

# The Problem Solving Process

## The 6-Step Process

## **The Six-Step Problem Solving Process**

The objective of this step is to identify the problem.

That sounds simple enough, but problems usually are tied to very emotional issues.

Egos are usually connected to the problem or the possible solution.

## Six-Step Problem Solving Process

- 1. Identify**
- 2. Analyze**
- 3. Identify Solutions**
- 4. Select & Plan a Solution**
- 5. Implement the Solution**
- 6. Evaluate**

## Problem Solving

- Create a Schematic of Existing Information
- Identify Important Criteria
- Identify Constraints
- Identify Users
- Create Profile of Users
- Weigh Alternatives
- Restructure
- Evaluate and Prioritize
- Select the best alternative
- Is it feasible?
- Is it suitable?
- Is it flexible?

Another way to structure

- 1. Define the Problem**
- 2. Consider Possibilities Based on Facts**
- 3. Brainstorm Potential Solutions**
- 4. Create an Action Plan**
- 5. Implement the Plan**
- 6. Observe the Results**

## The Problem Solving Process

A method use to collaboratively find solution to problems or design challenges.

The problem solving process when used can be a productive structure to give guidance when exploring creative solutions.

CONSENSUS means that everyone is in agreement, or they can live with the agreement. If they cannot live with the agreement, then consensus is not reached in the team.

That indicates more discussion needs to ensue.

## IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

Determine how consensus is made in the team.

Consensus has 3 elements:

1. I agree.
2. I don't fully agree, but I can live with and support the agreement.
3. I don't agree, and I cannot live with or support the agreement

## The Problem Solving Process

Take a look at what is causing  
the difficulty.

### IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

You can use the STAR method  
of reaching consensus:

**S = Stop**

**T = Think**

**A = Act**

**R = Review**

## The Problem Solving Process

Define the problem in a written Statement – a Goal

If the problem is too big, break it down in to smaller, manageable parts and redefine it.

### IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

Once your team has identified the problem.

**WRITE IT DOWN** in a clear concise statement.

## The Problem Solving Process

### ANALYZE THE PROBLEM

#### Determine the facts.

1. Create a schematic of the existing website
2. Develop personas of the site users – existing + potential
3. Analyze the existing information [content] – what might be missing, consistency, writing style, quality of graphics, branding, color scheme, etc.
4. Analyze the navigation – ease of use, accessibility of information, clarity, etc.

## The Problem Solving Process

Oftentimes in brainstorming sessions really great ideas come from ideas or comments made during the process.

Don't discount a thought or idea.  
Record everything.

After you have exhausted ideas, go back and rank your ideas.

See if there are any patterns.

Clarify any suggestions to make sure there is a common understanding among the team.

Group like-minded solutions.  
Combine ideas to form new ideas.

## GENERATE POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

### Brainstorm Rules:

No idea is to be discounted or dumb. Write down every idea even if you think it is stupid.

There are no wrong answers here, and judgments should not be passed on another person's suggestions.

## The Problem Solving Process

Factors that can affect solutions:

Budget

Timing

Procedures

Policies

Personnel

Platform

Resources

## SELECT THE BEST SOLUTIONS

1. List your solutions and rank them based upon factors that may affect the successful outcome.
2. Eliminate the weakest solutions.
3. Develop a Plan.

The Problem  
Solving Process

**IMPLEMENT THE PLAN**

Make sure your  
solution can be tracked.

## The Problem Solving Process

This is by far the one step in the process that many organizations neglect.

But it is a critical step, for without it no improvement or learning can happen.

## EVALUATE THE SOLUTION

Did the solution work?

If not, why?

What went right?

What adjustment can make the solution better?