10 Reasons Why Problem-solving Is Impossible (FDEP, August 1998)

(1) It’s viewed as extra. Everyone is already busy with more structured, manageable tasks; all of which have deadlines and therefore take precedence.

(2) The required analytic support is not available.

(3) Problem-Solving has no formal budgetary support, nor any legislative mandate. Everything else the department does has both.

(4) Real world problems come in awkward shapes and sizes, which do not fit established groups or units. Requires coordination across units/ agencies.
10 Reasons Why Problem-solving Is Impossible (FDEP, August 1998)

(5) Management has failed to understand or support it. “We are left to push from down here ... it should not be up to us.”

(6) Problem-Solving brings an unfamiliar degree of discretion, and uncertain degrees of authorization. Teams unsure of right to commit agency resources.

(7) Persistent ambiguity as to whether problem-solving is really new. Many staff think it isn't. Several managers have already declared that it isn't. If not new, why worry?

(8) Project teams lack rigor in their approach. They don't understand why the different stages are necessary.

(9) Engaging external parties (regulated industries, interest groups, etc.) without offering them any kind of veto or vote, awkward. Unfamiliar terms of engagement.

(10) Problem-solving is regarded by many as an alternative to enforcement, and is consequently written off as “one of the fashionable new soft options being pushed by senior management as they sell out to political pressures.”
Risk-Control Infrastructure

Problem-solving/risk-control

Essential Infrastructure

- A Nomination System: generating and funneling nominations.
- Assignment System: for committing personnel/resources.
- Project Records: project files, paper or electronic.
- Managerial Oversight and Periodic Review: for monitoring and adjustment during the course of a project.
- Reporting System: channeling project accomplishments into the agency's routine performance accounts.
- Support System: for Teams/Managers, access to consultants or specialists in the problem-solving art.
Problem-solving/risk-control
Essential Infrastructure

Two other features, while perhaps not absolutely essential, seem highly desirable:

- **A Reward System**: to provide recognition for project teams that achieve important results.
- **A System for Learning**: to provide broader access (within the organization and across the profession) to knowledge acquired: what works, what doesn’t, what resources are available within and outside the agency, contact information, keyword-searchable databases of projects, etc.

Government’s Risk-Control Tasks:
Common Features

1) Exist primarily to deliver *protection* from harms, rather than provide *services*
2) Major component is delivery of obligations to businesses and citizens
3) Entrusted with coercive power of the State
4) Criticized more often for uses & abuses of power, rather than uses & abuses of money
5) Face organizational challenge of integrating a range of reactive, preventive and proactive strategies into coherent control system
Theory of operations

Life in the toolshed...

- extending the use of negotiated rulemaking in environmental protection
- exploring the role of civil society in corruption control
- evaluating the effect of “three-strikes and you’re out” policies on crime levels
- reducing drug abuse by expanding drug awareness resistance programs in the schools
- decreasing worker injury rates through the use of experience-rated premium-setting for employers in workers’ compensation insurance
- developing education and information campaigns that would help reduce international trafficking in women and children
- developing broader international cooperation among law enforcement and intelligence agencies in combating money laundering
Life in the field...

- dealing with domestic burglaries being committed by high-school kids on their way home from school in mid-afternoon
- reducing the frequency of serious or fatal spinal and head injuries caused when roofers fall off roofs
- reducing the incidence of repetitive back-strain injuries in the nursing profession, caused by lifting patients without proper equipment
- eliminating corruption in real-estate development involving the infiltration of local development boards and manipulation of land prices
- reducing arsenic in surface waters on golf courses
- eliminating the practice of port-running, used by drug smugglers at land-border crossing points between Mexico and the United States
- reducing the threat of commercial airplane hijacking by terrorists willing to commit suicide
- combating the trafficking of Nepalese girls for prostitution in eastern Europe by smuggling organizations deceptively offering modeling careers

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PICK IMPORTANT PROBLEMS:

FIX THEM

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OSHA Survival Strategy (1995)

PICK IMPORTANT PROBLEMS:

FIX THEM:

THEN TELL EVERYBODY!
# Targeted interventions

**Applied at the point of maximum leverage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nominate issue</th>
<th>Precise definition</th>
<th>Success criteria</th>
<th>Develop intervention</th>
<th>Deploy and review</th>
<th>Close and monitor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on risk clusters where we have highest ability to improve safety outcomes</td>
<td>Uncover root cause and potential control points</td>
<td>Determine how to measure impact</td>
<td>Assess optimal leverage point</td>
<td>Implement plan through actions of WorkSafe and partners</td>
<td>Close project, allowing for long term monitoring and maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather data and test patterns (e.g. remuneration growth vs. claims rates; rainfall and agriculture claims)</td>
<td>Investigate through internal and external partnerships (eg inspectorate, HSR, industry groups)</td>
<td>Outline expected changes from our actions</td>
<td>Select the right mix of tools, channels and partnerships</td>
<td>Monitoring, review and adjust in a set cadence</td>
<td>Link to systems compliance model to ensure sustainability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Targeted intervention process

Enhanced outcomes through developing and deploying strategies with partners and a disciplined process of research, design & monitoring.

**Source:** *The Regulatory Craft: Controlling Risks, Solving Problems, and Managing Compliance*, Malcolm K. Sparrow

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### Problem Solving Process to Identify and Mitigate Risk in the Railroad Industry: 2010

**Risk Mitigation Program Management Teams (RMPMT)**

- Nomination Guidelines
- 2a. Select Problems and Launch RMTs
- 2b. Define Precisely, Analyze & Prioritize
- 2c. Start Up RMT, Further Define/Decide
- 3. Determine Performance Measures
- 4. Develop Corrective Actions
- 5. Implement with Monitoring
- 6. Close RMT, Allowing Long Term Monitoring

**Risk Mitigation Team (RMT)**

- Coordinate Nominations
- 1. Submit Nominations
- 2a. Monitor and Review
- 2b. Approve Completion of Each Stage
- 3. Review and Close RMTs

**FRA Agency, Other Stakeholders (Impacted Parties, Partners)**

- Help Develop Corrective Actions
- Help Implement

**Selection of RRP Problems**

**Solution Process**

**Problem Solving Process to Identify and Mitigate Risk in the Railroad Industry: 2010**
Hiccups in the maturing of Problem-Oriented Policing

1) Problem-Solving is for Beat Officers
2) Compstat (narrower forms can be restrictive)
3) Continued emphasis on “Placed-Based”, hot-spots, cops-on-dots
   Does “Predictive Policing” extend our analytic imagination, or merely refine familiar approaches?
4) Evidence-Based Policing: aggressive claims by some proponents to be arbiters of “what works.”
   Figuring out what kinds of science policing needs, broadening academic support, getting the balance between social science & natural science methods.
   “Which programs work?” v. “How does the world work?”

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“Compstat”—implementation options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Narrow forms:</th>
<th>Broader (mature) forms:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data Sources:</td>
<td>Reported Crime Rates</td>
<td>Multiple sources, including victimization surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms of Analysis:</td>
<td>Geographic (by Precinct &amp; cluster) &amp; Temporal</td>
<td>Versatile, considering full range of relevant dimensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Focus:</td>
<td>Drive the numbers down</td>
<td>“Expose &amp; Deal” effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of Responsibility</td>
<td>Precinct Commanders</td>
<td>Tailored to each problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial Style:</td>
<td>Adversarial</td>
<td>Cooperative/Coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred Tactics:</td>
<td>Directed Patrol, Street Order Maintenance</td>
<td>Full range of interventions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tensions between Operational Problem-Solving & “Evidence-Based Policing”

1) EBP is too slow for operational purposes (3-5 year lag)
2) EBP produces no new solutions, and may narrow the range of solutions available (use only programs “that work”)
3) Social Science focuses on subtle effects at high levels; problem-solving focuses on obvious effects at lower levels
4) Greater influence for EBP may (ironically) reduce the level of experimentation (more complex & demanding protocols)
5) EBP may perpetuate “program-centric” mindset, as opposed to “problem-centric” mindset
6) EBP, with focus on statistical analysis, may not recognize the best problem-solving performance (“spot & squish”)
7) EBP focuses on establishing causality; problem-solving focuses on eliminating or reducing problems, then moving on quickly
8) EBP focuses on interventions, and pays little attention to organizational competencies (even failures are valuable...)

“Governing Science” Sparrow, 2011. New Perspectives in Policing, NIJ/HKS

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Pick Important Problems: Fix Them

Experienced by those who have grappled with it as:
- Different
- Intellectually demanding
- Analytically demanding
- Organizationally awkward
- “Unrelentingly difficult”
- Extremely effective!

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