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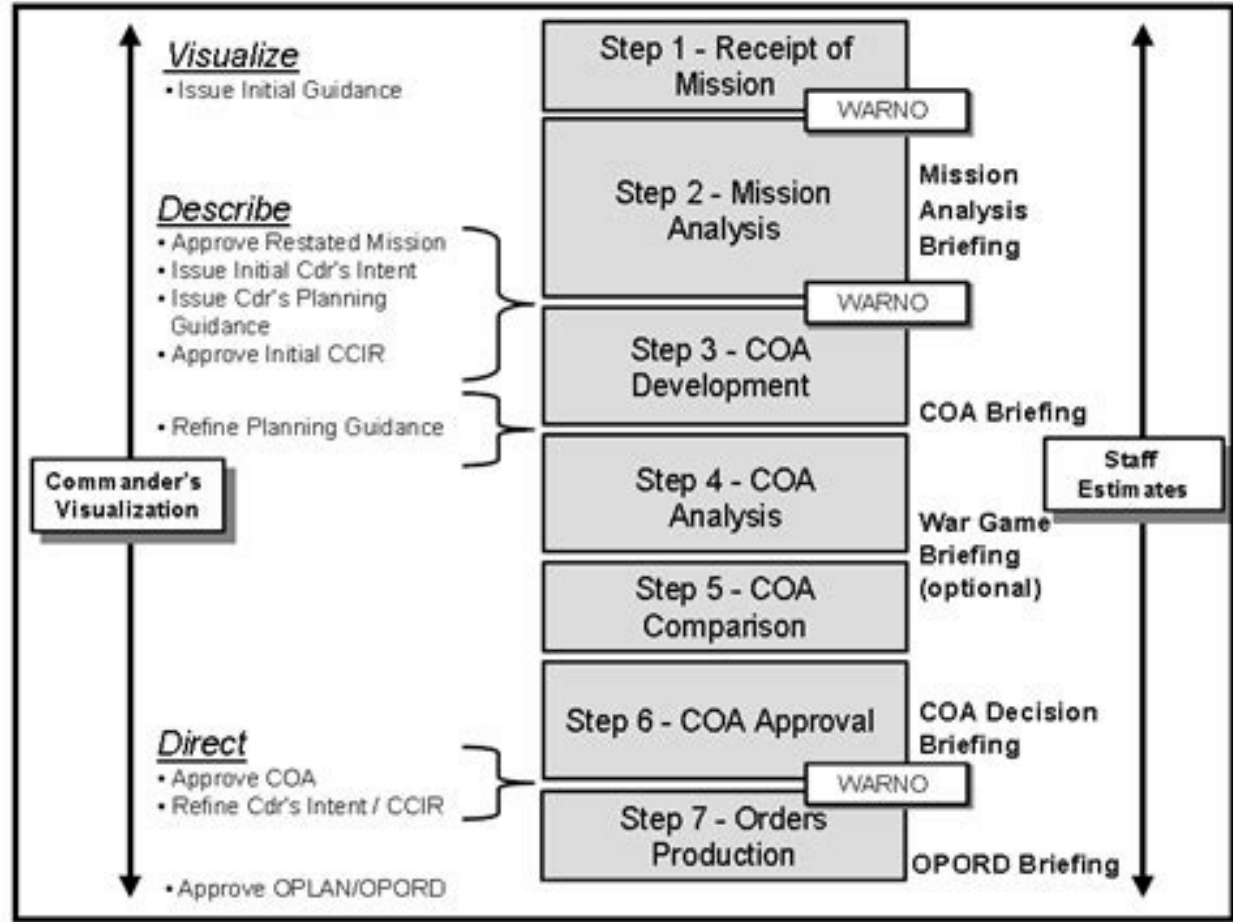reCAPTCHA

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In addition to power and strength, the military relies on quick and decisive thinking. Members in service must be able to think on their feet and craft solutions in the blink of an eye. Obviously, this is not easy to do. But it is not too far-fetched when you realize that countless lives depend on a single personnel's decision and course of action. As such, every recruit coming into the military is taught and trained about the 7-step military problem solving process. This systematic approach is believed to be the best way for military members to address any problems that they encounter. In short, the 7 steps to solve problems are: Pinpoint the Problem Identify the Facts and Assumptions Craft Alternatives Analyze the Generated Alternatives Weigh Between the Generated Alternatives Make and Carry Out Your Final Decision Evaluate the Results From Your Decision To make it easier for you to comprehend and follow along, we have elaborated on each of the above steps in this article. So, continue reading by scrolling down! Seven Step Military Problem Solving Process The first step is to ID the problem, which means recognizing and identifying what needs fixing. Needless to say, you cannot attempt to seek a solution without first knowing what has to be addressed. By pinpointing your problem, you will have a clear goal or end destination in mind. Only then can you come up with the right steps to take. Step 1: Pinpoint the Problem To effectively define the problem, ask yourself the 5Ws—who, what, where, and when. In detail: Who is affected? Who is involved? What is affected? What is in the overall picture? When is/did this happen? Where is/did this happen?

Always be crystal clear about the problem and try to view it in the most objective way as much as possible. Imagine you are the third person looking at It rather than from it. It also helps to organize your answers into a coherent and concise problem statement. Step 2: Identify the Facts and Assumptions The next step is to ID the facts and assumptions.

This entails that you get whatever additional information you can in the time that you have.

Try to garner more facts than assumptions by reviewing all the possible factors, internal and external, and use them together with what you have thought out in the step above to determine the cause of the problem. You should also be aware of the nature and scope of the problem from this step. From here, you take a sub-step: think about what you want the final result to be. This does not have to be complicated but it has to be very clear. For instance, one of your troop members may be lost and uncontactable. Your ultimate goal is to find him/her and return to your base together. Remember, having a wishy-washy end state will only make your problem solving process more difficult. These first two steps constitute situation assessment, which serves as the basis for you to work towards the remaining steps of the military problem solving process. Step 3: Craft Alternatives Onto the third step, strive to develop as many potential solutions as possible. Here, you will have to exercise your imagining and visualizing skills. Brainstorm and refine any ideas simultaneously. Engage both critical and critical thinking in this step. If possible, take note of what you have come up with.

Do not be hesitant and brush off any ideas. Step 4: Analyze the Generated Alternatives Then, analyze your options. Consider all of your possible courses of action with all the available information that you have compiled in the previous steps. Take into account your experiences, intuitions, and emotions. This does not have to be a purely rational or mathematical procedure. Nevertheless, this does not mean that you are 100% guided by your instincts and emotions. You must have a good balance between the two.

Step 5: Weigh Between the Generated Alternatives This step naturally lends itself to the next: compare between your generated alternatives. Weigh between their respective pros and cons. In particular, look at their cost and benefit of success. Are there any limiting factors or potential for unintended consequences? Evaluate carefully and ask yourself a lot of questions. You can also consider using a table, T-chart, or matrix to compare visually. Step 6: Make and Carry Out Your Final Decision Try to settle for the "best" solution or course of action that is both logical and feels "right". Apart from picking the best, select two or three more workable solutions as backups. Keep them handy in case you need to refer back to them.

During this process, you may merge ideas and mix-match bits and pieces—that's perfectly fine! Once you have made your decision, craft your action plans. Know the details—what exactly do you have to do to solve the problem? If it is a long-term problem that you have to address, set milestones and timelines with clear methods of measuring progress and success. On the other hand, if it is a short, instantaneous problem, communicate your plans clearly to anyone else involved. Be aware of the specifics and be brutally honest. Execute your course of action with care. But do not be rigid. If something happens out of the plan, be willing to adjust and adapt. Step 7: Evaluate the Results From Your Decision After your solution implementation, wrap up by assessing the results.

Was it what you envisioned? Were there deviations? What did you take away? Answer all of the questions so you can be even more equipped for future endeavors. Think of it as a reflection stage. The 7 steps to problem solving in the military are a continuous process—you will be confronted with challenges over and over, so do not skip this step. It will further your skills and expertise to handle problems going forward. Army Problem Solving & Decision Making Process Another set of seven steps that you may come across during your service is the army problem solving steps. Needless to say, this is applied to the army problem solving process. Receiving the Mission Analyzing the Mission Developing the Course of Action Analyzing the Course of Action Comparing the Course of Action Getting Approval for the Course of Action Producing, Disseminating, and Transitioning Orders This is a part of the MDMP, short for the military decision making process. In each step, there are inputs and outputs. In general, it is more specific than the above set of steps. These seven steps focus on collaborative planning and performance. Plus, set the stage for interactions between different military agents, including commanders, staff, headquarters, etc. COA is an abbreviation for a course of action. Thus, these steps are relatively similar to the steps that we have gone through earlier; specifically steps two: mission analysis, three: COA development, four: COA analysis, and five: COA comparison. Like the previous seven steps, these are carried out sequentially but can be revisited when needed. The main difference is that these 7 steps to problem solving in the army are more explicitly directed to junior personnel. Hence, the mentioning of orders from higher-ranks, the significant role of commanders, and the need to earn approval before execution. A mnemonic that service members use to remember this process is M.A.D.A.C.A.P. for: M: Mission A: Analysis D: Develop A: Analyze C: Compare A: Approve P: Produce You might want to remember this for an exam at military school, at NCO, or soldier of the month board. You can learn more about the MDMP here: Conclusion So, there you have it—the 7-step military problem solving process. You should now be aware of two different but equally important sets of steps to problem solving and decision making. If you have any follow-up questions or thoughts, let us know in the comments. We look forward to hearing from you! I am Everett Bledsoe, taking on the responsibility of content producer for The Soldiers Project. My purpose in this project is to give honest reviews on the gear utilized and tested over time. Of course, you cannot go wrong when checking out our package of information and guide, too, as they come from reliable sources and years of experience.