

Problem solving

Study text

Wiki

“Problem solving skills and methods”



14 minutes
to read

Introduction

Definitions

What are problem-solving skills?

The ability to identify and solve problems is a universal skill that can benefit you in a wide variety of careers. Problem-solving skills help you determine the source of a problem and find an effective solution. Although problem-solving is often identified as its own separate skill, there are other related skills that contribute to this ability.

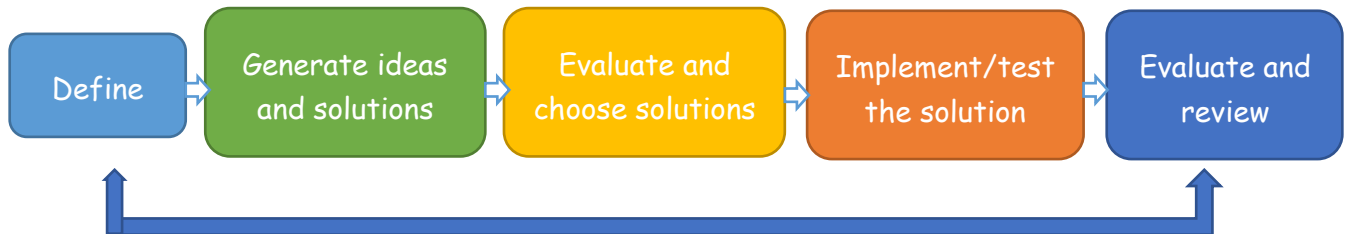
What are the problem solving skills?

In general problem-solving is mentioned as a separate skill, however it is connected with other soft skills that are necessary and contribute, many of the above skills are analysed in the sections. Some key skills are:



Problem-solving steps/process

Here are the basic steps involved in problem-solving:



Scheme 1. The basic stages of problem-solving process.

1. **Identify and define:** identify the problem, try focusing on a problem in objective terms, rather than focusing on outcomes or the consequences of the problem. Write the Problem down: this forces you to clarify and define the problem more specifically
2. **Analyse:** You want to try and learn as much as you can about the problem and determine its root causes

Questions to Identify the Problem, the five Ws are five questions beginning with W that you can ask about any problem

The Five Ws (Why?, Where?, Who?, What?, When?)

- ✓ What can you see that causes you to think there's a problem?
- ✓ Where is it happening?
- ✓ How is it happening?
- ✓ When is it happening?
- ✓ With whom is it happening?
- ✓ Why is it happening?

Do not go directly to the question "Who cause this problem"

Be flexible and Open-minded: try to see the problem from the perspective of others who may be involved. Evaluate all the ways that the problem has impacted you, or may impact you in the future

3. **Generate solutions:** This analytical, creative problem-solving step is all about creating a variety of solutions, even if they are outlandish and impractical. Often the most obvious answer isn't the best answer to a problem.

4. **Evaluate Problem-Solving Options:** (-Which is the most feasible?, -Can this option be implemented within an acceptable timeframe? Or within budget? – Will this option be easily adopted by those implementing and using it? – Are there proven outcomes from any of the solutions that make one more favourable than the other solutions? – Will the option help you meet your previously established goals?)
5. **Choose and implement**
6. **Evaluate and review**

Some ways/tips to achieve an effective problem-solving:

What is your goal? ...

What have you tried? ...

What happened? ...

What did you learn from this? ...

What else do you need? ...

What else can you do? ...

What do you think will happen if you try option A? ...

What will you do?