

Decision Architecture Root Cause Analysis - Facilitators Guide

Overview

To discover and unearth the core underlining issues for a problem or activity, Root Cause Analysis is our preferred technique. Through a set of exploratory questioning, the facilitator will be able to dig into the reasons behind an issue to determine the root issue.

This technique is most useful when you are trying to further explore an issue or problem. There are better tools and methods one can leverage to brainstorm on an idea or discover the initial problem or subject area. Root Cause Analysis is a tool one should leverage for getting to the underlining issue once an initial subject area has been discovered.

In the Decision Architecture Methodology, we leverage the Category Tree technique to understand the various subject areas for further exploration. We then leverage the Root Cause Analysis technique to understand the questions and decisions.

Approach

1. Determine the subject area for further exploration from the Category Tree.
2. Ask the question 'What is the first question you ask yourself when you think about the subject area for analysis?'
3. Based on the answer to the question, drill into the next logical question, 'What is the next question you ask yourself?'
4. Repeat this process 5-7 times until you get to the underlining issue or opportunity.
5. As the group is determining the decisions, codify them into the "Inform" and "Diagnose" phases of the analytical cycle.
6. Once the group has reached the point that they have no more questions, the group should be ready to make a decision, assuming they have answers to the prior questions.
7. Once you get to a decision, you have found the root cause they are looking to solve. This is typically the point where one has completed the diagnostic process and is ready to choose an approach or take action to solve the problem.

Supporting Tools & Techniques

- Category Tree Facilitation Technique
- Decision Architecture Methodology
- Decision Analysis Technique
- Parking Lot
- Issue / Risks Management

Keys for Success

- If the process is breaking into too many branches for solving a question, ask the group to take a higher level approach. They may be too in the weeds
- You may conduct several sessions for each category you pursue
- Use active listening skills
- Let the group be the subject matter expert, your goal is to facilitate the process
- It may not be necessary to drill down into 5-7 levels to get to the root cause or decision
- Use silence effectively, it will be your strongest technique

Examples

A doctor is trying to diagnose an issue with a patient based on verbal and visual information provided by the patient. The first step is for the doctor to take the patient's vitals and then proceed with a set of questions to narrow down the potential issue. Below is the line of questions:

Level	Analytical Cycle Phase	Question	Response
1	Inform	What seems to be the problem?	I have a rash
2	Inform	How long have you had the rash?	2 days
3	Inform	Where is the rash located?	On my forearm
4	Inform	Where did you get the rash?	In the garden
5	Diagnose	Can you show me the rash for a visual inspection?	Small red spots
6	Diagnose	Are there blisters	Yes
7	Diagnose	Are the rash and blisters severe?	Yes
	Decision	Treat for poison ivy	