5 Whys worksheet

Problem title

Reference no.

Ticket, complaint or 8D no.

Area / process / product

Date

Team

Who took part

Facilitator

Status

☐ Open

☐ Closed

1 State the problem

What is wrong with what, where it was seen, since when and how often — as a fact, without a cause in it.

Problem statement

Object and defect in measurable terms, e.g. "12 of 400 housings from line 3 had a cracked boss at final inspection on 4 Nov"

Where it was seen

Process step, machine, location

When / since when

How many / how often

Parts, %, per shift

Evidence of the problem

Photos, measurements, records attached

Containment in place?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not needed

2 Ask why

Answer each why with something observed, measured or found in a record, and write down how you know. Each answer is the direct cause of the one above it.

Why 1 — Why did the problem happen?

The direct cause, as observed

How do we know?

Observation, record or measurement

Why 2 — Why did that happen?

How do we know?

Why 3 — Why did that happen?

How do we know?

Why 4 — Why did that happen?

How do we know?

Why 5 — Why did that happen?

Stop earlier if a process is already reached; go further if not

How do we know?

3 Root cause and countermeasures

The process or standard the chain ends at, how it was confirmed, and the actions that remove it.

Root cause

The process or standard that failed, is missing or was not followed — not a person

Chain check

Read backwards with “therefore”; would the problem have occurred without each cause?

Chain passes both tests?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Verification: how the cause was confirmed

Evidence that removing or controlling the cause removes the problem; data, sample sizes

Root cause verified?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Inferred only

Countermeasures

#	Countermeasure	Removes	Owner	Due date	Status
1		☐ Root cause ☐ A link in the chain ☐ Symptom only			☐ Planned ☐ In progress ☐ Done
2		☐ Root cause ☐ A link in the chain ☐ Symptom only			☐ Planned ☐ In progress ☐ Done
3		☐ Root cause ☐ A link in the chain ☐ Symptom only			☐ Planned ☐ In progress ☐ Done
4		☐ Root cause ☐ A link in the chain ☐ Symptom only			☐ Planned ☐ In progress ☐ Done

4 Follow up

Compare the problem’s measure before and after the countermeasure. If the problem came back, the chain was wrong somewhere.

Result after the countermeasure

Problem measure before and after, and over what period

Problem gone?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Too early to tell

Checked on

Checked by

Standards updated

Work instruction, specification, FM

Lessons learned

What the chain taught about the process, and where else it applies

Reviewed by

Date closed