

Problem Solving and Persuasion Planning Worksheets

These worksheets, referenced in our article "[Five Critical Skills for Team Leadership Part 4: Using Problem Solving and Persuasion Instead of Criticism When Leading Teams](#)," will help you prepare for and practice using the problem solving approach and the persuasion approach to lead your team.

PROBLEM SOLVING PLANNING WORKSHEET

Think of a recent action or behavior by a team member that you want to address. The steps below will help you prepare to lead a problem-solving session.

Step 1: State the Performance Discrepancy

Simply state the difference between what you expected and what happened. Focus on the action or behavior, not the person. Do *not* criticize, do *not* focus on personalities, do *not* lecture, and do *not* beat around the bush. Come right to the point.

Step 2: Get the Team Member Involved

Use active listening skills. Do not interrupt. Do not argue. Show that you are genuinely interested in what your teammate has to say.

Focus on the problem (not personality) and ask for your teammate's help and ideas. Focusing on the problem helps reduce resistance to change. If your teammate gives excuses, resist the temptation to "lecture." Comment briefly on the excuse and then continue to insist on getting some ideas that will *solve the problem*. Also, resist the temptation to solve the problem yourself. Instead, work to get your teammate involved in solving the problem with you.

Step 3: Come to an Agreement

Come to an agreement on steps to be taken by both of you. This step is critical. It not only ensures the setting of specific goals, but also ensures clarity and understanding on the part of both of you.

Step 4: Follow Up

Make a plan to follow up to ensure that the problem gets solved according to your agreement.

POTENTIAL PROBLEM SOLVING RESPONSES

After you state the performance discrepancy, you may get a variety of different responses. The chart below outlines suggested approaches to the most typical responses you will get.

If the response you get is... Then you should...

A reason...	work together to solve problem ("we").
An excuse...	get the person involved ("you").
A bad idea...	ask for more suggestions.
Person clams up...	give the person time to think; offer a suggestion.
Person gets angry or becomes defensive...	fog/diffuse it.
Blames other people...	fog/diffuse it.
Has already solved the problem...	congratulate and thank.
Disputes the facts or denies the discrepancy...	present facts and discuss.



PERSUASION PLANNING WORKSHEET

Plan your persuasion approach by jotting down notes in the spaces provided in this worksheet.

Get Your Teammate's Attention

Write down what you can say to get your teammate to listen to your suggestion.

Specific Positive Suggestion

Write down specifically what you want the person to do differently. Either specify an action or an outcome (or both):

Show Understanding

Write down some things that you can say to show understanding to the person:

Sell the Idea/Ensure Commitment and Follow up

Write down some things that you can say to persuade the person it is in his/her best interest to do what you suggest. Remember that this should be something that is positive for the person. Be sure to gain commitment for next steps and a follow up action plan.
