

Problem Solving and Decision Making



Focus on: The Manager The Specialist Spotlight Programme Hands-on Skills



Course Overview

Sub-Saharan Africa faces complex challenges that require leaders with the ability to think creatively, analyze rigorously, and decide decisively. This course develops advanced problem-solving and decision-making skills for professionals determined to make a difference in their organizations and the wider region.

Participants will learn to overcome cognitive biases, apply analytical frameworks, and use innovative tools to design practical, high-impact solutions. By combining critical thinking with creative approaches, delegates will be equipped to tackle organizational issues and regional priorities with confidence and clarity, ensuring that decisions contribute directly to Africa's sustainable growth and transformation.

| Course Objectives | | This Course is Ideal For: | |
|-------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Participants will: Be able to differentiate between 20th-century sequential thinking and 21st-century lateral thinking, and articulate ways their own thinking preferences might create blind spots in problem-solving. | ✓ | Team managers |
| 2 | Be able to identify common thinking errors or psychological barriers (e.g., functional fixedness, defence mechanisms) in a given case study and propose a strategy to challenge each identified barrier. | ✓ | Team supervisors |
| 3 | Demonstrate the application of thinking models (e.g., Ishikawa Fishbone, SWOT, Root-cause analysis) to analyse a problem scenario and outline a step-by-step process to move from problem definition to idea generation. | ✓ | Leaders |

Problem Solving and Decision Making



Focus on: The Manager The Specialist Spotlight Programme Hands-on Skills

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| 4 | Demonstrate the use of creative thinking techniques (e.g., Mind Mapping, SCAMMPERR, Brainstorming) to generate distinct ideas for a specific work-place issue. | | |
| 5 | Develop an outline for applying the Kano Model analysis to a new product or service concept relevant to their work. | | |

Course Content

| Day | Theme | Coverage |
|-----|---|--|
| 1 | The Bases of Thinking, Creating and Deciding | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Why creative problem solving, thinking and decision making are important in today's organisations20th century sequential thinking vs 21st century lateral thinkingHow your brain thinks, creates, thinks and decides and how to access the parts that are more creative, more readilyUnderstand the differences between "Thinking slow and thinking fast" - the work of KahnemanHow people think in different ways - Analyse your own thinking, become aware of your thinking blind spots and read how others prefer to think. |
| 2 | Thinking Traps and Errors - How to Get the Real Issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Know when and when not to use convergent or divergent thinking processesRecognise and challenge the psychological barriers to creative thinkingChallenge "functional fixedness"Uncover other typical thinking errorsChallenge thinking defence mechanisms. |
| 3 | Thinking models - Applying models to give you a conscious framework for thinking | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyse problems and understand their root causes<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ishikawa fishbone diagramsRoot-cause analysisSWOTPESTLEStakeholder analysisApply an end-to-end process to move from problem or opportunity definition to idea generation and finally decision-making<ul style="list-style-type: none">Soft systemsWolfson DOITRED |

Problem Solving and Decision Making



Focus on: **The Manager** **The Specialist** **Spotlight Programme** **Hands-on Skills**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An alternative thinking model: applying the Appreciative Inquiry process to give new perspectives on problem solving and opportunity generation. |
| 4 | Divergence to Convergence - Creative Thinking and Decision-Making Techniques | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Become skilled in using a range of creative thinking techniques for divergent thinking<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Mind Mapping◦ SCAMMPERR◦ Brain storming◦ Metaphorical thinking◦ Attribute Listing.• Apply decision-making techniques to specific work-place issues.<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Thinking hats◦ Force field analysis◦ Decision-making matrices◦ TRIZ methodology and principles |
| 5 | Application to Customers and Clients | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify ways of working with customers to understand their world and present solutions that they will adopt.• Deploying Kano Model Analysis to deciding features to include in a new product or service• Setting up systems for creative thinking in your organisation |

| Course Assessment | Certification |
|---|---|
| Participants will be assessed on: Participation in sessions Completion of exercises & case studies Performance in assessments | Upon successful completion of the course, participants will receive a Certificate of Successful Completion , along with a Transcript of Marks showing the performance by grade in each element of assessment and overall. |
| Course Instructor | |
| With an M.A. Honours degree and teaching and training qualifications from the UK, and over 30 years of experience in managing teams and transformational change, this speaker is now an internationally respected consultant. | |