

Five Whys Tool for Root Cause Analysis

Directions: The five whys tool can be helpful to identify the root cause(s) for a problem. The team:

Write down the specific problem. Asks why the problem happened. Write down the answer. If the answer provided doesn't identify the root cause of the problem, the team keeps asking "why?" until there is agreement from the team that the root cause has been identified. It often takes 3-5 whys, but it can take more than five! Ask: if you address the "root cause" you have identified, could the problem reoccur? If the answer is yes, it's likely that you are not addressing a root cause.

Problem Statement:

WHY?

WHY?

WHY?

WHY?

WHY?

WHY?

To validate root causes, ask the following:
If you removed this root cause would this event or problem have been prevented?
If you removed this root cause could the problem reoccur?

ROOT CAUSE(S)

1.

2.

3.