



The Five Whys Questioning Technique

One way to identify the root cause of a problem is to state your basic understanding of the problem and ask “Why?” at least five times. This technique is useful in the “define” step of the design thinking process. It can help you challenge assumptions and identify the root cause. Knowing the root cause helps you make sure you have the right target in mind before you try to brainstorm possible solutions. Use this worksheet to document the process and conclusions.

Problem statement:	
Question 1:	Why...
Answer 1:	
Question 2:	Why...
Answer 2:	
Question 3:	Why...
Answer 3:	
Question 4:	Why...
Answer 4:	
Question 5:	Why...
Answer 5:	
Root cause of problem:	

“If you do not know how to ask the right question, you discover nothing.”
W. Edwards Deming

