



## The ICE Tactic

In 1906 Vilfredo Pareto observed that 80% of his peas came from only 20% of the pea pods in his garden. The Pareto Principle was developed further by business management specialist Joseph Juran who noted that 80% of effects come from only 20% of the causes. To fix the business problems Juran would focus on the 20%, the underlying core obstacle, instead of the surface level effect. Whether the Pareto Principle is one of Nature's laws or not is irrelevant. However, many of today's business problems adhere to the Pareto Principle.

The problem seen is more often a symptom of something deeper. Businesses that ignore the root cause of the problem and focus on the symptoms find themselves applying band aids and never quite solving the problem. Rosewood Partners applies Pareto's Principle in its Iceberg Methodology to locate the root cause of problems. Only after identifying the root cause can a business implement real change and correct the problem.

Much like the Pareto Principle, only 20% of an iceberg's mass is visible above the water's surface. The hidden 80% contains the root cause. Only by thoroughly examining the hidden 80% can one determine what the root cause really is. Rosewood uses the ICE Method to evaluate the symptoms. The evaluation is accomplished by identifying the symptoms. The next steps would include interviewing key resources, investigating the symptoms and its associated claims, comments, beliefs and thoughts. This examination would include the examination of who, what, when, where, why and how of the symptoms. The next steps include the challenge, trial, and testing of the knowledge gained. Just because it is said, or believed does not make it so. The final step is the eradication and elimination of the non-essential components of the problem. Rosewood examines every aspect of the problem, its inputs, outputs, people, process and procedures. Only when the root cause is truly understood can a real resolution be developed and implemented.

Root problems can be many things. All too often managers are quick to blame poor performance on bad employees, bad systems or even poor applications. While any one of those items may appear as the problem, the bigger question should be what is driving the poor behavior? What portion of the organization's culture, procedures or rewards/punishments system gives the employees the idea that poor performance/behavior is acceptable? Are there prevalent attitudes, behaviors or excuses? Is there a misalignment of the organizations procedures and its overall strategy? Are accountability measures being utilized? Are the right things being measured? Is the business rewarding the wrong behavior? What message are the employees receiving? What kinds of communication tools are used? Do those communication channels make management approachable? These are all questions that can only be answered by looking underneath the superficial effects of the problem.

Surface reviews of the problem and the accompanying solutions lead to elongated problems. Many businesses repeat the failure by hiring a new employee to replace the perceived poor performing employees rather than solving the root cause. If there is something in the organization that is promoting a lackadaisical behavior it needs to be identified and eliminated. Only by identifying the root cause of the problem can the effects be changed, corrected or removed. Once the root problem has



been identified it can be corrected. This requires a plan to ensure that it is successfully fulfilled. Different root problems require different procedures to correct, but general guidelines for any plan should be followed.

A goal must be defined and contain clearly measurable components. Physicist Lord Kelvin wrote, “When you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it.” If an outcome can be empirical then success can be easily recognized when achieved. If the goal is not numerical in nature, the metrics to be used to determine success must be determined. Identifying and removing obstacles inhibiting the achievement of the goal may require new or modified procedures.

Good plans include the details of how and what followed by clearly defined follow-up tools to ensure the changes are maintained. Finally, the business must determine what accountability measures will be used to enforce change. Only by removing the root problem can an organization hope to resolve any conflicts. Rosewood’s in-depth analysis finds this root and creates a plan to remove it.

## **About Rosewood Partners, LLC**

Headquartered in a rural East Texas town, Rosewood Partners, LLC is a unique management consulting group that builds on its small town roots of loyalty, partnership and commitment. Its team is comprised of industry specialists with centuries of combined practical hands on business experience in the areas of change management, operations management, off-site and staff augmentation services. Rosewood’s leadership philosophy is drawn from actually having led teams located all over the world through corporate downsizing, merger and acquisition activities and everyday business operations.

With its down-to-earth small town roots Rosewood believes in keeping things simple. Real-life experience has granted its team members the ability to employ simplicity to solve real world business problems. The straightforward tasks that simplicity demands deliver the reward of constant and consistent results. It is this simplicity that drives Rosewood’s OES methodology, Operational Excellence Simplified.