



Critical Thinking Challenge™

TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Develop your team's ability to be creative and come up with innovative solutions

U*nl*ock the secrets
*of synergy and
lateral thinking.*

WHAT IS THE CRITICAL THINKING CHALLENGE?

The *Critical Thinking Challenge* is a unique exercise that provides an opportunity for improving lateral thinking skills as well as teamwork. Developed by Dr. Robert A. Cooke, the exercise challenges participants to develop creative and workable solutions to five quality improvement problems.

HOW DOES THE CRITICAL THINKING CHALLENGE WORK?

The *Critical Thinking Challenge* can be completed by participants working independently, although the exercise is particularly effective when they work in teams. Participants solve the problems in the *Critical Thinking Challenge*, then compare their solutions to those based on vertical (traditional) versus lateral (out-of-the-box) thinking. By comparing their answers to these solutions, participants become aware of their typical problem-solving approaches and how they affect the types of solutions they identify. They will also learn how to use lateral thinking techniques—such as assumption breaking, entry points, and reversal—to supplement their traditional approaches and to generate even better solutions.

The *Critical Thinking Challenge* takes approximately 1¾ to 3 hours to complete all five problems (including debriefing).

Alternatively, the problems can be tackled at different points in time (taking approximately 20 to 35 minutes each to complete and debrief).

APPLICATIONS

The *Critical Thinking Challenge* can be used as an icebreaker, overview, central activity, wrap-up or summary activity, pre-test/post-test, or follow-up activity for programs focusing on:

- Problem solving
- Creative or lateral thinking
- Team building

The exercise can also be used as the basis for:

- Kicking off a team meeting
- Initiating a continuous quality improvement process or program
- Stimulating new ideas during a problem solving session or meeting

WHO SHOULD EXPERIENCE THE CRITICAL THINKING CHALLENGE?

The *Critical Thinking Challenge* is appropriate for managers, supervisors, members of work groups or teams, participants in continuous improvement or reengineering programs, and anyone who is responsible for problem solving.

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