PROBLEM SOLVING · DEFINE THE PROBLEM

Future Back

Stand in the outcome you want, work back through what had to be true, and land on the one problem worth solving now.

Facilitator _____

Team / date _____

CANDIDATE PROBLEMS

the several you could work on — 3 to 7

STAND IN THE FUTURE, VIVIDLY

it's one year from today — the outcome is real

What's visibly different? What are customers saying? What does leadership say? What evidence proves it's truly achieved?

↓ THE BACKWARD CHAIN

work back from the outcome, one link at a time

DESIRED OUTCOME — *the future you stood in*

↓

1 · WHAT HAD TO BECOME TRUE?

↓

2 · WHAT MADE THAT TRUE?

↓

3 · WHAT HAD TO CHANGE FIRST?

THE ONE PROBLEM — ON THE CRITICAL PATH, NOT A LIST

The ONE problem we must solve now is

… because without solving this, **the desired outcome is impossible.**

VALIDATE

If we solved this tomorrow, would the outcome become significantly more likely? If not — keep working back.

CHECK THE NEAREST PROBLEM

Which was the loudest problem — and why wasn't it the one on the path?

Define the problem from the finish line, not the starting line.

Make the future vivid · work backward, not forward · one problem, not a list · it must gate the outcome

© Witmer