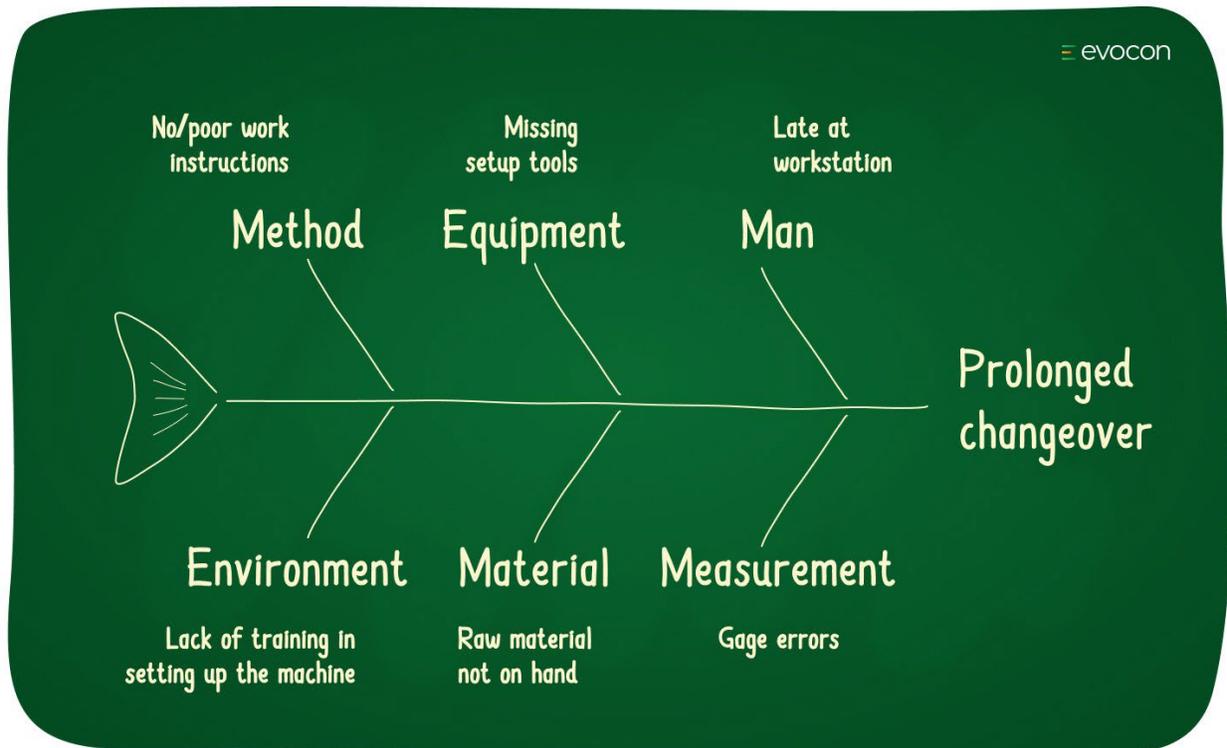
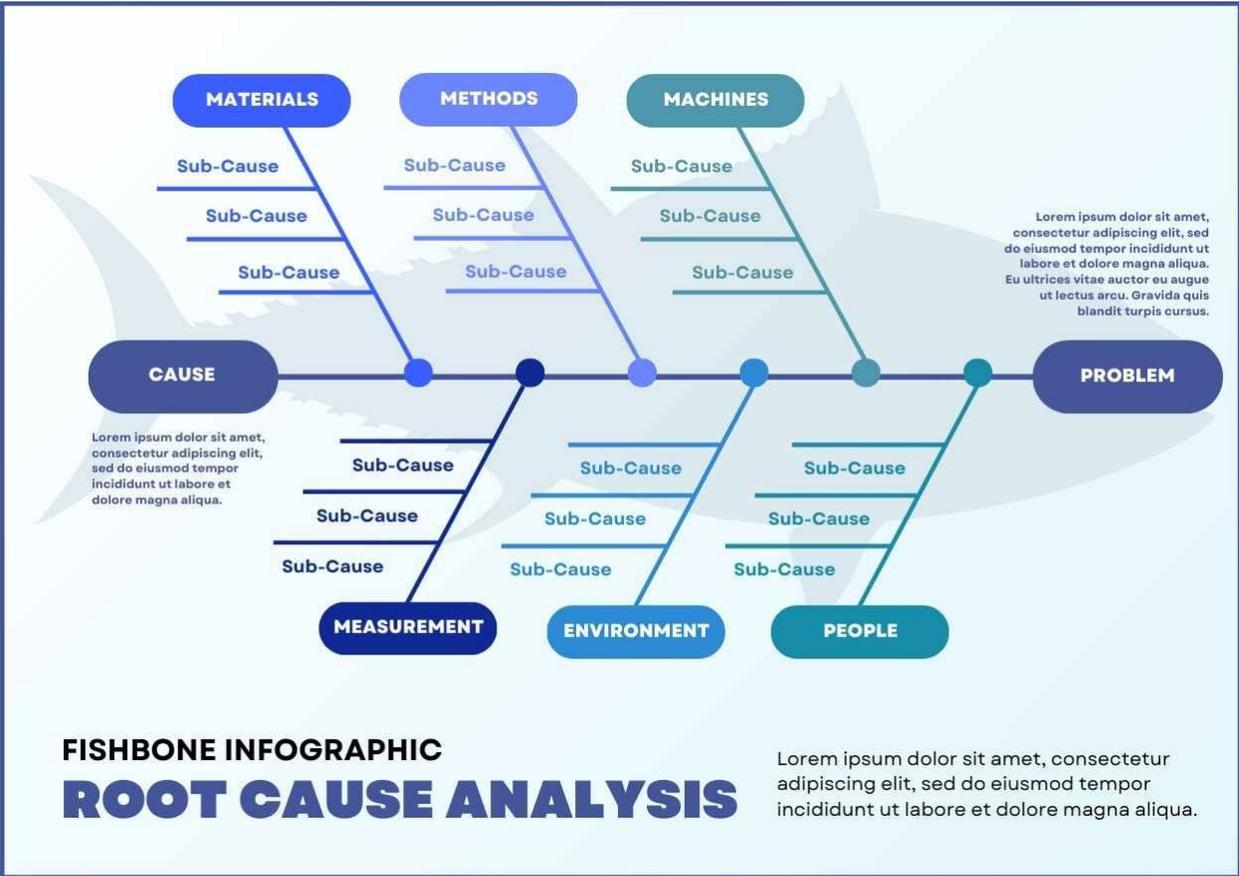
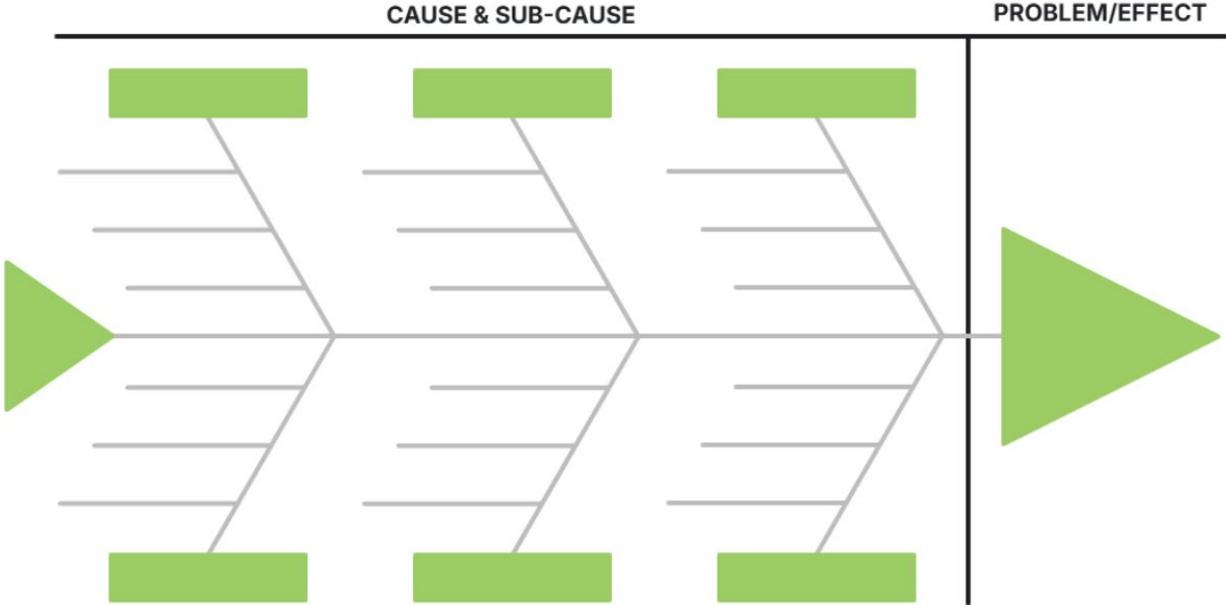


Micro Lab for DEC Meeting: Root Cause Analysis

Facilitators: Trio/Division Directors/Data Analyst



Blank Fishbone Diagram Template



Fishbone Analysis for Toastmasters International

Root Cause Analysis for Member Recruitment & Retention

Why We're Using This Tool

The **Fishbone Analysis** (also called an **Ishikawa** or **Cause-and-Effect Diagram**) helps us move beyond symptoms and surface **root causes** of challenges related to **recruiting new members and retaining current ones**.

This structured approach allows us to see **possible causes that may not have otherwise been considered**, especially those that sit beneath the surface of common explanations like *“people are busy”* or *“we need more marketing.”*

Step 1: Define a Clear Problem of Practice (PoP)

For our **Problem of Practice (PoP)**, it is essential to have a **clear, specific, and observable statement**.

Being specific helps us:

- Examine **cause-and-effect relationships**
- Avoid jumping to solutions too quickly
- Identify **what is within our influence and control**

Examples of Strong Toastmasters PoP Statements

- *“Our club has struggled to maintain 12 members for the past two program years.”*
- *“Guests attend one meeting but do not return for a second visit.”*
- *“New members join but disengage within their first 6 months.”*
- *“Our club is not meeting Distinguished Club Program membership goals.”*

 **Tip:** Avoid vague statements like *“We need more members.”* Precision leads to insight.

Step 2: Identify the Effect (The Fish Head)

Write your **PoP** at the **head of the fish**.

Example Effects

- Low Member Retention
- Difficulty Recruiting New Members
- Declining Meeting Attendance
- Low Engagement After Icebreaker

This “effect” is **what we see**, not yet *why* it is happening.

Step 3: Establish Major Cause Categories (The Big Bones)

These categories help organize thinking and ensure a **holistic view** of the club experience.

Suggested Toastmasters Categories

You may adjust these based on your context:

1. **Club Culture & Environment**
2. **Meeting Quality & Experience**
3. **Leadership & Officer Support**
4. **Member Value & Growth**
5. **Marketing, Visibility & Outreach**
6. **Onboarding & Mentorship**
7. **Logistics & Accessibility**

 **Facilitator Note:** There are no “right” categories—use what best fits your club or district context.

Step 4: Explore Contributing Causes (The Smaller Bones)

Under each category, brainstorm **specific, observable contributing factors**.

This is where we dig deeper—moving from **symptoms to causes**, and from **assumptions to evidence**.

Example

If the **Effect (Head)** is:

Low Member Recruitment

And one **Category** is:

Unwelcoming or Unclear Club Environment

Then the **smaller bones** might include:

- Guests are not greeted or followed up with
- No clear explanation of Toastmasters value for guests
- Roles are confusing or rushed
- No assigned host or mentor for visitors
- Inside jokes or acronyms not explained
- Guests unsure of “next steps” to join

→ Each small bone asks: *“What specifically is happening—or not happening?”*

Step 5: Ask “Why?”—More Than Once

For each contributing factor, ask:

- **Why does this happen?**
- **What enables this to continue?**
- **What system, habit, or assumption is underneath this?**

This helps distinguish:

- **Root causes** from
 - **Surface-level behaviors**
-

Step 6: Identify Root Causes Worth Acting On

Once the diagram is complete, look for:

- Patterns across categories
- Causes that appear multiple times
- Factors within the club’s **sphere of influence**

Not every cause needs a solution immediately.

Focus on **2–3 root causes** that, if addressed, would create the greatest positive impact.

Step 7: Connect to Action (Club Success Plan)

Use identified root causes to:

- Inform **Club Success Plan goals**
- Shape **officer priorities**
- Design **small experiments or pilots**
- Request **district support** (coaches, marketing, Pathways help)

➔ This ensures the Fishbone Analysis leads to **insight → alignment → action**, not just discussion.

Facilitation Tips (Especially for Focus Groups)

- Encourage **curiosity, not blame**
 - Separate **people from processes**
 - Capture ideas visually and visibly
 - Remind participants: *“We’re diagnosing, not prescribing—yet.”*
-

If you’d like, next I can:

- Turn this into a **one-page printable handout**
- Create a **Toastmasters-branded Fishbone worksheet**
- Design a **facilitator script** for a 45–60 minute focus group
- Align this directly to **DCP membership goals and CSP sections**

Just tell me how you plan to use it.