

INNOVATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS

Basic Steps of Group Problem Solving Process

1. Define the challenge
2. Brainstorm alternate solutions
3. Select solutions
4. Plan implementation strategy
5. Evaluate

1. Define the Challenge

Gather input: Form a list of problems or issues to be addressed. These could come from immediate experience or ongoing projects, interpersonal or task oriented.

Categorize: Separate problems into those over which you have little or no power, and those which you do have the power to affect or change. Refine the list further to determine time priorities, and identify which issues should be addressed now, and which at a later time.

Select: Reach consensus to select the problem(s) to be dealt with.

2. Brainstorm Alternate Solutions

Blue-sky brainstorming to look at many possible solutions--the stranger the better.

3. Select a Solution

Reach consensus on the solution(s) to be implemented.

4. Plan Implementation Strategy

Reach consensus on an action plan for implementation. Determine schedule, individual roles and responsibilities, target dates, and specific assignments.

5. Evaluation

Decide what will constitute "success," and how it will be evaluated or measured.

References:

Harrison, Edward L., and Pietri, Paul H. (1997) Using Team Building to Change Organizational Culture.
Organization Development Journal, (15/4) Win 1997, 71-76

Schein, Edgar (1969) *Process Consultation*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley