

# SA8000

## Analysis of Causes & Corrective actions



Following any Non-Conformity issued, the Organization must find correct root cause of each issue identified. To identify suitable corrective action, it is essential to perform a complete analysis to find the real cause which led to the finding. This analysis must be consistent with the finding highlighted and must clearly identify the fundamental cause of the finding and shall not be a simple repetition of the finding. If the root cause analysis is not properly made, the Corrective Action proposed is merely treating a symptom of the not conformity. In addition, if a permanent remedy is not determined and implemented, the problem will eventually repeat.

## 5 Whys methodology

A tool to perform a good analysis of the issue raised it's the "Five Why" methodology. The method is remarkably simple: it's necessary to drill down to its root cause by asking "Why?" five times when a problem occurs. Then, when a countermeasure becomes evident, it's simple to prevent the recurring issue. A countermeasure is an action or set of actions that seek to prevent the problem from arising again, while a solution may seek to deal with the symptom. Countermeasures are more robust and will more likely prevent the problem from recurring. Not all problems have a solitary root cause. If one wishes to reveal multiple root causes, the method must be repeated, asking a different sequence of questions each time. The method provides no rigid and fast rules about what lines of questions to investigate or how long to proceed with the search for additional root causes. Certification of the social accountability management system of one's own company is an effective way to give visibility to company performance in terms of sustainability, with particular reference to social aspects.

### HOW IT WORKS

"Five whys (5 whys)" is an iterative inquisitive technique used to explore the cause-and-effect relationships underlying a particular problem. The primary objective of the technique is to determine the root cause of a defect or issue by repeating the question "Why?". Each answer frames the basis of the next question. The "five" in the name derives from the number of iterations to resolve the problem.



# Fundamental Steps

Ask "Why?"	The answers must be based on facts: they must be records of things that have happened, not guesses at what might have occurred. This blocks 5 Whys from becoming just a process of deductive reasoning, generating many possible causes and, sometimes, creating more confusion as you chase down theoretical issues
Ask "Why?" four more times	Ask why four times, using the previous answer to base the question on. there will have five reasons for each "why?" question whenever it has done this. As previously mentioned, it might need to ask why more times than five if you haven't got to the root of the problem
Know When to Stop	The process will stop when to asking "why?" no longer produces good responses. If a "why" question can reasonably be asked about the root cause analysis, this indicates the analysis did not go far enough
Address the Root Cause	Whenever you have identified the root cause of the problem, it should be discussed a list of corrective actions or countermeasures to prevent the problem from recurring
Monitor the Measures	It's very important to carefully monitor how successful your countermeasures are in stopping the problem. If they aren't as effective as it need them to be, it means that the true root cause may have not bee found and it should be repeated the 5 Whys technique from the beginning

## Key elements

- The company must carry out the analysis of the causes for all Non-Conformities
- Determine the real cause of the not conformities
- Avoid simply repeating the finding
- Prevent the non-conformity from reoccurring

## 5 whys methodology, an example,

Problem - There is a chemical leak in the factory

1. Why? - Because a substance container had a leak.
2. Why? - Because the container was put on by a forklift
3. Why? - Because the container was placed in an unsuitable place
4. Why? - Because staff have not been adequately trained on proper container handling
5. Why? - Because the risk assessment did not consider the possibility of accidental impacts during operations

## Additional reference

Additional technical documentation and guidance can be found at SAI and SAAS document library

<https://sa-intl.org/resource-library/>

- SAAS Procedure 200: "Audit Requirements for Accredited Certification Bodies for the SA8000 Program
- Guidance document for Social Accountability 8000 (SA8000®:2014)