Critical Thinking and Problem Solving for Effective Decision-Making

Course Summary

Description

Mastering critical thinking and problem-solving skills can help you make better decisions or recommendations – an essential competency in today's knowledge workplaces. Critical thinking helps you to examine and improve thought processes, ask the right questions, challenge assumptions and consider varying viewpoints. Effective problem-solving helps you to properly identify and systematically work through a problem in a comprehensive manner, ensuring clarity when it comes time to make decisions or recommendations.

This course will demonstrate how critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making work optimally together, and will provide hands-on practice with tools that you can apply to your everyday workday tasks, big or small.

Note: This course is available as a stand-alone workshop, or you can enhance your learning by taking the companion workshop, Creativity and Innovation for the Workplace.

Objectives
At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Define critical thinking and identify your critical thinking styles
- Work through the critical thinking process to build, analyze and evaluate varying viewpoints
- Improve key critical thinking skills, including active listening and questioning
- Analyze context and information to clearly understand and identify a problem
- Apply problem solving steps and tools
- Identify appropriate solutions using specific approaches
- Select the best technique for making decisions
- Avoid common decision-making mistakes

Topics

- Introduction
- Maximizing the Power of Your Brain
- Critical Thinking
- Problem-Solving
- Decision-Making

Audience

This class is ideal for anyone who is required to problem solve on the job or make important project, department or organizational decisions or recommendations.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Duration

One day

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Course Outline

I.   Introduction

II.   Maximizing the power of your brain
- A. Critical thinking and problem-solving: the key to effective decision making
- B. The Iceberg Principle and the Understanding-Resolution Ratio

III.   Critical Thinking
- A. Definition of a Critical Thinker
- B. Critical thinking behaviours: active listening, probing, Empty Your Bucket
- C. Identify and evaluate issues and viewpoints
- D. The 3 Cs: context, credibility and consistency
- E. Critical thinking worksheet – practice it!

IV.   Problem-Solving
- A. The problem-solving process – various models
- B. Obstacles and counterproductive approaches
- C. Problem-solving techniques for groups and individuals
- D. Applying a problem-solving model to a workplace scenario

V.   Decision-Making
- A. Individual and collective decision making traps
- B. How to choose: criteria, goals and vision-based decision-making
- C. Individual and group decision-making tools and techniques
- D. Decision-making – practical application to a workplace scenario