



Global Knowledge.

Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making

Improve your decision-making capabilities through critical thinking, structured reasoning, and creative problem analysis.

Effective decision makers are those rare individuals who are able to consistently identify and choose the best option among multiple alternatives. Their decisions are imaginative, reasoned, and defensible.

In this course, you will be provided with the training and tools necessary to become an inventive, logical decision maker. You'll explore a structured way to approach and dismantle problems, and you'll learn to clarify problems in terms of objectives and issues, with a view toward optimum outcomes.

Applying the techniques of critical thinking allows you to dismantle complex problems and to understand the inputs and implications of your thought processes. This training allows you to develop positions on issues that are logical and explicable to others. After completing the course, you'll understand why most decisions are of poor quality and you will be able to impose quality controls on your decisions and the decisions of others.

What You'll Learn

- Quality control in decision making
- Why intuitive decision making is not effective
- How thinking and reasoning processes operate
- Natural barriers to sound reasoning
- Where to look for bias and assumptions in problem analysis
- Analytical techniques for comparing alternative solutions
- Structure, standards, and ethics of critical thinking
- Inputs and implications of thought processes
- How to control and evaluate your thought processes
- How to reason effectively and consistently
- Problem analysis best practices - using your decision time most effectively
- Understand problems from multiple perspectives
- Techniques for structuring the comparison of alternatives
- Formulating creative solutions
- Analytical decision analysis techniques such as sequencing, sorting, time lines, and matrixes

Hands-On Exercises

- Evaluate the strategic thinking of others
- Assess the reasoning of others
- Dismantle reasoning into the elements of reason
- Judge the elements of reason based on standards
- Problem solving by starting with restatement of the issues
- Problem solving from a number of different perspectives
- Identify decision-making factors
- Quality control in recommendations
- Creativity and the decision-making process
- Apply sorting techniques to the decision-making process
- Structure the analytical process with a matrix

- Analyze decision options using decision trees
- Evaluate decision options using probabilities
- Compare options using paired ranking

Who Needs to Attend

Any professional who is, or will be, making important business decisions, including: department managers, directors, supervisors, project managers, IT project managers, project coordinators, project analysts, project leaders, senior project managers, team leaders, product managers, program managers, associate project managers, stakeholders, team members, and all other professionals.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Follow-On Courses

- Management and Leadership Skills
- IT Project Management
- Applied Project Management

Course Outline

1. The Problems with Instinctive Decision Making

- Factors which influence our natural decision-making
- Quality problems with intuitive decision-making processes

2. What is Reasoned Decision Making?

- What are the barriers to reasoning well?
- What are the qualities of reasoned decision processes?

3. The Natural Barriers to Sound Reasoning

- Emotional state
- Mental shortcuts
- Patterning
- Bias and assumptions
- Mind set
- Need for explanations
- Narrow focus
- Stubbornness

4. An Introduction to Critical Thinking

- Are you a critical thinker?
- What is critical thinking?
- Why do we need critical thinking?
- Developing as a critical thinker
- Second-order thinking

5. The Structure of Reasoning

- Purpose
- Point of view
- Assumptions
- Implications and consequences
- Data, facts, and experience
- Inferences
- Concepts
- Questions

6. Standards of Critical Thinking

- Clarity
- Relevance
- Logic
- Accuracy
- Depth
- Significance
- Precision
- Breadth
- Fairness
- Ethics of critical thinkers

7. Problem Analysis and Decision Making - Best Practices

- Slow down
- Think critically
- Impose creativity
- Clarify purpose
- Focus on major factors
- Actively focus in and out
- Structure the selection process
- Take a step back-does the decision make sense?

8. Imposing Creativity on the Choice of Solutions

- Slow down
- Suspend judgment
- Imagine courageously
- Think beyond conventional wisdom
- Question everything and everyone
- Imagine backwards from the ideal
- Restate the problem
- Dismantle the problem

9. Analytical Decision-Making Techniques

- Sequencing
- Sorting
- Time lines
- Matrixes
- Decision trees
- Ranking
- Probability