

Root Cause Analysis in Utilities

The Art and Science of Knowing Why

The Utility Industry is facing new regulations, changes in public perception and emerging market opportunities. Drivers of change include aging infrastructure, opportunities for decarbonization, the need for sustainability, cyber-security and moving towards green energy.

Understanding why things happen is a fundamental management skill. For anyone who is challenged to manage data quality, business processes, or people and organizations, finding root causes is an essential skill. Understanding why is the key to knowing what to do – the core of sound decision making. But cause-and-effect relationships are elusive. Real causes are often difficult to find so we settle for easy answers. This leads to fixing symptoms rather than to solving problems, and to little or no gain where opportunity is abundant.

Please think about the following items before and during class:

- Examples of common operational or business problems encountered by your company
- Techniques used to identify these problems and to develop appropriate responses
- The role of collaboration in your company for resolving problems
- How measurement and analytic techniques are used to monitor, identify, diagnose, and respond to problems
- The effectiveness and sustainability of the various techniques
- How skills are developed in your company to apply data analytics techniques as a basis to find problems, discover root causes and develop sustainable responses
- How accountabilities are defined and allocated to ensure that problems are readily discovered, analyzed and resolved