

UCI Extension

Continuing Education

Practical Management for Career Readiness



Effective Problem Solving and Decision Making Module 1



with Rob Stone, M.Ed., PMP

Let's Start with
Types of Problems

Problem-Solving: The Owner's Manual (Owner's Manual for the Brain)

by Pierce Howard

1. Problems for which the possible solutions are unknown
2. Problems for which the solutions are known, but the best solution is not obvious



Source: Howard, Pierce (2014-05-06). Problem-Solving: The Owner's Manual (Owner's Manual for the Brain) (Kindle Locations 77-79). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.

Possible Solutions Are Unknown

1. Problems where the cause is unknown and must be discovered
2. Problems where the cause is known, or is unknown and irrelevant

Source: Pierce Howard. *Problem-Solving: The Owner's Manual (Owner's Manual for the Brain)*. HarperCollins Publishers.

Solutions Are Known, But Best Solution Is Not Obvious

1. Solutions with certain outcomes
2. Solutions with uncertain outcomes
3. Solutions in need of being prioritized

Source: Pierce Howard. *Problem-Solving: The Owner's Manual (Owner's Manual for the Brain)*. HarperCollins Publishers.

Different Types of Problems

Different Types of Solution

Kind of Problem	Nature of Appropriate Problem-Solving Activity
Problem with unknown cause	Finding the cause
Problem with known or irrelevant cause	Generating ideas that could fix the problem
Decision between solutions with certain outcomes	Deciding on one best solution
Decision between solutions with uncertain outcomes	Deciding which solution has the highest probability of success
A jumbled list	Determining the priority order