optimistic. It indicates new ideas, creativity, and moving forward
Blue Hat = Cool Hand Luke:	Blue is cool. It suggests control and organization of the thinking process. The blue hat defines the problem and summarizes the contributions of others

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## V. Exercises/Applications

### A. Case Study One: “The Petty Cash Fund Loan”

Jane Nixon is a valued employee who has worked in the bookstore at City University for a number of years. She is the kind of worker you can depend on to put in extra time and effort when it is needed. She is always there in a crisis, and several times she has handled situations that would have been uncomfortable for you. You are Jane's boss, and you really owe her a great deal.

Recently Jane came to you and admitted that for some time she has been “borrowing” money from the petty cash fund—writing false receipts to cover it. It was never much, usually \$10 or \$15, and she always repaid it. But her conscience bothered her so much that she had to confess. She also indicated that she has on occasion falsified her time card to reflect time at work when she was actually taking time off. It was never more than two or three hours a month.

Under the personnel policies of the University, Jane's actions are clearly cause for dismissal. She has also shared her feelings about this matter with close friends in the Receiving Department at the University. Three years ago an employee in the Physical Plant was terminated for taking home pieces of lumber which were left over from a job on campus; however, he was a below-average employee who had only worked at the University for two years.

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## V. Exercises/Applications

### Worksheet for Case Study One "The Petty Cash Fund Loan"

1. Define the problem.
2. Develop alternative solutions.
3. Evaluate alternative solutions (pros and cons).
4. Select best alternative.

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## V. Exercises/Applications

### B. Case Study Two: "Teamwork in Crisis"

An unfortunate accident has taken the life of your university's Vice President for Finance and Operations. As tragic as this is, the timing could not be worse. A meeting with the Board of Trustees to present the coming year's budget is weeks away. A quick check reveals that the report is far from complete. At the same time, there is an unforeseen drop in projected enrollment, adding to the difficulty of planning for the coming year.

You and the other members of the Cabinet have a matter of weeks to determine the future course of the university. Determine your priorities and establish a timeline. Present your plan to the rest of the group. Discuss.

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## V. Exercises/Applications

### Worksheet for Case Study Two "Teamwork in Crisis"

1. Define the problem.
2. Develop alternative solutions.
3. Evaluate alternative solutions (pros and cons).
4. Select best alternative.

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