

# PROBLEM SOLVING & DECISION MAKING

## OVERVIEW

It is a fact of life that Supervisors and Managers are paid to make mistakes!

Impossible? Untrue? Ridiculous? Not at all!

Life – and the work place – is full of choices which have to be made. We usually call these choices, “Decisions”. By simple definition, a choice between two or more options means that one or more of the alternatives is “wrong” (or at least, not quite as right as others). And because we are all human, and fallible, or because the information on which we base our decisions is not always accurate or complete, sometimes we make the wrong choice. Indeed, experience demonstrates clearly that we are all subject to making wrong decisions from time to time.

Since someone has to make these choices, these are the people we usually call managers or supervisors. We pay them to make decisions - and some of these will be wrong! OED!

In our concern to minimise the “wrong” decisions, and maximise the “right” ones, we often spend disproportionate amounts of time and other resources in seeking extra information to reduce the risk.

Problem solving and decision making is always one of the real challenges which face supervisors and managers in the workplace; it is often one of the major causes of stress for individuals and problems for the organisation. The need to make “good” decisions in as short a time frame as possible therefore remains a goal for many managers and organisations.

This program is designed to help decision makers by discovering useful practical tools that can inform the decision making process, and come to terms with the constant tension between the need for sensible speed in decision-making and the need to have adequate information on which to base the decision.

## AIMS

The aim of the “Problem Solving and Decision Making” Workshop is to equip participants with the

skills and abilities necessary to improve their decision-making abilities, both on the job, and in their lives generally.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of the program participants will:

1. Understand the conceptual nature of problems and decisions.
2. Comprehend the inherent conflict between the need for speedy decision making and the need to gather suitable data and information to assist the choice.
3. Know and understand various practical and contemporary problem solving tools and the advantages and drawbacks of each.
4. Have the confidence to actually use these tools in decision making on the job.

Every effort is made to tailor the precise program content to reflect the major needs and interests of individual participants.

The program uses a blend of classroom sessions, interactive group work and experiential learning activities.

## EVALUATION

Participants themselves are always invited to provide their responses to the program which provides an indication of participant “comfort level”.

However, over time the only real determinant of program success is the extent to which the program may be seen to have impacted upon participant performance. Our approach is to provide the participant, or a nominated manager or supervisor, with an evaluation instrument for completion several weeks after conclusion of the program. This is essentially an in-house tool for use by the client.

However, we encourage organisations to return a copy of the completed instrument for use in the future review, development and general improvement of the program.

## **DURATION**

The basic program is designed as a four-hour Workshop. Longer and shorter versions have been successfully presented to meet the needs of particular clients.

The subject is usually included as an element in our key Supervisory and Management Training programs.