

The 5Cs of Problem Solving

Ask most people how they solve everyday problems and they can't tell you. The 5Cs of Problem Solving is a simple process for solving everyday problems more systematically.

Clarify the problem.

Make sure you solve the right problem. When working with customers, be patient and listen all the way through their description. Once the customer has finished, reflect back what you heard to make sure you heard it correctly. If they correct you, ask clarifying questions.

Most resources are on the screen in front of you or at your fingertips. But sometimes a customer will pose an issue where more nuanced judgment is necessary. Rather than saying, "I don't know," say, "That's a great question. Can I have a couple of minutes to research this?"

Collect your resources.

Consider your options.

Many times, an immediate solution will come to mind. Resist the temptation to accept the obvious. Don't get married to the easiest fix. There can be more than one right way to resolve a problem. The best option fixes the problem and makes the customer happy.

Uncertainty in choosing the best option can make you hesitate. There is calculated risk in all decisions. If you have clarified the problem, collected your resources, and considered your options, you can be confident choosing the best option. The best decision-makers act with confidence but prepare for unexpected outcomes.

Choose the best option.

Cogitate on the outcome.

Cogitate means to reflect. Always reflect on how decisions turned out. What didn't work? What did you learn? What resources were you lacking? What patterns are you seeing? Keep a record of these insights. They will help you in the future.



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