Root Cause Analysis

Root Cause Analysis helps uncover a hypothesis about what caused your situation

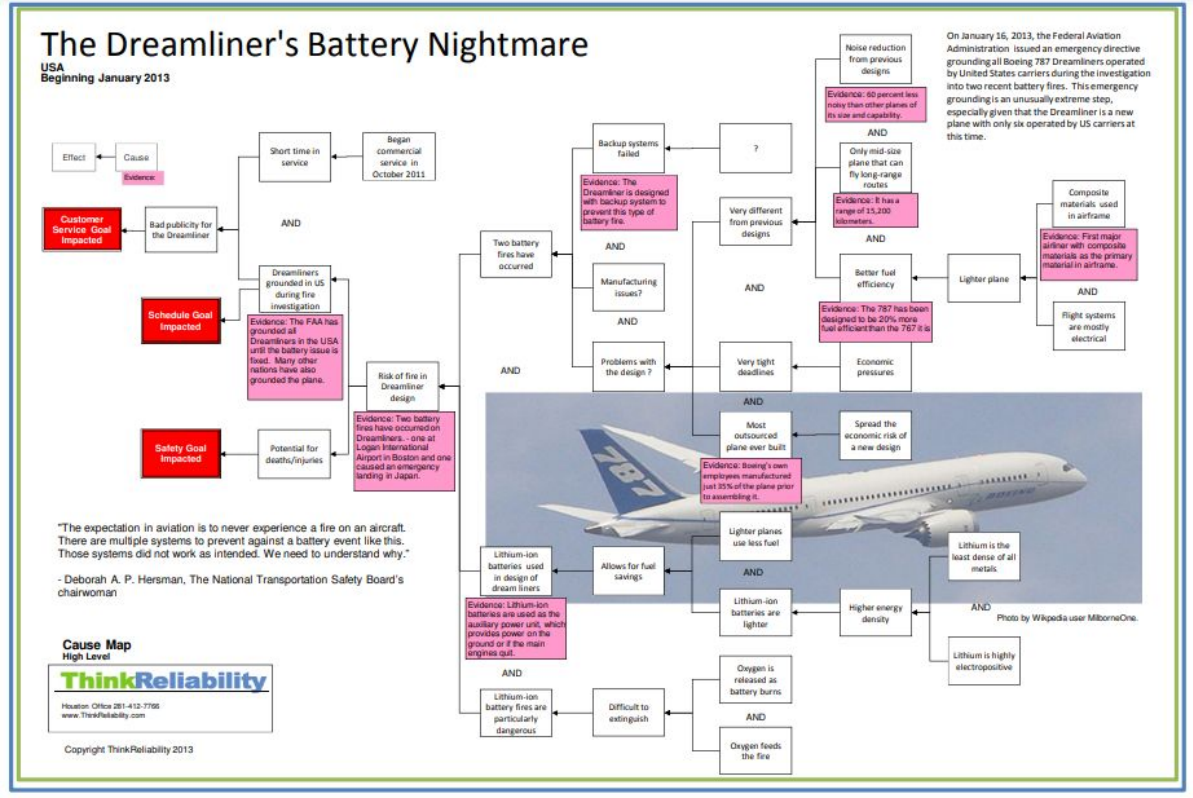
Example of a Root Cause Analysis (Simple)

From the reading in chapter 5 of Humane Leadership:

"A useful way to understand our challenges is root cause analysis. To find a root cause of your distraction, you might ask a series of deepening "whys:"

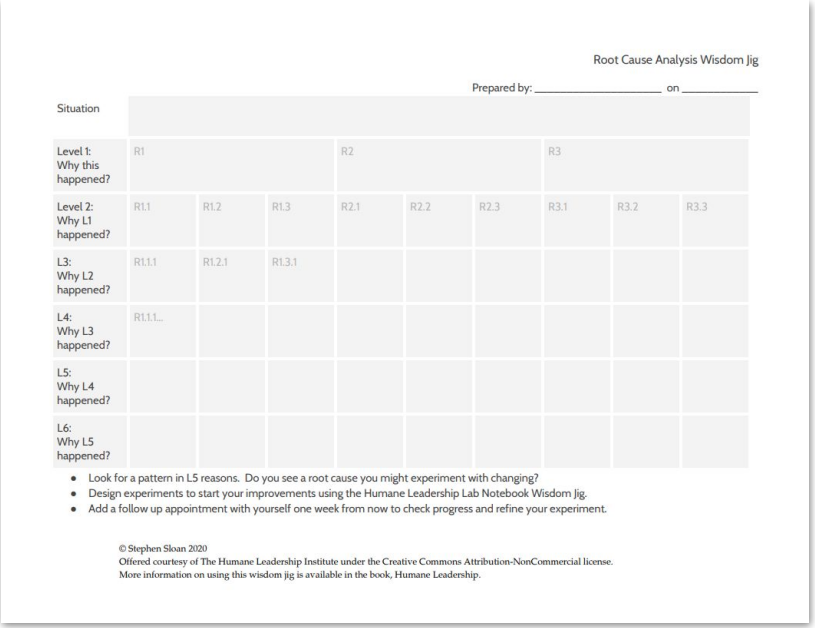
1	Q: Why was I distracted?	A: My phone rang.
2	Q: Why did your phone ring?	A: I was afraid I would miss that critical call from client B that only I can handle.
3	Q: Why can only you handle client B?	A: I promised client B something special my team doesn't know about.
4	Q: Why did you promise something special to client B?	A: I felt insecure about our offerings.
5	Q: Why did you feel insecure about our offerings.	A: The new product line does not meet the needs of our customers.

Root Cause Analysis (Complex)



Root Cause Analysis (RCA) Method - Asking 5 Whys

- RCA is a method of exploring why things happen, not just the obvious, but digging down to the roots of of the problem.
- RCA Wisdom Jig for your use
- More background on this analytical technique here and many real world examples here



Root Cause Analysis Wisdom Jig

Prepared by: _____ on _____

Situation									
Level 1: Why this happened?	R1			R2			R3		
Level 2: Why L1 happened?	R1.1	R1.2	R1.3	R2.1	R2.2	R2.3	R3.1	R3.2	R3.3
L3: Why L2 happened?	R1.1.1	R1.2.1	R1.3.1						
L4: Why L3 happened?	R1.1.1...								
L5: Why L4 happened?									
L6: Why L5 happened?									

- Look for a pattern in L5 reasons. Do you see a root cause you might experiment with changing?
- Design experiments to start your improvements using the Humane Leadership Lab Notebook Wisdom Jig.
- Add a follow up appointment with yourself one week from now to check progress and refine your experiment.

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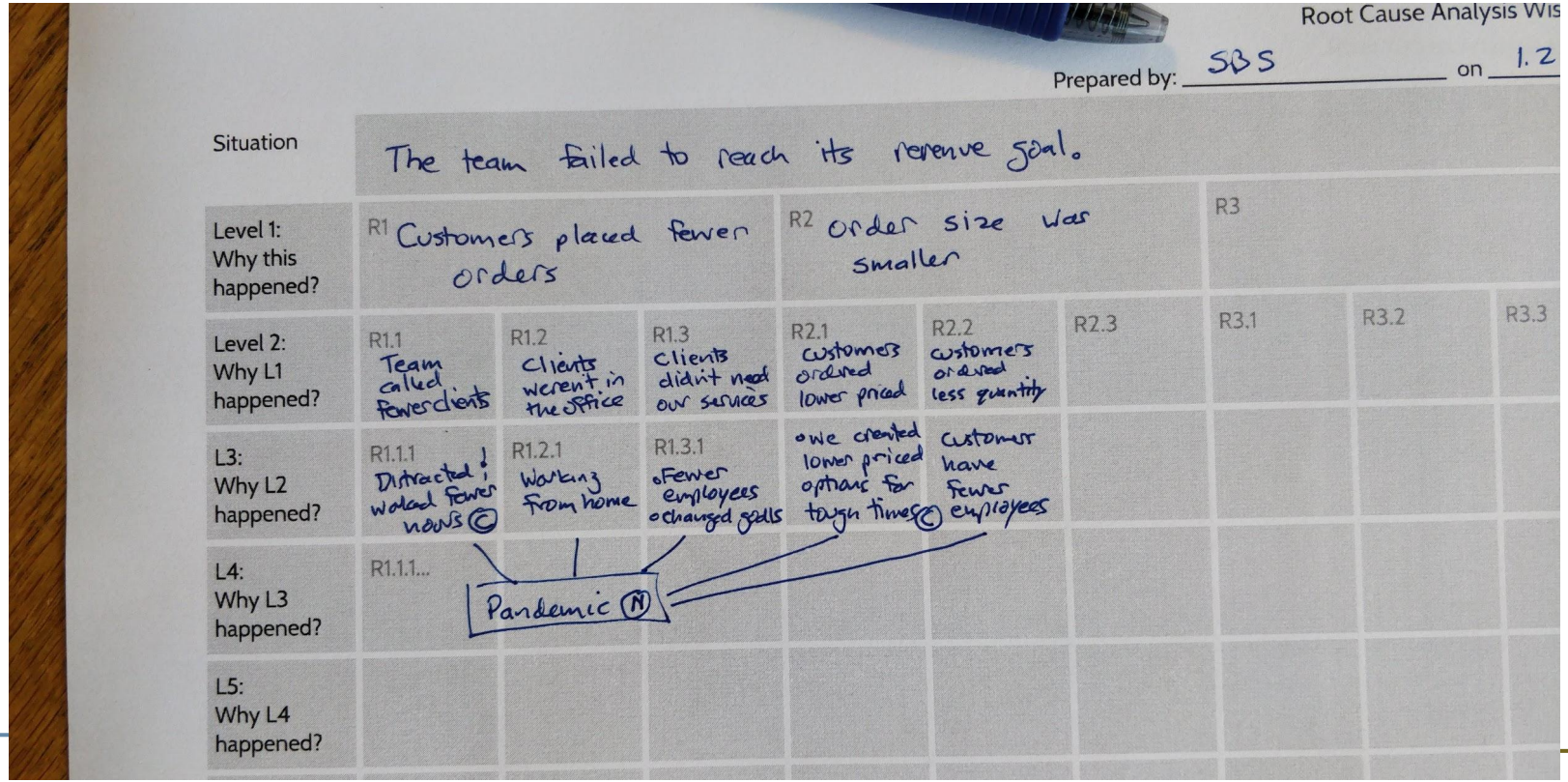
More information on using this wisdom jig is available in the book, Humane Leadership.

Root Cause Analysis Example



Root Cause Analysis Wis

Prepared by: SBS on 1.2

Situation	The team failed to reach its revenue goal.								
Level 1: Why this happened?	R1 Customers placed fewer orders			R2 Order size was smaller			R3		
Level 2: Why L1 happened?	R1.1 Team called fewer clients	R1.2 Clients weren't in the office	R1.3 Clients didn't need our services	R2.1 customers ordered lower priced	R2.2 customers ordered less quantity	R2.3	R3.1	R3.2	R3.3
L3: Why L2 happened?	R1.1.1 Distracted! workload fewer hours (C)	R1.2.1 Working from home	R1.3.1 • Fewer employees • changed goals	• we created lower priced options for tough times (C)	customers have fewer employees				
L4: Why L3 happened?	R1.1.1...	Pandemic (N)							
L5: Why L4 happened?									

Results of the Root Cause Analysis = Hypothesis

- In the end, our root cause is only a **hypothesis** about what caused our situation
- Root cause analysis will reveal variables
  - Controllable
  - Uncontrollable
- Hypotheses must be tested with experiments.
- Next, we need to explore the nature of useful hypotheses.