

A word from the experts

The power of root cause analysis

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Too many times when we are trying to problem solve in the workplace, we jump to a solution that makes good business sense and won't impact operations. Why do we do this? Maybe because with our experience we think we know the answer, we use our gut instinct, we submit to peer pressure or we want to save time and money.

If an issue is repeating itself and becomes ongoing or even systemic, you may realize that you didn't address it properly. Why did the issue return? It is because the true root cause was not identified and corrected.

It takes some energy to "peel back the onion" like my boss likes to say. If you had invested in the time up front to identify the root cause of the issue and implemented a solution, the problem most of the time would be resolved or at least diminished in magnitude.

People are being taught different methods for root cause analysis for problem solving. My two favorites are the Fishbone Diagram and the "5Whys" Technique. These tools are part of our PPI (Practical Process Improvement) program (like Lean) and are deployed throughout our organization. It is becoming second nature to many of us. We use these tools for assessment of every CAPA (Corrective Action/Preventive Action) we work through.

In my next upcoming article, I will walk you through the methodology for these great two root cause analysis tools.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at kelly.huckabone@thermofisher.com