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CareerSense

Problem

Solving

– The Basics





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Getting to **the root** of a problem

Often, when we come across a problem, we just want to dive in and fix it, and that's fine. But if we also find the cause of the problem, it's less likely to happen again.



When we try to solve a problem, it's best to start by asking these questions.

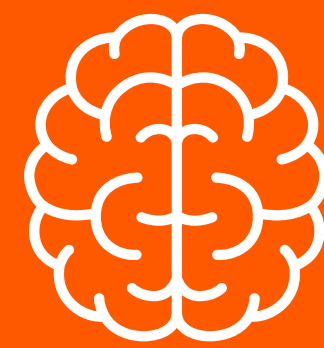
How big is the problem, and who's affected?

To start solving the problem, you'll need to understand **how big it is and who's affected by it.**



What do they think?

You'll need to talk to **all the people affected** to make sure the problem gets **solved in a way that helps everyone.**



What happens when the problem is solved?

Fixing the problem will **create change**, so you'll need to make sure everyone involved will be **comfortable** with that.



How big is this problem, and who's affected?

You need to understand the size of the problem and the scale of its impact before you can start to find a solution. Then you need to know who's affected by the problem and who can do something about it. These are your 'stakeholders', and you begin by talking to them. **A stakeholder is an individual, group or organisation that has an interest in the success of a piece of work or project, and different stakeholders may have varying levels of interest and priorities.**

The stakeholders you speak to should include those that are involved in the chain of events before the point where the problem happens, those involved and affected at the point that it happens, and any others that are involved in any knock-on effects or outcomes.



How big is this problem, and who's affected?

Trying to solve a problem by yourself is frustrating, and often ends up with poor results. **Contacting people affected by a problem can be challenging but shows everyone you care about their experience, and their input will make finding a solution a lot easier.**



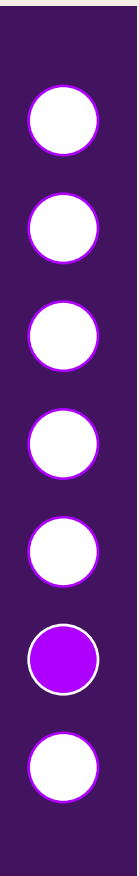
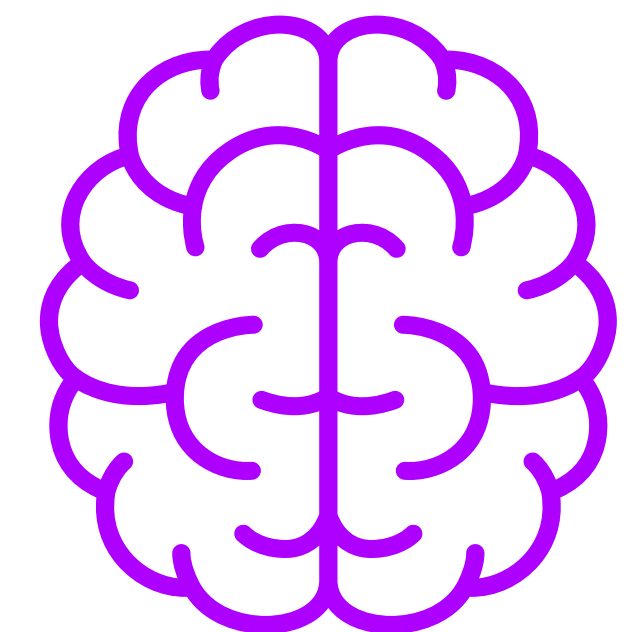
What do they think?

We all appreciate being spoken to before something big happens to us, so it's **important to ask people for their input** when it comes to the decisions that affect them.

And fixing problems creates change. Getting peoples' acceptance is important when things are changing. If you're able to make your stakeholders feel valued, **letting them know that their opinion truly matters**, they're more likely to agree with any big changes you would like to make.

Start with questions about what is and isn't working, what are the challenges you're facing, what would you change if you could? Keep the questions simple and direct. **Gathering these opinions allows you to see the big picture – the whole problem, not just what you can see from your own perspective.**

Make sure everyone affected has the chance to give their opinions. You can find out more about the methods you can use by looking at our guide to brainstorming.





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What happens when the problem is solved?

When the problem is solved, it will bring change to everyone you've been speaking to. Make sure they're aware of the impact that change may bring and that they're happy with it. **By gaining the trust of your stakeholders and learning from their experience, you can help build bridges between people by solving the problem you're faced with.**

In the next flipbook, you'll find out about a useful problem-solving tool that will help you accomplish what we've been discussing.

