**Barriers To Problem-Solving**

Problems are inevitable at work. They could be big problems. Or they could be small problems.

Either way, the trick is to develop strong problem-solving skills. But it isn’t always easy to find a solution to a problem. You often face many unexpected obstacles on the way.

Imagine a client rejects a proposal for a marketing pitch you and your team worked hard on. In such a situation, you might come up with a quick and easy alternative to retain the client, but in the scramble, you may forget to assess its long-term potential.

Such barriers to problem-solving abound at the workplace. You need to be prepared for potential pitfalls that could trip you up.

Effective problem-solving in such situations is a handy skill that’ll help you navigate your way through the professional landscape.

You will find some useful tips on how to deal with some common barriers to effective problem-solving in Harappa Education’s Defining Problems course. The course introduces ways in which you can define, identify and deal with problems in a solution-oriented manner.

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Contrary to popular belief, problem-solving takes time and patience. This is something we tend to overlook because quick solutions are often rewarded at the workplace where everyone is busy and pressed for time.

When you stop for a moment to think about what went wrong, you’re more likely to come up with a lasting solution. Here are the most common barriers to problem-solving and decision-making in the workplace:

1. **Misdiagnosis**

Common barriers to problem-solving include an incorrect diagnosis of the problem. This could be due to preconceived ideas, biases, or judgments. Defining a problem is the hardest step in the process of problem-solving because this is the foundation on which your entire strategy is built. If you’re not careful, you may end up spending all your time, resources and effort on the wrong problem and, eventually, the wrong solution.

1. **Communication Barriers**

Thinking that you know better than anyone else or miscommunicating the problem is another one of the barriers to problem-solving. Everyone defines or understands the problem differently. It’s important to communicate with your teammates so that everyone’s on the same page. If you’re unclear about something, acknowledge your limited understanding of the problem. This will save you both time and energy.

1. **Solution Bias**

Another common challenge is a solution bias or thinking that one solution is universal and can be applied to multiple problems. If you catch yourself thinking about a problem that you solved in a particular way, you’re already going in the wrong direction. It’s more important for you to focus on the problem at hand than to force-fit a solution from the past that, in all probability, won’t work.

1. **Cognitive Bias**

Barriers to problem solving psychology often involve a cognitive bias or the tendency to jump to conclusions. To find a solution as quickly as possible, you might end up with a solution that’s irrelevant to the situation. You have to learn to listen before making a judgment. If you miss a step, for instance, there’s a chance that you’ll end up in an even bigger mess.

1. **Lack Of Empathy**

Every problem is in one way or another associated with human emotions, abilities or feelings. If you’re not able to recognize the people who are affected by the problem, you won’t be able to come up with a solution that serves everyone.

**How To Circumvent Barriers To Problem-Solving**

Some of the ways in which you can tackle common barriers to problem-solving are:

* Be open to suggestions and different points of view
* Accept that you may not know everything
* Be patient and take your time before coming to a conclusion
* Approach the owner of the problem and ask the right questions
* Avoid shortcuts and ‘cut and dry’ formulas

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