Team problem-solving techniques for project managers

This workshop provides project managers and team leaders with a number of common team problem-solving tools required in many aspects of planning and project management. These tools include brainstorming, control charts, Pareto charts, flow charting, cause-effect diagrams, checklists and other common forms of data gathering and analysis. We'll apply these methods to real project issues, such as risk management, quality control and status reporting. The techniques covered are straightforward, the methodology is proven and accessible, and the principles we'll cover can be applied to all kinds of business operations and organisational planning

Learning objectives

The course will assist attendees improve their problem solving and decision-making by providing an understanding of a number of simple techniques drawn from quality control and operations management.

Attendees will learn how to:

- Understand the benefits of team techniques over individual methods used by management consultants and “gurus”
- Understand the underlying team processes and the use of such methods in leading and motivating project team members
- Recognise a number of common business problems or decisions for which these methods are suitable
- Understand the origins and purpose of each of the common methods as well as their strengths and weaknesses
- Learn how to conduct such analyses accurately and consistently
- Interpret and act upon the results of such analyses ? what questions to ask of their subordinates and colleagues, how accurate is the result, and what further steps are required to improve their analysis
- Anticipate and circumvent issues arising in the day-to-day implementation of these techniques back in the work place.

Course outline

- Introduction, Overview of course - Review of work book, case examples and other materials
- Problem solving techniques Problem solving – what are we trying to decide? What do we need to measure?
- Structured methods in problem solving – strengths and weaknesses. Differences between “technical guru” strategy and team methods
- Review of major methods to be considered.
- Flow charting, Evaluate characteristics of flow charting, common types and examples of flow charts
- Examine when to develop and use a flow chart

- Control charts in quality control.
- Group exercises using flow charting – process development & control chart
- Check sheets, Check lists and check sheets – discuss characteristics, common types, and examples of good check sheets. Measuring time frames.
- Graphical methods – mapping defects, distribution of occurrences, physical location.
- How to develop and use a check sheet
- Group exercise using check sheets
- Histograms (bar charts), Characteristics of histograms – examples. Use in statistical analysis, time estimation, quality control, acceptance testing.
- Group exercise using histograms
- Pareto Charts, Characteristics of Pareto Charts – examples. Use in quality control and issue analysis.
- Group exercise using Pareto Charts
- Cause-and-effect diagrams (Fishbone or Ishikawa diagrams), Characteristics of Ishikawa diagrams – examples. Use in project risk analysis and quality control.
- Group exercise using Cause-effect diagram
- Brainstorming and its variants, Purpose of brainstorming – alternative methods (Crawford slip, affinity diagrams, etc) – examples. Use in project risk analysis, scheduling and scoping of projects.
- Group exercise using Pareto Charts
- Wrap-up, Taking it further – resources on web.
- Decision Quality – relative merits of "technical" versus "Quick and dirty" methods
- Management issues in implementing techniques

Who Should attend?

- Project managers and team leaders in all industries (building, engineering, IT, manufacturing and finance) who must develop plans and schedules, or who have to make risk or quality decisions using uncertain or fluctuating data.
- Operational managers or business owners responsible for making business decisions or business process improvements
- Ordinary business people and managers faced with gathering and interpreting facts and making common management decisions.

Presenter

John Flynn has wide experience in management consulting, project management, market research and analysis, economic forecasting, and PC software package design and development, as well as in marketing, divisional and general management, in Australia, the United States and in the Far East. He has advised or consulted with all the major computer vendors, as well major software vendors and users. He has also written numerous reports on market projections and technical trends in the industry for clients throughout the world.

Related Coursesl

- introduction to project management
- Project management