

Getting to the Root Cause at Snack Brands

'You don't learn a new skill with one lesson'

Root Cause Analysis problem solving is a skill that takes time and regular practice to develop, a bit like learning to play a musical instrument – weekly lessons and practice can achieve amazing results. This is the learning at Snack Brands Australia, one of the largest suppliers of snack foods in Australia.

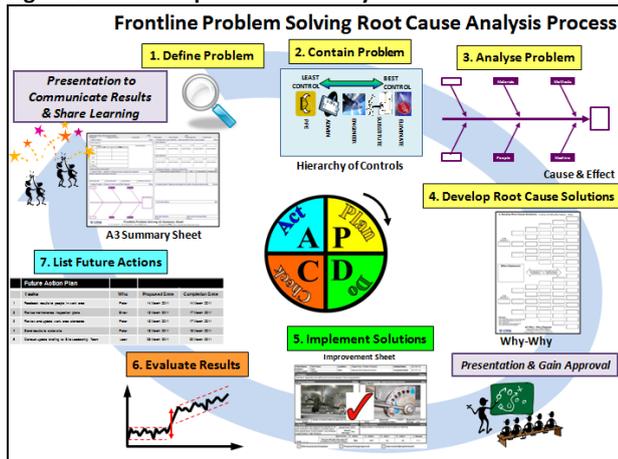


Following on from 2 successful 12 week

Frontline Problem Solving Root Cause Analysis Development Programs with CTPM in 2017 and 2018, Snack Brands embarked on their third program in October 2019.

Due to the timing being so close to Christmas, it was decided to make it an 8 week program with each team working on 2 problems rather than the normal 3. The Blacktown and Smithfield sites each identified 10 employees covering Production, Maintenance, Quality, Product Development and Safety to allow the formation of two effective Cross-functional Improvement Teams at each site.

Figure 1: The 7 Step Process used by the Teams



After confirming the plan for both sites, CTPM, as an approved provider, was again able to seek part-qualification funding through the **Smart and Skilled Program** from the NSW Department of Industry. This training and support is subsidised by the NSW Government.

For the identified employees who met the funding criteria, the funding was approved for two units from the Cert III & IV in Competitive Systems and Practices qualification:

- MSMSUP390 Use Structured Problem-Solving Tools; and
- MSS403085 Ensure Process Improvements are Sustained.

To commence the program and minimise disruption to operations, the teams participated in a 3-hour kick-off workshop. For the remainder of the program the teams worked independently with 1.5 hour weekly meetings over 8 weeks.

Each team progressed through two recent frontline problems reported at their site's Daily Direction Setting Meetings. Collectively the teams addressed 8 problems, which when analysed had the potential to cost the company a substantial amount each year if not addressed to the root causes.

Team Natural from the Blacktown site addressed the following 2 problems:

- **Chip Fryer – Breakdown**; and
- **Product give away – Underweight and Overweight Waste.**

Figure 2: Team members of Blacktown's Team Natural



The "Super Natural" Team, also from the Blacktown site, addressed the following problems:

- **Pallet Shrink Wrap – Non Conformance**; and
- **Waste Water Plant – Oil Contamination.**

Figure 3: Team members of Blacktown's Super Natural Team



The “A Team” from the Smithfield site addressed the following 2 problems:

- *Waste Water Plant – Oil Contamination*; and
- *Date Coding – Clear or missing on pack(s)*.

Figure 4: Team members of Smithfield’s A Team



The “Something Corny” Team, also from the Smithfield site, addressed the following problems:

- *Corn Fryer – Optimisation of HX performance*; and
- *Random Tape Machine Process – Minimising rework and lost production*.

Figure 5: Members of Smithfield’s Something Corny Team



At the end of the program, the 4 teams were invited to Snack Brands Australia Head Office to present their outcomes and learning to Senior Management.

Each team presented their problems covered during the program, and at the conclusion, all participants were congratulated and presented with their Statements of Attainment for the two units of competency they had successfully completed.

Figure 6: Receiving their Statements of Attainment at HO



So what did they learn?

After acknowledging the excellent presentations from the teams, the question that was put forward to all team members – What did you learn?

Some of the comments from the teams included:

- Found the 7 Step Process very helpful as it helped us to gain a good overview of all issues;
- The narrative up front along with the detailed cost analysis put the problems into perspective to give us the motivation to get to the root causes;
- Power of Cross-functional Teams to bring different perspectives to the problem and most importantly address multifaceted frustrations in our workplace;
- Highlighted the importance of addressing all the 7 key elements of Reactive Improvement and how without a Supportive Organisation Structure (1) and Effective Frontline Leaders (2) many root causes in the workplace cannot be properly addressed;
- The importance of the first step of the 7 Step Process – Define the Problem; and
- All speaking a common language, so we have a standard approach.

CTPM would like to congratulate the teams on their efforts in reducing their frustrations in the workplace while achieving great bottom-line benefits for Snack Brands. Overall the funding received through the Smart and Skilled Program covered more than **80% of the cost** to the company.

If you would like to find out more about the Frontline Problem Solving Root Cause Analysis Program or how the Smart and Skilled Program in NSW could assist your site in linking your improvement activities to a part-qualification for your employees, please contact CTPM Head Office on +61 2 4226 6184 or Ross Kennedy on 0418 206 108 or via email ross.kennedy@ctpm.org.au.