

11B - Critical and Creative Thinking: Getting “outside the box”

Presenter

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Session Summary

Critical and creative thinking are often considered as complimentary approaches to analyzing situations. While traditional critical thinking tools help to narrow the possibilities to those that meet the criteria, creative thinking expands the universe of possible solutions. While we often provide technical training to increase knowledge, we rarely teach people how to think for themselves. Employees require the right tools and both sets of skills, creative and critical thinking, to effectively solve problems and foster change.

Dually rooted in adult learning theory and business management theory, the tools of critical and creative thinking follow proven concepts of logic and psychology to enable individuals and teams to think on a higher plain. They improve your analytical abilities, and the synthesis and evaluation of information - the three higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy. In this presentation, we explore the use of four tools to step outside the box: formal logical argument, TRIZ, Edward deBono's "Six Thinking Hats", and *reductio ad absurdum*. You learn to incorporate these concepts into your everyday responsibilities to hone your abilities to analyze, synthesize and evaluate information. In turn, creative and critical thinking tools help you turn win/lose situations into win/win situations.

About the Presenter - James August, CQA

James August is a quality professional with over twenty years of experience in industrial and Military / aerospace manufacturing. James holds a Bachelor of Engineering and a Masters in Materials Science from SUNY Stony Brook, and has completed postgraduate work at the Colorado School of Mines. Starting as an Engineer and Metallurgist, his career evolved toward quality management as a result of early experiences establishing manufacturing systems. He spent seven years teaching quality management and related courses in New Jersey as Adjunct Professor at Raritan Valley Community and at Middlesex County Colleges. He continues to be a guest lecturer as needed. Currently, James is the Director of Quality Management for American Biltrite Tape Products Division, where he is the ISO 9001:2008 representative.

James August rejoined ASQ in 1992 as a senior member belonging to the Princeton and South Jersey sections. During this time he served as the Administrator for their Performance Excellence Network until 2007 and has been an ASQ Certified Quality Auditor. He was a member of the Performance Excellence Board of Examiners - QNJ Governor's Award (Baldrige criteria) for twelve years, a team leader for eight years, and an assessment process trainer for four years. James is a member of ASCD, a Registered Professional Development Provider in New Jersey, and a regular contributor to his ASQ sections' programs.