

5 Why Technique

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By repeatedly asking the question "Why" (five is a good rule of thumb), you can unearth layers of symptoms which can lead to the root cause of a problem.

Very often the ostensible reason for a problem will lead you to another question. Although this technique is called "5 Whys," you may need to ask the question fewer or more times than five before you find the issue related to a problem.

How to do a 5 Why analysis

1. Write down the specific problem. Writing the issue helps you formalize the problem and describe it completely. It also helps a team focus on the same problem.
2. Ask Why the problem happens and write the answer down below the problem.
3. If the answer you provided doesn't identify the root cause of the problem that you wrote down in step 1, ask Why again and write that answer down.
4. Repeat step 3 until the team is in agreement that the problem's root cause is identified. Again, this may take fewer or more times than 5 Whys

Where to use 5 Why analysis

- 5 Why technique can be used to identify the root cause of a problem
- It is a structured Brainstorming tool
- As it is a non-statistical tool, usage is much easier.
- It is important to involve the people from the process while doing a 5 why technique
- 5 Why technique can be used in conjunction with Fish-Bone diagram. It can be used to populate a Fish-Bone Diagram

5 Whys Example

Primary Cause: “ Turn Around Time for completing the documentation for Mortgage is High”

1. “ Why is the Turn Around Time for documentation high ?”

As process for preparing the documentation takes more time than allocated

2. ‘ Why does it take more time than allocated for documentation ?”

As there are too many typographic mistakes and hence rework

3.” Why are there too many typographic mistakes ?”

As the officer who keys-in the text reads word-by-word and types, not letter-by-letter.

Hence answer to the 3 Why has got us to the root cause of the problem.

Researches have proved that with increasing typing speed, keying letter-by-letter produces much lesser errors than keying word-by-word.