



Lean
Six Sigma

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The Five Whys (or 5 Whys) is an exploratory technique used to understand the cause-and-effect relationships underlying a particular problem. The primary goal of the 5 Whys technique is to determine and understand the root cause of a defect or problem by repeating the question “Why?” five times.

What issue(s) are you or your team facing? Define the problem:

Ex. Problem: *There is a puddle of water on the floor.*

1. *(Why?) A pipe is leaking.*
2. *(Why?) Too much water pressure in the pipe.*
3. *(Why?) There is a faulty water valve.*
4. *(Why?) Valves have not been tested/maintained.*
5. *(Why/Root Cause?) Water valves are not on a maintenance schedule.*

Notes:

- If an answer is something you cannot control, go back to the previous answer.
- Avoid unintuitive questions and answers. Think long and hard about what the causes could be.
- The 5 Whys is meant to find a single root cause, not an effect of that particular cause.

