

Creative Problem Solving and Decision Making

Why Attend

- We are continuously confronted with problems that require us to take decisions. Most decisions are reached without requiring any complex decision making process: We're hungry? We decide to eat. Some problems are more complex, like deciding how to prioritize our work, or understanding why a process failed and deciding what to do about it; these require a rational approach to problem solving. Often, things get even more complicated, or our decisions could have an important impact on our lives, careers or the lives of those around us; that is where we must have the ability to think critically and make sure there is no flaw in our logic. At other times the problem is so unusual that it defies rational and critical thinking; these are the times where creative problem solving becomes an invaluable tool.
- In this course we will cover all these important thinking approaches. After understanding the thinking mechanisms, we will provide you with methods and tools that you will practice during the sessions and that can help you at work or in life, and from the most mundane situations to the most difficult or unusual ones.

Course Methodology

- The course uses a mix of interactive techniques, such as brief presentations by the consultant and the participants, role plays (rehearsed and impromptu), Video clips with detailed debriefs, and individual and group feedback

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- Build and expand decision making, critical thinking and creative problem solving skills
- Apply logical and creative approaches to solving problems and making decisions
- Use traditional and creative tools for identifying causes and generating solutions
- Employ creativity and lateral thinking as business tools
- Analyze and solve actual problems facing them at work
- Demonstrate and build credibility with upper management
- Develop strategic approaches to problem solving and decision making

Target Audience

- Managers, supervisors and administrators who will benefit from better problem solving and decision making skills, and business professionals who want to take their critical thinking to the next level by using both their experience and intuition to make the right moves and decisions

Target Competencies

- Attention to details
- Balanced decision making
- Creativity
- Evaluating options
- Intuitive decision making
- Practical and proactive thinking
- Situation analysis
- Problem solving ability and anticipating potential problems

Problem solving and decision making

- Definition of 'problem'
- Definition of 'problem solving'
- Definition of 'decision making'
- Creative problem solving and decision making
- The helicopter view
- Problem diagnosis
- Defining the opportunity or problem
- The link between causes and symptoms
- Problem deviation
- The right decisions at the right time

The rational approach to problem solving (Kepner & Tregoe)

- Defining the problem
- Writing a problem statement
- Techniques for recognizing problems
- Six important questions to clear out
- The rational approach
- Kepner & Tregoe

Problem analysis supplementary tools

- Root cause analysis
- Creative problem solving and decision making
- The five-why process
- The cause and effect diagram
- The fishbone diagram

Decision making supplementary tools

- Effective decision making
- Why-Why and how-how analysis
- The how-how method
- Choice making
- The decision analysis worksheet
- The Kepner & Tregoe method for analyzing alternatives
- Use of the matrix
- Effective decision making
- The decision making matrix
- Definition of 'consensus'

Creativity and problem solving

- The need for thinking skills
- Mental structures of college students
- Stages in problem solving and decision making
- The human brain
- Understanding the two hemispheres of the brain
- Critical thinking
- Lateral thinking
- Mental blocks to creative thinking
- Brainstorming
- The six thinking hats