Root Cause Analysis Template

Root Cause Analysis for \_<Project name>\_\_\_

**Section 1. Symptoms**

In this section list all the points of pain that have led to this project request. Knowing this enables you and your team to prioritize project goals and determine what the scope of the project will be given your time limits, skills, and other relevant constraints.

1. A symptom is a point of pain for users.
2. List all the complaints from your team, clients, other users, and your own observations.
3. Do not include underlying system problems here—those go in the next section.
4. If your team is proposing a new system that is an opportunity to improve services or take advantage of an opportunity to make money, then your symptoms should be what is lacking or a cause of dissatisfaction with an existing system or a competitor.

**Section 2. Problem Chain**

In this section list all the problems associated with each of the symptoms above. A series of problems underlying symptoms is called a problem chain. Please also adjust indentation to make problem most readable and reduce

1. List all the problems that are the likely cause of each of the symptoms above.

* Symptom 1 Xxxxxxxxx
  + Problem a
  + Problem b
  + Problem c
  + Etc.

1. List at least one underlying problem for each symptom.
2. Group symptoms when an underlying problem is the likely cause of several symptoms.

* Symptom 1, Symptom 3 & Symptom 4
  + Problem b
  + Problem c
  + Problem f

NOTE: Remember to ask “Why” after identifying each symptom. This will enable you to determine if there is another symptom or if you have found the root cause.

**Section 3. Root Cause(s)**

1. List the major causes that underlie the problems above.
2. Depending on your situation there may be one or more root causes.
3. List all the root causes you consider viable as a basis for discussion with your clients.

NOTE: Some of the root cause problems you uncover may be outside of your realm of expertise or may not have an IT solution. However, list them here because they may impact your final solution. The ASTA example illustrates this situation.

**Section 4. Summary of Potential Solution(s)**

List all potential solutions to the root cause, problems you identified in Section 3.

1. Will you be replacing a manual system with an automated system?
2. Will you create a new system?
3. Will you up-grade an existing system?
4. Is the solution not IT related but necessary because of its impact on your IT solution?

**Section 5a. Your System Solution n (don’t number solution if you only give 1 option)**

For each potential solution listed in Section 4 make a bulleted list of the associated general objectives and performance criteria. Whether you include constraints for each of your solutions, as shown below or a single final section on constraints depends on your situation. If the constraints apply to all of your suggested solutions, the single section on constraints makes more sense than repeating the same constraints for every single solution.

* Objectives for Solution 1
  + Xxxxxxx
  + Xxxxxxxx
  + Xxxxxxxx
  + Etc.
* Measurable Performance Criteria for Solution 1
  + Xxxxxxx
  + Xxxxxxxx
  + Xxxxxxxx
  + Etc.
* Constraints for Solution 1
  + Xxxxxxx
  + Xxxxxxxx
  + Xxxxxxxx
  + Etc.

NOTE: Collaborate with your team to develop this list. Doing so should lead to a clear consensus about the project scope. This will enable a clear understanding of the time and skill constraints associated with your project.

**Section 5b. Your System Solution 2 (if you suggest more than 1)**

For your 2nd potential solution, listed in Section 4, make a bulleted list of the objectives and measurable performance criteria.

* Objectives for Solution 2
  + Xxxxxxx
  + Xxxxxxxx
  + Etc.
* Measurable Performance Criteria for Solution 2
  + Xxxxxxx
  + Xxxxxxxx
  + Etc.
* Constraints for Solution 2
  + Xxxxxxx
  + Xxxxxxxx
  + Etc.

NOTE: Again, collaborate with your team to develop this list.

**Section 6. Constraints**

Constraints will limit your scope. If they are different for each potential solution, then include your constraints in each of the 5x sections. *If* they are the same for all solutions, list them here, rather than repeat the same constraints in the above format.

* Constraints for all Solutions
  + Xxxxxxx
  + Xxxxxxxx
  + Etc.

NOTE: Collaborating early and often with your team enables informed decision-making and sets reasonable project expectations.