

Ian ponders: Digging out the roots...

In my last article I showed you the engine in ISO 9001, the part that converts the rhetoric into an active component. The engine diagram illustrates clearly the different sorts of actions that are required to deal with nonconformities of any kind.

The other area often missed is carrying out investigations that get to the root of an issue. While Professor Kauru Ishikawa's "Fish Bone" Cause & Effect Diagram is where we're traditionally led, I personally don't find this tool particularly effective. For a start it requires setting up a number of cause areas, which seems back to front to me; but there's another issue with the tool, as you'll see later and as the old saying goes, "There is Always a Better Way", so try this....

Step 1: Set up a team

Set up a team of people who understand the issue and represent the stakeholders so far as practicable. Note: we're looking for systemic improvements, not scapegoats. Note also that investigations done by individuals alone are rarely effective because personal agendas always prevail, unwittingly or otherwise. In any case, nobody has all the wisdom; we all have some of it¹.

Step 2: Brainstorm the problem

Brainstorm the problem – use the Affinity Diagram and Interrelationship Diagram tools from The Memory Jogger 2 (GOAL/QPC). Remember if you can't agree what the problem is you won't ever be able to fix it! Understanding any sequence of events is helpful too. Note particularly that the temptation to come up with solutions to undefined problems is a common behaviour among many; watch out for it during team sessions. Make use of it so far as possible by getting to the background experience that drives it.

Step 3: Identify causes (The Binary Cause Model)

Prof James Reason^{2,3} from the University of Manchester is famous for his Swiss Cheese Model to describe organisational accidents such as the leak from the Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Station, the Tenerife B747 collision, the Piper Alpha oil platform explosion and the capsizing of the Herald of Free Enterprise.

Prof Reason insists that organisational structures and behaviours are like slices of Swiss cheese: when the holes in the structure 'slices' align with holes in the behaviour 'slices', something unintended (such as an accident) occurs. He calls the structural holes 'latent conditions' and the behavioural ones 'unsafe acts'. The trick, he says is to spot these before they line up and something goes wrong. The location of these holes is very difficult to anticipate, and in the realm of the ultimate in internal auditing. On the other hand, finding them after something untoward has happened is much easier.

Experienced safety investigator, Dean Gano⁴ markets a software tool called Reality Charting based on the same binary principle but not related, apparently. He calls it Apollo Root Cause Analysis. He says: obviously, the minimum

number of causes for any occurrence is two; at least one system deficiency and one erroneous action (hence the binary relationship).

Gano makes two additional vital points that add a streetwise level of reality missing from Reason's academic approach. He says there's no such thing as common sense; since we all come from different backgrounds and have different experiences there's no basis for commonality in what we do and think. This of course is pertinent to the folly of taking seriously, investigations done by individuals rather than teams.

He also says that cause and effect are the same; see Table 1.

Effect	Cause
Person slips over on on wet floor	Leak from water pipe
Leak from water pipe	Maintenance not done
Maintenance not done	Budget run out
Budget run out	Sales targets not met
Sales targets not met	World recession
World recession	Bad mortgagor decisions
Bad mortgagor decisions	Poor governance controls
Etc	Etc

Clearly two points emerge. Cause and effect are indeed the same (so Ishikawa's Fish Bone Diagram can't work, can it?); it's the timing that's important. Also, in reality, poor governance in the mortgage industry was as much the cause of the victim slipping over on the wet floor as the maintenance that didn't get done.

Procedure (see Figure 1)

Using the model is a matter of understanding the problem and having access to large flat surface (e.g. a wall) and good supply of PostIt notes.

1. Write the problem from Step 2 on a PostIt Note.
2. Place at centre top or centre left of the space.
3. Brainstorm the primary Latent Condition (LC), write it on a PostIt Note and link it to the left or under the problem 1/3 of the way across or down the sheet (as per your preferred orientation).
4. Do the same for the primary Unsafe Act (UA), but add the PostIt 2/3 down or across symmetrical with the Latent Condition.
5. Treat each LC and UA as a new problem in its own right and add secondary LCs and UAs.
6. Repeat this binary process for each LC and UA until you reach either:
 - a workable conclusion, or
 - the point where you run out of influence or knowledge.

continued on page 13

The Science of Achievement – the true cause of success

When you know what you want (target), and why you want it (driving force and fuel), then all you need to perform at your best is to manage your state, as Sam Hazledine explains:

In my previous articles I've shared my perspective on the 80:20 of success; that 20% of success is based on mechanics and 80% of success is based on psychology. I then shared with readers that the first determinants to creating a bulletproof mindset are: first, gaining clarity about exactly what it is you want, and then determining your compelling reasons 'why' that goal is a must for you. When you know what you want (your target), and why you want it (your driving force and fuel), then you need also to manage your state on a day-to-day, moment-to-moment basis in order to perform at your best.

Creating a peak state

There is nothing more powerful to affect your outcomes in any moment than your state. Even people who know what they want and why they want it, can fall down if they don't understand how to manage their state in order to perform at their best.

Your state is a moment-to-moment decision that you have to make; it's so important that you can't afford to forget about it and go through life on autopilot.

There are only three components of your state that you need to manage: physiology, focus and language. It's pretty simple really!

Physiology

Your physiology is the first and most immediate component of your state; it's how you move your body, what you eat, what you drink, how you breathe and how you hold your posture.

Try this: as you're reading this take a big sigh, hunch your shoulders, drop your head and see how you feel. Now sit up straight – or even better, stand up, put a big smile on your face and pull your shoulders back. Do those postures feel a



lot different? That's the power of physiology and you can change it in a moment.

Focus

What you are focussing on will also determine your state and your ability to perform. Where focus goes, energy flows, so focus on the outcome you want and how you need to show up to achieve it; and you give yourself the best chance of success.

Language

Our subconscious mind is over 30,000 times more powerful than our conscious mind. The language we use speaks directly to our subconscious mind, and our subconscious wants to remain congruous with our language so it will adjust our state to reflect it.

If you are about to perform a task and you say to yourself "I'm hopeless at this, I can't do it", then chances are you won't be able to do it. On the other hand if you say "I can handle anything that comes my way with a smile on my face", then you've just increased your chances of success a hundredfold.

As Henry Ford famously said, "If you think you can do a thing, or you think you can't do a thing, you are usually right."

Begin to manage your state

So, to perform at your best at any moment there are only three things to manage: your physiology, your focus and the language you are using; it's simple!

But while it's simple, it's not always easy, because we all have habitual patterns that we've become conditioned to over many years and which we fall into. But it's like anything – the more you practise it the better and more natural you get. So over the next week my challenge to you is to write out the triad and put it somewhere so you'll see it throughout the day, and to manage your state. I bet you'll have a great week, you'll enjoy it more and you'll get more done. You might even have more fun!!!

Then you might decide that your new state is a better habitual pattern to condition...

For further information contact: sam@medrecruit.com

continued from page 12

7. Determine the actions necessary to deal with the causes identified, noting that the Affinity Diagram is a good brainstorming tool to use here too.
8. Implement the actions and review in due course.

That's all there is to it, really. You'll be amazed not only at what emerges but how little time it takes!

For further information contact bigfella@paradise.net.nz

References

- 1 McKinney, M. (1998). *Sharing Wisdom*, Ave Maria Press, ISBN 0883473658
- 2 Reason, J. (1990). *Human Error*, Cambridge Univ. Press, ISBN 0521314194
- 3 Reason, J. (1997). *Managing the risks of organisational accidents*, Ashgate Publishing, ISBN 1840141042
- 4 Gano D. (1999). *Apollo Root Cause Analysis*, Atlas Books, ISBN 9781883677114