"IS / IS NOT" TOOL

Purpose

To clarify just what the team has to achieve: what is the issue to be resolved and what goals are to be met**.**
"A problem well-described is a problem half-solved."

When to Use it

Use the "Is/Is Not" tool to structure team thinking about the definition of the issue you want to investigate. Use it especially when you suspect there is only partial knowledge of the situation.

How to Use it

1. State the issue in clear, factual terms. Avoid defining the issue in terms of its possible solutions - use only observable facts. For example: "10% of invoices have the wrong unit price", *not* "Data entry clerks need training because they make mistakes entering data". Separate problems from personalities.

2. Describe everything you know about the issue:
   WHAT is it / WHAT is it *not**?***
   WHERE is it / WHERE is it *not**?***
   WHEN is it a problem/ WHEN is it *not* a problem**?**
   WHO is involved / WHO is *not* involved**?**
   HOW OFTEN does it happen**?**
   HOW BIG a problem is it**?**

3. Ask yourself - "How will we know that we have succeeded in solving the problem - what are the **measurements** that would tell us?"

4. Define the **boundaries** of the process and its **inputs** and **outputs**:
   - which people, departments, equipment etc are involved?
   - what are the boundaries of the process?
   - what are the inputs, who supplies them?
   - what are the outputs, who are the customers who receive them?

5. Find out what the **customers** of the process want and what their opinion is of quality, response time, on-time delivery and cost.

6. Use the worksheet to record your team's ideas.

7. Use the results to plan further investigation and data gathering before moving on to analysing and generating solutions and action plans.

Issue Definition Worksheet

Issue Statement:

What needs to be improved? What is wrong?

	IS	IS NOT	Information Required
WHAT - process - product(s) - service(s) - object(s) - fault or deviation			
WHERE - located on product or objects - geographically			
WHEN - first seen - other occurrences - process stage			
WHO - persons involved in process - customers - suppliers			

HOW OFTEN does the problem occur?

HOW BIG an issue is it? ($, time consumed, number of customers, services, quality of product, etc)

MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS – how will we know that the problem has been solved?