

# Problem-Solving

prob·lem·solv·ing

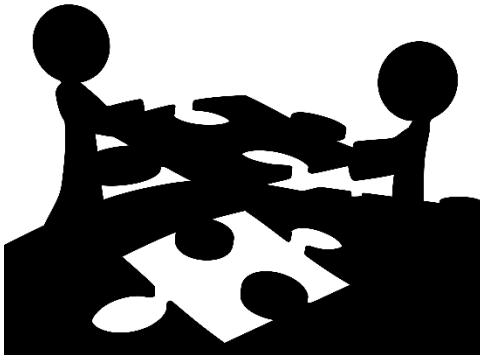
1. The process of working through details of a problem to reach a solution.

We all are problem solvers. We solve problems in our work lives, at home and at school. Problems range from the complex to the mundane.

Students face a range of problems that must be solved from those that are simple, where to have lunch and what to eat when you get there; to those that are complex, debugging a computer or trying to figure out why a printer won't work.

**Problem-solving** is necessary on every job. It is important that students develop the skills to resolve problems and have the personal resilience to meet the challenges and pressure that may be the result of a problem.

**Problem-solving** requires a variety of both analytical and creative thinking skills. Which are used depends on the role in the organization and the problem.



**Problem-solving** means using both of these skill sets to help students evaluate and make decisions. Logic and a method for problem solving are key to identifying practical solutions. Creativity is necessary to look at problems and resolve with a fresh approach.

Not every student will have developed these two types of skills making team work a key component to problem solving.

## Problem Solving Process

Leon Shimkin, owner of Simon and Schuster, a large publishing company, told employees that before they presented a problem at a meeting they had to answer 4 simple questions.

1. What is the problem?
2. What is causing this problem?
3. What are all possible solutions to this problem?
4. Which solution would you suggest?

Instituting this plan had several results, one of which was less time spent in meetings discussing problems. According to Schuster, once employees used the process, answered all four questions, proper solutions typically resulted in action and problems solved. <sup>1</sup>

## Supervisors and Problem-solving

Encourage students to become better problem solvers. Introduce the basic process of problem solving. Allow them in teams or as individuals to apply the process to simple problems with a willingness to accept the solutions presented. If the solution is not acceptable send the students back to the drawing board to struggle with the problem again.

*Problems can also be opportunities: they allow you to see things differently and to do things in a different way: perhaps to make a fresh start.*

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<sup>1</sup> [http://time.com/4099973/overcome-fear-anxiety-dale-carnegie/?xid=time\\_socialflow\\_facebook](http://time.com/4099973/overcome-fear-anxiety-dale-carnegie/?xid=time_socialflow_facebook)

## **For Students:**

Understand that most problem-solving skills are developed through everyday life and experience.

- If you have not, develop a method to manage problems on a daily basis that minimizes stress and worry.
- Consistently apply that process to any problems that present themselves either in your personal life, school or work.
- Remember that the more you apply the process the easier it should become to solve problems.
- Work with a team if you cannot solve an existing problem on your own. Multiple viewpoints sometimes help the problem solving process.
- If all else fails, involve your supervisor, professor or if a personal problem the appropriate professional.