

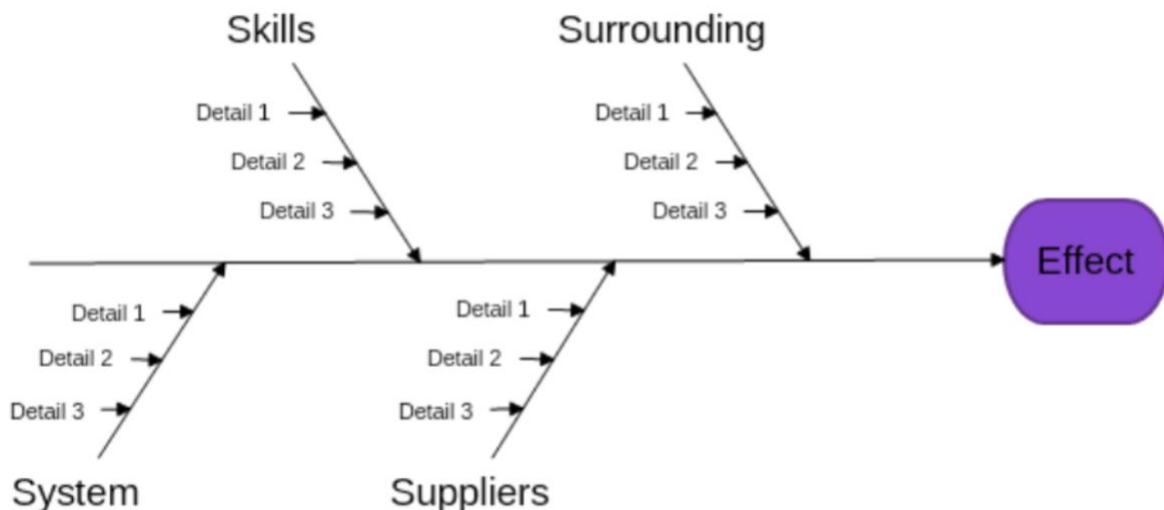
First Ask How? Then Why? Then Decide

Activity #1: Root Cause Analysis

Your boss was just contacted by the mayor's office. The city newspaper ran stories this morning about city contracts "failures," as the paper reported it. The city's new online construction permitting system contract is overrun, and the first rollout of the system was late and met by complaints in the construction community. On the newspaper's next page, there is a story about the construction of the airport's new terminal. Apparently a whistleblower went to the paper complaining about how the contractor has busted the schedule. The mayor wants to know why these contract failures are happening.

Your department procures the contracts, but the using department administers them. You have assembled a team. The Ishikawa diagram below has some provisional topical areas to organize your team's thinking and possible causes. (Other cause-and-effect categories can be used, e.g. 4 Ps, People, Processes, Policies, "Plant" or material.) Are those the right ones? Are there others?

One of the team members cited inadequate contract administration as one potential cause. Role play a fast 5-Whys on poor contract administration as a root cause, using your experience to fill in possible answers to each "why?"



Activity #2: Deciding on a Spring Event

You are a member of on your NIGP chapter's board. You are facing a decision on whether to hold a Spring conference, typically the largest revenue source for the chapter. The supplier community traditionally has been supportive and have paid modest sponsorship fees to host speakers and moderate panel discussions. With the looming uncertainty caused by the pandemic, the question is, "Will the conference be held?" Membership is expecting a decision and announcement.

How will you decide?

Some tips and basic steps in developing a flowchart include:

- Self-stick notes are ideal tools for initially constructing a process map.
- Begin by defining the scope of the process to be examined: where it begins and ends.
- Use high-level process flowcharts initially to define the handful of major steps, and then build on them.
- Use brainstorming to identify the activities that take place in the process, writing each on a self-stick note. (Don't worry about sequence initially.)
- Then arrange the activities in a proper sequence.
- Characterize activities as either process steps (square), decision points (diamonds), etc.
- Then draw the arrows to show the process flow.
- This tool is used initially to define the "as is" process state. After further exploration and eventual decisions about improvements, a flowchart can be used to define the ideal or "should be" process.
- They can be used to document a process that later can be used in training or policy manuals describing a process.

Useful variations of the flowchart

- The *top-down flowchart* that begins to build on a high-level flowchart by listing major sub-steps under each major step. This type of flowchart can then be turned into a more detailed flowchart.
- A *deployment flowchart* adds organizations or locations to the flowchart, arranging the steps into columns that correspond to the various offices involved in the process steps. Sometime called *swim lane flowcharts*, they can be useful to show the number of handoffs between offices as the process progresses, handoffs that may be adding time or creating inefficiencies.

References: Nancy Tague, *The Quality Toolbox*, 2nd Ed. (Milwaukee: ASQ Quality Press, 2005); Scholtes, Joiner, & Streibel. *The TEAM Handbook*, 3rd Ed. (Madison WI: Oriol, 2003)

Value-Added Analysis

1. Create a detailed flowchart or deployment flowchart
2. For each step, ask the following :
 - a. Is the activity necessary to create output?
 - b. Does it contribute to customer satisfaction?
 - c. If answer is yes to both, color code green
3. If answer to either is no, ask:
 - a. Does the activity contribute to the organization's needs, e.g. internal controls?
 - b. If yes, color code yellow for organizational value-adding (OVA)
4. If answer to both questions is no, color code red for non-value-adding
5. (Optional) For each step compute time for each category and entire process; determine percentage of time in NVA
6. Study OVA and NVA to reduce or eliminate them.

References: Nancy Tague, *The Quality Toolbox*. *The TEAM Handbook* calls these “Opportunity Maps” because they identify not just the process steps, but improvement opportunities.

Decision Retrospects

1. Did the decision resolve the issue?
2. What information, presentation, thinking, or data could have been used to filter out options faster?
3. Were the project's purpose, requirements, and organizational policies of value?
4. Were they used effectively? Did the decision help the project's progress?
5. Were the right people involved in the decision process? Was the evolving decision tested periodically for consensus?
6. Were there unintended consequences from the decision, and could those have been forecasted?
7. Were the risks, the things we worried about, the right things?
8. Did the team have sufficient authority to make the decision in a timely and effective way?
9. Overall, what was learned in the decision process that could help future projects?

— Scott Berkun. *The Art of Project Management*. (Sebastopol CA: O'Reilly, 2005)