Contents

1	The Most Important Skill You Never Learned	1
	Fast and Slow Problem Solving	2
	Problem Solving and the Expertise Trap	5
	Complex Problems and "Unknown Unknowns"	7
	The Need for a Disciplined Problem-Solving Process	10
	Chapter 1 in One Page	12
2	The Five Pitfalls of Problem Solving	15
	Case 1: When the Music Industry Went Out of Tune	15
	Pitfall 1: Flawed Problem Definition	16
	Case 2: The Grameen–Danone Strengthening Yogurt	18
	Pitfall 2: Solution Confirmation	21
	Case 3: The Call Center Story	22
	Pitfall 3: Wrong Framework	23
	Case 4: New Strategy at J.C. Penney	25
	Pitfall 4: Narrow Framing	26
	Case 5: A Fat Chance for Sugar	29
	Pitfall 5: Miscommunication	32
	Chapter 2 in One Page	33
3	The 4S Method	35
	Where Does the 4S Method Come from?	35
	An Overview of the 4S Method	41
	State: A Problem Well Posed Is Half-Solved	43

xiv	Contents

	Structure: The Architecture of Problem Solving	44
	Solve: Between Analysis and Creativity	46
	Sell: Choose the Approach That Suits Your Audience	48
	Chapter 3 in One Page	51
4	State the Problem: The TOSCA Framework	53
	Trouble: What Makes This Problem Real and Present?	54
	Owner: Whose Problem Is This?	57
	Success Criteria: What Will Success Look Like, and When?	58
	Constraints: What Are the Limitations and Trade-Offs?	60
	Actors: Who Are the Stakeholders?	61
	Write the Core Question	62
	Singing TOSCA as a Choir	65
	Chapter 4 in One Page	67
5	Structure the Problem: Pyramids and Trees	69
	Hypothesis-Driven Problem Structuring	71
	Building a Hypothesis Pyramid	72
	Hypothesis-Driven Problem Structuring: Pros and Cons	79
	Issue-Driven Problem Structuring	84
	Growing Issue Trees	86
	Growing a Tree or Building a Pyramid?	89
	Chapter 5 in One Page	92
6	Structure the Problem: Analytical Frameworks	95
	Using Frameworks to Breakdown Problems	96
	The Danger of Frameworks: Frameworks as Mental Models	99
	Industry Frameworks: Value Drivers	101
	Functional Frameworks	105
	When All Else Fails, Try Good Old Logic	113
	Chapter 6 in One Page	115
7	Solve the Problem: Eight Degrees of Analysis	117
	From Structuring to Analyses	117
	Eight Degrees of Analysis	121
	Planning the Work	125
	Conducting the Analysis	126
	Chapter 7 in One Page	136

	Contents	XV
8	Redefine the Problem: The Design Thinking Path	139
	Design Thinking and When to Use it	142
	Five Phases, One Mindset	144
	Phase 1: Empathize	147
	Phase 2: Define	156
	Chapter 8 in One Page	165
9	Structure and Solve the Problem Using Design Thinking	169
	Phase 3: Ideate	171
	Phase 4: Prototype	182
	Phase 5: Test	186
	Chapter 9 in One Page	191
10	Sell the Solution: Core Message and Storyline	197
	Don't Tell the Story of the Search, Tell the Story of the Solution	198
	The Pyramid Principle	200
	Pave the Way for a Dialogue	204
	Design Your Storyline	205
	Go for Either a Grouping or an Argument	213
	Chapter 10 in One Page	220
11	Sell the Solution: Recommendation Report and Delivery	223
	Manage Communications Throughout the Process	224
	Beware the PowerPoint Curse	225
	Create an Effective, Modular Report	226
	Develop the Content Pages	230
	Make Quantitative Charts Relevant and Simple	233
	Use Conceptual Charts Sparingly	241
	Trim the Deck Ruthlessly	241
	Quality Control	243
	Beyond Slide Presentations	243
	Chapter 11 in One Page	248
12	The 4S Method in Action	251
	Case Study: The Kangaroo Opportunity	251
	What Is the Problem?	255
	Structuring the Problem	257

ivx	Contents	
	Solving the Problem	257
	Selling the Solution	259
	Appendix: First Section of a Report on the Kangaroo Case Study	263
13	Conclusion: Becoming a Master Problem-Solver	271
Ind	ex	275