

Picking Priority Problems

A Workshop for the Albuquerque Quality Network*
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* Note: This would normally be a tailored, 1/2-day workshop, but I'm sure this is a really smart, enthusiastic group!

Round 1 Execution

- ❖ Context: None
- ❖ Process: Individuals picked a puzzle (problem) to solve
- ❖ Rules of engagement: None
- ❖ Time limit: Complete prior to start of workshop



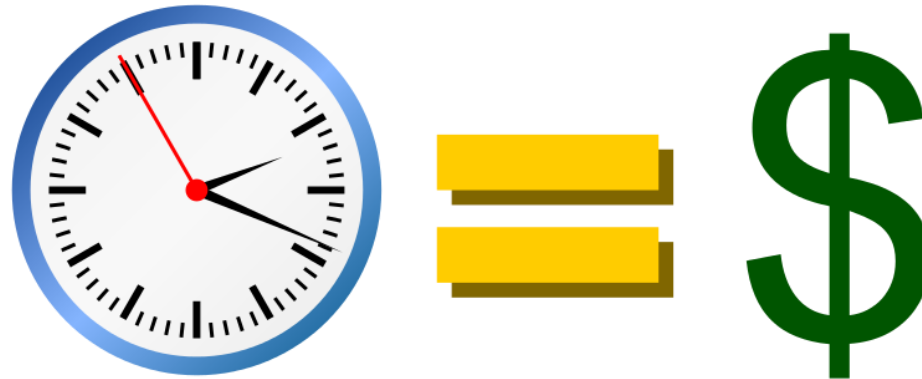
Defining "Problems"

Example "Problems"	Issues	Opportunities
Internal	Stove-piping	Innovation
External	Customer Complaints	Technology Advancement

- ❖ Problems vary by cost, complexity, impact...
- ❖ Solving the right problems calls for optimization

Optimization Assumptions

1. We don't have perfect knowledge
2. We don't have infinite/enough resources
3. Must decide quickly/efficiently which problems to solve...



Other assumptions?

Key Optimization Questions

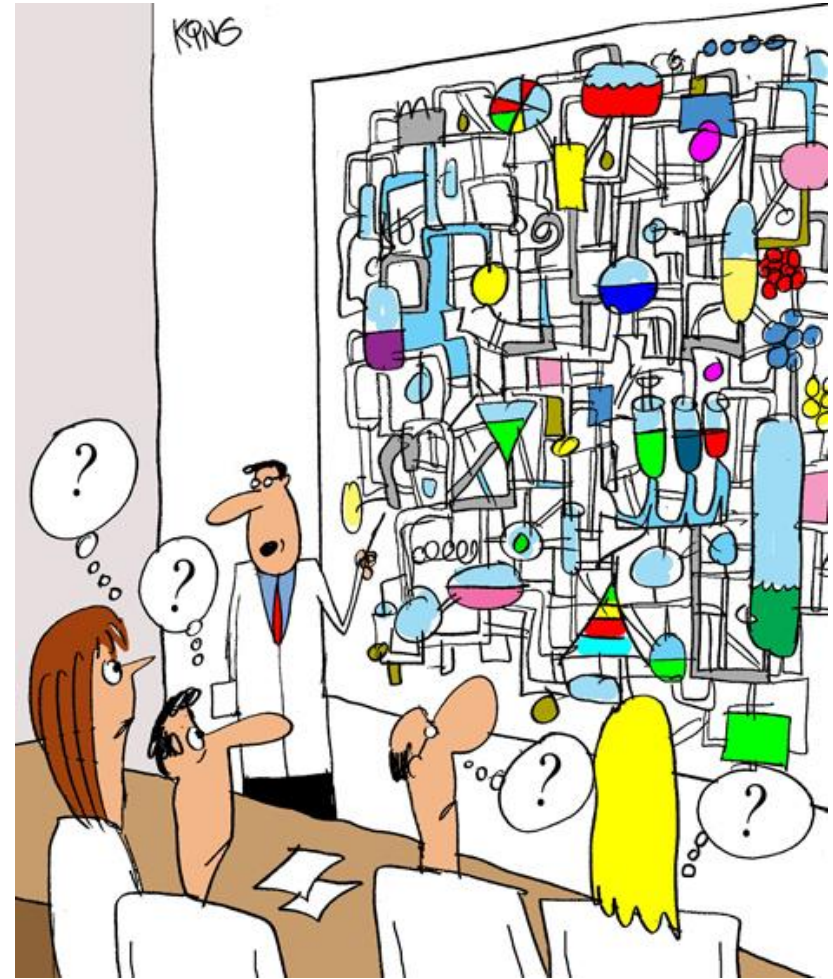
1. Can we solve this problem?
2. Is the problem worth solving?



Other questions?

Complexity Factors

- ❖ Resources required
- ❖ Cross-functionality of implementers
- ❖ Cost of implementation
- ❖ Risks
- ❖ Number of problems to solve to arrive at solution
- ❖ How long to implement
- ❖ Constraints that need to be overcome



Source: budtoboss.com/difficult-situations/prioritization-means-choosing-problems-not-solve, 23 Sep 2019

Benefits of Strategic Alignment



- ❖ Focus energy
- ❖ Reduce redundancies
- ❖ Eliminate conflicting priorities
- ❖ Increase ... buy-in
- ❖ Clarify capabilities/advantages
- ❖ Provide structure/clarity
- ❖ Empower team members
- ❖ Support maneuverability

Source: cmoe.com/strategic-alignment, 23 Sep 2019

Goal of Optimization

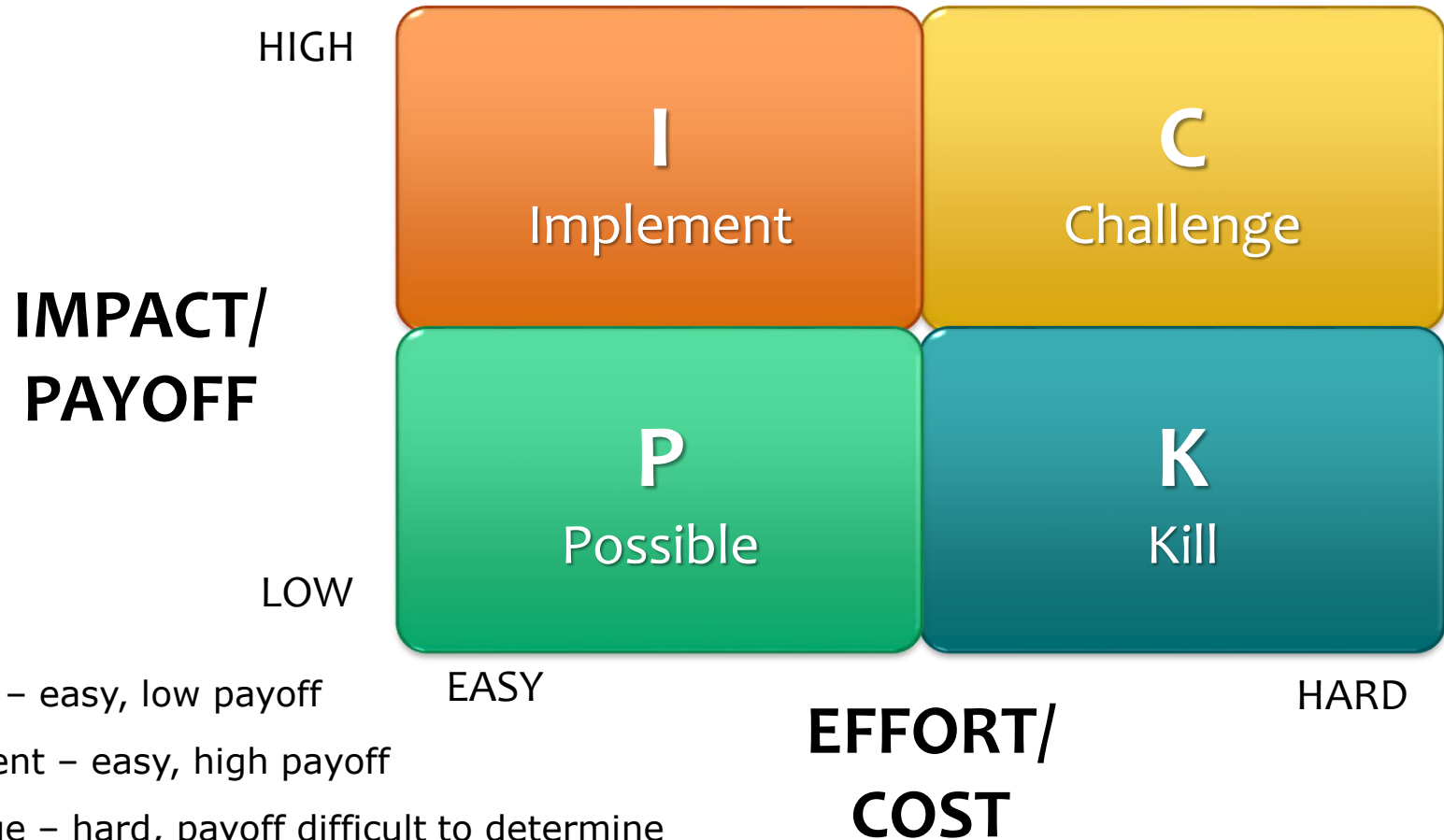
Get the “Biggest Bang for the Buck!”



Sample tools:

1. PICK (Possible, Implement, Challenge, Kill) Chart
2. Benefit-Effort Matrix
3. Opportunity Radar

PICK Chart



- ❖ Possible – easy, low payoff
- ❖ Implement – easy, high payoff
- ❖ Challenge – hard, payoff difficult to determine
- ❖ Kill – hard, low payoff

Source: searchcio.techtarget.com/definition/PICK-chart-Possible-Implement-Challenge-and-Kill-chart, 23 Sep 2019

Benefit-Effort Matrix

Zone 1 - "quick wins"

- Identifiable solutions
- Little to no dedicated team effort
- Immediately by one or two people

Zone 2

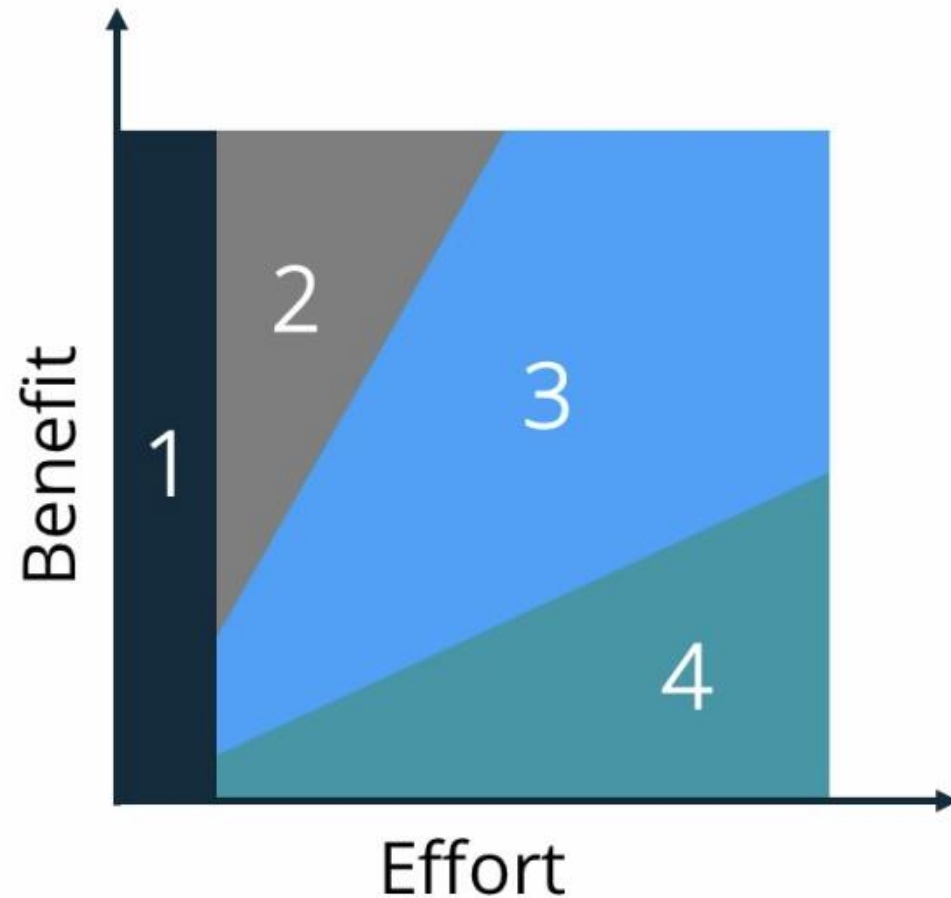
- Take 1-4 months
- Dedicated project team effort
- Need analysis prior to implementation

Zone 3

- Should be planned carefully
- require 5-6 months

Zone 4

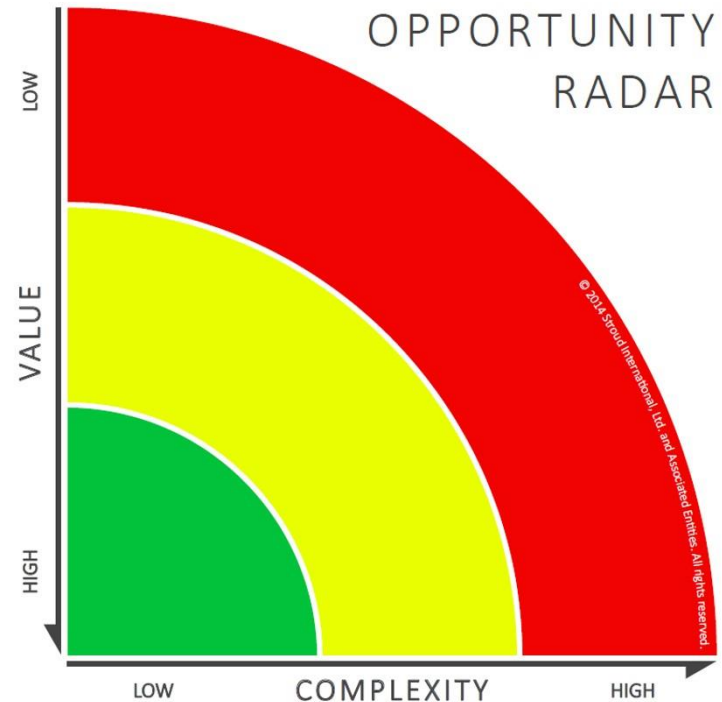
- Should not be executed
- Don't throw away – may change zone later



Source: bigskyassociates.com/blog/project-selection-how-to-pick-a-winner-every-time, 23 Sep 2019

Opportunity Radar

1. Identify Opportunities
2. Assign Value
3. Assign Complexity
4. Ensure Alignment

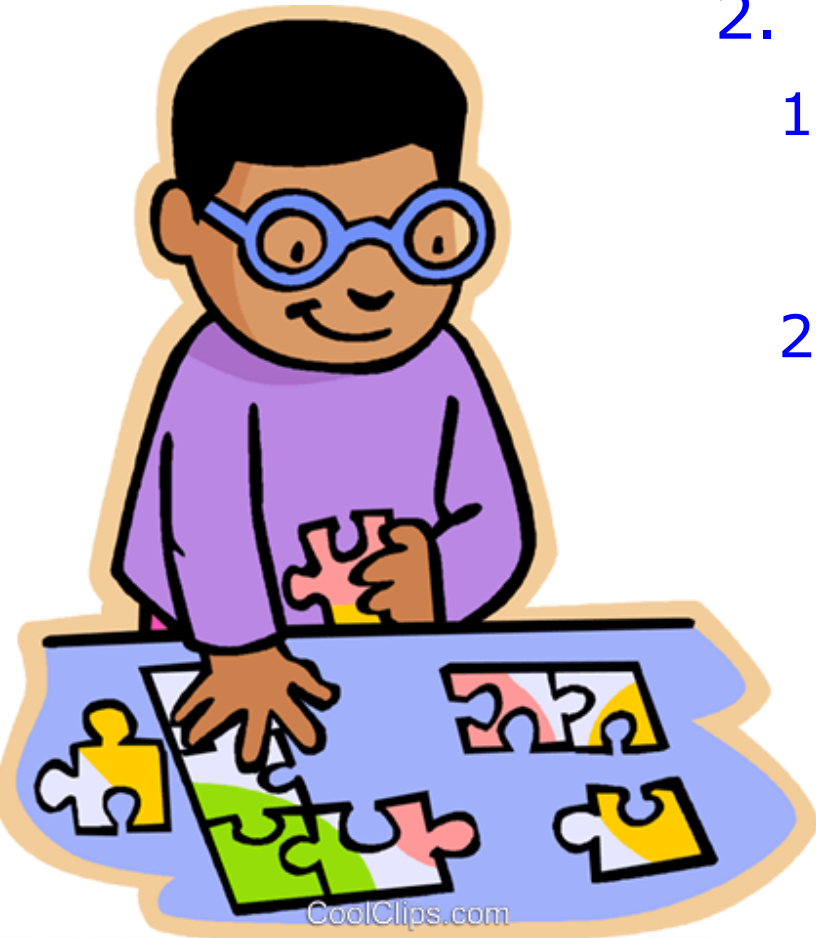


What other “Biggest Bang for the Buck” tools have you used?

Source: stroudinternational.com/opportunity-radar, 23 Sep 2019

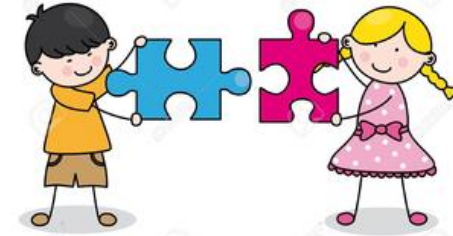
Round 1 Evaluation

1. Time limit: 5 minutes
2. Tasks:
 1. Come to consensus on which 3 puzzles your table would solve if you had 30 minutes
 2. Document your rationale using one of the three “Bang for the Buck” methods
 - ❖ PICK Chart
 - ❖ Benefit-Effort Matrix
 - ❖ Opportunity Radar



Round 1 Discussion

Each team report results, including how you assigned value to the “problems” you chose to solve



Discussion questions for the group:

1. Where are the overlaps between tables?
2. Did you analyze each “problem” to verify the information was correct/complete?
3. What were some of your challenges?
4. How do your problem-selection priorities, strategies, or actions change if you...
 - ❖ ...work for the same company?
 - ❖ ...work for different, competing companies?
5. Does your team’s answer change if the customer defined the following metric for value/impact?

SURFACE AREA COVERED BY COMPLETED PUZZLE

Round 2 Execution

- ❖ Context:
 - ❖ Each table is a Division in Puzzle Palace, LLC
 - ❖ You are competing against the other Divisions for Division of the Quarter
 - ❖ Your goal is to maximize your value to/impact on the bottom line (based on theoretical surface area coverage of selected puzzles)
 - ❖ Your Division's strategy is written on Handout #2; points will be assigned based on strategic alignment
- ❖ Process:
 - ❖ Each team member select 3 puzzles and bring them back to the table
- ❖ Rules of engagement:
 - ❖ If you do not use your puzzles from Round 1, return them
 - ❖ Do not share your strategy with the other Divisions
 - ❖ No pushing, shoving, or physical contact of any kind
- ❖ Time limit: 3 minutes

Round 2 Evaluation

1. Time limit: 5 minutes
2. Tasks:
 1. Come to consensus on which 5 puzzles your table would solve if you had 30 minutes to realize your maximum theoretical value to the bottom line
 2. Document your rationale by updating the “Bang for the Buck” method you chose in Round 1
 3. Assign your team the following points:
 1. 10 points for aligning with the specific theme
 2. 5 points for aligning with the general theme
 3. 1 point for every square foot covered
 4. Record your scores at the front of the room

Round 2 Discussion

1. Review reported results
2. Calculate the total score for Puzzle Palace, LLC

Discussion questions for the group:

1. What were some of your challenges?
2. What was the general mood/feeling during execution?
3. Did anyone observe any positive or negative behaviors?
4. Did changing the paradigm cause any unintended consequences?

Round 3 Execution

❖ Context:

- ❖ Each table is a Division in Puzzle Palace, LLC
- ❖ Your goal is to maximize your value to/impact on the bottom line (based on theoretical surface area coverage of selected puzzles)
- ❖ The company's strategy is written on Handout #3; points will be assigned based on strategic alignment
- ❖ All employees will receive bonuses based on how much the company's score exceeds Round 2

❖ Process:

- ❖ Company employees ensure puzzles get to the appropriate table

❖ Rules of engagement:

- ❖ If you do not use your puzzles from Round 2, return them
- ❖ Sharing of expertise encouraged
- ❖ No pushing, shoving, or physical contact of any kind

❖ Time limit: 3 minutes

Round 3 Evaluation

1. Time limit: 5 minutes
2. Tasks:
 1. Come to consensus on which 5 puzzles your table would solve if you had 30 minutes to realize your maximum theoretical value to the bottom line
 2. Document your rationale by updating the “Bang for the Buck” method you chose in Rounds 1 & 2
 3. Assign your team the following points:
 1. 10 points for aligning with the specific theme
 2. 5 points for aligning with the general theme
 3. 1 point for every square foot covered
 4. Record your scores at the front of the room

Round 3 Discussion

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Summary/Key Points

1. Prioritizing which problems to solve is a top priority
 - ❖ Choose ones that are scoped properly
 - ❖ Employ a consistent, documented process for organization
2. Make data-driven decisions
 - ❖ Don't take a problem at face value; gather evidence
 - ❖ Use a business case; ensure the juice is worth the squeeze
3. Several factors are key in maximizing value
 - ❖ Value defined from the customer's perspective
 - ❖ Shared and strategically aligned goals & metrics
 - ❖ Teamwork enabled by trust, shared expertise, collaboration
 - ❖ Proper incentives tied to evaluation & compensation

Sources

Slide 6: Green, Nat. "Prioritization Means Choosing What Problems Not to Solve," website: Bud to Boss budtoboss.com/difficult-situations/prioritization-means-choosing-problems-not-solve

Slide 7: "The Need for Strategic Alignment," website: cmoe.com
cmoe.com/strategic-alignment

Slide 9: Rouse, Margaret. "PICK Chart (Possible, Implement, Challenge and Kill Chart)," website: searchcio.techtarget.com
searchcio.techtarget.com/definition/PICK-chart-Possible-Implement-Challenge-and-Kill-chart

Slide 10: Andrews, Brittany. "Project Selection: How to Pick a Winner Every Time," website: bigskyassociates.com
bigskyassociates.com/blog/project-selection-how-to-pick-a-winner-every-time

Slide 11: "The Opportunity Radar," website: Stroud International (© 2015 Stroud International, Ltd. and Associated Entities. All rights reserved.)
stroudinternational.com/opportunity-radar