



# The 5 Whys

## ? What is It

The 5 Why method is one of the most effective tools and easiest to use when problem solving, and we want to get to the **essence of the problem** and then fix it.

## 🕒 When

- To identify the **root cause** of a problem.
- To have **full understanding** of a problem.
- To pair with the **Cause-Effect (fishbone)** methodology.
- Used in the **Analyze** phase of the **DMAIC**.

## 🎯 Goals

- **Eliminating the root cause** is crucial to avoid iteration of failures.
- Eliminate **biases and assumptions**.
- Help the **teams** in finding the common root cause of an unclear problem cause.

## 📝 How

1. With the team, write a clear **problem statement**: What, When, how much, where, for how long, who.
2. Ask: **“Why does this happen?”**
3. Ask **again** for the resulted answer.
4. **Keep asking** until the team identify the **root cause**.
5. Validate the answers asking back with **“therefore”**.
6. Initiate a formal **Corrective Action Plan**.

### PRIMARY CAUSE

Why is it happening?

Is too fast

Therefore

And this is happening, because ...

operator cannot keep up

Therefore

And this is happening, because ...

need additional time to stack pouches and align them

Therefore

And this is happening, because ...

pouches come in a bin, not in order

Therefore

And this is happening, because ...

Labeling machine shut the product directly into the bin

## 🏠 Hints

Do not ask too many Whys. Focus on finding the root cause.

Sometimes there could be more than one root cause. In these cases, the 5 Whys analysis will look more like a matrix

## 👤 Example



<b>Problem</b>	Customers wait too long on the phone at the end of the month
<b>Why?</b>	The last week of the month is the busiest for sales
<b>Why?</b>	The company offers more incentives to customers late in the month
<b>Why?</b>	Sales usually behind the goal late in the month
<b>Why?</b>	Customers have learned that if they wait, they will get incentives
<b>Root Cause</b>	Sales target are done on a monthly basis, letting a big deficit form the start of the period.

### ACTION

Make weekly sales goals instead of monthly target to prevent getting behind