

Problem Solving and Decision Making



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

Course Overview

The course enhances problem-solving and decision-making skills leading to improved performance and productivity in individuals and teams. Participants explore thinking foundations, identify cognitive traps, and apply a range of analytical models. The program also covers creative techniques such as Mind Mapping, SCAMMPERR and Thinking Hats, culminating in customer-focused applications using tools like the Kano Model to drive creative, effective solutions.

| 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 |
| 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 |
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| 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 thinking |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How your brain thinks, creates, thinks and decides and how to access the parts that are more creative, more readily• Understand the differences between “Thinking slow and thinking fast” - the work of Kahneman• How 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 processes• Recognise and challenge the psychological barriers to creative thinking• Challenge “functional fixedness”• Uncover other typical thinking errors• Challenge 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 diagrams◦ Root-cause analysis◦ SWOT◦ PESTLE◦ Stakeholder analysis• Apply 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 systems◦ Wolfson DOIT◦ RED• 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 |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 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 |
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| 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. | | |