

# SOLVE

## Tips and tools for meetings to solve a problem

When it comes to problem-solving, a group brings an important mix of perspectives and expertise. The key in these meetings is to uncover and address root causes.

### Essential Guidance

**Ensure that the problem is clearly defined.**

An accurate and comprehensive problem statement gets everyone thinking in the right direction.

**Avoid jumping to solutions.**

It's tempting to skip steps and cite a solution at the outset. But this "quicker" approach can lead to ineffective or temporary fixes that end up wasting time and solving nothing.

**Dig deep to address causes.**

An analytical approach takes more time, but it helps groups pinpoint what needs to be solved – and keeps everyone from addressing surface-level symptoms or rushing to superficial solutions.

### Additional Recommendations

**Bring in relevant information.**

Collect and review data, facts, and insights related to the problem and its causes. Encourage meeting-goers to share their perspectives, observations, and expertise to enrich the discussion.

**Hear from customers and stakeholders who are affected by the problem.**

They're a key source of input regarding impact, root causes, and potential solutions. Use input sessions, surveys, or both to get their perspective and bring it into the conversation.

**Circulate key info to ensure understanding.**

The solution will likely involve agreements, action steps, and other key items. After the meeting, spell these out in a document that's sent to all meeting participants.

### Tools and Techniques

- Root Cause Analysis
- Pareto Diagram
- A3 Problem Solving
- Six Thinking Hats
- Force Field Analysis

Go to [sc.edu/excellence](https://sc.edu/excellence) for step-by-step guidance on all these tools.



Use the **Meeting Time Calculator** to see how much time you spend in meetings – and how much time you could save.

### For ALL meetings

**Involve the right people.** Invite those who are essential to the purpose of the session.

**Plan the flow.** Create a concise agenda with time blocks for topics.

**Get the group ready.** Send the agenda and any pre-meeting materials in advance.

**Make it visible.** Use flipcharts, sticky notes, etc. to write and draw out key points.

