**Root Cause Techniques are Easier than a Root Canal!**

**Practice with Techniques for Understanding Business Needs**

**Overview**

Business needs are arguably the most important input to any project. Given their impact, it is critical for project team members to have tools and techniques to get to the root cause of business problems and opportunities. This practicum is a follow-up to the presentation “Five Proven Techniques for Understanding Business Needs.” It features practice with some of the root cause techniques for uncovering and understanding needs. You will leave the session feeling better able to get to the root cause and analyze the current state for your next effort.

Comments from past attendees of the companion presentation:

"Great presentation! Thank you for sharing. Very helpful visual aids and examples to drive home the topics under discussion."

“Great material and ideas! Thanks”

“EXCELLENT presentation. Very clear and practical and I'm looking forward to putting the tools presented into practice.”

"A big thank you to Rich Larson. His scenario illustrations had helped me understand better how to use the 5 needs assessment tools."

"Good insights on understanding Needs in business analysis efforts. Thank you."

"Great presentation that shares the hard earned knowledge from Larson on Root Cause Analysis. The quote from the presentation "When techniques are good they stay good" is spot on. The techniques he discusses are not new but not well applied by many practitioners.

"The diagrams and examples where really good. Nice to see real life examples applied to these standard techniques."

"Good presentation, great level of details and thanks for the examples!"

“Rich, thank you for your presentation on digging out root causes. There's a lot I'll be able to take back with me. Half our battle is getting the business to tell what they actually need! "

"Very helpful techniques. Good practical information."

"A truly useful presentation. It's really nice to see a tutorial with very good examples of these well known tools."

**Abstract**

Needs are arguably the most important input to any business analysis effort. Why is that? For one thing, the *BA Body of Knowledge* from IIBA literally starts with needs as the core input when planning the BA approach. Needs are also the primary input when eliciting requirements, which leads to virtually every other task in the BABOK.

The PMI Standard for Business Analysis includes Needs Assessment as its initial domain. Outputs of that domain are key inputs to all but one of the other domains: the situation statement, business case, and project charter. Why do we then struggle with understanding business needs?

Given the impact of business needs, it is critical for project team members to have tools and techniques to get to the root cause of business problems and opportunities. This practicum is a follow-up to the presentation “Five Proven Techniques for Understanding Business Needs.” It features practice with some of the root cause techniques for uncovering and understanding needs. You will leave the session feeling better able to get to the root cause and analyze the current state for your next effort.

**Learning Objectives**

Attendees will be able to:

* List and describe the 5 root cause analysis techniques that will help uncover business needs.
* List which techniques apply best to certain situations.
* Use one or more techniques to uncover and understand business needs.

**Speaker Bio - Richard Larson, PMP, CBAP, PMI-PBA**

President and Founder of Watermark Learning, Richard Larson is a successful entrepreneur with over 30 years of experience in business analysis, project management, training, and consulting. He has presented workshops and seminars on BA and PM topics to over 10,000 participants on five different continents.

Rich is a frequent speaker at Business Analysis and Project Management national conferences and IIBA® and PMI® chapters around the world. He has contributed to the BA Body of Knowledge version 2.0 and 3.0, was a lead author for the Needs Assessment chapter of the PMI publication *Business Analysis for Practitioners: A Practice Guide*, and was an author of the PM Body of Knowledge, 4th edition. He and his wife Elizabeth Larson have co-authored five books on business analysis.