

Whys



KEY LEARNINGS: WHYS

What is the 5 Whys Method?

- A problem-solving technique used to find the root cause of an issue.
- Helps uncover deeper causes by repeatedly asking "Why?"
- Based on the idea that most problems are symptoms of deeper issues.
- Usually involves asking "Why?" five times, but it can take more or fewer steps depending on the problem.

How Does the 5 Whys Work?

- Clearly Define the Problem Be specific. Example: Instead of "We missed a deadline," say "We missed the delivery deadline for Project X by two days."
- Ask the First "Why" Identify the immediate cause of the problem.
- Ask "Why" Again Challenge the first answer and dig deeper.
- Repeat Until You Reach the Root Cause Continue asking "Why" until you find the real cause—not just a symptom.
- Act on the Root Cause Implement a long-term solution to prevent the problem from recurring.

Example: Solving a Machine Breakdown in a Factory

Problem: A critical machine has stopped working.

1. Why did the machine stop? – A fuse blew.
2. Why did the fuse blow? – The motor was overloaded.
3. Why was the motor overloaded? – The lubrication wasn't sufficient.
4. Why wasn't the lubrication sufficient? – The maintenance schedule wasn't followed.
5. Why wasn't it followed? – The team wasn't trained on the new maintenance protocol.

Root Cause: Lack of training on maintenance protocols.

Solution: Train employees properly to ensure regular machine maintenance.

Whys



KEY LEARNINGS: WHYS

Key Benefits of the 5 Whys Method

- Prevents quick-fix solutions that don't address the real issue.
- Cuts through assumptions and reveals hidden causes.
- Encourages critical thinking instead of blaming symptoms.
- Helps create long-term solutions that prevent future problems.

What's Next?

- The 5 Whys uncovers individual root causes, but what if multiple issues are interconnected?
- How do you find the few major problems causing most of the issues?
- Up next: Learning how to prioritize problems using a data-driven approach.