

Tree Cause Analysis and Business Results!

What About Doing Tree-Cause Analysis by Deborah Mills Scofield

Irene Becker, Just Coach It-The 3Q Edge™ | (IQ-EQ-SQ) Reach-Resonance-Results

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Honored to host this guest post by the brilliant, innovative and practical, Deborah Mills Scofield, VC/startup expert, business strategist and educator, Deb always succeeds in hitting the nail smack on the head.



Root Cause Analysis (RCA) – sounds like a blast doesn't it? We can all agree it's important and should be a habit we adopt in

our organizations, but few of us do it. Why? It takes time, self-reflection (personal and organizational), analysis and... it's focused on the negative, what didn't work, what didn't go well. Makes you wonder if Root Cause Analysis isn't an oxymoron. After all if the roots are weak, whatever grows above ground is at risk. That's why we do the analysis!

What if instead of focusing only below the ground, we focused above ground too? What if we did Tree Cause Analysis (TCA)? My clients always look at me as if I had two heads when I recommend TCA as part of strategy execution.

TCA is the positive deviance side of RCA. It focuses on what is going well, what's working, what's going right instead of what's not. We can learn as much from the positive as we can from the negative. Analyzing what is going well let's us:

Identify if things are going well because of dumb luck or because of real processes, competencies, relationships, etc.;

- Learn and apply that to areas that aren't going so well;
- Find strengths that go across disciplines to leverage, train and develop;
- Create a culture focused on the positive, which encourages collaboration, creativity and customer delight.

It sounds simple and obvious...because it is! It still takes time, self-reflection (personal and organizational) and analysis. Yet, spending time focused on what's working creates energy and excitement instead of draining it. Over the next few weeks, why don't you try it? **Apply TCA to a project, tactic, or program and see what happens? Please share the results!**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Deborah Mills-Scofield has her own consultancy on innovation and strategy and is a partner in an early stage Venture Capital firm.



Deb writes for Harvard Business Review, Switch and Shift and other venues, including her own blog, and has contributed to several books. She is on the board of RISD's DESINE-Lab and Brown University's Engineering School as well as lecturing in Brown's IE-Brown E-MBA program. Deb also mentors students doing 'regular' and social startups and supports those involved in STEAM. Her patent from AT&T Bell Labs was one of the highest-revenue generating patents for AT&T and Lucent. She can be reached at @dscofield on twitter or dms@mills-scofield.com.

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