Problem solving process

5 tips for effective remote working: tip # 4

This problem solving process is all inclusive – so everyone has a voice. This is so important!

BLUE Leader, guides the process respecting time, takes or designates someone to take notes, respects the order of the hats and recaps at end of the session.

WHITE Stick to facts, so if people go off on tangents, immediately bring them back.

RED Gut feeling. What did you like, what didn't you like? How did you feel during the round? Get out the emotions to clear the way for thinking, creativity.

GREEN Bring in new ideas. **No** negativity, everything is permitted to be said and is listed no matter how crazy it may sound.

BLACK Look at the risks, downsides, identify issues to help eliminate options and to choose the most impactful ideas. Remember, you cannot do everything: prioritize and decide which are most feasible - make your short list and establish a contingency "plan B" too.

YELLOW your chance to bring in people who may feel off because their ideas were not selected. Brings up the energy level and enthusiasm of how great things will soon be.

PINK introduce ISHIKAWA, Fishbone analysis - Method to determine cause of errors and wastage. There are at least 6 areas of possible sources. Check the web for many examples to customize:

- People, Processes, Management, Materials, Machinery and Environment

TOTAL 30 Minutes:

1. White Hat .....5 mins
2. Red Hat .....3 mins
3. Green Hat + Pink Hat .....12 mins
4. Black Hat .....4 mins
5. Yellow Hat .....3 mins
6. Blue Hat .....3 mins

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Note: you might want to run the first round without the PINK hat and introduce it at a later stage for additional depth of the problem solving.

To help you apply and fine-tune the problem solving hats within your team, you can use some of the activities below:

- ✓ Unbreakable egg (remote, indoor, outdoor)
- ✓ Team symbols puzzle / problem solving puzzle (remote, indoor, or outdoor)
- ✓ Treasure island (indoor, outdoor)
- ✓ Spider web (outdoor)
- ✓ Island game (outdoor)
- ✓ Yukon escape (outdoor)

Note: The unbreakable egg, team symbols puzzle and treasure island are easy to do for yourself. With the rest, I am more than happy to accompany you with my materials and experience.

Team symbols puzzle (for 5 to 30 participants, as 1 large team or 3 sub-teams)

Depending on the format (remote, indoor, outdoor) the procedures will change. Here are the basics.

1. Distribute the puzzle cards to your team, which they ultimately need to fit together correctly within 1 minute.
2. Communicate with each other without showing your card(s). Decide on a plan how you are going to achieve the objective.
3. By describing the symbols and colours on the cards, find which cards fit together and which ones make the frame.
4. After ~20 minutes, the team needs to put together the puzzle as fast as possible. A good problem solving team makes it within a minute. Remember, practice makes perfect!
5. For a virtual session, the team leader can share his screen, optionally participants can directly access a shared mounting frame online.
6. For indoor-outdoor settings, communication between team members can go through phone, talkie walkie or video from their desk or other areas.

Email me to order our ready-to-go on-line version € 150. Alternatively order a physical 30 card A5 size pack for € 240.
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Unbreakable egg (for 4 to 30 participants or more)

A fun, problem solving activity, easy to do with simple desk or household materials. Either during remote work or as an indoor / outdoor team performance activity.

The objective is to build an 'Airbag', that saves an uncooked egg from crushing when dropped from four meters high (imagine the handrail on a first-floor balcony).

Below you will find the **only** tools your team can use. Remember, during remote work, your team can discuss virtually while trying it out at home.

1. A box of small matches
2. One roll of office tape
3. Ten paperclips
4. One sheet of A4 paper
5. Two meters of string
6. Three pencils
7. A glue stick
8. Two throwable tissues

Treasure Island

Make two circles, a smaller one of 1-meter diameter (the Island) inside the larger one of 10 meters diameter. On the Island is a small plastic barrel with the necessary materials to accomplish the challenge. Get your team to imagine that the big circle is a crater 10 meters wide and 35 meters deep.

Without touching the materials, the team has ten minutes to come with a plan. Then, they have one minute to achieve the objective: **get the small barrel with the materials still inside it.**

The team has <u>only</u> these materials at their disposal to accomplish the task.

- ✓ 2 strings / ropes of 15 m long
- ✓ 4 strings / ropes of 6 m long
- ✓ 4 bike tubes
- ✓ 1 role of duct tape

Most of these you can get at your local DIY hardware store

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Spider-web

A vertical spider-web of elastic bands is attached between two trees.

The objective is for everyone to start on one side and finish on the other.

The following rules must be respected:

- ✓ No part of the body can touch the web
- ✓ A hole is used only once
- ✓ If someone touches the web, honesty counts ➔ that person returns back
- ✓ If someone is dishonest or cheats ➔ the whole group starts over
- ✓ Think Communication Framework and Team Inventory

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Island challenge

The objective is for all the teams to safely get onto the main island by building bridges, not lower than 50cm, and collaborating.

The game proceeds in two phases.

After the briefing on rules and objective, the teams are shown the "Final Game Area". They are also shown from which island their team will start from, in phase two. They are allowed 15 min to freely check, discuss and measure distances and lengths in the "Final Game area". They are not allowed to go to their "Huddle & Materials Area" yet.

Phase one: Each team has 45 mins to prepare in their "Huddle & Materials Area".

Dispatch each team to their allocated "Huddle & Materials Area". Make sure they cannot see the other teams for which you have prepared different materials in advance. During the 45 minutes each team can try different types of bridges with the materials they have at their disposal. Although the teams cannot see each other, they are allowed to communicate, discuss and plan on talkie walkie or one mobile phone per team with the other teams.

Phase two: Each team starts from their allocated island in the "Final Game Area" with the materials they choose from phase one. Once on their island, the teams may no longer return to the "Huddle & Materials Area".

The objective is for all the teams to safely get onto the main island by building bridges, not lower than 50cm, <u>within one hour</u>.

From this point on, they alternately have: fifteen minutes of *inter-team silence, followed by fifteen minutes of free communication until the hour is up (two cycles of 30 mins).

** challenging variant: total silence, even within their own team.*

The following rules apply:

- The communication must go through talkie walkies or the one team mobile phone
- Outside their island, nobody can stand on anything that is lower than 50cm (knee-height) *Imagine the islands stand in a swamp with crocodiles*
- Safety is very critical, and all construction must be checked before anyone steps on it
- No jumping around whatsoever!
- No gear is to be rolled or thrown between islands
- Sharing of materials can be applied between islands only after they connect
- Breaking rules results in loss of materials. Breaking a safety rule ends the game for all.

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Yukon escape

The Yukon escape is a sort of escape game that combines activities, but outdoors. Through skills such as coordination, orientation, balance, communication, precision, trust and of course teamwork, you and your team will have to complete multiple problem solving tasks!

1. *Perfect square* 10min
   With blindfolds on, the whole team must hold on to a rope and make a perfect square
2. *Treasure island* 20min
   The team has several objects (ropes, hooks, bicycle tubes, etc), hidden in a small plastic barrel, which they can use to retrieve compasses from the 'island'
3. *Spider web* 20min
   A web of ropes is attached between two trees, which the whole team must cross. Each hole is only used by one person and must cross without touching the web.
4. *Nazca lines* 15min
   The team will be divided with each a compass and handheld radio. They will guide each other using bearings from a compass to 'draw' a word or symbol.
5. *Small orientation course* 20min
   One team will have the map with the location of beams, hidden in the forest.
   Using their hand held radio and compass, they can guide their colleagues retrieving the gear.
6. *The Maze* 20min
   Using planks and crates, the team must retrieve ropes scattered through the field. Be careful, the crates can only be placed a limited number of times!
7. *Slackline course* 10min
   The whole team must cross a slackline course without falling off. Touching the ground is starting over!
8. *Trust fall* 10min
   From a platform of 110cm high, each person lets themselves fall into the arms of their colleagues. Each participating person will earn a beam. Motivate your colleagues and be gentle!
9. *Build catapult(s)* 15min
   Build a catapult with the retrieved beams and ropes

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