



Agenda

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Creative Problem-Solving: Applying Nonlinear Thinking to Solve Difficult Project Management Problems

Instructor(s): Lisa Hammer, DASSM, PMP

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Length: 2 days

CEUs: 1.4/see below for PDU breakdown

Pework: None

Level: Intermediate

Training Topic: New Ways of Working

Subtopics: Complexity, Problem-Solving

Training Description:

Whether it's finding resources in a matrix management structure or balancing stakeholder expectations as scope creep challenges your planned schedule, the ability to find creative solutions is paramount to success in today's challenging environment! Creative problem-solving involves the ability to come up with a solution that was not obvious or apparent. Often referred to as "thinking outside the box," many are surprised and excited to learn that finding creative solutions to difficult problems does not require genetic prerequisites. It is a learned skill and we can all improve our abilities in creative problem-solving by applying and practicing the methodologies.

Seemingly insurmountable problems represent very real situations that occur in many organizations and are quite often cited as the top issues facing project managers today. This Creative Problem-Solving (CPS) training is structured around the principles of The Osborn-Parnes model with emphasis placed on the most difficult and pressing problems that a project manager is likely to face! The process, created by Alex Osborn and Dr. Sidney Parnes back in the 1950s, which gave birth to the term "brainstorming," has been refined to accommodate our fast-paced environments. However, the original concept of applying a process in order to find creative solutions is as valid today as it was then. Perhaps even more so as we are constantly asked to do more with less!

This interactive training will take you through the six-step process as well as introduce several useful brainstorming methods to enable you to facilitate more interesting problem-solving sessions and provide flexibility and variety to the meetings, resulting in ever-increasing creativity. As we are tasked with more responsibility and less resources, the out-of-the-box thinking methods become an essential component of the project management toolbox. Through application and practice, you will flex and grow your creative muscles enabling you to face challenges head-on and work toward a more creative and motivational environment!

Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of this training, learners will be able to:

- Define and implement a structured approach to problem-solving that leads to creative solutions during any phase of an ongoing or planned project.
- Explore the specific six-step Osborn-Parnes creative problem-solving process, providing learners with an in-depth understanding of the total process and why each step is important.
- Learn to process nonlinear thinking methods to provide tools and techniques that will be immediately applicable to facilitate solving the most difficult and complex problems that project managers typically face.
- Examine the problem definition stage in depth to eliminate circular and tangential distractions that tend to reduce the effectiveness of the process.
- Examine the concepts of critical thinking and the use of various problem-solving tools and methods such as brainstorming, putting learners' actual work environments into context through hands-on, problem-solving activities.

- Assess levels of happiness in the workplace and employ specific techniques to proactively manage performance quickly and effectively during project execution in order to optimize team morale and substantially increase project success factors.

AGENDA

Learners should plan to have fun and participate actively in this training, which will include multiple interactive, hands-on activities and will cover the following topics:

Day 1:

- A Structured Approach
 - Why use a structured approach?
 - What is the Critical Problem-Solving (CPS) process?
 - How does CPS lead to better solutions?
- Brainstorming
 - Alternative techniques
 - Typical brainstorming issues
 - Practicing idea generation
- The Six Stages of CPS
 - Defining the steps
 - Focus on problem definition
 - Using the process
- Critical Thinking
 - Linear and nonlinear thinking
 - Applying reason
 - Remaining humble

Day 2:

- Adaptability and Resilience
 - Emotional intelligence
 - Active listening
 - Impacting the organization
- Solution Generation and Selection
 - Evaluation and assessment
 - Separating fact from intuition
 - Refining the short list
- Applying the Process
 - A well-defined problem
 - The power of the people
 - Taking an answer home
- Positivity and the Importance of Happiness in the Workplace
 - Happiness and productivity
 - Can we be happier?
 - Putting the theory to practical use

Professional development units (PDUs) are 1-hour blocks of time spent learning, teaching others, or volunteering. By attending this training, you will be able to achieve the following PDUs as learning hours to apply for PMI certification or to maintain your certification status with PMI. [View](#) how your PDUs align with the PMI Talent Triangle®.

	Technical	Leadership	Strategic	Total
CAPM® / PMP® / PgMP®	0	14	0	14.00
PMI-ACP® / Agile*	0	14	0	14.00
PMI-SP®	0	14	0	14.00
PMI-RMP®	0	14	0	14.00
PfMP®	0	14	0	14.00
PMI-PBA®	0	14	0	14.00

**Please note that the asterisked row above applies to the PMI® Agile Certification Journey and includes DASM™, DASSM™, DAC™, and DAVSC™ certifications.*