Management Problem Solving

College Business Management Institute

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Presented by:
Dr. Jairy C. Hunter, Jr.

Management Problem Solving

I. Introduction

II. Problem Solving Overview

III. Management's Role

IV. Problem Solving Process

V. Problem Solving Techniques

VI. Problem Solving Exercises/Application

I. Introduction

- Greetings
- Course Objectives
- Take Aways
  - Problem Solving Process
  - Management's Role
  - Problem Solving Tools
  - Problem Solving Applications
II. Problem Solving Overview

A. Observations:
- "We might have solved the wrong problem"
- "We realized at the end of our deliberation that we acted too quickly with too little information"
- "We shouldn't have jumped to a decision so quickly"
- "Our decision did not prove to be in support of our organization's mission & vision"
- "Let us never forget - there are always 3 or more opinions/stories/views to conflicts & problems"

B. Problem Solving Essentials:
- Determining the "TRUTH"
- Adopting a positive/growth attitude vs. a negative/fixed
- Beginning at the end with the desired outcome in mind
- Practicing skills effective leadership/manager skills
- Listening and communicating effectively
- Dividing the problem & conquering
- Monitoring and modifying strategies and decisions

C. Two Dimensions of Problems
- Institutional Problems
- People Problems
II. Problem Solving Overview

D. Types of Problems

- Conflict within the individual
- Conflict between individuals
- Conflict between individuals and groups
- Conflict between organizations

II. Problem Solving Overview

E. Problem Solving in Higher Education is Different

- Educational level of individuals
- Diverse population
- Captive audience
- Freedom of Speech
- Visible/accountable outcomes
- Contribution to workforce
- Long term alumni relationships
- Betterment to society

II. Problem Solving Overview

F. Problem Solving Tips

1. Employ the “Fire” Model
   F = Facts
   I = Interpretations
   R = Reactions
   E = Ends

Source: "Try Using the "Fire" Model" by Mark Murphy.
II. Problem Solving Overview
F. Problem Solving Tips

2. Ask these 5 helpful words
   “What are the facts here?”
   • Listen Carefully
   • Confirm the situation by repeating the problem and the desired solution

II. Problem Solving Overview
F. Problem Solving Tips

2. Ask these 5 helpful words (continued)
   • Provide a response to the problem
     o “Noted” and move on
     o If you know, say so
     o If you don’t know, say when you’ll respond
     o Follow through and up
3. Remember: Every response to a problem will not be accepted and satisfactory

II. Problem Solving Overview
E. Problem-Solving Survey

A. What is the Number One Problem in your workplace that you would like to change?
B. Identify the factors to be considered.
C. Who should be involved?
D. Identify 3 alternatives.
E. Select the best alternative.
III. Management’s Role

A. Focus on “True North”

- Know your purpose and passion
- Employ the highest ethical standards
- Treat others with respect and kindness
- Have a plan and work your plan every day
- Demonstrate humility and servant leadership


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III. Management’s Role

A. Focus on “True North”

- Think positive and envision successful outcomes
- Be an active listener and participate
- Exhibit high energy and a sense of urgency
- Be a problem solver and not a problem maker
- Give others credit for success and assume responsibility for failures
- Possess a forgiving heart and give others a second chance
- Stay focused on the most important and never stop learning and teaching others
- Live for something greater than self and always give back


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III. Management’s Role

B. Avoid Management Flaws

- Betraying of “TRUST”
  - Management functions on the basis of trust “Integrity”
  - Trust is the foundation upon which all relationships are built
- Keep balance between 3 forces
- Character always intelligence & success
- Losing touch with your people
- Forgetting that people are the only appreciable asset
- Failing to realize that people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care

III. Management’s Role

C. Be Consistent in What you say and What you do?

• (“M” “P” “M”)
  • “M” – Management must practice what they preach
  • “P” – A pint of example is worth a gallon of advice
  • “M” – Management By Example is the key “saying and doing is paramount”

Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pijQTTmyhEk&feature=youtu.be

D. Management Tips for Problem Solving

Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pijQTTmyhEk&feature=youtu.be

IV. Problem Solving Process

• Identify the right problem
• Define the problem
• Develop & analyze alternatives
• Select the best alternative
• Implement the best alternative
• Monitor & modify the process
### IV. Problem Solving Process

#### Emotional Trigger Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Triggers</th>
<th>Calmers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Here's what we can do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can't</td>
<td>Can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorry</td>
<td>Thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I don't</td>
<td>I can find out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But</td>
<td>And</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You should have</td>
<td>I understand why you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The only thing we can do</td>
<td>The best option I think is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: "Exceptional Customer Service" by Ford, Wohlt and Perry

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### V. Problem Solving Techniques

- Cost Benefit Analysis
- Nominal Group Technique
- Delphi Technique
- SWOT Analysis
- GAP Analysis
- “6 Thinking Hats”

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### V. Problem Solving Techniques

**Nominal Group Technique**

- Members meet as a group, but before any discussion takes place, each member independently writes down ideas.
- Each member presents one idea to the group, taking turns presenting a single idea until all ideas have been presented and recorded (on a flipchart or chalkboard); No discussion takes place until all ideas have been recorded.
- The group discusses and evaluates ideas.
- Each group member silently and independently assigns a rank to each idea; The final decision is determined by the idea with the highest aggregate ranking.
V. Problem Solving Techniques

Delphi Technique

- Problem is identified and members are asked to provide potential solutions through a series of carefully designed questionnaires
- Each member anonymously and independently completes the first questionnaire
- Results of first questionnaire are compiled at a central location, transcribed and reproduced
- Each member receives a copy of the results
- After viewing results, members are again asked for solutions
  Results typically trigger new solutions or cause changes in the original position
- Steps 4 and 5 are repeated as often as necessary until consensus is reached

VI. Problem Solving Exercises/Applications

- "6 Thinking Hats"

- Put Your Thinking Hat on and Have Fun Solving Problems!

Source: The Six Thinking Hats of Ed de Bono

VI. Problem Solving Exercises/Applications

"Assuming a Role – Colored Hat Thinking"

Objective: Develop an understanding of how team members think

In order to improve our effectiveness as team members, we need to develop an understanding of how we and others think. Wearing colored hats when role-playing helps to overcome defense mechanisms. We can envision and say things that we could not otherwise say without appearing foolish. The use of the colored hats allows the wearer to focus on one aspect of a thought process. The wearer does not have to be concerned with objectivity when expressing his/her viewpoint. The wearer is simply portraying the thinking represented by the colored hat.
VI. Problem Solving Exercises/Applications

“Assuming a Role – Colored Hat Thinking”

Using the Colored Hat Technique, ONE team will tackle the “Teamwork in a Crisis” problem, assuming the personalities indicated by the colored hats. The remaining class participants will offer their observations following this group presentation.

Hat Colors and Functions:

White Hat = Mr. Clean: White is neutral and objective. The white hat is concerned with objectives, facts, and figures.

Red Hat = The Abrasive: Red suggests clam, anger, rage, and emotion. The red hat gives the emotional/interpersonal viewpoint.

Black Hat = The Judge: Black encourages people to think critically and creatively about danger, problems, obstacles.

Purple Hat = The Pessimist: Purple assesses the gloomy and negative aspects. The purple hat reflects why something cannot be done.

Yellow Hat = Sunny Sunshine: Yellow is sunny, positive, and optimistic. It indicates new ideas, creativity, and moving forward.

Blue Hat = Cool Head Luke: Blue is cool. It suggests control and organization of the thinking process. The blue hat defines the problem and summarizes the contributions of others.

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VI. Exercises/Applications

A. Case Study One: “The Petty Cash Fund Loan”
   (Appendix A)

B. Case Study Two: “The Promotion/ Demotivational Dilemma”
   (Appendix B)

C. Case Study Three: “The Misdirected Electronic Mail Message”
   (Appendix C)

D. Case Study Four: “Teamwork in Crisis”
   (Appendix D)
Case Study One
“The Petty Cash Fund Loan”

Jane Nixon is a valued employee who has worked in the bookstore at City University for a number of years. She is the kind of worker you can depend on to put in extra time and effort when it is needed. She is always there in a crisis, and several times she has handled situations that would have been uncomfortable for you. You are Jane’s boss, and you really owe her a great deal.

Recently Jane came to you and admitted that for some time she has been “borrowing” money from the petty cash fund—writing false receipts to cover it. It was never much, usually $10 or $15, and she always repaid it. But her conscience bothered her so much that she had to confess. She also indicated that she has on occasion falsified her time card to reflect time at work when she was actually taking time off. It was never more than two or three hours a month.

Under the personnel policies of the University, Jane’s actions are clearly cause for dismissal. She has also shared her feelings about this matter with close friends in the Receiving Department at the University. Three years ago an employee in the Physical Plant was terminated for taking home pieces of lumber which were left over from a job on campus; however, he was a below-average employee who had only worked at the University for two years.
Worksheet for Case Study One
“The Petty Cash Fund Loan”

1. Define the problem.
2. Develop alternative solutions.
3. Evaluate alternative solutions (pros and cons).
4. Select best alternative.
Case Study Two
“The Promotion/Demotivational Dilemma”

Jack Spratt is the Director of Accounting at Tide University. He began working at the University just after graduating from that institution with a degree in Industrial Management. Jack has worked hard for 14 years. Basically, he is a nice guy—he has earned the respect of staff and faculty, and he does a good job. He has had to work extra hard to keep up-to-date with changes in the accounting and financial computing fields because of his lack of formal training in college accounting.

You are Chief Business Officer, and the position of Comptroller has become available. You have advertised for the position, stating that applicants should have a C.P.A. certificate or the equivalent of appropriate education and/or experience. There are numerous qualified applicants for the position. The President of the University continuously stresses that key positions must be staffed by highly experienced and qualified individuals in order for the University to maintain high credibility and remain competitive in the marketplace in terms of staffing, recruiting students and fund raising. As the Chief Business Officer in support of the Personnel Director, you have always stressed that strong consideration should be given to promoting qualified individuals within the organization to provide for upward mobility of staff. The position must be filled in three weeks.

Jack Spratt has applied for the position, and several influential faculty, staff and community members have recommended him highly. Many employees are saying that because Jack has been at the University for 14 years, he will get the job. The President has just announced that the University will be pursuing the purchase of a new computer system within the next year, and the first system to be put into operation will be the financial and accounting system.
Worksheet for Case Study Two
“The Promotion/Demotivational Dilemma”

1. Define the problem.

2. Develop alternative solutions.

3. Evaluate alternative solutions (pros and cons).

4. Select best alternative.
Case Study Three
“The Misdirected Electronic Mail Message”

It was Monday morning and President Jim Johnson sat motionless at his desk as he read the electronic mail message on the screen before him. He and his entire cabinet of Vice Presidents and deans were listed as recipients of an email message sent by Vice President Wolthrup to Dean Garcia which, as he read it, stunned him.

In her three years as Vice President of Administrative Services, Elizabeth Wolthrup had developed an impressive track record and was generally regarded as a very capable, no-nonsense administrator. Bill Garcia, in his fifth year as Dean of the College of Business Administration, was well known as an amiable fellow who had built up his school by using his considerable contacts among leaders in the local business community. Bill and his wife, Cecilia, who had recently won a seat on the City Council, often socialized with the Johnsons.

The email message began, “Dear Billy Boy” and continued:

“I’m still tingling with the memories of last night...you (no, WE) were wonderful...m-m-m-m-time will pass slowly till we can be together again. It will be so-o-o hard to just be ‘normal’ when you’re sitting across from me at Cabinet today...see you then...xxx Beth.”

Reeling with disbelief that such a message appeared at all, President Johnson looked up as his secretary stepped to his door to announce that the members of his cabinet were arriving for their usual Monday morning meeting in his office.

How would you advise him to handle this situation?
Worksheet for Case Study Three
“The Misdirected Electronic Mail Message”

1. Define the problem.

2. Develop alternative solutions.

3. Evaluate alternative solutions (pros and cons).

4. Select best alternative.
Case Study Four
“Teamwork in Crisis”

An unfortunate accident has taken the life of your university’s Vice President for Finance and Operations. As tragic as this is, the timing could not be worse. A meeting with the Board of Trustees to present the coming year’s budget is weeks away. A quick check reveals that the report is far from complete. At the same time, there is an unforeseen drop in projected enrollment, adding to the difficulty of planning for the coming year.

You and the other members of the Cabinet have a matter of weeks to determine the future course of the university. Determine your priorities and establish a timeline. Present your plan to the rest of the group. Discuss.
Worksheet for Case Study Four
“Teamwork in Crisis”

1. Define the problem.

2. Develop alternative solutions.

3. Evaluate alternative solutions (pros and cons).

4. Select best alternative.