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# Team-based Problem Solving

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- Problem Solving Defined
- Problem Solving Techniques
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- 7 Step Process

# Problem Solving Defined

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- What is a Problem?
  - A problem is a question to be considered, answered, or solved.
  - A situation, matter, or person that presents difficulty.
- What is Problem Solving?
  - A systematic methodology to address problems
  - Focused on resolving issues
- What is Group Problem Solving?
  - A planned and informed attack on a problem
  - Conducted in a cooperative manner
  - Draws out the best resolution
  - Results in an action plan that has the commitment of the implementers



# Problem Solving Defined (cont.)

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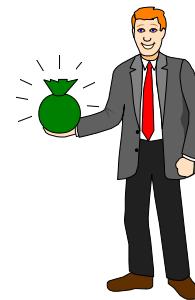
- Consequences of Not Using a Structured Approach

- Vague problem definitions
- People argue and get off on tangents
- People are unhappy with solutions
- Much time spent with nothing accomplished
- Poor implementation of solutions



- Benefits of Using a Structured Approach

- Participative process
- Team building experience
- It solves problems and gets results!

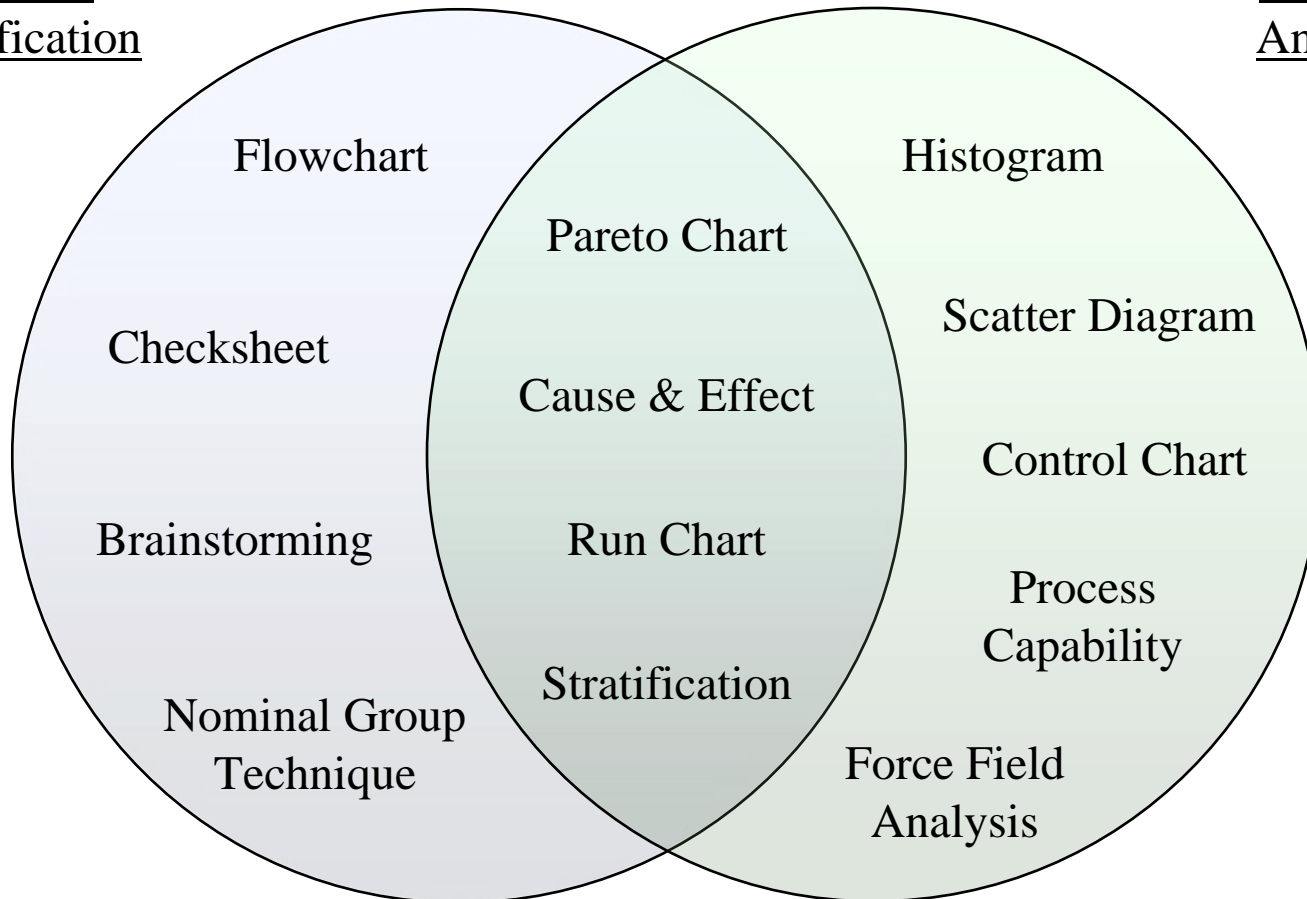


# Problem Solving Techniques

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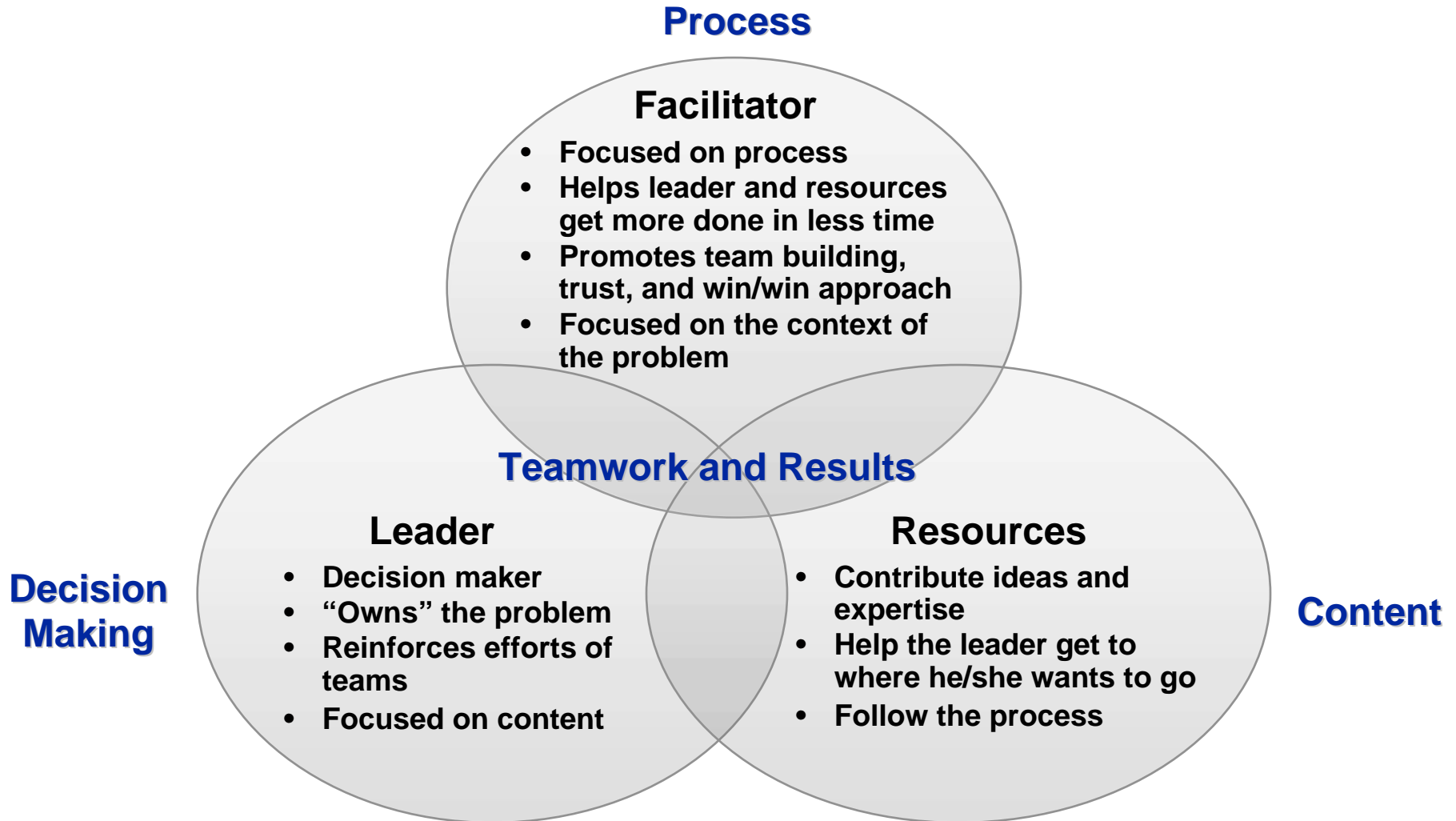
Problem  
Identification

Problem  
Analysis



# Roles & Responsibilities

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# Roles & Responsibilities - Leader

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*Gives problem statement and background information to the group.  
Also contributes to the process in the form of:*

- **Motivation for the group**
- **“Builds” on ideas**
- **Direction and decisions**
- **Idea selection**
- **Benefits and concerns**
- **Action plan**



# Roles & Responsibilities - Facilitator

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*The facilitator is a catalyst in the group. The key roles are:*

- **Initiating, assisting, orienting, clarifying, integrating, summarizing, and developing others' ideas**
- **Leading the group through the Problem Solving sequence**
- **Assisting the group in working together effectively**
- **Avoids making content contributions**
- **Concentrates on keeping group focused**



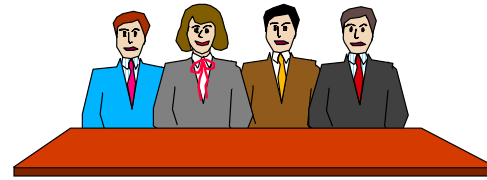


# Roles & Responsibilities - Resources

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*Brought together to “lend their minds” to the leader finding a solution and developing an action plan. Resources share:*

- Ideas
- Thoughts
- Suggestions
- “Builds” on other ideas
- Benefits and concerns
- Reports on previous action steps



# Managing a Problem Solving Meeting

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## Before

- Identify the leader for the problem
- Meet with the leader to:
  - Clearly identify and define the problem
  - Clarify roles for the problem solving meeting
  - Clarify expectations for the meeting (objectives, agenda, etc.)
- Contact/meet with group members to clarify expectations for the meeting

## During

- Clearly specify expectations for the meeting:
  - Objectives, agenda
  - Expected outcome(s)
  - Roles
  - Ground Rules
  - Other
- Clearly state the problem and appropriate background to the group
- Facilitate the group process
- Conduct a benefits/ concerns analysis at end of meeting

## After

- Follow up with leader to ensure expectations were met (“debrief” the meeting)
- “Scribe” coordinates and distributes minutes from the meeting
- Follow up with group members to ensure agreed upon next steps are being acted upon

# The 7 Step Process

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- State the Problem
- Review Background
- Identify Causes
- Generate Potential Solutions
- Select the Best Solution
- Analyze Concerns and Benefits
- Develop Action Plan



# State the Problem

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- Initial statement of problem, task, opportunity, challenge
- Must be concise and accurate
- Should be action oriented, “How to...”

# Review Background

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- Additional information
- Clarification, definitions
- Constraints
- What was tried before and the outcome

# Identify Causes

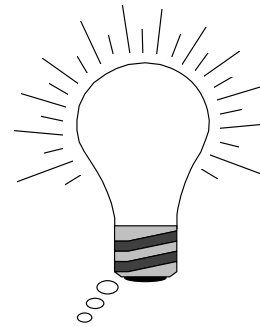
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- Driving forces
- Cause and effect
- Root cause
- Could lead to restatement of problem
- Tools
  - Stratification
  - Pareto Analysis
  - Force Field Analysis
  - Cause & Effect (Ishikawa)

# Generate Potential Solutions

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- Creative thinking, new approaches
- Quantity over quality
- Triggering
- Synergy
- Serendipity
- Tools
  - Brainstorming
  - Force Field Analysis



# Select the Best Solution

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- Many options for selecting
- Groupings
- Leader selection
- Leader/resource collaboration
- Building toward an action plan
- Tools
  - Nominal Group Technique
  - Q-Sort Analysis





# Analyze Concerns and Benefits

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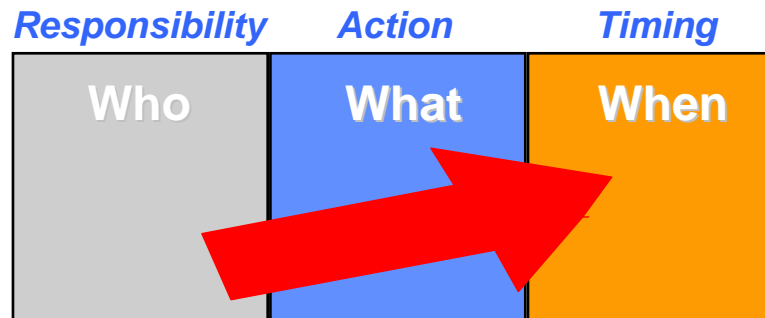
- Benefits first: “What I like about that...”
- Concerns in “How to” or “I wish” format
- Increases quality of solution and team satisfaction
- Ensure identification of any potential problems with solution
- May result in a mini problem solve
- May result in returning to selection of the best solution or even to identifying additional potential solutions



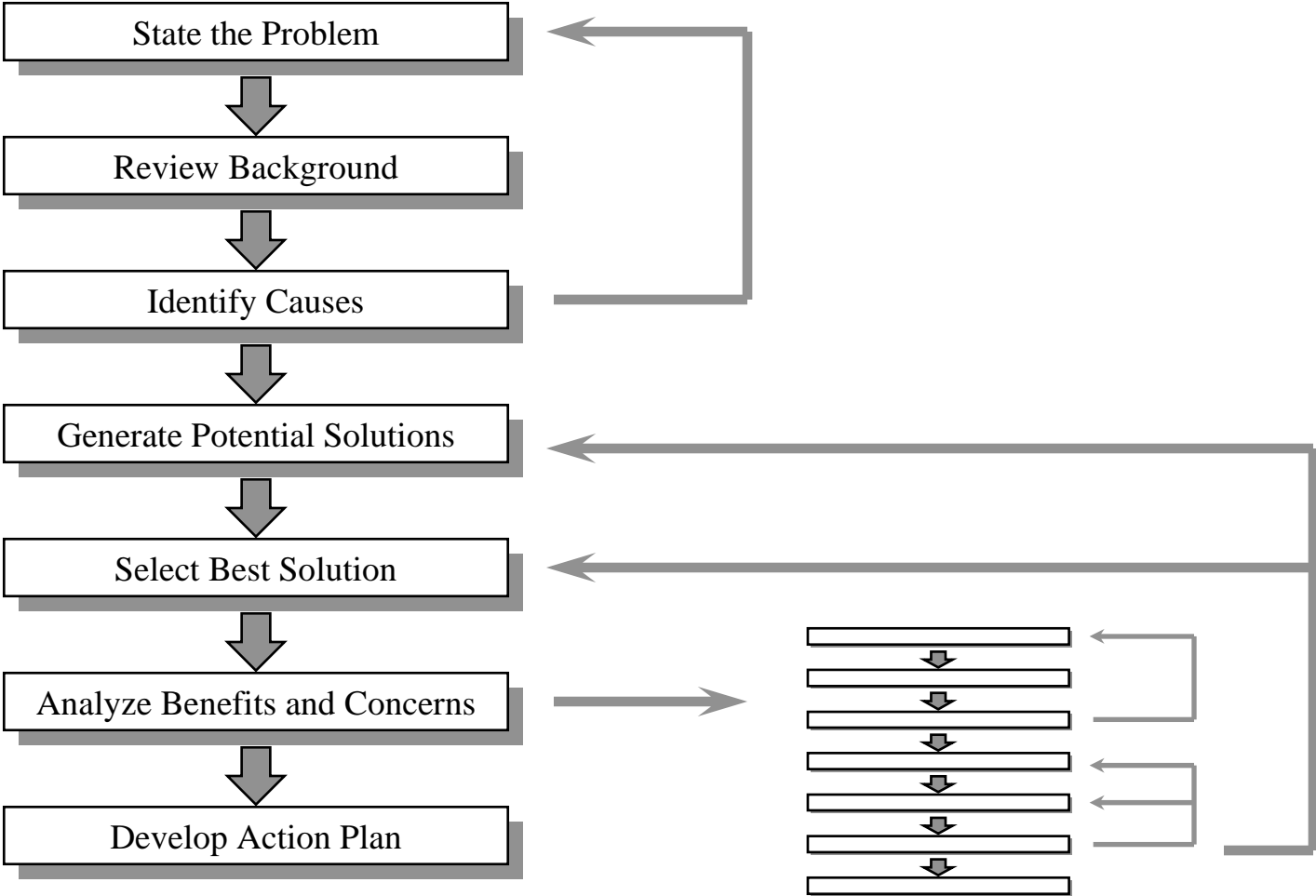
# Develop Action Plan

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- Who does what by when?
- Blueprint for executing the solution
- Ties up loose ends
- Ensures tangible results
- Increases group's ownership through task management



# Problem Solving: An Iterative Process



# Selecting Priorities for Senior Management Attention

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