



The 5 Whys Technique

The 5 Whys is a simple but powerful root cause analysis technique that focuses on asking "Why?" questions to drill down to the root of a problem.

To perform the 5 Whys analysis:

1. Clearly define the specific problem to be addressed.
2. Ask "Why did the problem occur?" This is the first why.
3. The answer becomes the basis of the next why question.
4. Continue asking "Why?" four more times, with each answer forming the next question.
5. The fifth why provides the root cause to the original problem.
6. Verify the identified root cause by testing the hypothesis.
7. Address the root cause with corrective actions like process changes, training, etc.

Key benefits of the 5 Whys technique:

- Simple to learn and apply
- Forces digging beneath the symptoms
- Identifies causal relationships
- Can be done without fancy tools, just asking questions
- Can be combined with other analysis methods
- Engages team members in the problem-solving process

By repeatedly investigating the layers below an obvious surface issue, the 5 Whys quickly reveals the underlying root cause. Fixing it is more effective than applying quick solutions.