

Find out how you're doing in problem solving and decision making

The ability to quickly and efficiently solve problems and make decisions is **critical** to get ahead in today's hyper-fast environment. The best way to know if you need to improve problem solving and decision making results is to score yourself (or *department/division/organization*) as objectively as possible in each of the six problem solving/decision making success categories:

- Managing the decision making process;
- Resolving broad, complex issues;
- Solving specific problems;
- Creative problem solving;
- Making decisions;
- Implementing decisions and contingency plans.

This **Problem Solving/Decision Making ScoreCard** is designed to help you understand exactly where you are - what's working, what's not working and where to pay the most attention to improve performance. **Score yourself from 0 to 5 for each statement (0 means "Absolutely Not"; 5 means, "Definitely Yes!")**. Just put your score in the fields provided, compile the subtotals and determine the final tally.

A Note About the ScoreCard. The areas on the ScoreCard are all action-oriented items. They are the things you need to be, do and have for effective decision making. Our experience has proven that improving **any** of these areas can have a major impact on your effectiveness. The trick is knowing **what** to improve and **how** to improve it.

| I) Managing the Decision Making Process | Score (0 – 5) |
|---|------------------|
| 1. We have an established process for making decisions and solving problems in our organization. | |
| 2. The information necessary to make a decision is readily available to all team members. | |
| 3. When solving a problem, we focus on solving the problem completely rather than choosing the "quick fix". | |
| 4. Problem solving/decision making meetings result in clear conclusions and positive outcomes. | |
| 5. We retain knowledge gained from past decisions so we can apply that knowledge to future decisions. | |
| Section I subtotal: | |

| II) Resolving Broad, Complex Issues | | Score (0 – 5) |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| 1. We are effective at differentiating between the symptoms of a problem and the true causes. | | |
| 2. We are effective at getting to the heart of the issue, not just the beginning scenario. | | |
| 3. Issues are resolved based on facts, not opinions. | | |
| 4. Buy-in for our action plans is high. | | |
| 5. Once a problem is resolved, it does not recur. | | |
| Section II subtotal: | | |

| III) Solving Specific “Deviation” Problems | | Score (0 – 5) |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| 1. We are effective at deploying the right people to solve sudden problems when they occur. | | |
| 2. We are effective at collecting the facts surrounding a problem in a timely manner. | | |
| 3. Root causes are verified before time and money are spent to correct the problem. | | |
| 4. The problem analysis process is documented for future reference and benefit. | | |
| 5. We are effective at managing meetings where problems are analyzed. | | |
| Section III subtotal: | | |

| IV) “Creative” Problem Solving | Score (0 – 5) |
|--|------------------|
| 1. We are okay with bending the rules now and then if it means a great idea gets implemented. | |
| 2. After coming up with a good idea, we challenge ourselves to come up with an even better idea. | |
| 3. We are able to see problems and challenges from various viewpoints. | |
| 4. New ideas are welcomed and considered in this organization. | |
| 5. We have a system for encouraging and nurturing new ideas. | |
| Section IV subtotal: | |

| V) Making Decisions | Score (0 – 5) |
|---|------------------|
| 1. A common (uniform) decision making process is used by all group members. | |
| 2. Decision criteria are established before options are considered or selected. | |
| 3. Decision alternatives are analyzed in a consistent, fair manner. | |
| 4. Decision risks are properly identified and evaluated. | |
| 5. Rationale for decision recommendations is clear and understandable. | |
| Section V subtotal: | |

| VI) Implementing Decisions and Contingency Plans | | Score (0 – 5) |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Our plans and projects go smoothly with minimal problems and setbacks. | | |
| 2. Future problems and threats are routinely assessed to determine their seriousness and the likelihood they will happen. | | |
| 3. We prevent problems by taking proactive action ahead of time. | | |
| 4. When problems do occur, the negative effects are minimal because contingency plans are in place. | | |
| 5. In our organization, preventing problems is rewarded more than solving them when they happen. | | |
| Section VI subtotal: | | |
| ScoreCard total (sum of all six sections): | | |

| SCORE | GRADE | Comments |
|--------------|--------------|--|
| 130-150 | A | You are performing at the highest level of effectiveness. What actions can you take to "lock this in" so it becomes automatic for you and your team? |
| 110-129 | B | Your score is good but could be even better. There are proven tools and tactics to get to a higher level of effectiveness. Look at areas where scores are at "3" or below to determine where to focus. |
| 90-109 | C | Your score is average. There are fundamental changes that need to be made for improvement. Chances are good that many areas need attention, so you'll need to set priorities for action. |
| 70-89 | D | Your score is well below average. There are multiple weak spots that must be addressed if you expect to improve. This scoring range typically indicates issues in problem solving skills, workgroup procedures, and the collaborative environment. |
| <70 | F | Major barriers exist that prevent any acceptable performance. These obstacles need to be identified and acted on immediately. |

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