

## Critical Thinking for Supervisors, Managers and Leaders

Workshop #361 – Three days - On-Site - Customized

*Critical Thinking* is a method of analyzing and looking at problems, decisions, and goals. This results in faster decisions, more creative and innovative solutions, and higher quality deliverables. Critical thinking has an immediate positive impact for solving current problems, and has significant long term benefits with business issues, goals, and strategies. Imagine the benefits when people are “Thinking” at a new level.

*The Foundation:* This three-day workshop provides supervisors, managers and leaders a thorough foundation and set of tools and techniques for Critical Thinking in a variety of problem solving, decision making and leadership situations. The participants will practice these tools in numerous and extended exercise sessions using their real individual business issues. Templates, called Thinksheets, are used as a guide for thinking, both in the class, and to aid future out of class use.

*The Thinking Coach:* Having learned and practiced the core critical thinking tools, the participants will role play and partake in an extensive Thinking Coach exercises. A Thinking Coach is one who gets others to think. As a manager and leader of people, it’s essential to get others to think critically. Whether you’re managing up, across or down, interacting with customers or third parties, being a Thinking Coach is a discipline to help and organization focus on true issues and implement critical thinking throughout an organization.

*Creating a Critical Thinking Environment:* Critical Thinking doesn’t happen by itself, nor with just training. The environment needs to support it. In this workshop, we’ll expand on additional tools to help foster a critical thinking environment. This includes; expanded sessions on getting agreement, enrollment and presenting. Also included are outside-the-box, Abductive and Impossible thinking tools to foster and encourage and environment to look at solutions beyond business as usual.

### *Our Customization*

While Critical Thinking isn’t difficult, the learning is most effective when tailored and practiced within a familiar area of focus and real world situation. Prior to the workshop, we meet with some of the attendees to obtain an understanding of the work they do and specific objectives and challenges they have. With this, we create relevant examples and exercises for the workshop. Using their issues and challenges, as well as the functional areas focus and seniority of the attendees, we customize:

- The appropriate techniques and content most effective for the attendees
- The examples and break-out exercises used in the workshop

### *Benefits for Participants of this workshop*

- Clarity of thought for understanding a problem and situation
- Leadership skills for helping others think critically
- Superior and innovative ideas and solutions to problems, goals, and strategies
- Faster and higher quality decisions that are more impactful
- Better understanding of the dynamics between different aspects of a business or project
- Higher productivity and quality
- Better prepared to tackle difficult problems and make decisions daily
- Creating an environment for innovative thinking
- Clear presentations of solution for approval and enrollment

Examples of where these skills can be applied include:

- Improved processes and quality
- Difficult conversations
- Presenting for agreement and enrollment
- General problem solving and decision making
- Leading people and teams
- New product ideas and creation
- Project management
- Revenue generation and cost reduction strategies
- Process design
- Short and long term business strategies
- Crisis management
- Performance management
- Strategic Planning
- Influencing Leadership
- Improved operational efficiency
- Change Management
- Customer care improvement
- Business planning

### *Not your average Class or Seminar!*

Unlike most classes that are taught in “academia” style and content, our workshop is about applying critical thinking tools and techniques in the real world on your actual business problems. Tools and Techniques are taught, and then practiced in class, on the problems you bring. Then, when you return to the workplace, you already know how to apply what you just learned.

### *Learning Objectives: After completing this course, you will be able to:*

- Be a Thinking Coach
- Distinguish “Automatic” Thinking from “Manual”
- Understand a Framework for Thinking Critically and apply the 3 step Critical Thinking Process
- Learn and practice a variety of tools to think critically including the use of Thinksheets to:
- Get Clear on a Problem, Situation or Goal
- Guide thinking for Conclusions (yours and your team)
- Guide thinking for Decisions
- Be able to identify the “box” that constrains your current thinking and think outside of it.
- Creating credible presentations for buy-in, enrollment and approval.
- Understand how critical thinking can help to lead through change
- Thinking through 11 risk factors and how they weigh in
- Leave the day knowing how to ask questions to get yourself and others to think critically
- Identify where you can apply Critical Thinking in your job and create a next steps plan

**Critical Thinking Training -**  
***An investment that raises the overall performance and leadership of an individual and organization.***

### *Course Outline:*

We focus on the 3 major components of critical thinking related to problem solving and decision making and how to apply these in the work environment and as a leader. (also see diagrams in this document).

- Clarity of issue, problem, or decision. The most important step in critical thinking.
- Conclusions – 99% of conclusions are Inductive reasoning. This includes; Facts, Observations, Experiences, Beliefs, Assumptions. We show how these components form conclusions.
- Decisions – Attendees learn that the decision process is very different than reaching a conclusion and that quality decisions require two elements to be present.

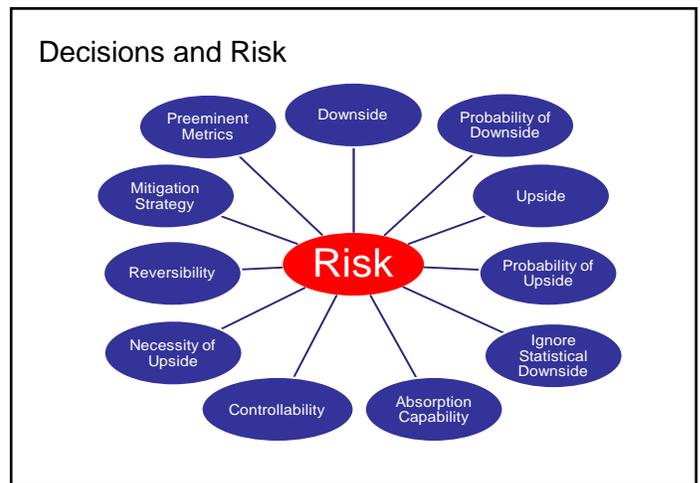
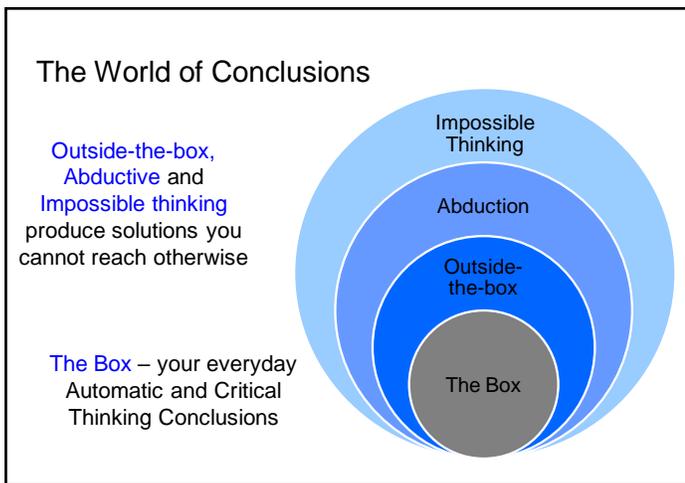
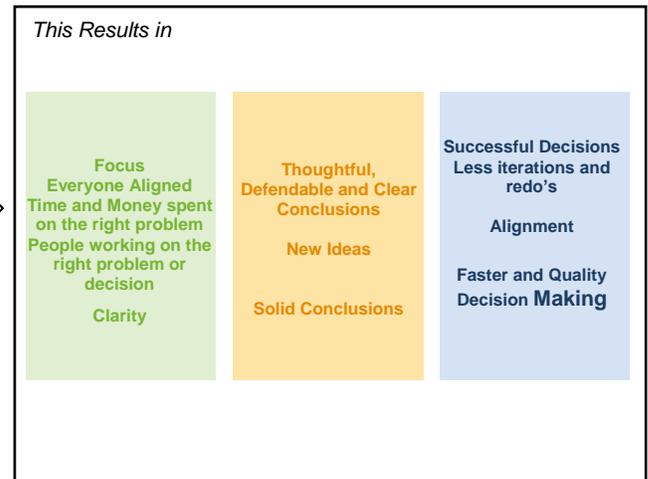
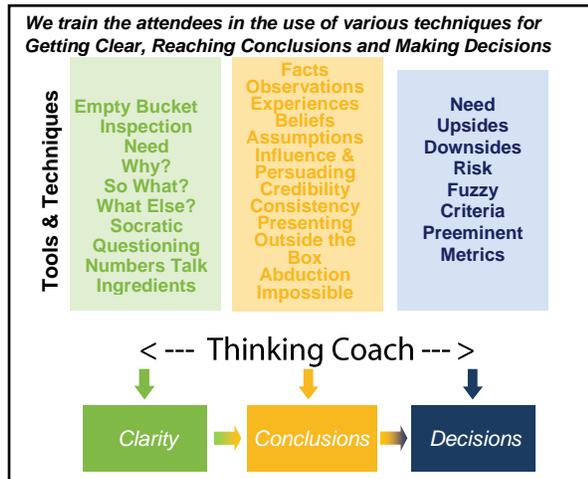
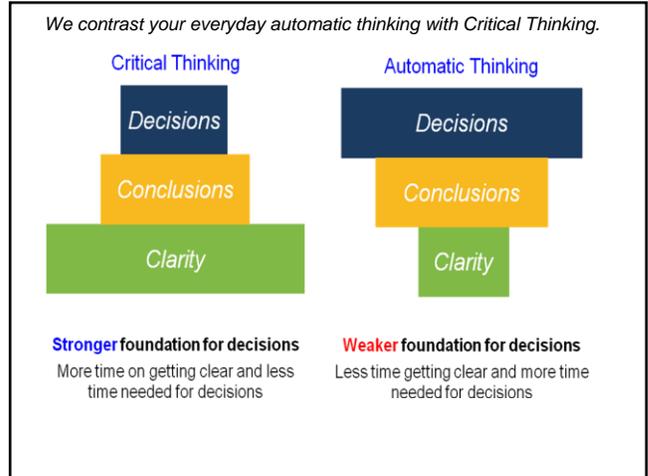
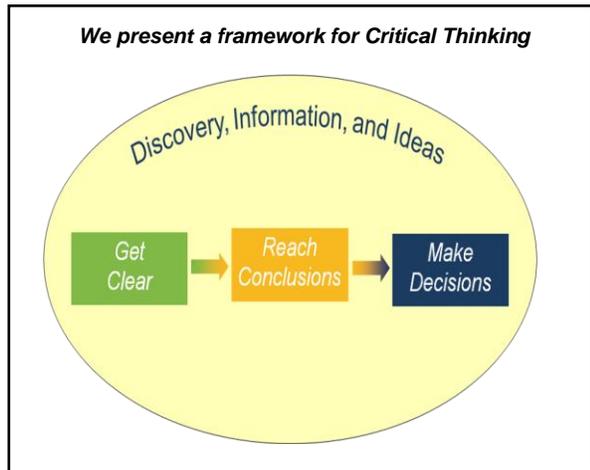
### *Topics Covered:*

- **Distinguishing “Automatic” Thinking from “Manual Thinking”**
- **Framework and Benefits of Critical Thinking**
- **Empty your bucket**
- **Clarity - “Get Clear” on a problem to solve or decision to make, and the Clarity Thinksheet**
  - Inspecting the problem statement
  - The tools of Socratic Questioning; Why, So What, What else
  - Anticipatory Thinking
  - Need vs. Want
  - A Family of HeadScratchers
  - Ingredient Diagram
- **Conclusions - Create Solutions and the Conclusion Thinksheet**
  - Applying Inductive & Deductive thinking.
  - Understanding the Premise that leads to a conclusion and how personality affects this.
  - How facts, observations, experiences, beliefs and assumptions affect your thinking
  - Why people come to different conclusions and what to do about it.
  - A critical thinking view of change and how to address it
  - Credibility and Consistency - Increasing the strength of your premise
  - Triangular Thinking – When you can’t know exactly
  - Argument Analysis – Review for and against arguments as elements of conclusions
  - Exercises in Presenting solutions to influence, enroll, and get approval
- **Innovation - Creating an environment and stimulating creativity and innovation**
  - Thinking Outside-the-Box - Challenging the Premise (What if?, What other?)
  - Abductive Thinking - Thinking beyond your experience
  - Impossible Thinking -To generate Breakthrough ideas
  - Encouraging and enrolling a team behind innovation
- **Decisions – Taking action and the Decision Thinksheet**
  - The Elements of Decision; Who, When and Criteria
  - Risk Criteria – 11 Risk factors to help evaluate risk (Downsides, Downside Probability, Upside, Upside Probability, Downside Absorption Capability, Ignoring Statistical Downside, Controllability, Necessity of Upside, Reversibility, Mitigation Strategy, Preeminent Metrics)
  - Fuzzy Criteria – Not all the criteria are black and white. This topic looks at the grey ones
- **Being a Thinking Coach**
  - The rules & Extended Role play to practice this skill and implementing this in a team
- **Next Steps - Your plan to implement your learning (for yourself and your team)**

### *Materials attendees will receive:*

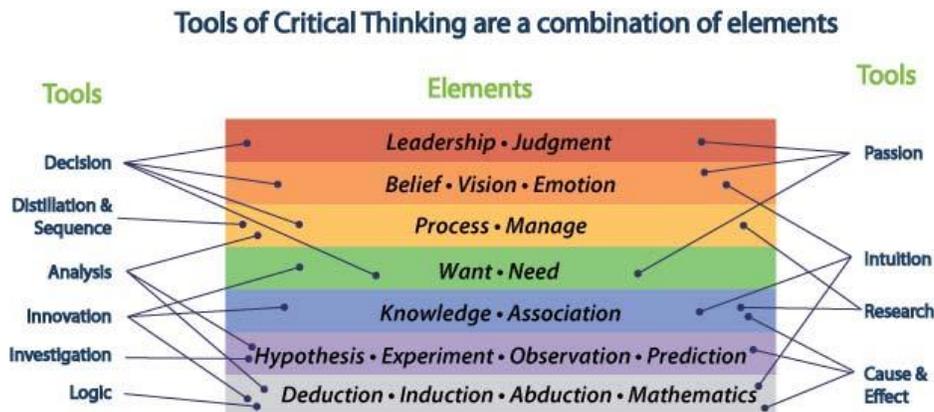
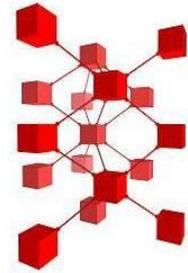
- A workbook containing
  - Copy of slides used in the course
  - An appendix - List of places to use critical thinking and 100 questions to ask
  - Thinksheets that guide participant through the critical thinking process
  - Blank Thinksheets that can be used post course
- A free subscription to The HeadScratcher Post, a monthly, one page, thought provoking Newsletter about some technique or tool related to Critical Thinking.
- A copy of “Think Smarter” book, authored by Mike Kallet, CEO of HeadScratchers
- Laminated sheets containing summary of tools and our “The 10 minute Thinksheet”

# HeadScratchers Critical Thinking Framework



## The Model

While we do not train attendees in the specifics of the model. Nevertheless, below is an overview of the “elements” and “tools” used in thinking. Building on this foundation, we present numerous successful “techniques” for problem solving. The attendees practice these newly learned techniques using their current business challenges.



You can read more about the model and critical thinking techniques on our website at [www.headscratchers.com](http://www.headscratchers.com)

The tools are combined with the framework into Techniques (see examples below)

Getting Clear	Clarity of problem, goal and decision is the start and most important step in Critical Thinking
Reaching Conclusions	The role that Inductive reasoning plays in reaching a conclusion: Facts + Observations + Experiences + Beliefs + Assumptions yields Conclusions
Necessity	Distinguishing Need from Want. Wants might get things started, but need gets things done.
Empty your Bucket	There’s no room in a filled bucket for critical thinking and creativity
Decision Making	Need and Criteria are the ingredients behind Decisions. Both have to be present for quality decisions
Asking “Why” and “So What?”	“Why?” is a tool for discover. “So What?” gets people thinking about what the consequences, value, interdependencies and impacts there are.
Listening to Answers	Asking the right questions is important and so is listening to the answer
Influence and Persuade	What happens when there are multiple conclusions?

### *Who should attend this course?*

Supervisors, Managers, and Directors with direct reports. This workshop builds on our two day workshop (#351) with expanded Thinking Coach exercises and practice (4 hours), and additional tools and exercises designed for employees who manage teams and people.

### *Duration:*

Three days, usually from 8:00 A.M. to 4:15 P.M.

### *Delivery Method:*

Group-Live, On-Site at your location  
Maximum of 25 Participants per class

***Prerequisite:*** At least 5 years experience in the workplace and current in a supervisory position. (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> line manager).

### *How we prepare for the Workshop:*

Some of the participants, or the sponsor, organizer, or manager(s) of a team, are interviewed (via phone) for about 20-30 minutes with questions about the participants' responsibilities and the scope of the problems they resolve, and decisions they make. Alternatively, this can be in the form of a questionnaire. From these interviews we tailor the content, break-out exercises and examples to be relevant for the participants and to maximize the learning.

### *How you prepare for the Workshop:*

We suggest participants come to the workshop with a few tasks, problems or goals from their work. The workshop is fast passed and builds upon the learning, so the participants should plan and devote the full day for the class. Of course, we understand if an urgent matter occurs.

If the culture is such that the participants will perform pre-work, we'll ship "Think Smarter" the book, prior to the class and ask for a few chapters to be read. In this way we can spend less time introducing some of the tools and more time devoted to exercises that practice them.



### *Multiple curriculums for varied attendees:*

In addition to customizing the content, we also vary the approach to accommodate various configurations of attendees and needs. These include:

- **Critical Thinking for Product Teams**  
For Product and Process teams that are tasked to create new solutions we put more emphasis on Innovation and Presenting ideas and solutions
- **Critical Thinking for Senior Leaders**  
For managers of people or projects. We'll put additional emphasis on being a Thinking Coach and creating the environment for Innovation and Decision making.
- **Critical Thinking for Intact Teams**  
For Managers or Leaders along with their direct reports. The emphasis and exercises are focused on using critical thinking techniques on a team issue, such as a strategy, new product or process effort. The emphasis of this workshop will depend upon the functional area. For example, when training an audit team, Risk will be of great interest. When training an R&D team, Innovation will be of more interest. When training a project management team, Influencing and Persuading may be of higher interest.

Complete curriculum customization is available for special needs or for a mixture of attendees.

### *How to Arrange for a Workshop*

For on-site workshops, fees and scheduling please contact:

Mike Kallet

[mike.kallet@headscratchers.com](mailto:mike.kallet@headscratchers.com)

720-493-8567

### *Contact Information:*

For more information about the workshops please contact us at 720-493-8567 or [info@headscratchers.com](mailto:info@headscratchers.com) or visit our website at [www.headscratchers.com](http://www.headscratchers.com)



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