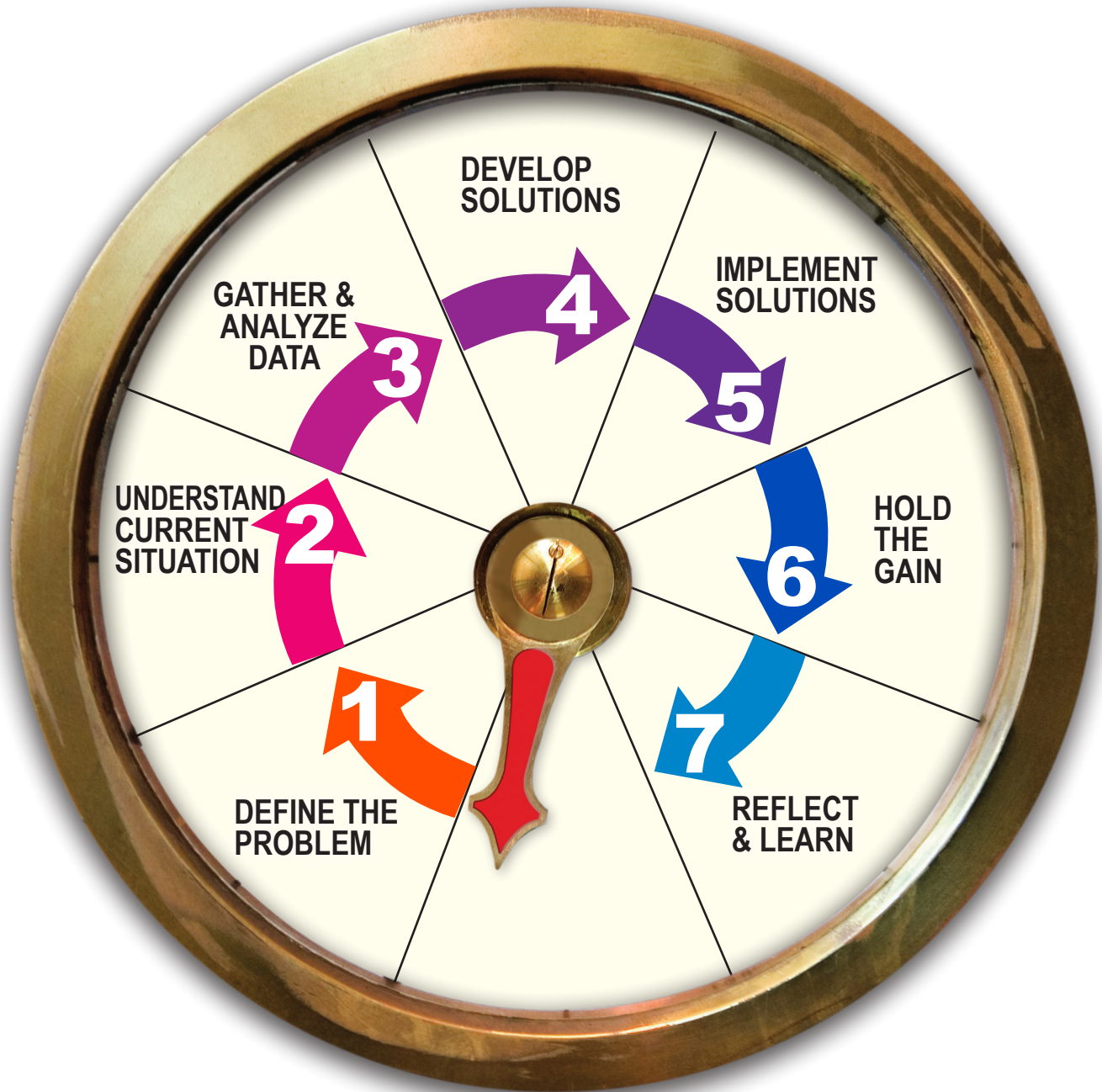


7-step problem solving

Common language and shared tools increase the speed, quality and effectiveness of problem solving.



USE THIS METHOD WHEN THE OUTPUT OR PRODUCT OF THE WORK OR PROCESS IS (ONE OR MORE):

- Late
- Takes longer than expected
- Is incomplete
- Has errors or defects
- Costs more than expected
- Requires rework
- Causes complaints
- Demands excess and repeated handling
- Has wasted time or unnecessary activities

7-step problem solving

STEP	PURPOSE	OUTCOME
1 DEFINE THE PROBLEM	Agree on what the problem “is” and why it’s important to address	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear written statement describes the situation concisely Processes involved are identified Consequences of not solving the problem are known The ‘facts’ compel action
2 UNDERSTAND CURRENT SITUATION	Understand what is contributing to the problem, how the work is currently done, and where it breaks down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context for and history of the problem are understood Identify, agree and document <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where things stand today, e.g., a process map Symptoms that need attention Constraints or obstacles in the way Opportunities for possible leverage Factors to consider, (political, legislative, risks, etc.)
3 GATHER & ANALYZE DATA	Use data and critical thinking to better understand what is happening and why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A “root cause” analysis is completed “Suspect” data is gathered Data and other situational information is analyzed Root cause(s) are prioritized for resolution
4 DEVELOP SOLUTIONS	Explore multiple solutions and choose the best one(s); create an implementation plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple solutions are considered Impact analysis is completed
5 IMPLEMENT SOLUTIONS	Effectively implement the selected solution(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A detailed implementation work plan with milestones and measures to track progress is completed Effective execution of the work plan is completed Implementation glitches are fixed
6 HOLD THE GAIN	Install control(s) that will prevent slippage, or will initiate intervention if the gain starts to slip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control mechanism(s) are in place Escalation triggers and paths are set Process owner is assigned to monitor and improve
7 REFLECT AND LEARN	Learn from the problem solving process and implementation and apply what was learned in the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons learned are identified and communicated