

## Problem Solving and Innovation



This is a blended programme, consisting of a pre-workshop assignment and a one-day workshop that encourages participants to apply a range of problem solving tools and techniques to seek innovative solutions to 'haven't got a clue' type of problems

### Overview

Many of the problems facing us on a day-to-day basis have a tried and tested solution. For example, when a colleague calls in sick, the practical solution is to identify their key responsibilities, find out what work they had scheduled for the day, decided what is urgent and redistribute the associated tasks to the team. We have seen it before and we know the solution will work; we don't really need innovative problem-solving techniques to manage this issue. However, what if, following the introduction of flexible-hours working throughout the office in the hope of improving staff motivation, you have seen a steady decline in performance and all efforts to reverse the decline have failed. In this case, you have a 'Haven't Got a Clue' (HGAC) type of problem that requires a different approach than simple 'corrective action'.

### Programme Objectives

On completion of the programme, participants will be able to:

- Explain the role of problem solving in a service and team context, with specific reference to HGAC type of problems
- Use an array of tools and techniques to develop their own creativity and style and applying it to impactful innovation practices
- Share good practice and learning with colleagues and different areas of the business
- Make better and more informed decisions through critical thinking and creative problem solving
- Apply systematic approaches to assess work issues and problems

## Self-Study Assignment

This self-study assignment consists of three parts:

- An introduction to Problem Solving and Innovation
- An explanation of an array of critical and creative problems solving tools to use during a problem-solving activity
- A series of web-links to tools that participants may wish to investigate to further their understanding of problem solving and innovation

## Workshop

- Self-study recap
- Practical problem-solving exercise
  - The problem-solving cycle
  - Defining the problem – SWOT/Starburst
  - Restating the problem
  - Identifying the cause – Mind Map/Ishikawa
  - The problem-solving process - Convergent and Divergent Thinking
  - Creating options – Brainstorming/Round Robin/Clustering/Forced Relationships/Reversal
  - Selecting the best option – Nominal Group/Diamond 9/Multivoting
- Briefing on the post-workshop activity

## Post Workshop Activities

- Convene a small group to apply tools to a real example
- Write a brief case study to share with colleagues.

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