



TRANSFORMING CULTURE TOGETHER



# A Positive Approach to Problem Solving

## GUIDE

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## **In our roles as leaders we very often come across problems or challenges.**

### **Remember:**

- It is normal to have problems or challenges; they are part of everyday leadership practice it is how we approach and respond to them that is important.
- Problem solving is a fundamental part of the continuous improvement process, each time we effectively resolve a problem we are improving our service for the better.
- The sooner you start to take action the better, you will feel more positive once you have started to take action.

### **Guidance:**

1. Ask, is there actually a problem in the first place? Check information, facts and figures.
2. Take the time to define the problem clearly.
3. Challenge the problem as it is defined e.g. occupancy is low, this may be due to many factors such as: strong competition, ineffective advertising, ineffective management of enquiries, commissioning blockages or poor reputation.
4. Question the cause of the problem. This is about finding the ROOT cause rather than treating a symptom. If you don't get to the ROOT the problem will reoccur. Focusing on treating the symptom is a waste of your time and resources.
5. Through adopting a coaching style ask others to help you identify possible solutions and options. The more you come up with, the more likely you are to find the right solution.
6. Make a decision. Select a solution and decide a course of action. The longer it is put off the higher the impact and cost. Develop a SMART plan and stick to it.
7. Assign responsibility. Decide who is going to carry out the solution or the different parts of the solution, otherwise it will not happen.
8. Set a measure for the solution, otherwise you have no idea when or whether the problem has been solved.
9. Take action and implement the SMART plan.
10. Review and celebrate success!!

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## Tips:

When developing your SMART plan:

1. Be specific, assign responsibilities to a person by name rather than a role or department.
2. Avoid words like 'ongoing' or 'asap' be specific with timescales.
3. Be clear about how you will know when you have resolved your problem e.g. occupancy increased by 5%.
4. Include specific timescales for review to check in that you are on track.

**S**et out the problem. Is there actually a problem?  
What is the root cause?

**O**utline possible solutions & options. How will you know  
when you have resolved the problem?

**L**isten to others their views & ideas. Apply a coaching style  
to enable & encourage others.

**V**alues aligned? Is the solution aligned to the values  
of your organisation?

**E**xecutive the solution. Make a decision, develop a SMART  
plan & go!

**D**id it work? Review SMART plan.



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## Other resources

- [Culture Check](#)
- [Staff Survey Template](#)

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