

PROBLEM SOLVING PROGRAM

S. O. S. SITUATION-OBJECTIVE-SOLUTIONS

We usually feel that a problem exists before we can define it. Conditions that evoke dissatisfaction, frustration, tension, and other negative feelings are symptoms of a problem. These symptoms create negative feelings due to the desire for a more desirable state. Often the person is unaware of what is causing it. Thus a problem exists when we experience a difference between the current state of affairs and the desired one.

Stating a problem is more than just listing symptoms. A problem is not well defined until 3 sets of information have been clarified and understood. These are:

1. What are the essential aspects of the current state?
2. What are the key attributes of the desired state?
3. What forces either help or inhibit moving from the current to the desired state?

The S-O-S Method & Model is a process of organizing information to define a problem or solution and to manage the issues that occur in creating a solution. Information organized into 3 interrelated dimensions:

1. **Situation:** Information about the current state and the forces that keep moving to a more desired state.
2. **Objectives:** What you want to accomplish or avoid. They are chosen because those working on the problem value and desire them. (Imposed requirements are part of the Situation dimension)
3. **Solution:** Any action that members can support that will change the current state into the desired state. The solution also answers the question, "Who will do what and when?" Any proposal for action implies some view of the Situation and the Objective.

Problems solving occurs during discussions among people as they share realities, discuss goals, and initiate solutions to the problem. What is unique about the SOS process is that any mention about any one dimension of SOS impacts information about the other two. Because the 3 dimensions are so closely connected, it is helpful to think of them as a single, interactive unit, basically 3 points of a triangle, rather than 3 separate factors. Shared understanding of the problem analysis exists when each party to the joint inquiry understands the Situation, Objectives, and the proposed Solutions from other's point of view.

Situation Leads to Objectives

Objectives Leads to Solutions

Solutions respond to Situations and attain Objectives

ADVANTAGES USING THE S-O-S SYSTEM

1. COMMON LANGUAGE – NO TECHNICAL JARGON
2. EASY TO LEARN AND USE
3. CONVERSATIONAL STYLE
4. IDENTIFIES IF A PROBLEM SHOULD BE SOLVED, DROPPED, OR IGNORED
5. SHOWS CLEARLY WHERE TO START
6. COMMON LEVELS OF THOUGHT AND CONCEPTS
7. NO BOOKS TO READ OR COURSES TO TAKE
8. AVOIDS THE IDEA THAT THE DEFINITION IS THE ANSWER
9. MOVES FROM IDEAS TO ACTION
10. RESOLVES CONFLICTS
11. INTEGRATES WITH REALITY AND OBVIOUS STEPS
12. GOOD METHOD FOR A GROUP LEADER

	FIRST STEP IS WHAT'S OUR SITUATION?	
SOS - PROBLEM SOLVING	WHY ARE WE HERE?	

"Our Current State Is:

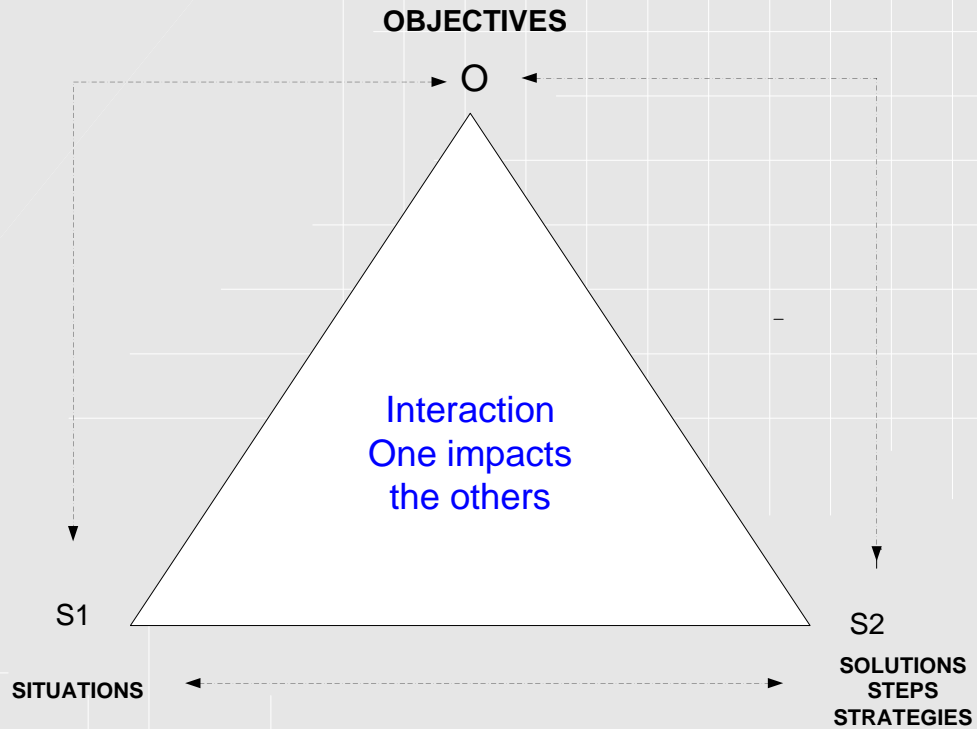
Situation	Objective	Suggestion
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
5	5	5

Our Action Plan:

Who	Will Do What	By When

A ROADMAP IS USUALLY PREPARED SHOWING TASKS AND TIMING TO ACCOMPLISH OBJECTIVES.

THE S-O-S TRIANGLE



Situations will lead to Objectives - Objectives lead to Solutions -
Solutions will impact Situations

Will Change The Way You See Things!

Easy to Use