



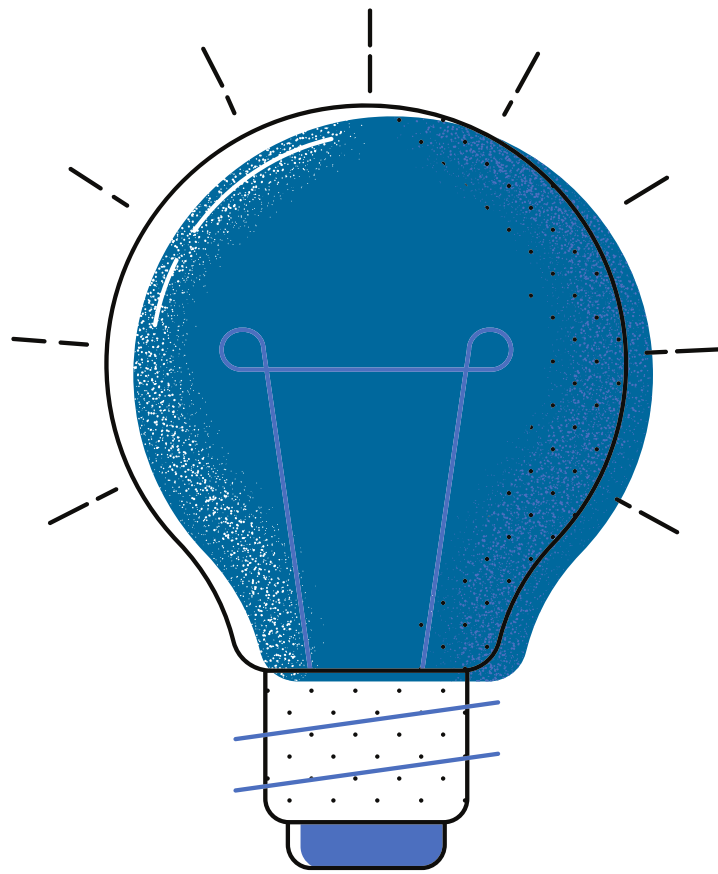
MARK **S** KENNY

Managing Complexity | Decision Quality

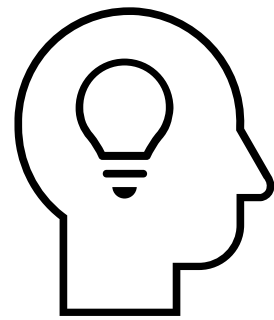
MARKSKENNY.COM | MARK@MARKSKENNY.COM

On Your Own

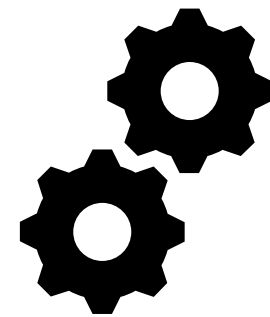
On your own, write down a leadership challenge you have experienced or are currently experiencing (requires a decision and / or has some complexity).



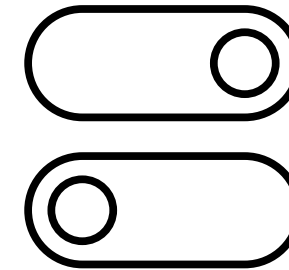
Our Agenda



Understanding
the
Competencies



Principles for
Managing
Complexity

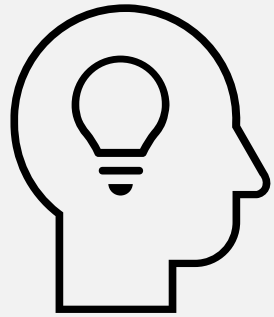


Frameworks
for Making
Quality
Decisions

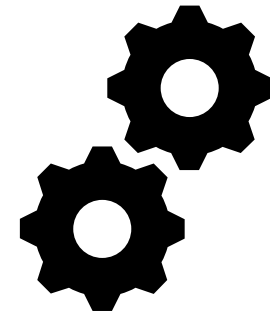


Applications /
Common
Challenges

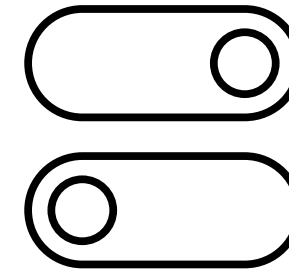
Our Agenda



Understanding
the
Competencies



Principles for
Managing
Complexity



Frameworks
for Making
Quality
Decisions



Applications /
Common
Challenges

Managing Complexity

Making sense of complex, high quantity,
and sometimes contradictory
information to effectively solve
problems.

Decision Quality

Making good and timely
decisions that keep the
organization moving
forward.

Managing Complexity: Skilled Behaviors

- ✓ Asks the right questions to accurately analyze situations.
- ✓ Acquires data from multiple and diverse sources when solving problems.
- ✓ Uncovers root causes to difficult problems.
- ✓ Evaluates pros and cons, risks and benefits of different solution options.

Managing Complexity: Less Skilled Behaviors

- ✓ Misses the complexity of issues and force fits solutions.
- ✓ Doesn't gather sufficient information to assess situations completely.
- ✓ Relies solely on intuition, even when contrary information exists.
- ✓ Is caught off guard when problems surface without an obvious solution.

Managing Complexity: Common Traps

- ✓ Over-simplification: assuming a simple solution exists when it does not.
- ✓ Paralysis by analysis: trying to consider every possible factor, leading to decision fatigue.
- ✓ Reactive problem-solving: focusing on short-term fixes, putting out fires, instead of addressing root causes.
- ✓ Missing the big picture: i.e. how different elements of the organization influence one another.
- ✓ Jumps to conclusions.
- ✓ Disorganized.

Managing Complexity: Common Biases

- ✓ Confirmation Bias: we favor information that supports our preexisting beliefs and ignore contradictory evidence.
- ✓ Anchoring Bias: clinging to the first piece of information they receive, even when better data emerges.
- ✓ Groupthink: Teams conform to dominant opinions rather than exploring diverse viewpoints, leading to blind spots.

Decision Quality: Skilled Behaviors

- ✓ Makes sound decisions, even in the absence of complete information.
- ✓ Relies on a mixture of analysis, wisdom, experience, and judgment when making decisions.
- ✓ Considers all relevant factors and uses appropriate decision-making criteria and principles.
- ✓ Recognizes when a quick 80% solution will suffice.

Decision Quality: Less Skilled Behaviors

- ✓ Approaches decisions haphazardly or delays decision making.
- ✓ Makes decisions based on incomplete data or inaccurate assumptions.
- ✓ Ignores different points of view or makes decisions that impact short-term results at the expense of longer-term goals.

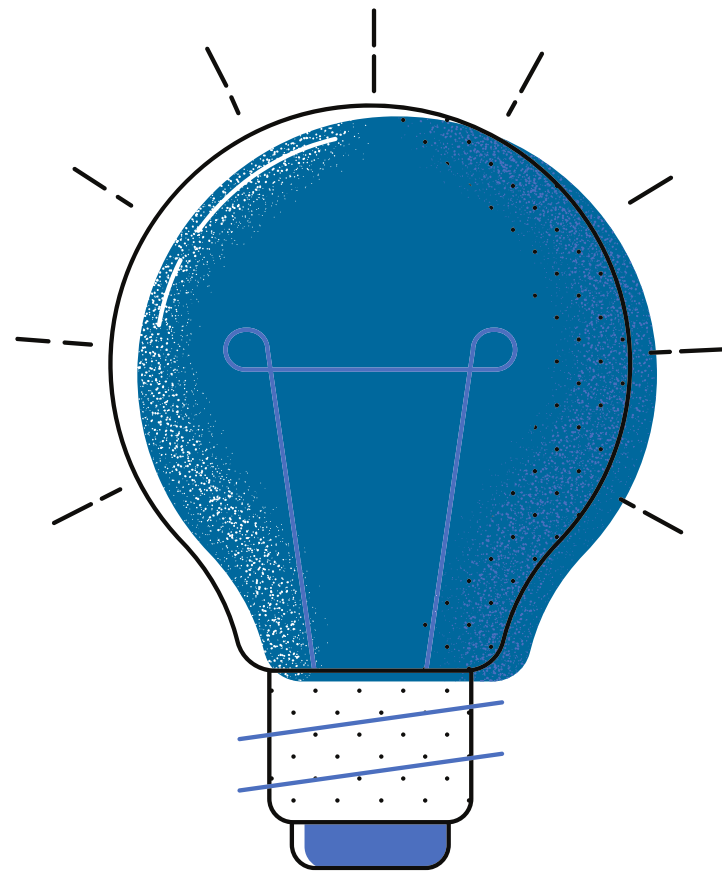
Decision Quality: Common Traps

- ✓ Relying Too Heavily on Past Experiences: assuming that what worked before will work again, even in different contexts.
- ✓ Making Decisions Too Quickly (or Too Slowly).
- ✓ Overvaluing Intuition Without Supporting Data.
- ✓ Failing to Involve Key Stakeholders.
- ✓ Chasing Perfection (Analysis Paralysis): overanalyzing and delaying decisions, waiting for perfect information that may never come.

Decision Quality: Common Biases

- ✓ Confirmation Bias: favoring information that supports your existing beliefs and ignoring contradictory data.
- ✓ Frequency Bias: more likely to believe something you hear or see repeatedly over time.
- ✓ Recency Bias: what you've learned most recently carries more weight.
- ✓ Negative Bias: stored negative emotional memories of similar situations or people cloud your judgment.
- ✓ Attachment Bias: holding on to a status quo you helped shape.

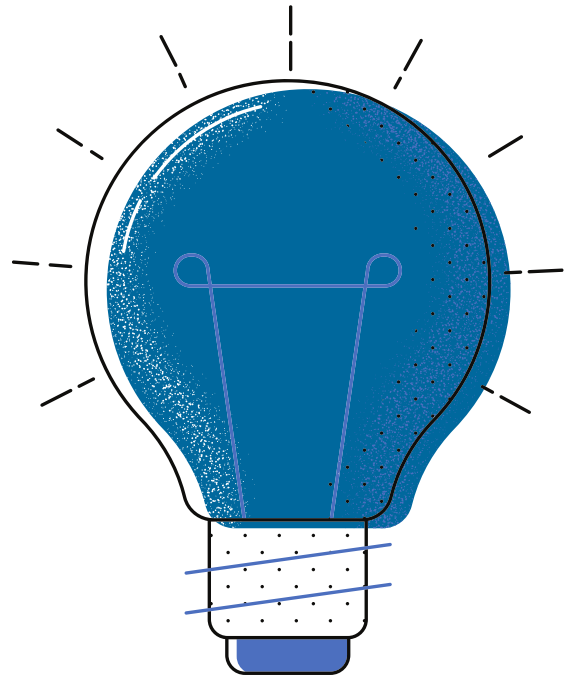
Self-Assessment



On your own, complete the self-assessment in your hand-out.

1. Reflect on your scores: what is one strength you can build upon? What is one area you want to improve?
2. Discuss your takeaways with a partner.

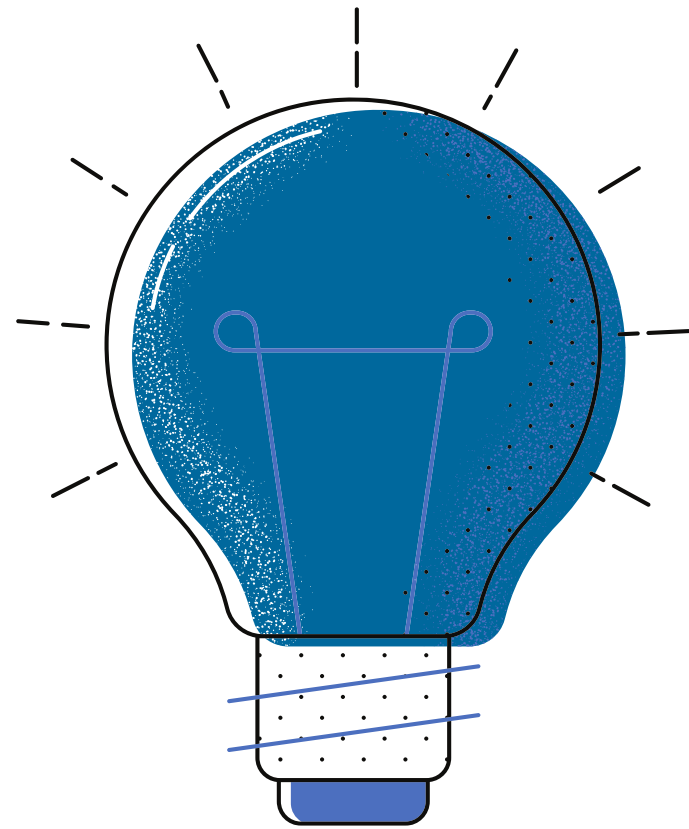
On Your Own



(1) Think about a time when you or a leader you observed:

1. **Excelled in managing complexity:** Made sense of a difficult situation, navigated uncertainty, or helped a team stay focused amid chaos.
2. **Struggled with complexity:** Got overwhelmed, jumped to conclusions, or failed to address the real issue.
3. **Excelled in decision quality:** Made a well-reasoned, timely decision with limited information.
4. **Struggled with decision quality:** Delayed action unnecessarily, made a rushed decision, or ignored key factors.

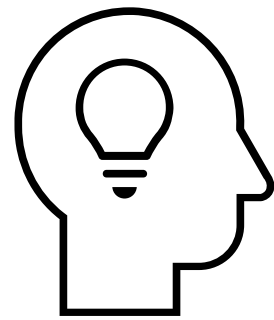
Table Discussion



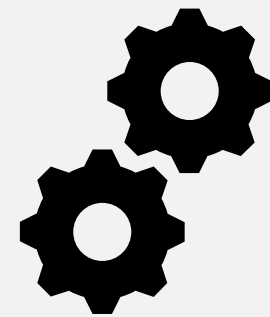
(2) Share a brief example with your group:

1. What happened?
2. What made it a success or failure?
3. What was the impact on the team or organization?
4. What lessons can be applied to future decisions?

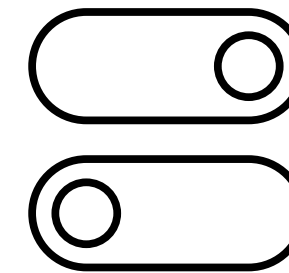
Our Agenda



Understanding
the
Competencies



Principles for
Managing
Complexity



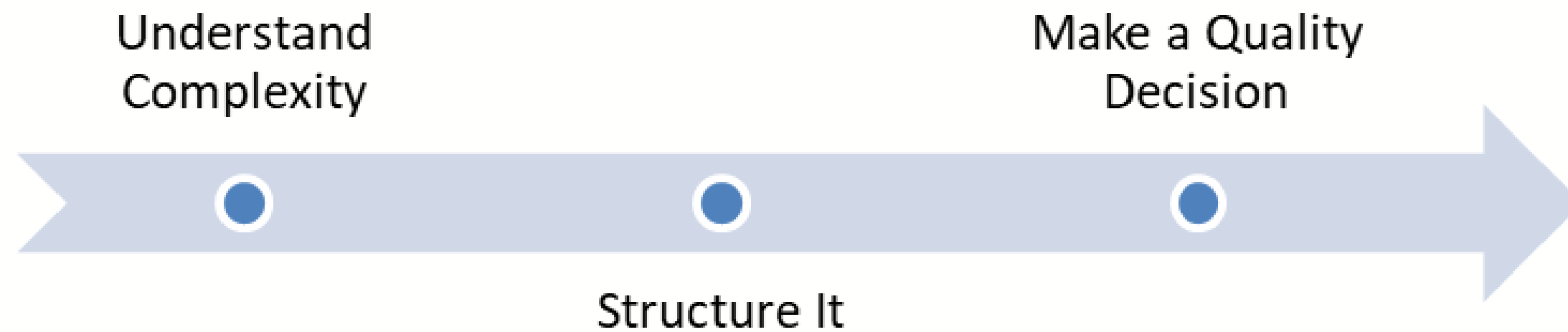
Frameworks
for Making
Quality
Decisions

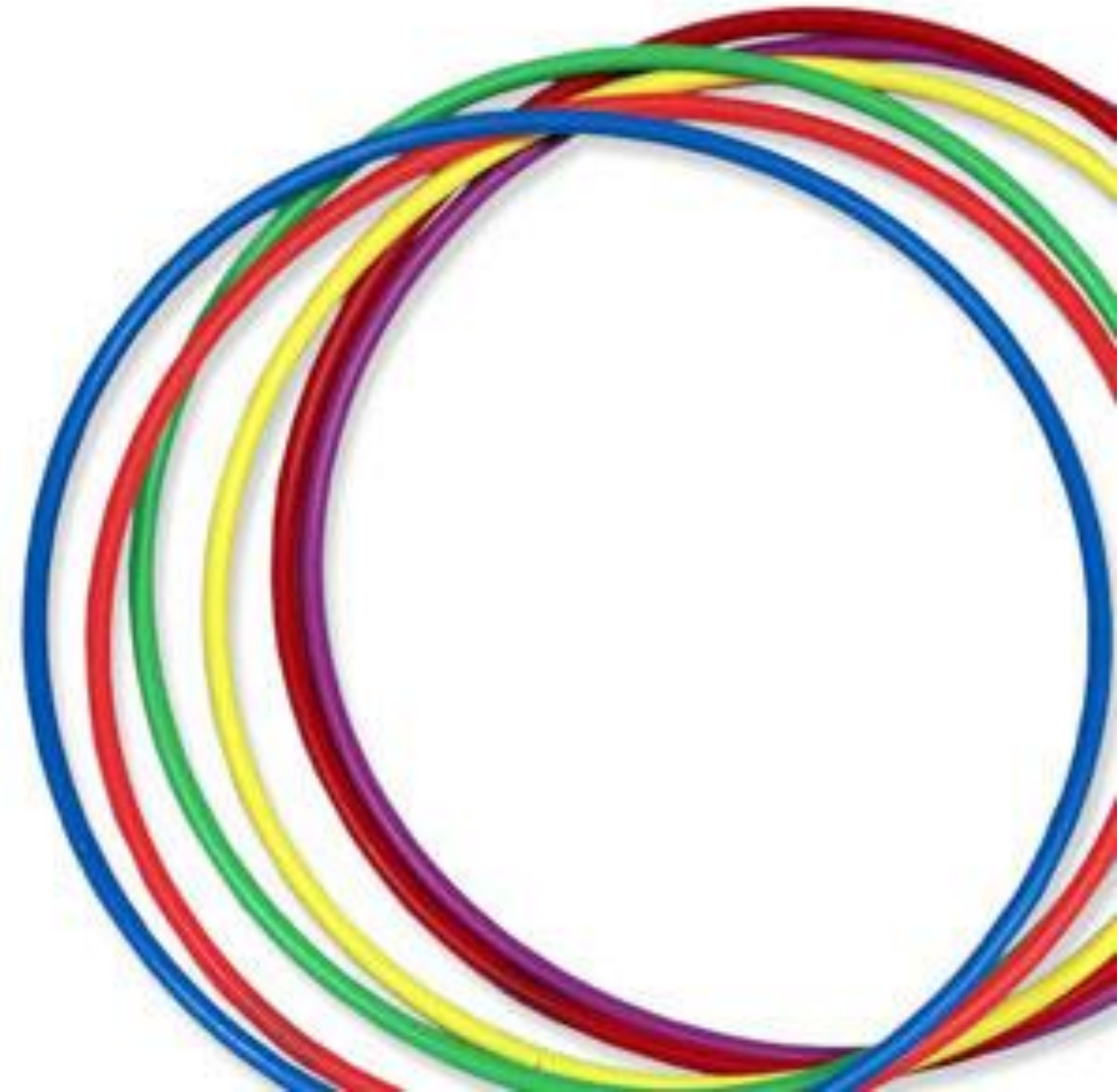


Applications /
Common
Challenges

The Process

Use the following process to make quality decisions.





Principles to Manage Complexity

Not sure where to start? Define the problem.

“If I were given one hour to save the planet, I would spend 59 minutes defining the problem and one minute resolving it.” – Albert Einstein

Write a problem statement.

1. State the Problem Clearly

- What's wrong? Why is it an issue?

2. Explain Why It Matters

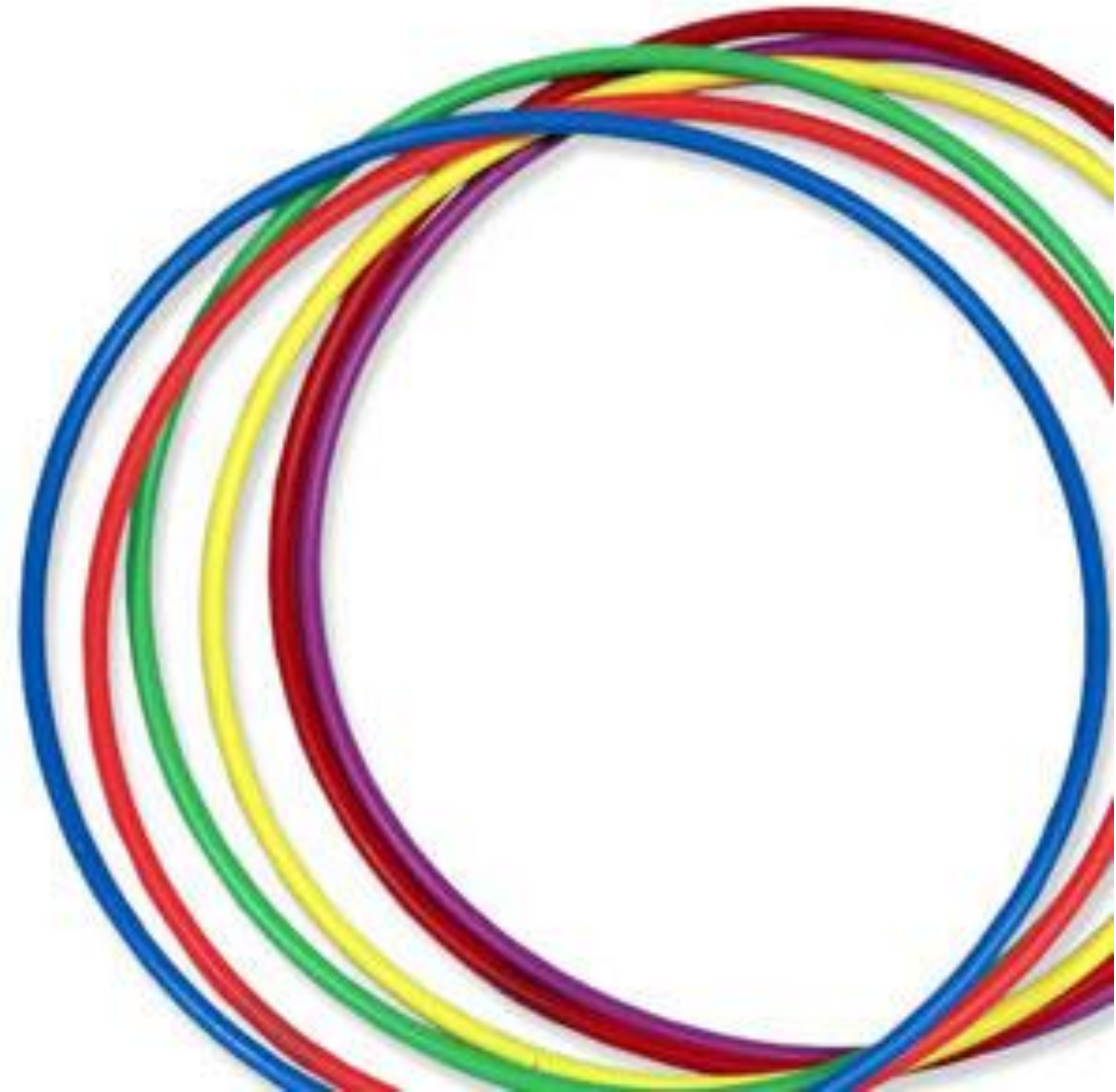
- What's the impact of this problem?

3. Describe the Ideal Outcome

- What should things look like instead?

Template:

- “Right now, [the problem]. This leads to [the impact]. If solved, we could [ideal outcome].”



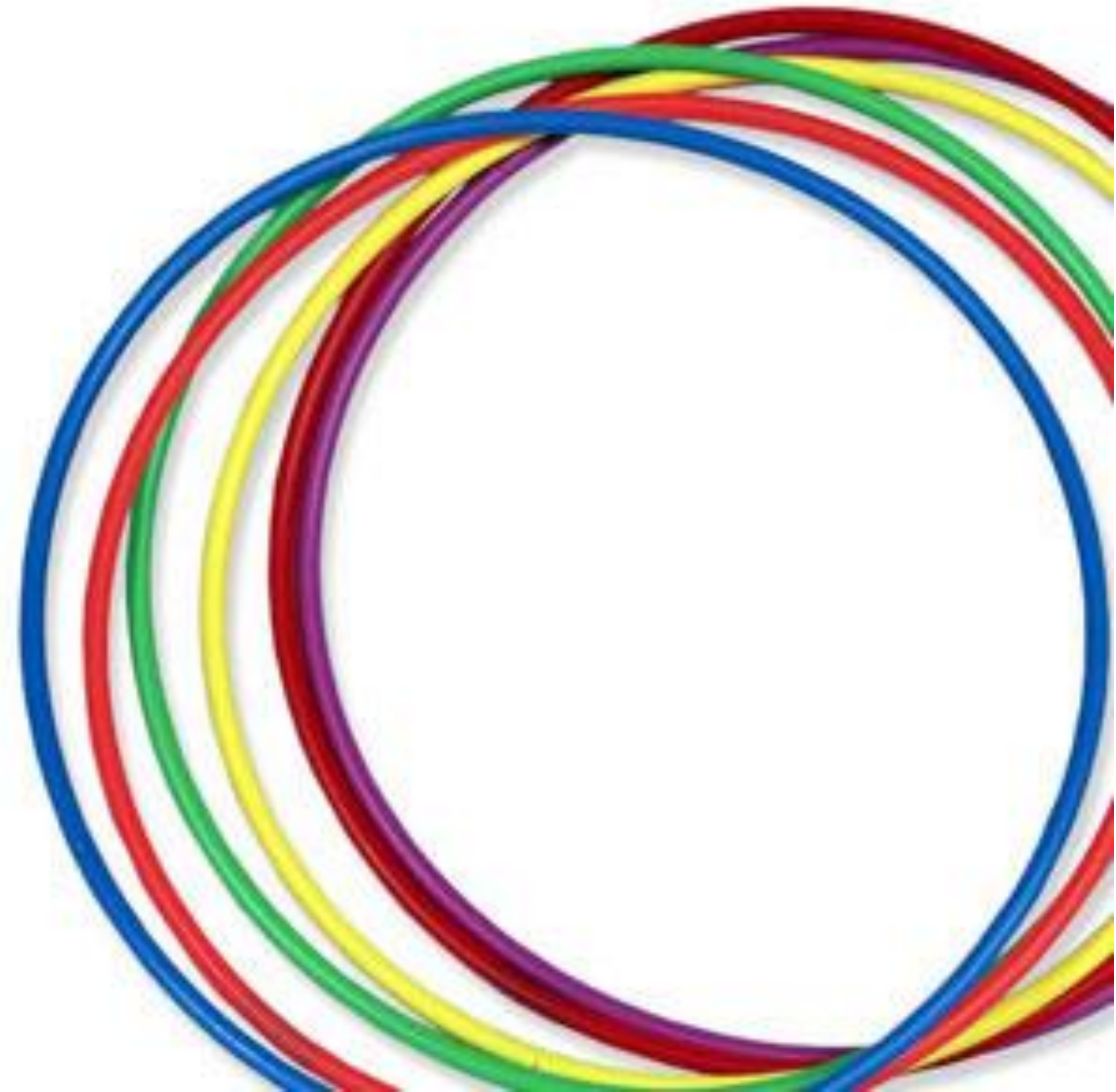
Things too vague? Gather relevant information.

- Get organized.
- What info do we have?
- What info do we need?
- Gather data on who, what, when, where, why, and how the problem occurs.
- FOG: What are Facts, Opinions, Guesses?

Gather information.

Who, what, when, where, why, and how does the problem occur?

FOG: What are Facts, Opinions, Guesses?

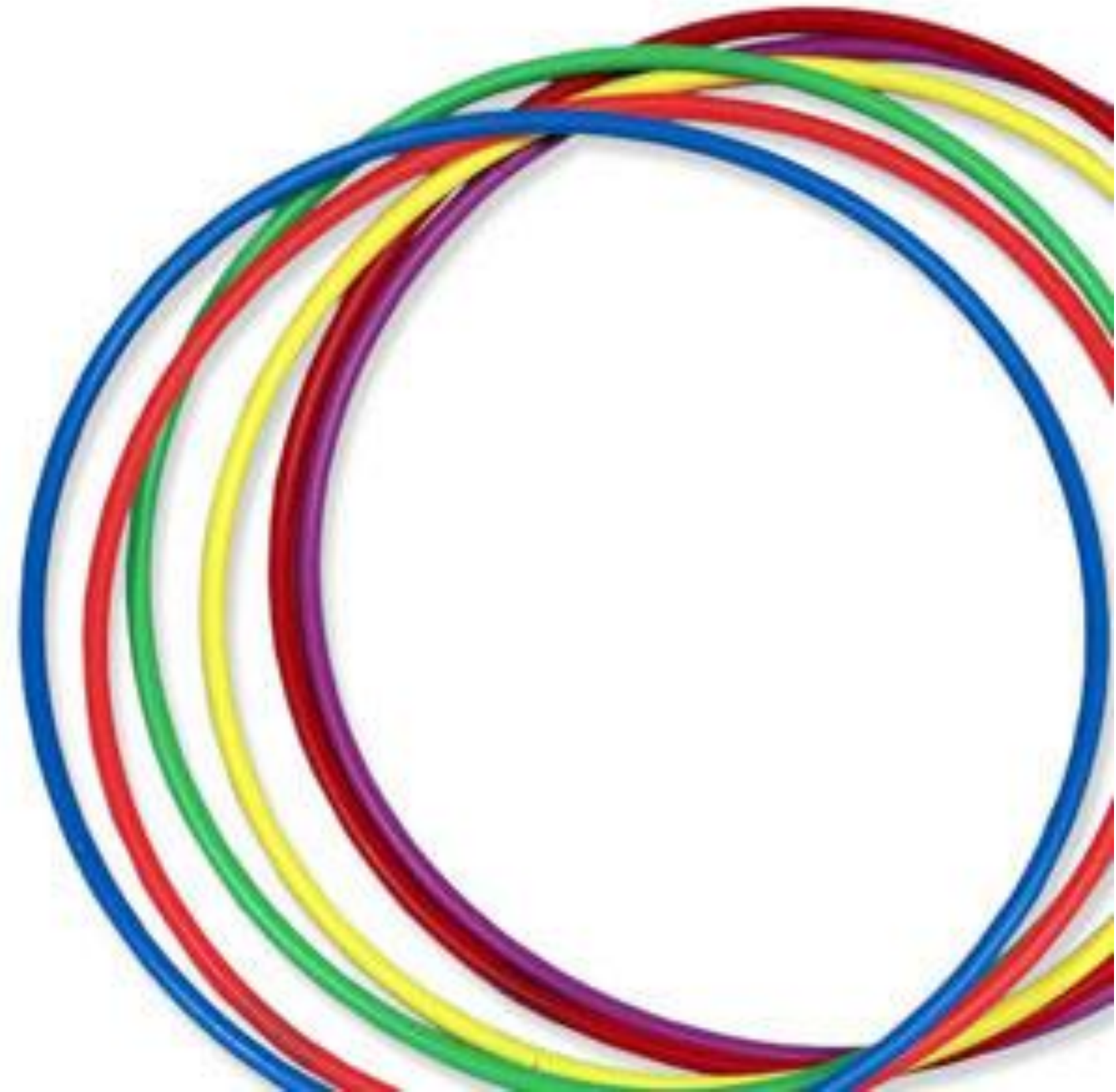


Principles to Manage Complexity

Having difficulty finding the answer? Ask better
questions.

Ask better questions.

What questions should we be asking? (choose three useful questions to ask from the question guide)



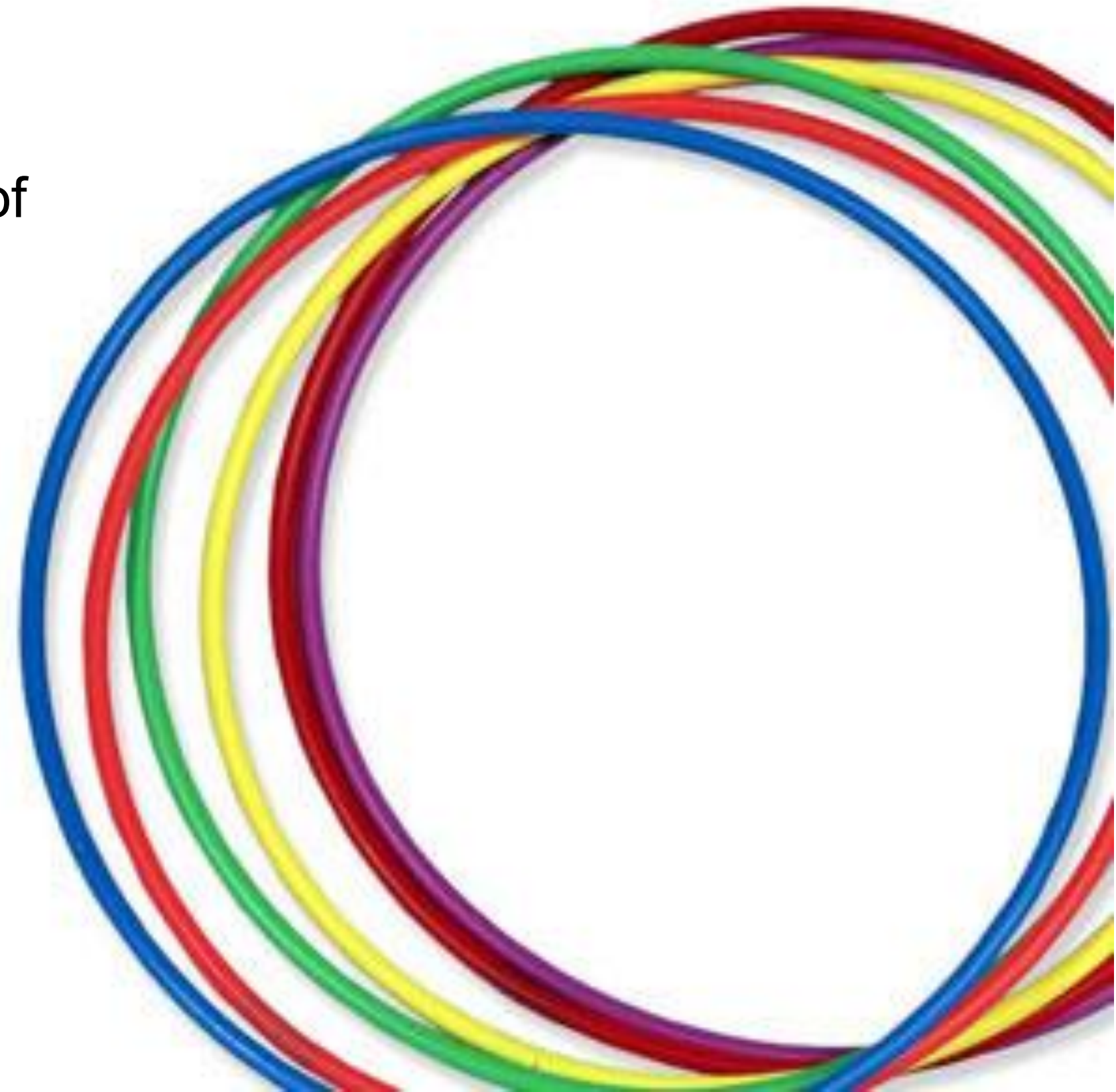
Principles to Manage Complexity

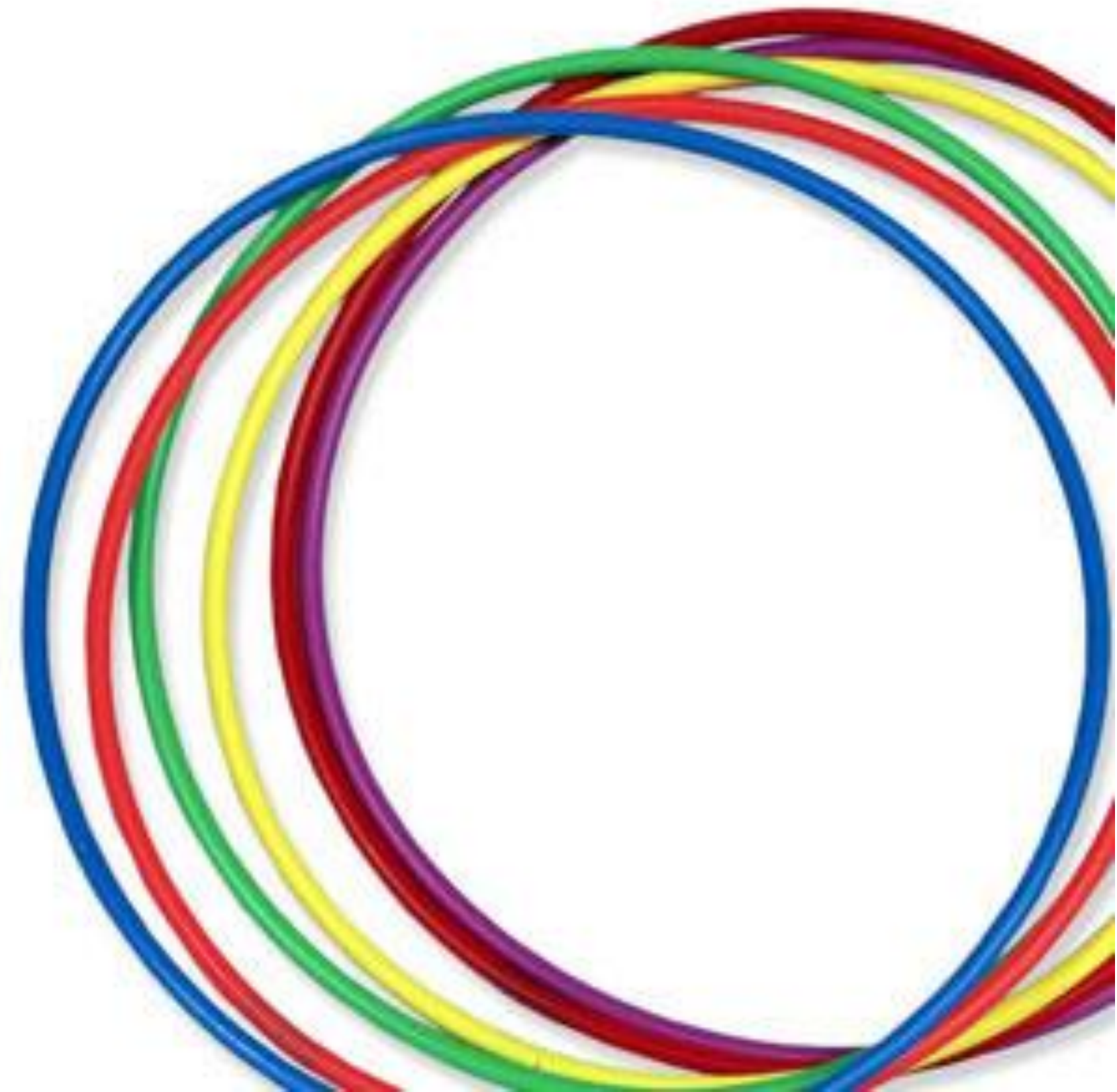
Trouble getting at what's under the surface? Drill down to root causes.

- 5 Why's
- Cause and Effect Diagrams (Fishbone Diagram)

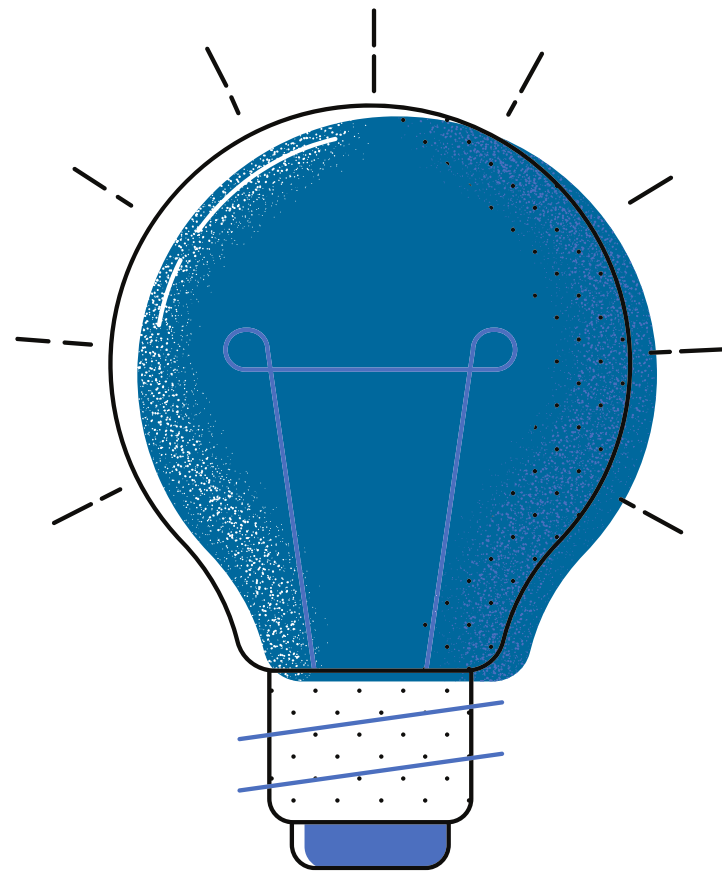
Drill down to root causes: 5 Why's.

1. Ask “why does this occur?”
2. After the first answer, ask “Why” again for a total of five times.





In Pairs



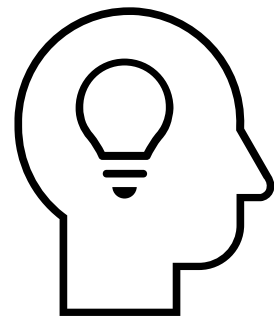
Go back to the leadership challenge you identified in the beginning.

1. Pick one person's leadership challenge to work with.
2. Review the managing complexity principles.
3. Which principle could you use for this challenge?
4. How would it help you break down complexity?
5. Map out a process of your next steps.

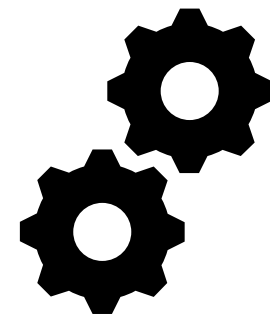
Tips to Manage Complexity.

- Consult diverse resources, *especially* if you prefer to solve it on your own.
- Don't rush to judgement.
- Overwhelmed by complexity? Break it down into a series of smaller problems.
- Create an evaluation matrix to assess potential solutions.

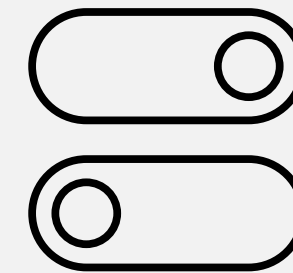
Our Agenda



Understanding
the
Competencies



Principles for
Managing
Complexity



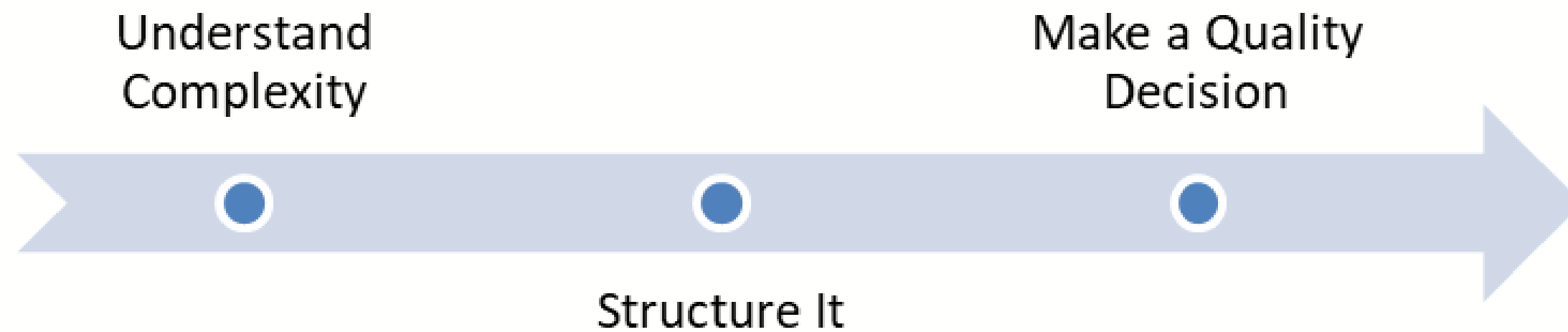
Frameworks
for Making
Quality
Decisions



Applications /
Common
Challenges

The Process

Use the following process to make quality decisions.



Frameworks to Making Quality Decisions

For fast decision-making in dynamic, high-pressure environments.

1. OODA LOOP (OBSERVE, ORIENT, DECIDE, ACT)

Best for: Fast, iterative decision-making in dynamic, high-pressure environments.

2. RECOGNITION-PRIMED DECISION (RPD) MODEL

Best for: Decisions under extreme time constraints with limited information.

3. HEURISTIC-BASED DECISION MAKING

Best for: Quick, experience-driven decisions using mental shortcuts.

Frameworks to Making Quality Decisions

For decisions with more time, requiring consistency, such as customer service, handling uncertainty with policies, and situations without complete information.

1. RAPID MODEL (RECOMMEND, AGREE, PERFORM, INPUT, DECIDE)

Best for: Structured, policy-driven decisions that involve multiple roles.

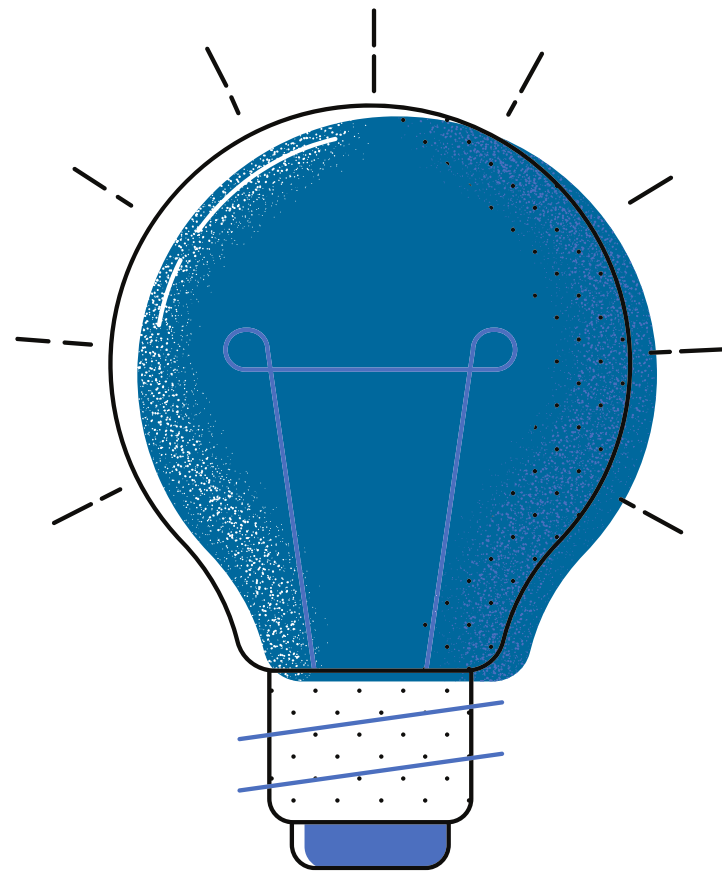
2. FIRST PRINCIPLES THINKING

Best for: Problem-solving and policy interpretation when standard answers don't apply.

3. DECISION TREES

Best for: Consistently handling customer inquiries based on predefined rules.

In Pairs



Go back to the leadership challenge you identified in the beginning.

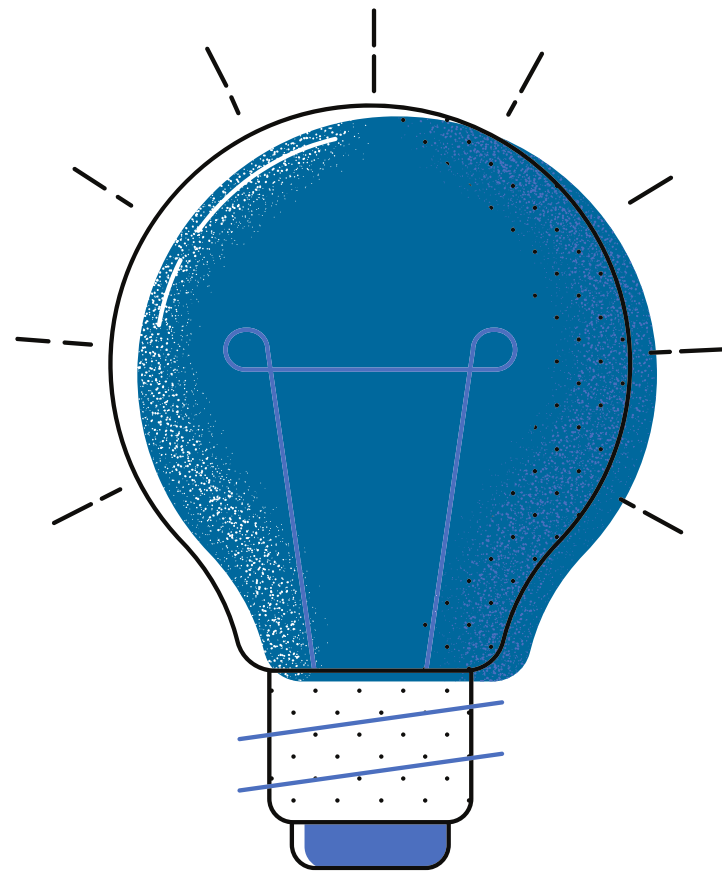
1. Pick one person's leadership challenge to work with.
2. Review the decision-making models.
3. Which model could you use for this challenge?
4. How would it help you make a quality decision?
5. Map out a process of your next steps.

When will an 80% solution suffice?

- When a decision does not need perfection.
- When the cost of waiting slows progress unnecessarily.
- When the extra effort is not worth the extra value.
- When the decision can be refined or adjusted later.
- When the problem will be solved, without a perfect process.

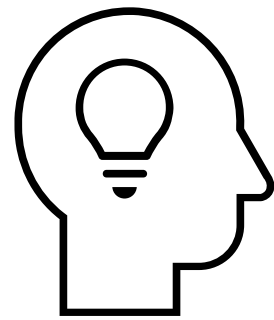
Tips to Making Quality Decisions

- Even if you are certain your decision is the right one: pause (if able).
- Map out a process: Define the intended outcome of the decision; generate alternatives and evaluate them based upon what you want to accomplish.
- Invite open dialogue and debate.

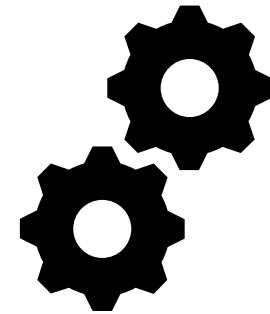


“The High Stakes Decision”

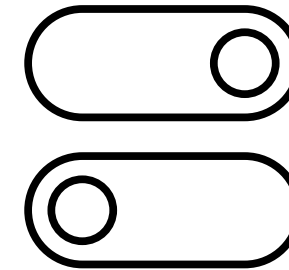
Our Agenda



Understanding
the
Competencies



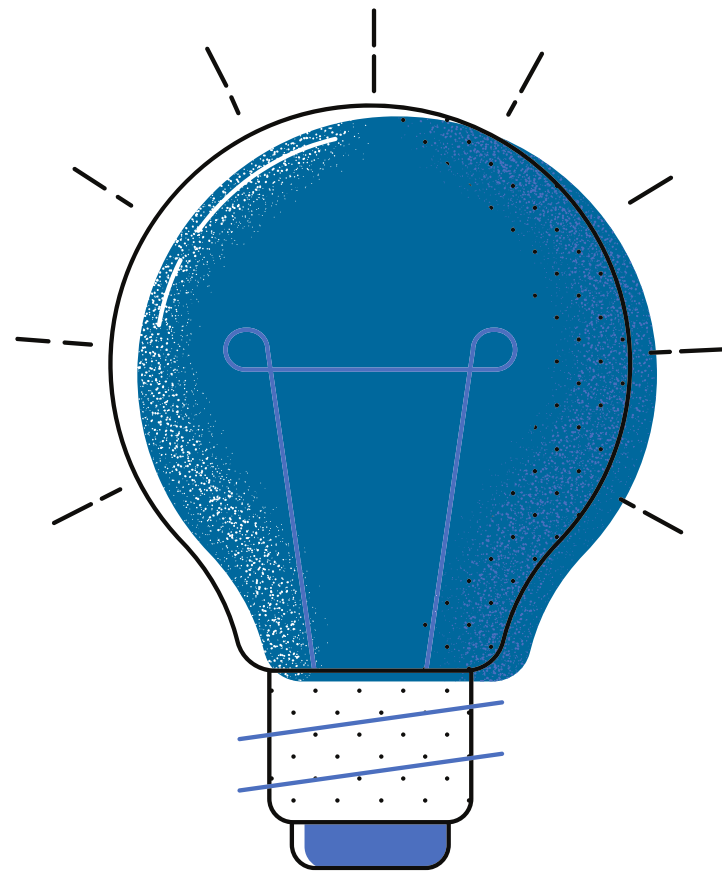
Principles for
Managing
Complexity



Frameworks
for Making
Quality
Decisions



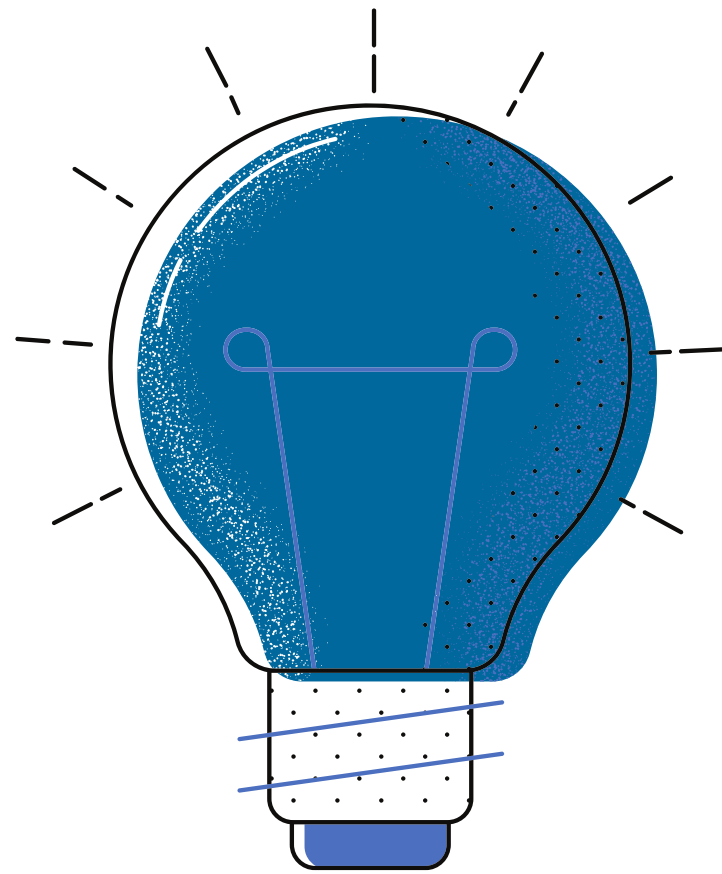
Applications /
Common
Challenges



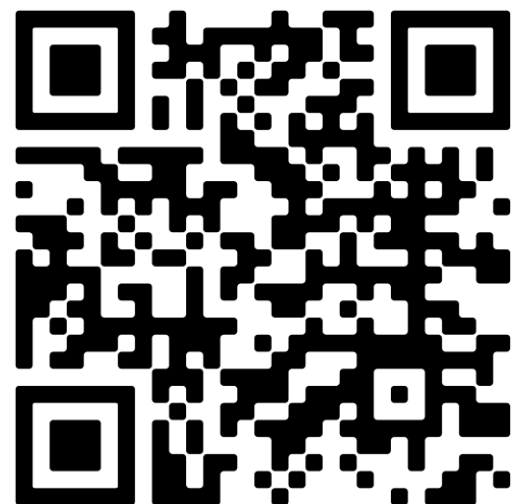
Solving Common Challenges

Solving Common Challenges

Walk around the room and visit each flip chart paper.



1. Write down ONE suggestion for how to tackle that challenge.
2. You can build on ideas already written, add a new perspective, or provide a question to consider.
3. Spend 2-3 minutes at each paper.
4. Rotate until you've contributed to each challenge.



Sign up for
Mark's
Weekly
Team Tips

mark@markskenny.com

Get in touch with Mark

Text: (760) 271-8256
Email: mark@markskenny.com

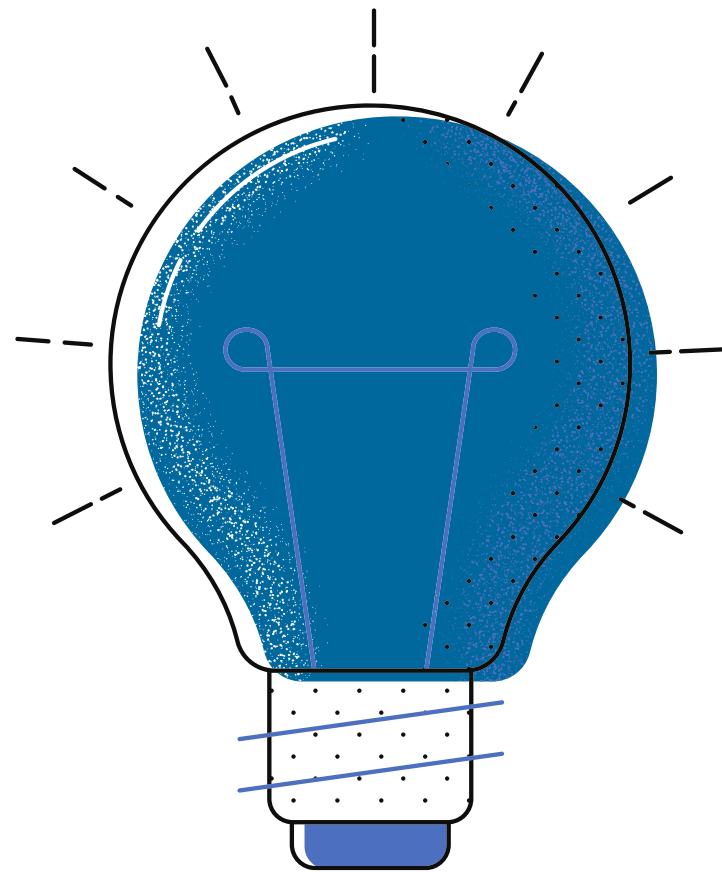
Retreat Speaker | Keynote Speaker | Team Advisor

markskenny.com

“Speed Takeaways”

On your own, write down the following:

1. What surprised you the most today.
2. One action you will take immediately.
3. One tip you will share with your team.



Managing Complexity | Decision Quality