

The group brainstorms various possible root causes. Sometimes it is helpful to think in terms of a tree diagram, or better yet, a fishbone, to help drive thinking about possible causes.

With the tree, one can drive the brainstorming session by asking why. For example, if we see lower PSHR scores as the issue, we can ask why are we seeing this. Likely causes are that people stop reporting, people never start reporting, or people report lower scores.

Asking why would people stop reporting, there may be change in their life, they may simple loose interest, or perhaps they are no longer able to meet the minimum score.

By continuing to drive these questions down, we can identify many potential root causes.

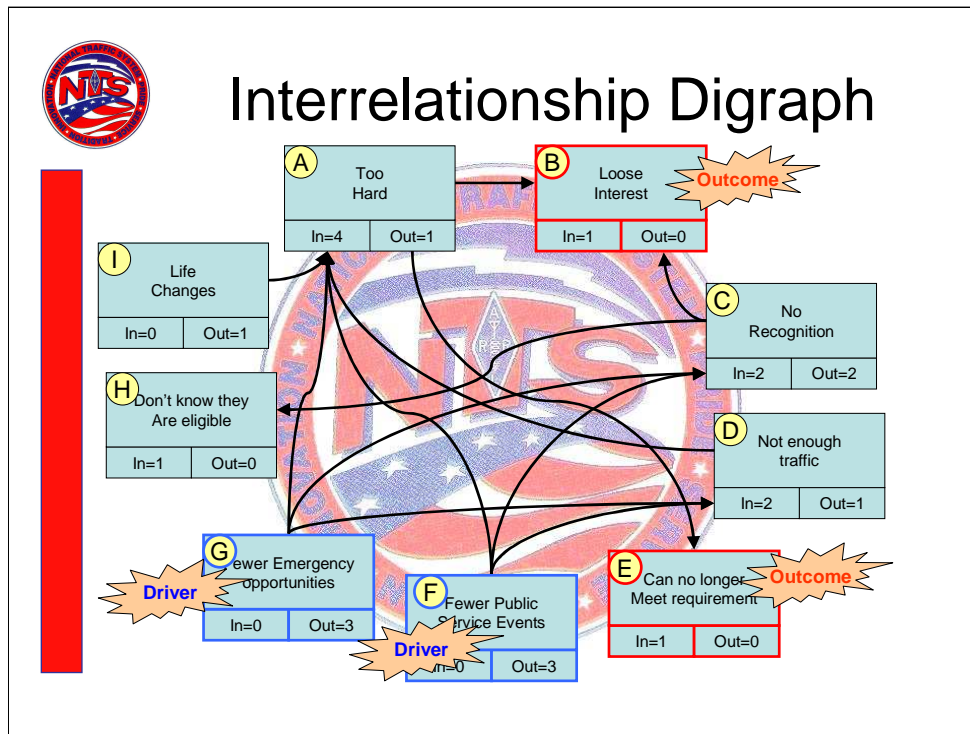


Root Cause Evaluation

Root Cause Evaluation Chart				
Problem: Fewer amateurs reporting monthly				
Possible Root Cause	Probability	Actionable	Total	Measurable?
New amateurs aren't aware they could qualify	7	9	63	Harder, could do survey
No recognition	5	9	45	Harder still, again could survey but harder to get honest answers
Perceived as too difficult to start	5	7	35	Hard
Fewer public service events	3	7	21	Yes
Can't make minimum score	3	3	9	Yes, but harder. Can't recognize whether to ask until much later
Not enough traffic	3	3	9	Yes
Life Changes	5	0	0	Yes, ask, but after the fact
Fewer weather and emergency events	5	0	0	Yes

Once we have a nice list of root causes, the group should then agree on the probability that each root cause is, in fact, the issue (simple scale, 1 to 9), and whether there is anything that could be done about it, without, at this point, articulating what it is that might be done. The group also should try to identify whether each root cause is measurable.

We come up with total scores by multiplying the probable and actionable scores. Root causes with a high score are those that bear closer scrutiny, and greater effort in coming up with measurements.



After we have some understanding of the various possible root causes and the degree to which they can be influenced, we want to add the interrelationship digraph to help us understand which causes to go after.

The various possible root causes are placed on PostIt notes, and arranged in roughly a circle on a flip chart. Then the group decides which potential causes influence other potential causes. Arrows are drawn showing this effect.

When the group is satisfied it has identified most of the relationships, the number of arrows in and out of each box are counted. Boxes with more arrows out of the box, and few, or no, arrow in, are likely drivers.

Drivers with a high probability and an high score on the evaluation matrix are good candidates to attempt to influence.