How to Easily Create an Effective Problem-Solving Culture

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**General Description:** The following guidelines are provided to help organizations create an effective problem-solving culture. Please note that this is only a guide. Every organization is different, so before implementing this plan you should determine who the players are and what level of training they need. With our support, we can help you integrate the elements of this guide into your organization. This Plan will be updated as we get your feedback on how to improve it, so please send your comments to us directly to info@epsrca.com.

**Critical Elements:** To be effective, everyone in the work force:
1. Must be exposed to the principles of causation to understand that “stuff” does not just happen.
2. Should know that we can find effective solutions to event-based problems by using RealityCharting® and RC Simplified™.
3. Must understand that different perspectives are a key to effective solutions and easily accommodated when you use the Realitycharting® process.
4. Must know their role in defining problems and finding effective solutions to prevent recurrence.
5. Must know that management is behind this initiative.

**Infrastructure:** The following elements are required to implement this plan:
1. Top-level management support.
2. A Program Champion. The name of this person may take many forms depending on the existing infrastructure. Examples include; Management Representative, Continuous Improvement Champion, and Problem-Solving Champion.
3. Dedicated Incident Investigation Facilitators.
4. Incorporation of the Realitycharting® process into existing procedures and protocol.
5. Involve every employee in this effective problem-solving initiative.
6. Utilize RealityCharting®, the RC Learning Center™, and RC Simplified™ throughout the organization.

**Management Buy-in and Support**
1. Show the Effective Problem-Solving video to top-level managers so they know the principles of effective problem-solving.
2. Show RealityCharting® Overview Video to all managers so they know what the software does and why it is so effective.
3. If they want to know more, managers should read the eBook: RealityCharting® – Seven Steps to Effective Problem Solving and Personal Success and work the interactive exercises in this book. To download, go to [www.realitycharting.com/rcbook](http://www.realitycharting.com/rcbook) and enter the code EPS011. This is a FREE pdf eBook that includes over 30 interactive links.
4. Provide a manager’s workshop on Managing Effective Problem-Solving. Discuss application to Safety, Defect Elimination, Continuous Improvement programs such as Six Sigma, Lean, Proactive Maintenance, Chronic (Systemic) issues.

Create a Program Champion

1. **Assignment:**
   a. The designated Program Champion can be developed with our help.
   b. Or if a company already has an experienced incident investigator they may choose to be the Program Champion.

2. **Qualifications:**
   a. The Program Champion must be an experienced incident investigator and facilitator - preferably an accredited Facilitator or Accredited Champion Instructor.
   b. The Program Champion must have extensive knowledge of the latest version of RealityCharting® software and have completed the training program defined herein.

3. **Training:**
   a. The Program Champion(s) must be familiar with the RealityCharting® learning tools to include the RC Learning Center™, RC Simplified™, and training videos, all of which can be accessed at [http://coach.realitycharting.com/](http://coach.realitycharting.com/)
   b. The Program Champion(s) must be a trained facilitator as defined in the Facilitator training below. If required, we will provide expert guidance and training to help the Program Champion(s) become accredited.
   c. Program Champions should be mentored and certified by us. This should include being guided and mentored by the training consultant who may perform actual incident investigations to show the Program Champion trainee how it’s done and then watch the Program Champion trainee facilitate actual events and mentor the trainee until they are deemed proficient.
   d. Required Reading: eBook: RealityCharting – Seven Steps to Effective Problem Solving and Personal Success. To download, go to [www.realitycharting.com/rcbook](http://www.realitycharting.com/rcbook) and enter the code EPS011.

4. **Role of the Program Champion**
   a. Mentor and be the “go to” person for all things relating to problem solving.
   b. Be able to effectively facilitate incident investigations.
   c. Incorporate problem-solving tools and techniques into the organization’s procedures, such that everyone automatically knows what to do in the event of a problem.
   d. Present or facilitate the appropriate training to all stakeholders to make sure they know what to do when they see a problem.
   e. Create and maintain a set of Threshold Criteria that trigger formal incident investigations.
      i. Make sure everyone knows what the criteria are.
      ii. As fewer and fewer events trigger each criterion, lower its trigger point.
   f. Ensure all problem solutions are tracked to make sure they are implemented according to the approved schedule.
g. Keep management informed of the status of all Threshold Criteria events, from the beginning of
the investigation to the implementation of the solutions.

h. Evaluate and trend the success of the solutions to prevent recurrence of all documented
problems.

i. Identify the savings generated from the non-repeat of events and calculate the Return-On-
Investment (ROI) of this initiative – present this information to management periodically.

j. Evaluate all events for common cause using RealityCharting® Cause > Find Feature, or purchase
RC Pro™ which provides unlimited data searches on all of your Realitycharts at the same time.

k. Create Realitycharts for major successes and make sure all stakeholders know why they have
been successful so they can continue to do the same things. This analysis may also identify
weaknesses, risks, and serendipitous causal relationships – all of which can be strengthened.

**Audits:** An annual audit of the program, investigation reports, skills, and success/failures should be performed
by us to ensure quality of investigations, adherence to core principles of the RealityCharting Problem-Solving
methodology, ensuring solutions are implemented and systemic problems identified.

**Dedicated Incident Investigation Facilitators**

1. **Identify Stakeholders**
   a. Identify all stakeholders who have to solve problems as part of their daily work scope
   b. Train all stakeholders. This usually includes the following:
      i. System or Process Engineers
      ii. Supervisors or Team Leaders
      iii. Some Managers

2. **Training**
   a. It is recommended that we provide in-house classroom training to the designated facilitators at the
      onset of this initiative. From this training we can provide recommendations, if needed, of which
      students show the most promise of being a good Program Champion.
   b. Facilitation training shall consist of each student installing RealityCharting® software and using RC
      Coach™ to learn the process and the software. If any questions arise during this training, we can
      provide answers, or provide an online conference and use that as a forum to complete this part of
      the training.
   c. Facilitator students will work at least two Facilitation Simulator exercises in the RealityCharting
      Learning Center™ and use RealityCharting® software to create at least two charts of real problems
      of their own. They should try to collaborate with one or two other trainees for this exercise. We will
      review them to ensure they are done properly and provide feedback as needed.
   d. After all facilitators have completed the RC Coach™ training and practice sessions, they will
      participate in a one-day classroom training session where they practice doing incident investigations
      using the software. These can be actual facility incidents and/or simulated ones provided by us.

3. **Proficiency Levels:** Practitioner proficiency levels and corresponding titles should be established as
   follows:
i. Student Practitioner – to be used while learning the process and have completed the ARCA training class or all five steps of the RC Learning Center™.

ii. Accredited Investigator – Complete the Accredited Investigator program.

iii. Accredited Facilitator – Complete the Accredited Facilitator program.

4. Mentoring Process

   a. The Program Champion should mentor other practitioners and support other practitioners to develop their skills for conducting more complex investigations by encouraging them to become accredited.

   b. By encouraging facilitators to continuously improve their problem solving skills you not only embed this thinking into the culture, it creates a line of succession if the Program Champion leaves.

Integration: Incorporate the RealityCharting® problem-solving tools and training into the existing company procedures and protocols as follows:

1. Entry Points: Identify problem-solving entry points by reviewing the work processes.

   a. Problems can occur anywhere and this evaluation should include what the actions of any employee should be if they identify a problem.

   b. This may include Non-Conformance Reports, Corrective Action Reports, and Customer Feedback Forms.

2. Minor Problems: If the problem is below the threshold criteria for performing a full-blown ARCA™, employees should use RC Simplified™ to document the problem as they see it and send the Realitychart to their Supervisor/Team Leader and the Program Champion.

3. Getting Help: If an employee is not capable of using RC Simplified™ for whatever reason, they should go to their Team Leader, supervisor, or other designated person who does have access and work with them to do the first cut analysis.

4. Problem Identification Form: If none of the above will work, the employee should fill out a designated problem identification form and give it to their Team Leader/Supervisor. The form should simply ask them to describe the problem as they see it – this entry point must be simple. Working with the stakeholders involved, the supervisor can then use RC Simplified™ or RealityCharting® to analyze the event.

General Employee Training

1. Watch Video: As a minimum all employees should watch the 17-minute Effective Problem Solving video. If possible the Program Champion should be present when watching and answer any questions people may have. The Program Champion may want to stop it at certain points and add examples that are applicable to the business. This can be part of the introduction to the effective problem-solving initiative or general employee training.

2. Use RC Simplified™: RC Simplified™ is an excellent training tool in addition to an entry-level problem-solving tool. If employees have access to a computer and the web, show them RC Simplified™ and ask them to view the training videos provided in the Help menu of RC Simplified™ and then ask them to create and submit a problem analysis of any problem they may be having now. It can be company related or not. These should be submitted to the Program Champion for review, information and to provide feedback to the individuals to help them understand the principles of causation.
Implementation Strategies

1. **Initial Findings:** If the initial problem analysis using RC Simplified™ provides effective solutions, then implement them according to existing procedures and approval protocol.
   - Send the final analysis to the Program Champion for review and approval and put into the organizations tracking and trending system and/or print, or otherwise transmit the final copy to stakeholders who may need it.
   - The Program Champion will review to determine if the problem exceeds the threshold criteria for a formal investigation and respond accordingly. He/she shall also convert the simplified chart to a Realitychart and put it in the database for common cause review using RC Pro™.
   - This protocol provides the Program Champion oversight of how well the program is working and when and where to adjust it.

2. **Incomplete Analysis:** If the event-analysis using RC Simplified™ does not find effective solutions, then send the initial Realitychart to the Program Champion.
   - The Program Champion will determine if the problem exceeds the threshold criteria for a formal investigation and respond accordingly.
   - The Program Champion will determine if he/she can finish the analysis or if a team is needed to work the issue.
   - If a team is required, the Program Champion will gather the team and work with them to finalize the analysis. The Program Champion may lead the analysis or ask their authorized ARCA™ consultant to do it. This is usually a function of the size of the organization and the functional domain.

Deployment

1. **Roll Out:** Depending on the size of the organization it may be necessary to roll this initiative out in a stepwise fashion. You may want to start with one business unit or discipline and as you work the kinks out move to another unit or discipline, until full deployment is achieved.

2. **Ease of Deployment**
   - Deployment is easy because the RC Learning Center™ is a free web-based training platform.
   - Use the RealityCharting Learning Center™ to access the free videos and other teaching aids as required.
   - Use the Exercises (Step 4) in the RC Learning Center™ to work real-world events and create a Realitychart. If you have problem examples that are specific to your business that you want added to this feature, send them to Realitycharting www.realitycharting.com) and we will add them. We can remove any sensitive information to make them look generic.

Send feedback to author directly to info@epsrca.com or visit us at www.epsrca.com