

# **ORGANIZATION TROUBLESHOOTING**

**By Ted C. Hill**

## **Introduction**

**No plan, project, unit, system or business is perfect. If it is perfect it doesn't stay that way for very long. Sooner or later you will be called upon to solve an organizational problem.**

**We will explore how you start and where and in what order you should look for the specific root cause of the problem or problems.**

**To be successful a business needs clear goals and objectives.**

**The organizational leader needs:**

- **Overall goals and objectives**
- **Personal goals and objectives**
- **Goals and objectives specifically designed to be a response to market demands**
- **Internal goals and objectives aimed at building an owner/employee partnership**

**This booklet will focus on dealing with the internal organizational problems. These are problems or barriers to achieving the internal goals and objectives of the organization. Examples of these internal problems are:**

**Systems  
People  
Policy  
Procedures  
Quality  
Efficiency**

**We will not be looking at external problems or challenges such as:**

- **External market**
- **Competitors**
- **Need for product or service**
- **Economic conditions**

## **Welcome to Troubleshooting the Internal Problems of an Organization**

### **Is this possible?**

**People, who are new to organizational troubleshooting, and perhaps the organization executives, wonder if this is possible. Can a business advisor walk into absolutely any organization and determine what the problems are and make intelligent suggestions on how to correct them?**

**The answer is yes because the same basic principles that allow a doctor to successfully diagnose most medical problems allow a business advisor to diagnose most business problems.**

**There are a possible 6 billion combinations of humans and therefore practically everybody, with the exception of identical twins, is different from each other. Every business owner and organization executive will tell you that their organization is unique and that the problems they face have never been seen before on the face of the earth.**

**The basic principle is this. People are very much alike and suffer from the same common ailments. Organizations are all fundamentally the same and tend to have identical problems, just in different combinations.**

**If a doctor can deal with 6 billion possible combinations we certainly can deal with the combinations found in a typical organization.**

**The medical profession offers two principles that apply well to a troubleshooter analyzing a sick organization.**

### **DO NO HARM**

**The medical profession's Hippocratic Oath includes the statement "Do no harm".**

**What this means is that it is important to find the root cause. Failure to identify the root cause means that you may just be treating the symptoms. Worse, the root cause may not be addressed at all.**

**That's not a bad slogan for us. We're trying to make the situation better, not make it worse. Over the years I have followed behind several consulting organizations that were definitely making things worse, not better.**

**If an executive says "I need a training program," or "We need an incentive system" you have a professional obligation to verify that this indeed is the root cause of the problem, not just a symptom.**

**As Ronald Reagan said, "Trust but verify." If you do not verify that you are down to root causes then you run the risk of doing harm.**

**Do no harm - find the root cause.**

**[Hippocratic Oath should not be confused with the hypocrite's oath, "Do as I say, not as I do."]**

## **Common problems occur commonly**

### **Rare problems occur rarely**

**One of the fundamental principles utilized by medical general practitioners, as well as those of us who are trying to diagnose organizational problems, is this simple fact:**

**Common problems occur commonly and rare problems occur rarely.**

**Therefore the first place you look to find a root cause is the most common root cause of problems.**

**If you go to the doctor with a severe headache, an upset stomach, and a slight temperature then the possibility of a brain tumor is not the first thing to enter the doctor's mind. Since you are the third person today with the same symptoms then the most likely cause is probably the flu that's been going around. Why not a brain tumor? Because brain tumors are very rare and the flu is very common.**

**Doctors have a book that lists symptoms and directs them to the most probable root causes of medical conditions. The book lists the probability of these in rank order from the most common to the least common. Most doctors don't like you to see them using this book but it is there in their office or on their computer.**

**So where do you get a book that lists the root causes from the most common to the least common so you can do the same thing with organizational troubleshooting?**

**The answer is right here.**

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**The Organizational Troubleshooting program contains 38 PowerPoint slides and instructor's script along with a downloadable/printable 22 page participants' handout booklet.**

**The materials provide approximately 2 hours of presentation materials.**

**Business advisers, consultants, and organizational leaders who want to build up their personal skills will find this material to be very valuable.**

**We are not aware of another program that provides the rank order of internal organizational problems from the most common to the least common. The contents are based on the author's 40 years organizational troubleshooting with over 70 different organizations in over 130 separate locations.**