



Analytical Thinking Skills

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Course Overview:

This course will improve your ability to analyze issues more effectively and to solve problems in a comprehensive way. Learn analytical thinking strategies and principles that will strengthen your understanding of problems and your ability to reach decisions that are relevant, defensible, properly aligned to available resources, and considerate of all stakeholders.

This challenging, but entertaining, course revisits many of the thinking skills that lie dormant in the average person. You will explore various kinds of individual and group problem solving approaches, and learn how the wrong approach merely perpetuates problems rather than solving them.

Who should attend?

Senior management in general and all managerial ranks involved in strategy formation and strategic planning in particular, including:

- General Managers
- Executive Managers
- Strategic Managers and Planners
- Operation Managers
- HR and Training Managers
- Managers identified by their organizations as having the potential to assume greater responsibilities within their organizations.

Course Delivery

The course delivery comprises instructor-led seminars interspersed with extensive practical exercises for both the group and the individual

Course Assessment

Participants will learn by experience and practical exercises. To complete the course, delegates are required to attend the full course and actively

participate in the exercises, discussion & feedback. Assessment of competency is done by the course facilitator. The mechanism is observation.

The course is designed to be completed in the full 5 days. There is no homework. However, if delegates take up the challenge of the course, they can expect to spend at least half an hour a day, for the rest of their lives, honing their problem-solving and thinking skills!

Course Outcome:

- Understanding the Four Statistical Pillars of Good Data Collection and Analysis
- Assessing a Problem Correctly
- A 10-step Approach: Yielding Defendable Results and Sound Recommendations for Any Type of Problem or Concern
- Enhancing Problem-solving and Decision-making Abilities
- Presenting Results and Solutions for Maximum Impact and Influence
- Applying Lessons Learned to Future Operational Difficulties and Issues

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, delegates will learn about:

- Identify and discuss the thinking or psychological faults/pitfalls that affect sound judgment and vigorous intelligence analysis (thinking about thinking)
- Conceptualize complex issues and problems through the use of applicable multidimensional techniques
- Understand various problem solving techniques
- Use operational analysis tools such as link/network analysis, event and commodity flow analysis, telephone records analysis, timeline analysis, and financial transaction analysis
- Use strategic analysis tools, such as indicator development, scenario-building, brainstorming, Porter's 5 Forces model, PESTEL analysis, SWOT analysis, and Analysis of Competing Hypothesis (ACH)

Course Outline:

Understanding analytical thinking and problem solving

- What is a problem and what is not?
- Common pitfalls in solving problems
- General approach to problem solving
- Importance of analytical thinking in solving problems
- What may be preventing you from thinking analytically?

Attitude of an analytical thinker

- Self-assessment
- Five (5) characteristics of an analytical thinker
- Developing an analytical mind

Reasoning

- Understanding the reasoning process
- Deductive versus inductive reasoning
- Common pitfalls (especially in the business environment)
- Avoiding the reasoning pitfalls

Evaluate information sources

- Why do we need to evaluate information sources?
- What to look for and look out for?
- Four (4) types of questions to ask
- Evaluating information sources at work
- Case studies

Evaluate arguments

- Challenging assumptions
- Weighing the evidences
- Checking for omissions
- Validating a reasoning
- Asserting a conclusion
- Case studies and role play

Some tools for analytical thinking

- Socratic questioning
- The argument checklist
- Applying analytical thinking at the workplace

Recognizing and assessing a problem

- Using examples, discussions and exercises, participants will learn:
- How to identify and define a problem?
- The need to assess the short term and long term implications
- When is a problem worth solving?
- Overview of a problem solving strategy

Analyzing causes

Through a case study and discussions, participants will learn:

- How to differentiate symptoms from causes
- How to use some troubleshooting tools to:
 - Trace a problem to its sources
 - Identify patterns and contrasts
 - Formulate hypothesis and conduct experimentation
 - Represent information using a Fishbone Diagram

Exploring options

- Through a case study and discussions, participants will learn
- How to generate and explore options to resolve a problem,
- Including:
 - Brainstorming
 - Framing perspectives
 - Modeling

Reaching a decision

- Through a case study and discussions, participants will learn
- How to make a decision using a decision matrix. Included in
- The sub-topics are:
 - Defining goal
 - Analyzing factors
 - Assigning weights
 - Comparing options

Team Problem Solving

- This section will also serve as a summary of all concepts
- Learnt. Participants will take part in a group problem session
- By applying all tools learnt during the day to solve a simulated
- Problem. The following techniques will be emphasized:
 - Facilitation techniques
 - Reaching consensus