



How to develop problem-solving competency inside the organization?

Irrespective of industry and size of the organization, one of the common scenarios we observe in most of the organization is the inability to converge into the solutions approach for the chronic problems. Alternatively, we can say that most of the organizations lack the problem-solving competency. When we say competency, it encompasses the knowledge of recognizing the problem, analyzing the causes from the reliable data, proposing the actions plan, implementing the actions and ensuring the problem does not recur. Organization differs on the level of competency steps. If the senior management brings this one competency across levels and functions, then the organization sails through any problems .

In most of the organizations, we observe that problem-solving mindset lacks not due to lack of awareness of the problem-solving methodologies or tools and techniques. In fact, most of the organizations are aware of structured problem-solving methodologies like QC tools and its applications, 8D approach, A3 approach, six sigma methodologies, etc.

In my opinion, the inculcating problem-solving competency is more of mindset and culture building issues rather than on awareness issue. It is due to the lack of conducive environment or winning mindset culture as developed by the senior leadership team.

Clarity on the term "problem."

Any gap between the target or desired status and reality or current status is a problem. The problem can be in tangible targets vs. actual as in sales turnover, profitability, launch timeline, etc. or in intangible areas like people expectations and the reality.

Whatever may be the case, people across the functions and levels of hierarchy in the organization must have the mindset, competency to solve the problem. But in reality, in most of the organizations; senior leadership team struggles to bring the culture of continuous problem solving inside the organization.

Reason for not able to create the problem-solving culture

- Not realizing the problem or trend
- No structured, authentic data
- Culture of jumping to quick solutions, once problem is identified
- Busy in firefighting and somehow resolving issues
- Hesitate to conclude the solutions approach or options
- No facilitation on arriving solutions approach
- No risk taking or rewarding risk takers

Solutions approach to create problem-solving mindset and culture inside the organization

Obviously, the people have to be given education exposure to different problem-solving methodologies, tools, and techniques. Assuming that education or awareness part is taken care, the senior leadership team has more responsibility to create a conducive environment or demonstrate consistent behavior towards solving problems. The following solutions approaches are recommended

- ✓ Building an environment to collect authentic, consistent data from source
- ✓ Encouraging discussion based on facts rather than opinions.

- ✓ Creating a routine forum or reviews to discuss the problems and solutions approach
- ✓ Encouraging open discussion and idea generation by keeping ego aside
- ✓ Allowing others to talk and listen more for insights
- ✓ Encouraging people to take risk and experiment with solutions approach
- ✓ Differentiating and recognizing problem solvers

In today's competitive environment, *one of the differentiators and competitive edge of the organization is to create more problem solvers and to create a culture of problem-solving mindset across levels and functions!*