



CREATIVE REFRAMING

Arrive at a mutual understanding of the challenge.

TIME

Approx. 45 – 60 minutes

PARTICIPANTS

All group participants

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Challenge or problem statement

WHAT IS IT?

Creative Reframing is a method for arriving at a mutual understanding of the problem statement. Customers, project sponsors, and even individual members of the team each bring with them a unique perspective and knowledge base. Hence, before you can work effectively on a problem, all parties need to convene to discuss whether there is in fact already a common understanding of that particular problem. Once this has been established, the next step is to consider whether the question, as formulated, does indeed address the core problem.

WHAT WILL IT GIVE YOU?

- A mutual understanding of a particular problem
- Clarity on uncertainties and clearly defined goals

Cheat sheet

INPUT

Challenge or problem statement

OUTPUT

Refined challenge or problem statement

RESOURCES NEEDED

- A problem and / or question, for which solutions are to be developed
- A room in which the participants can work without being disturbed or observed
- Post-it notes in different colors
- A flip chart or whiteboard
- Pens in different colors

KEY STEPS

1. PREPARE THE SPACE

- Write down the problem

2. LOOK AT THE PROBLEM (15 MINUTES)

- Underline all aspects of the question that are unclear
- Underline the aspects that are too limiting or too vague.

3. BRAINSTORM OF ALTERNATIVES (20 MINUTES)

- Formulate your interpretations.
- Identify generally accepted interpretations.

4. REFORMULATE THE PROBLEM (10-15 MINUTES)

- Create a new and well-formulated problem.

5. DEBRIEF YOUR TEAM

- Analyze your meeting notes and find insights.
- Share your experiences and findings with the team.

How to use it? In detail

1. PREPARE THE SPACE

Write down the problem – just as it has been put to you by your customer – in the center of your work space (ideally on a flipchart or whiteboard).

Come together around this space and ensure that every team member has post-it notes and pens.

2. LOOK AT THE PROBLEM (15 MINUTES)

Agree on a color (e.g. red) and underline all parts of the question that are unclear to you. Mark the underlined parts with a question mark for orientation.

Use another color (e.g. green) to underline all parts of the text where the wording may be too narrow or too vague – or may already include solutions – and mark them with a different symbol, such as a lightning bolt.

3. BRAINSTORM ALTERNATIVES (20 MINUTES)

Formulate your interpretations in the form of keywords on post-it notes and stick them next to the relevant passages.

Please note: This is not the time for long discussions or assessments, but rather for making various possible interpretations visible to everyone.

For words marked with a question mark do some quick brainstorming on possible alternatives and map them on the board.

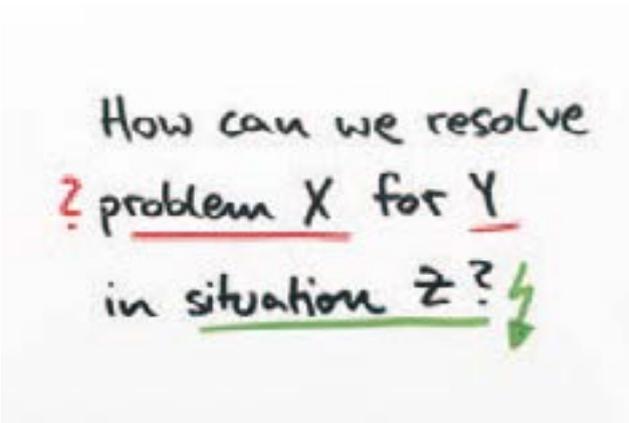
For words marked with a lightning bolt you need to either narrow or broaden the scope. Asking why questions may help you in changing the scope.

Only once all opinions and alternatives are visible should you talk about the expedience of each option and try to develop a mutual understanding of the question. Mark the generally accepted interpretations.

4. REFORMULATE THE PROBLEM (10-15 MINUTES)

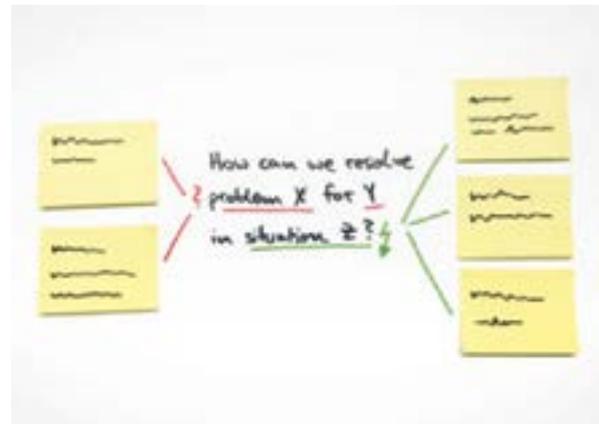
Try to develop initial phrases for the new problem based on the marked key words and write each of them down in your work space. This intermediate step helps to record the good thoughts, even if they do not yet give rise to a complete sentence.

Combine the developed phrases to create a new and well-formulated problem that, from the perspective of the user, has been formulated to clearly describe the root of the problem as well as the situation / environment in which the problem occurs. If you find it difficult to reach an agreement, formulate two problems that cover two different extremes.



STEP 2: LOOKING AT THE PROBLEM

Underline parts of the challenge sentence that are unclear or out of scope.



STEP 3: BRAINSTORM OF ALTERNATIVES

Explore each underlined word in order to gain a mutual understanding.

Tips and tricks

Use enough space

When writing down the question, make sure you leave enough space between the lines and around the edges for people to stick post-it notes and write in comments.