PROBLEM **SOLVING** TOOLS

VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

4

Implement the Solution

"Each problem that I solved became a rule which served afterwards to solve other problems."

- Rene Descartes

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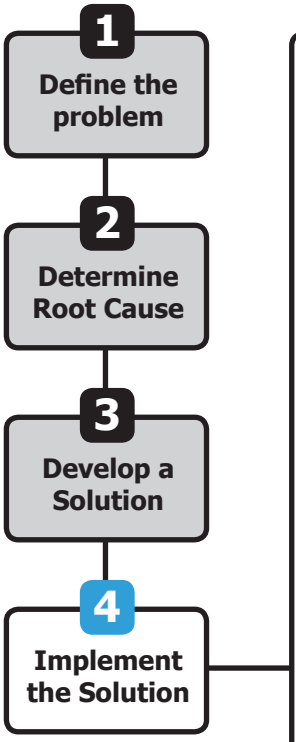
Step 4: Implement the Solution



This is the step where all your previous hard work pays off. If you have clearly defined the problem, identified the root cause, and created a well-crafted solution, you will find that your implementation goes much smoother and is more likely to be a success.

Key Outcome

An action plan that produces results.

Key Actions

Consider the following key actions:

S) Clarify the solution.

P) Plan out the solution.

D) Do what is on the plan.

C) Check your progress.

A) Act on obstacles and opportunities.

Primary Tools

Plan, Do, Check, Act

Action Planning Tool

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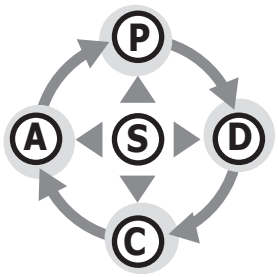
SPDCA



The SPDCA (solution, plan, do, check, act) model provides a good method for planning and implementing solutions.

S Solution

The entire planning process should revolve around the intended solution. To do this, describe the current situation and the desired situation. Then, write a brief solution statement.

P Plan

This involves creating a blue print for action. Plans are created to determine HOW to best implement the solution. The planned actions should specify what needs to be done, who will do it, what the outcome should be, and when it should be done.

D Do

This involves doing what is on the plan. Plans are of no value unless they help us take meaningful action. When we are working to complete the plan, we should be sure to use a simple method to monitor our progress. Then, we'll have accurate data for checking progress.

C Check

This involves assessing progress on actions to implement the solution. This usually requires dedicated time to determine what has actually been accomplished versus what was planned.

A Act

This involves acting on issues and opportunities that arise while implementing the plan. Adjustments are made in order to address issues and capitalize on opportunities.

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S Solution

The planning process should begin by clarifying the solution. This is important to ensure that actions are in line with expected solution outcomes.

When planning your solution, be sure to include the following elements:

- **Basic Information**
  Write in the NAME of the group or individual who is primarily responsible for the action plan. Include the DEPARTMENT and AREA for quick reference later.

- **Current Situation**
  Describe the current situation. This was also done in Step A: Define the Problem. It helps you see exactly where you are at the present moment, and contrast that to where you want to be.

- **Desired Situation**
  Describe the desired situation. This was also done in Step A. This provides direction and focus on what the solution should accomplish.

- **Solution Statement**
  Write a brief solution statement. This was done in Step C: Develop a Solution. The solution statement describes the idea or strategy that you will employ to address the root cause and solve the problem.

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P Plan

Planning is an essential step in this process. It is where you determine how you will implement your solution.

When planning your solution, be sure to include the following elements:

- **Actions Steps**
  List all action steps required to implement the solution. This may require some brainstorming on the part of the team. It may be helpful to list the action steps in the sequence in which they must be accomplished.
  All action steps should begin with an action verb.

- **Who**
  Specify who is primarily responsible for each action step. Write in the person's name or initials. You may want to indicate the primary person responsible and then all others who will help.

- **Outcome**
  Write in the specific result that is expected from each action taken. Consider speed, cost, or quality as you define the outcomes.

- **Date**
  Set a date by which time the action step must be completed or the date by when the action should be implemented.

- **Actual Results**
  Use this space to record what has actually been accomplished. As you begin to implement your plan, you may find it necessary to adjust or add to your action steps.

- **Follow-up**
  Record when and how you will follow-up on the action plan. When the plan is modified, enter the date in the DATE UPDATED box at the top of the plan.

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D Do

This step involves doing what is on the plan. Plans are of no value unless they help us take meaningful action.

The Action Planning Tool is useful during the DO step in that it helps the team:

- Coordinate individual efforts.
- Identify where support will be needed.
- Monitor progress.
- Prepare for an informed check.

Tip– Follow-up

Remember, it is important to be sure that your solution will actually fix the problem. Follow-up is key to your success. You will want to keep the following in mind:

- **Action items** - Follow up to make sure that each action item is properly completed.
- **Plan Completion** - Follow up to make sure your plan is fully completed.
- **Results** - Is your problem solved? Follow up by measuring results to be sure that your plan has actually fixed the problem.

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C Check

This step is where you CHECK progress on your plan.

Key questions to ask include:

- What was the expected action?
- What has actually been accomplished and when?
- If your plan has been completed, have you gotten the results you wanted?
- What obstacles have occurred that have hindered our progress? What obstacles might occur that we can prevent?
- What opportunities have occurred that we should act on? What opportunities might come up that we should act on?

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A Act

Each time you check your progress, you may identify new obstacles and new opportunities. Even the best plans will not unfold exactly as expected.

The ACT step involves adjusting and responding to unforeseen events that arise after you get started. These unforeseen events could hinder progress (obstacles) or help it (opportunities). If during the CHECK step you find specific obstacles or opportunities that are or will impact the success of your plan, you need to ACT.

Consider these questions:

- How can we eliminate OBSTACLES that are getting in our way?
- How can we take advantage of OPPORTUNITIES that have presented themselves?
- In what ways is our plan not realistic? How does it need to be adjusted?
- What are the results of our plan? Is the problem fixed, and how do we know?
- What have been our successes and how can we best CELEBRATE them?

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Action Planning Tool

Use the Action Planning Tool to help you plan and implement the solution to your problem.

Name			
Current Situation		**Desired Situation**	
#	**Action Steps**	**Who**	**Date**
Follow-up:			

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Checklist for Implementing the Solution

Use the following criteria to determine whether you are effectively using the Action Planning Tool to implement a solution.

▼ Solution

(Y) (N) Are you able to describe the current situation?
(Y) (N) Are you able to describe the desired situation?
(Y) (N) Is the solution statement clear and complete?
(Y) (N) Will the solution help you achieve the desired situation?

▼ Plan

(Y) (N) Is every ACTION step written as a verb?
(Y) (N) Is there a WHO for each action step?
(Y) (N) Is there an OUTCOME for each action step?
(Y) (N) Is every action step time bound with a DATE?

▼ Do

(Y) (N) Are you clear on who will do what and when?
(Y) (N) Do you know how you will coordinate actions?
(Y) (N) Do you know how you will monitor progress?

▼ Check

(Y) (N) Do you know when you will check in on progress?
(Y) (N) Do you have a process for evaluating progress?
(Y) (N) Do you know how you will celebrate success?

▼ Act

(Y) (N) Have you anticipated possible roadblocks and problems?
(Y) (N) Do you know how you will respond to opportunities?

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