



How Why Charts

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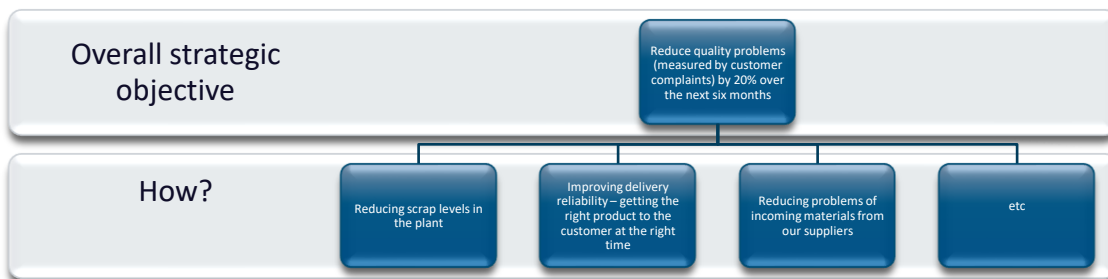
How Why Charts

This is a simple tool used in policy deployment to check the alignment of innovation projects. The advantage of employee involvement in innovation is that many people can work on small projects targeted around continuous improvement but the risk is that these projects run in many different directions and generate little strategic advantage. Policy deployment tries to link all of the small projects to a clear strategic objective and how/why charts offer one way of enabling this. The technique emerged in the field of quality management but can be applied to any area of innovation.

To construct a how/why chart first write down the core strategic objective – for example, we want to reduce quality problems (measured by customer complaints) by 20% over the next six months.

Then ask the question ‘how?’ – and list as many different ways of achieving this overall goal. For example it could be accomplished by:

- Reducing scrap levels in the plant
- Improving delivery reliability – getting the right product to the customer at the right time
- Reducing problems of incoming materials from our suppliers
- Etc



Each of these can be further broken down into challenges by continuing to ask the question ‘how?’ For example, reducing scrap levels could break down into:

- Improving training to help ensure ‘right first time’ manufacture
- Reduce wastage due to poor set up or wear and tear of equipment
- Identify problems earlier to reduce wasted effort and material

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- Etc.

And each of these could be further broken down, again by asking 'how'? – for example, reducing machinery problems could break down to:

- Regular checking of alignment
- Improved maintenance effectiveness (more frequent checks, more thorough checks, etc)
- Implement 'Fail safe' functions so machine cannot produce something which isn't good quality

We can continue the process, essentially breaking down one large strategic objective into many smaller and smaller chunks which become the kind of improvement activities which a large number of employees can work on in small groups or even as individuals. In this way it creates an extensive innovation agenda – but it also ensures that all these small improvement activities are aligned with the overall goal. If we take the chart we have constructed and reverse the process, starting at the bottom and asking 'why'? of each activity there should be a clear chain of logic which leads back to the overall strategic goal.

How/why charts can be constructed using other tools like fishbone/cause and effect analysis or brainstorming which help tease out the problem areas and identify the 'how'? elements.

A variation on how/why charts are 'bowling charts', so called because of their similarity to the scoring sheets used in ten-pin bowling.

More detailed information can be found via these links:

- <http://www.velaction.com/policy-deployment-matrix/>
- http://www.systems2win.com/solutions/policy_deployment.htm