Better Problem Solving & Decisions

Tools for problem analysis, alternative generation, and decision-making

Overview
Problem solving and decision-making are critical skills to working professionals yet most people learn these skills through trial and error and receive minimal formal training in these disciplines. Cognitive science has made great strides during the past two decades toward better understanding human problem solving and decision-making. Modern tactics and skills can build upon prior experience and improve both individual and team performance.

Better Problem Solving & Decisions is a one-day (7 hour) workshop providing participants with tools and tactics for working with real world problems in a professional environment. This class is a catalyst for better idea generation and provides analytical tools for problem definition, solution evaluation and selection. The workshop is highly interactive, combining demonstrations and brief discussions of key learning points with individual and group "hands on" problem solving exercises to reinforce learning and build confidence. The course is designed to help participants solve problems and make decisions to bring better value to their organizations and customers.

Objectives
The workshop is a mix of individual and group exercises that provide participants with both problem solving and decision-making experiences. Participants apply the processes and tools presented by working on real world and case study problems throughout class. At the conclusion of the workshop participants will be able to:

- More clearly define problems
- Generate a wider variety of quality solutions
- Support more structured analysis of options leading to better decisions
- Recognize and avoid common pitfalls
- Face problems and decisions with increased confidence and an improved array of useful tools and tactics

Outline
Participants in this workshop will learn a variety of skills and tactics to aid them in becoming better problem solvers and decision-makers. The course is structured around the following topics:

- **Introduction**: What is a “problem” and what does it mean to “solve” one? - Participants are shown new perspectives on problem identification and solutions
- **Verification**: Tools and tactics for problem definition - Whether defining a “problem” or an “opportunity”, problem solvers must understand fundamental parameters and assumptions about the situation. This section explores methods to quickly gather and organize relevant information about a problem or opportunity.
- **Identification**: Heuristics for alternative solution generation - Introduces participants to tools and techniques for generating a wider range of solutions. These tools enable problem solvers to improve both the quality and quantity of alternatives available.
• **Selection:** Evaluating alternatives – The intersection between problem solving and evidence based decision-making is the analysis of different options. Several approaches will be explored, including advantages, disadvantages and pitfalls.

• **Execution:** Implementation considerations – How to implement decisions for maximum effectiveness and organizational learning.

**Cost**
Workshop is offered to groups of 16 to 36 persons (depending upon training facility capacity) at a per student price of $400. This fee includes the cost of the facility, lunch and refreshments, and all participant materials. Discounts apply to organizations scheduling multiple participants or providing facilities.

**PDU Information**
Catalysis Group, Inc. has been reviewed and approved as a provider of project management training by the Project Management Institute (PMI®). Workshop participants will receive 7 Professional Development Units (PDUs) for successful completion of this workshop.