SITUATION APPRAISAL

Clear thinking for complex situations

REFERENCE

KT Kepner Tregoe

Situation Appraisal

Situation Appraisal Example

There are a number of problems at one of your biggest customers, Big Bank. You have been asked to go on-site and obtain a full understanding of the problems. Specifically, there has been a recent unexplained database crash and the customer requires your company get to the root cause of the incident. The crash delayed the reporting of year-end results.

KT Kepner Tregoe — Situation Appraisal

Identify Concerns

Identify the Theme	Separate and Clarify Concerns	Create Action Statements
What are the primary areas of concern? What is the theme for this Situation What boundaries will help focus our attention and resources?	**Separate** — Is there more than one issue in this concern? / **Clarify**	Does each separated and clarified concern indicate the action needed to resolve it?
	What's the evidence? What else concerns us about…? / What exactly do we mean by...?	Is the action about a deviation, a choice, a threat, or an opportunity?
Big Bank's database problems	Can this concern be resolved by a single analysis or action? / What exactly is….?	
	What's the evidence?	Do we simply need to get something done?

List Concerns

What deviations are occuring? What decisions need to be made?
What plans should be implemented? What changes are anticipated?
What threats exist? What opportunities exist?

Concerns	Separated and Clarified Concerns	Action Statements
Bank reported year-end results late	Result of crash was a serious loss of time at year-end; customer is losing confidence in our support operation	Find the cause of the crash
Browser performance slow	One e-commerce page takes 2 minutes to load	Understand e-commerce page loading issue
Spooler queue too slow at spooling advertisements from web marketing division	Can't get new advertisements published to the server fast enough	Find out why the new advertisement cannot be published to the server fast enough
Back-up mirror site may not be able to update graphics files fast enough in the event of a failover	If there's a failover, the standby site does not have a fast enough link to download graphics	Recommend an approach for getting sufficient speed between sites
Users have to change working practices as a result of performance issues	Application is running at 50% of expected speed	How can we reduce the impact of the application running at reduced speed?
		Find the cause of the application running at reduced speed
May not be able to add users and new graphics to the system	While failed over, the configuration cannot be changed	Understand how to add new users during failovers

SA
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Situation Appraisal

Set Priority

Use Knowledge and Experience…OR

Which concerns should we work on first? What is the priority order of the remaining concerns? Mark highest overall priority (*)

…Use Current Impact,		**Future Impact,**		**and Time Frame**		
What is the actual impact (up to now)		*What will be the anticipated impact*		*What is the deadline after which this will*		Hide Detail
of this not being resolved?		*(in the future) if this is not resolved?*		*be difficult, expensive, etc. to resolve?*		Show Detail
(on people, safety, costs, etc.?)		*(on people, safety, costs, etc.?)*		*When do we need to start?*		Assess
Which concern(s) are having the greatest		*Which concern(s) will have the greatest*		*Which concern(s) will be hardest to*		combinations
current impact? Rate relatively H/M/L.		*future impact? Rate relatively H/M/L.*		*resolve later? Rate relatively H/M/L.*		horizontally H/M/L (±)
Current Impact	**CI Priority**	**Future Impact**	**FI Priority**	**Time Frame**	**TF Priority**	**Overall Priority**
Customer is upset because of late reports	H+	If we do not regain customer's confidence, we could lose their business	H+	Cannot help customer with anything else unless relationship is restored (address today)	H+	H+
A few users have commented on slowness (important to our marketing program that the speed increase)	M	Not changing, but may annoy users (annoyed users may not use site as much)	M	We need to address this concern in the next few days	M	M
Last advertising campaign out late, some revenue lost	M	If new product is not fully advertised immediately, could lose more revenue	M	New product launch coming in 2 weeks	H	M+
No current impact	L	If failover, web services may be unusable because they are missing graphics	M	Failover unlikely in near future -- fix in the next month	L	L+
Call response times across the business have increased (impacting MTTR metrics)	H	Customer complaints about wait times will increase	H	Have 2 weeks before management gets involved	H	H
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New user numbers are declining	L	New users may have to wait a day or two, continuing the decline in new user numbers	L	Needs fixing, but can wait until later in the month	L	L

Situation Appraisal

Plan Next Steps	Plan Involvement
Determine Resolution Approach	**Determine Help Needed**

What steps or actions are required to resolve this concern?	*Who needs to do what and by when?*
Is the action about a choice, a deviation, a threat, an opportunity or something that just needs to be done?	*Who needs to be involved for:*
	* Superior Solution? * Creativity? * Information?
	* Approval? * Structure? * Analysis?
What analytic process (and how much) is needed?	* Development? * Support? * Consensus?
What follow-on actions are needed? What else?	* Commitment? * Implementation? * Goal Agreement?

Process Needed	Next Steps (What)	Who	By When
PA	Gather data for a full and accurate description of the problem Complete a problem specification Identify and test likely causes	Customer representatives Technical support experts Resolution facilitator	Within the next six hours
SA	Separate and clarify the concern Work out what action to take to address the concern	Account team Customer	Next few days
PA	Gather data for a full and accurate description of the problem Complete a problem specification	Account team Customer	Next 2-3 days
DA	Write a decision statement and objectives Get signoff from stakeholders on the objectives Gather data for alternatives and evaluate Assess risks	Customer	Within a month
PPA	Identify what could go wrong and their likely causes Take preventive actions to eliminate the causes Plan contingent actions to reduce the impact	Customer	Within a day or 2
PA	Gather data for a full and accurate description of the problem Complete a problem specification	Account team Customer	Next 2 days
SA	Identify concerns and separate and clarify Identify actions to resolve concerns	Account team Customer	Within a month