Problem Solving Kujenga

The Problem Solving Kujenga framework was designed to help individuals and teams better understand their approach to tackling challenges, fostering self-awareness in how they naturally solve problems. The framework categorizes problem solvers into three types, Intuitive, Inconsistent, and Systematic, each with unique strengths, potential limitations (adapted from management30.com) and tailored Human-Centered Design (HCD) tips for growth. The identification of people's problem-solving type can help them leverage their strengths while becoming more versatile by adopting new strategies to enhance their problem-solving effectiveness.

In team settings, the framework encourages appreciation for diverse problem-solving approaches, enabling more cohesive and efficient collaboration. The incorporation of HCD principles also ensures that solutions are not only practical but deeply rooted in understanding the needs and experiences of users, leading to more impactful and user-centered innovations.

How We Came Up with the Framework

The Problem Solving Kujenga Sprint Framework was developed after observing common patterns in how people approach problem-solving across different contexts. We realized that many individuals tend to fall into one of three broad categories, some rely heavily on instinct, others are flexible but inconsistent, while others follow a more methodical, structured approach. To make these patterns more practical and actionable, we incorporated insights from Human-Centered Design (HCD), a methodology that focuses on understanding the user experience and integrating those insights into the problem-solving process.

Through research, reflection, and hands-on workshops, we recognized the importance of providing personalized guidance for each type of problem solver, equipping them with tips to improve their approach. The addition of HCD techniques ensures that regardless of problem-solving type, each individual or team can create solutions that truly address user needs while enhancing their own effectiveness.

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The name "Kujenga" comes from the Swahili word for "build," symbolizing the building of stronger problem-solving capabilities and the construction of innovative solutions that meet real-world needs.

Problem Solver Type	Characteristics	Strengths	Areas for Growth	HCD Tip
Intuitive Problem Solver	- Relies on instincts and past experiences - Quick decision-making	- Fast, confident decision-making - Adaptive and responsive	- Blend intuition with data and analysis - Reflect on decision-making patterns	Use **prototyping** to rapidly test ideas and confirm if instincts align with user needs.
Inconsistent Problem Solver	- No set approach to problem-solving - Tries various methods	- Flexible, adaptable - Open to learning	- Develop a toolkit of methods - Set feedback loops to assess methods	Engage in **ideation sessions** to broaden thinking and apply more systematic approaches.

Design Kit

Systematic Problem Solver	- Methodical and patient - Focuses on prevention	- Preventive mindset - Structured and thorough	- Balance structure with adaptability - Be open to spontaneous solutions	Use **user research** and **journey mapping** to foresee challenges and craft comprehensive solutions.

Session Flow

1. Welcome & Introduction (10 minutes)

- **Objective:** Set the context and explain why understanding different problem-solving styles is important for personal and team growth.
- **Activity:** Facilitator gives a brief overview of the session objectives and introduces the three problem-solving types.
- **Key Points to Cover:**
  - Importance of self-awareness in problem-solving.
  - Connection between problem-solving styles and successful innovation using Human-Centered Design (HCD).
  - Introduction to the **Problem Solving Kujenga** framework (Intuitive, Inconsistent, Systematic).

2. Self-Assessment Quiz (15 minutes)

- **Objective:** Help participants discover their problem-solving type.
- **Activity:** Distribute a brief quiz with questions that reveal their instinctive approach to solving problems (include scenarios, decision-making questions, etc.).
- **Instructions:**

- ○ Participants answer a series of 5–7 questions.
- ○ At the end, they tally their results to reveal whether they are Intuitive, Inconsistent, or Systematic problem solvers.
- **Outcome:** Each participant identifies their problem-solving style.

3. Group Reflection & Discussion (20 minutes)

- **Objective:** Foster reflection and discussion about different problem-solving approaches.
- **Activity:** Break participants into small groups of 3–4 people based on their problem-solving type (or mix them for diversity).
- **Discussion Prompts:**
  - ○ When did you last solve a problem? How did you approach it?
  - ○ Do you recognize your type from the quiz? Does this reflect how you usually solve problems?
  - ○ What do you think are the advantages and challenges of your approach?
- **Outcome:** Participants gain a deeper understanding of their style through personal reflection and group discussions.

4. Presentation of the Kujenga Framework (15 minutes)

- **Objective:** Present the Problem Solving Kujenga framework in detail.
- **Activity:** Facilitator walks through the table showing each problem-solving type's **Characteristics, Strengths, Areas for Growth**, and **HCD Tips**.
- **Visual Aid:** Use a projector or whiteboard to display the table with problem-solver types and their traits.
- **Key Points to Emphasize:**
  - ○ Each style has unique strengths.
  - ○ Understanding areas for growth helps in becoming more versatile.
  - ○ HCD tips are powerful tools for improving problem-solving approaches.

5. Interactive Exercise: Apply HCD Tips (20 minutes)

- **Objective:** Help participants apply HCD strategies to enhance their problem-solving style.

- **Activity:** Group work exercise where participants apply their style's **HCD Tip** to solve a simple design problem or challenge.
- **Instructions:**
    - Assign a common design problem or challenge (e.g., improving the customer experience of a product).
    - Each group applies their problem-solver type and its corresponding HCD tip to generate a solution.
    - Intuitive Solvers: Prototype their initial idea.
    - Inconsistent Solvers: Use ideation methods to generate various solutions.
    - Systematic Solvers: Map the user journey and plan preventive measures.
- **Outcome:** Each group presents their solution, highlighting how their style and HCD tip influenced the outcome.

6. Wrap-up & Takeaways (10 minutes)

- **Objective:** Summarize key learnings and reinforce the importance of blending styles for better problem-solving.
- **Activity:** Facilitator invites participants to share their takeaways from the session.
- **Key Points to Cover:**
    - No problem-solving style is "better" than another—each has its value.
    - The importance of self-awareness and continuous improvement.
    - Encouragement to integrate HCD tips into their problem-solving toolkit.
- **Closing Exercise:** Ask participants to write down one action they'll take to enhance their problem-solving approach based on today's session.

Materials Needed:

- Self-assessment quiz (printed or online version).
- Projector or whiteboard to display the Problem Solving Kujenga table.
- Markers, paper, and any materials needed for the prototyping activity (depending on the challenge).

Outcome:

By the end of the session, participants will:

- Understand their problem-solving style.
- Recognize their strengths and areas for growth.
- Learn and apply HCD techniques to improve their problem-solving process.
- Gain insights into how different styles can complement each other in team settings.

Problem solving styles adaptation from (https://management30.com/blog/what-type-of-problem-solver-are-you/)

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