

The 5 Whys

This technique prompts the user to ask why a problem has occurred, to identify the root cause of the issue. The tool digs deeper into potential causes to a problem by testing logic and illustrating that there is often more to a problem than the symptoms presented.

TIPS

- Asking why more or less than five times is ok, as long as you identify the root cause.
- If you can't answer "why" any more, you likely found the root cause.
- There can be more than one cause to a problem.

EXAMPLE

Problem Statement: The Lincoln memorial is deteriorating.

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| Why is the memorial deteriorating? | Because we power-wash with harsh chemicals. |
| Why do we use harsh chemicals? | Because the monument is covered in bird droppings. |
| Why is it covered in bird droppings? | Because there are a lot of spiders, and birds eat them. |
| Why are there a lot of spiders? | Because midges are drawn to the monument and spiders gather to feed. |
| Why are midges drawn to the monument? | Because at sunset, midges emerge to mate, and the light attracts them toward the monument – smashing against the wall. |

FIVE WHY'S AT WORK IN FORT COLLINS

Problem Statement: Affidavits do not contain correct owner contact information

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| Why is contact information not correct? | Because enforcement officer does not provide correct information. |
| Why does the enforcement officer provide incorrect information? | Because enforcement officer does not receive correct information from establishment after a violation occurs. |
| Why does the enforcement officer not receive correct information? | Because enforcement officer gets information from employees and not the establishment owner. |
| Why does the enforcement officer speak with employees to get contact information? | Because enforcement officer does not know that the posted license has all the owner contact information they need for an affidavit. |