



# WORKING A STRATEGIC ISSUE - PROCESSING FRAMEWORK

## OVERVIEW

**When to Use:** During a monthly or quarterly Strategic or QBR

**Why:** To address and solve potential areas of concern or new opportunities that will affect the organization’s momentum, performance and direction.

**Ideal Participants:** Executive and management teams, those that have the authority to take action on the outcome.

**Time Needed:** 60 minutes



### WORKING A STRATEGIC ISSUE

This exercise is designed to be a quick effort. It should take your team about 60 minutes to identify and work through a strategic issue. It should require little or no preparation and data analysis, but rather rely on the wisdom of the room.



#### QUICK EFFORT

- Requires Small Group of People
- Solves a Smaller Problem
- Doesn't Necessarily Require Data
- Solved in 60 Minutes

#### MODERATE EFFORT

- Requires Many People
- Solves a Systems/Process Problem
- Requires Some Data & Preparation
- Solved in 3-6 Hours

#### HIGH EFFORT

- Requires an Entire Organization
- Addresses Fundamental Strategy
- Extensive Data & Strategic Thinking
- Solved in Several Days or Weeks

## HOW IT WORKS

### 1 Step One - Framing the Issue

An executive brings an issue to the table, prepared to speak to the following points. Simple handout with background data is always welcome but isn't required!

- How do we \_\_\_?
- This issue is important to me because \_\_\_.
- What we have done to date is \_\_\_.
- What I want the group to help me with is \_\_\_.

### 2 Step Two - Clarifying Questions

Everyone else is allowed to ask clarifying questions to the person who brought up the issue. The other people in the group are explicitly not permitted to provide observations or suggestions – NO SOLUTIONS.

### 3 Step Three - Reframing

Sometimes, the questions help identify that the issue-bringer proposed the wrong “how do I” statement. Group members are allowed to nominate suggestions for an alternative “how do we” statement. Ultimately, the issue-bringer either sticks with the original “how do I” statement or changes it to one of the other suggestions.

### 4 Step Four - Solutions

Everyone in the room provides at least one solution to the issue – round-robin style. The issue-bringer is not allowed to speak, defend or redirect. All solutions are captured on a flip chart or whiteboard.

### 5 Step Five - Action

The issue-bringer reviews the solutions, asks clarifying questions and selects one or two solutions (or a combo) that he or she will commit to taking by a certain date.

## LEARNING & REFLECTION

At the next monthly Strategic or QBR, commit to starting the meeting with a report out from the last issue. The issue-bringer comes prepared to speak to the following:

- What action was taken and what might we know about the results? What, if any, follow up is still required?
- What did you learn upon implementation? What would you do differently?