PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Cubic Integrator Learning Journey

Session 5: Strategic Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making

CUBIC

Corporate Education Group

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Written and published by:

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300 Brickstone Square, Suite 201
Andover, MA 01810
978-649-8200
www.corpedgroup.com

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MDV829f-0921 Session 5 Participant Guide

Printed in the United States of America.

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MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Cubic Integrator Learning Journey

Session 5: Strategic Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making

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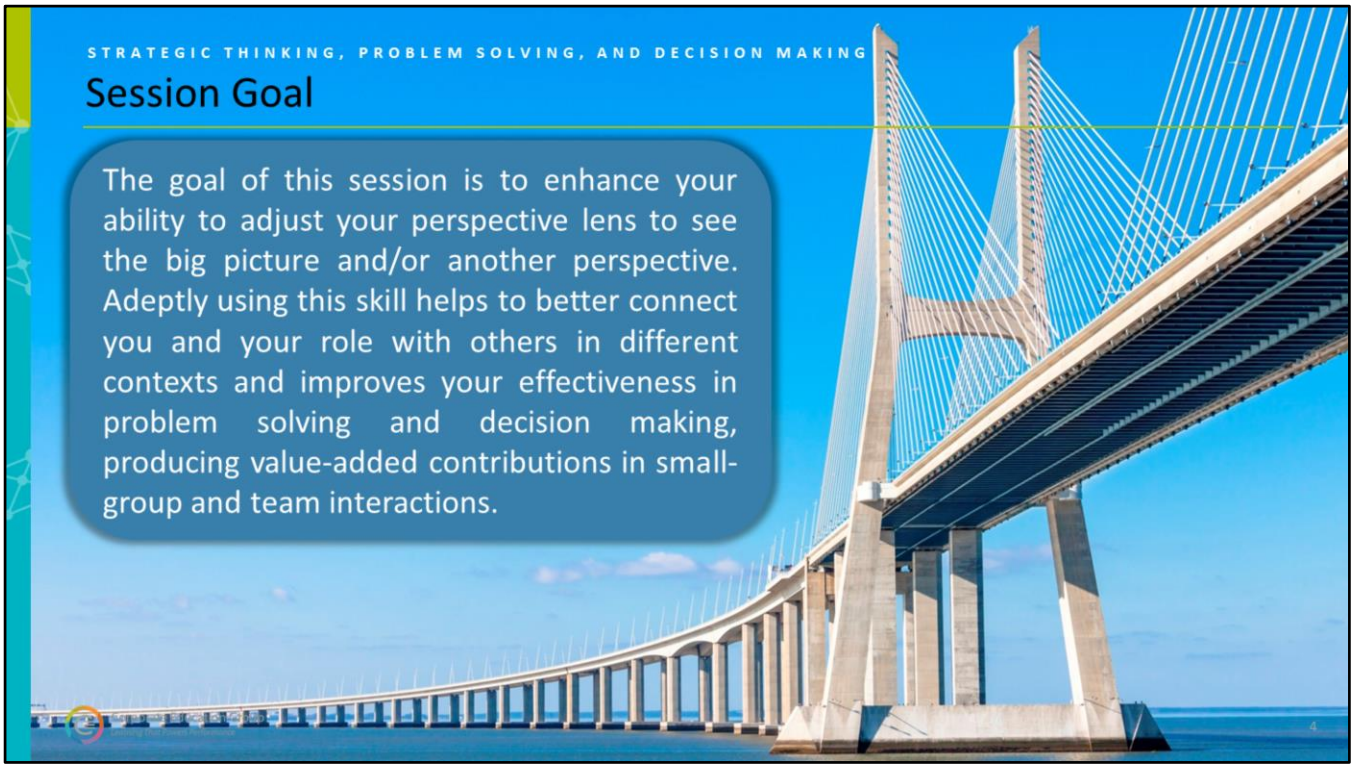
MDV829f-0921 Session 5


STRATEGIC THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND DECISION MAKING
Session Goal
The goal of this session is to enhance your ability to adjust your perspective lens to see the big picture and/or another perspective. Adeptly using this skill helps to better connect you and your role with others in different contexts and improves your effectiveness in problem solving and decision making, producing value-added contributions in small-group and team interactions.

STRATEGIC THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND DECISION MAKING

Session Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Describe the building blocks for employing strategic thinking
- Define the strategic thinking process
- Identify the critical success factors of strategic thinking and the problem solving process
- Explain how to communicate (translate) an organizational strategy and decision to an operation
- Structure a problem-solving strategy to deploy and manage a strategic outcome

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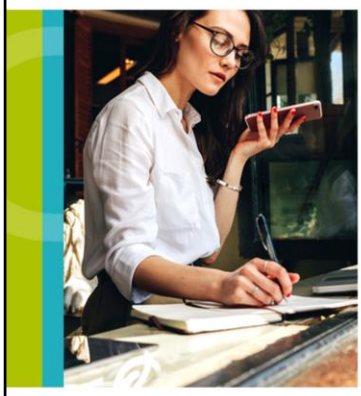

STRATEGIC THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND DECISION MAKING

Session Topics

- What Is Strategic Thinking?
- Critical Success Factors
- Operational Translation of a Strategic Direction
- Managing a Strategic Outcome

STRATEGIC THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND DECISION MAKING

Definition

Strategic Thinking Is:

coming up with alternative viable strategies or business models that deliver customer value

... finding alternative ways of competing and providing customer value

Source: Managing Research Library
https://managingresearchlibrary.org/glossary/strategic-thinking

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CLASS DISCUSSION

Is It a Process or an Individual Skill?

Let's take the next 15 minutes to discuss:

Individuals: How might an individual exhibit strategic thinking?

- Key traits or skills?
- What measurable outcomes might we see?
- When is it applicable to use, or not?

Organizations: How might an organization exhibit strategic thinking?

- Key attributes?
- What measurable outcomes might we see?
- When is it applicable to use, or not?

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STRATEGIC THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND DECISION MAKING

Identifying Attributes

Distractors

- Short-term
- Logical
- Convergent
- Pragmatic
- Deductive
- Creating Alignment

Key Elements

- Long-term
- Uncertain
- Divergent
- Incomplete
- Non-linear
- Disrupting alignment

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INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY

Common Understanding (1 of 2)

Individually:

- Take the next 5 minutes to examine the four terms on the next slide and match them with their definition.
- Then, sequence them into a process flow.

As a class, we'll share our answers.

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INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY

Common Understanding (2 of 2)

5 min

Terms

- ❑ Strategic Planning
- ❑ Strategic Management
- ❑ Strategic Thinking
- ❑ Strategic Decision Making

Definitions

- ❑ Monitoring & Controlling Actions
- ❑ Making Choices
- ❑ Generating Options
- ❑ Identifying the Actions

Sequenced Flow

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

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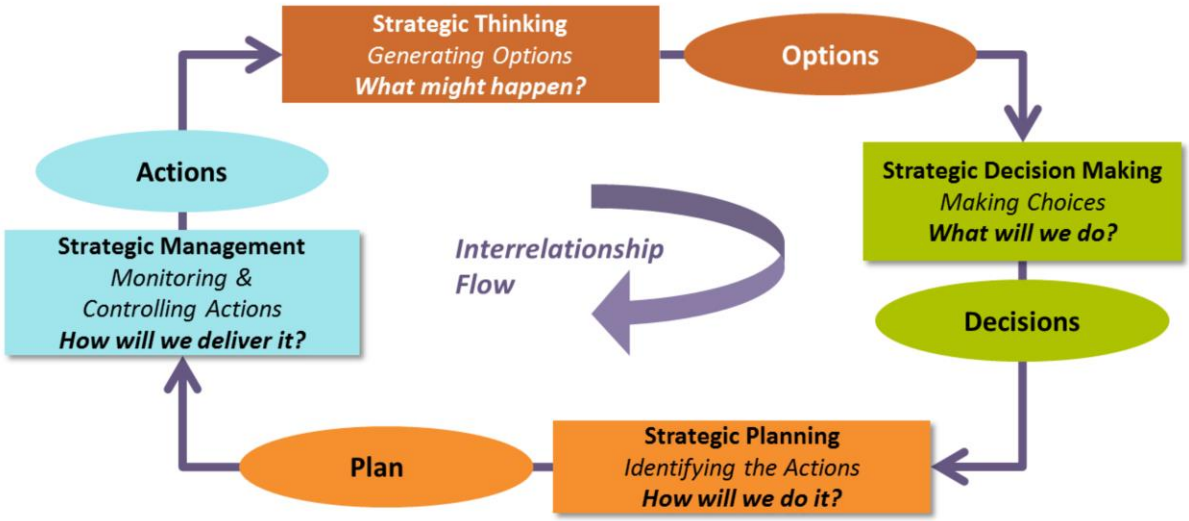
TOOL

Integrated Strategic Model



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GROUP BREAKOUT ACTIVITY

Assessing Integrated Strategic Model

In your small groups:

- Open the group breakout slide deck
- Select a scribe or use the annotation tool as a group to complete the table:
  - Where in your organization do you see evidence of this work being done?
  - What areas of improvement might you recommend?

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GROUP BREAKOUT ACTIVITY

Assessing Integrated Strategic Model

	Where does this occur?	Possible areas of improvement?
Strategic Thinking		
Strategic Decision Making		
Strategic Planning		
Strategic Management		

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VIDEO

The Fog of War

Sound Decisions – Must see things as they are.

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Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6ypo-MI2Uk&feature=PlayList&p=D93CA1B536427A37&playnext_from=PL&playnext=1&index=7

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Source*: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6ypo-MI2Uk&feature=PlayList&p=D93CA1B536427A37&playnext_from=PL&playnext=1&index=7*

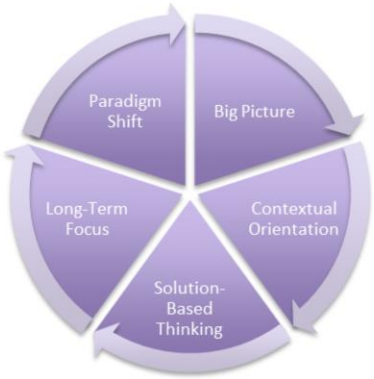
STRATEGIC THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND DECISION MAKING

Debrief: Problem Solving to Avoid Fog of War

Let's look at a 5-part model, and discuss how these elements might counter the Fog of War traps and better deploy and manage a strategic outcome.

- **Big picture** – use new, wider perspective for thinking, planning, doing, evaluating and continuous improvement
- **Contextual orientation** – aware of environment, capabilities (organizational and individual)
- Use **solution-based thinking**:
  - Define "need" as a "gap in results" rather than insufficient resources, means, or methods
  - Differentiate between ends (what) and means (how)
- **Long-term focused**
- **Paradigm shift** – move out of your comfort zone

Any other components to consider?



Adapted from Strategic Planning for Success, by Kaufman; pp. 40-56.

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STRATEGIC THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND DECISION MAKING

Diverse Perspectives: de Bono Six Thinking Hats

- **White Hat:** Facts, Neutral, Objective, Information
- **Red Hat:** Emotions, Hunches, Intuitive, Gut, Feelings
- **Black Hat:** Critic, Analyst, Logical Negative
- **Yellow Hat:** Sunshine, Optimism, Logical Positive
- **Green Hat:** Creative, Growth, Possibilities, Ideas
- **Blue Hat:** Cool, Agenda, Process, Organizer, Overview, Decision

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Source: 12manage.com

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STRATEGIC THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND DECISION MAKING

Operational Plan – Video Example

Organization Name & Strategic Initiative				
Services Provided:				
• •			• •	
Strategic Goals & Objectives:				
• •				
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)			High-level Resources:	
• •			• •	
Strategy	Activity	Owner	Target Completion	KPI Achieved

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VIDEO

Operational Translation of Strategic Direction

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhkItbtiBug

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Video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhkItbtiBug

STRATEGIC THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND DECISION MAKING

Video Debrief: Key Points

- **Broad key stakeholder input solicited:**
  - **SWOT:** strengths/weaknesses/opportunity/threats
  - **Stakeholders:** using **Michael Porter's Five Forces Model:** (Competitive Rivalry, New Entrant, Substitute, Suppliers, Customers) **and** Employees
- **Leadership aligned around goals and action plan**
  - Clearly defined decision-making and escalation processes
- **Operational deployment plan documented** – "How to deliver the value":
  - Summarize on one-page
  - Metrics / Milestones / Owners
  - Key: What you measure becomes important. Changing what you measure changes focus.
- **Contextual orientation** – aware of environment, capabilities (organizational and individual)
- **Outside process guidance** considered and/or utilized

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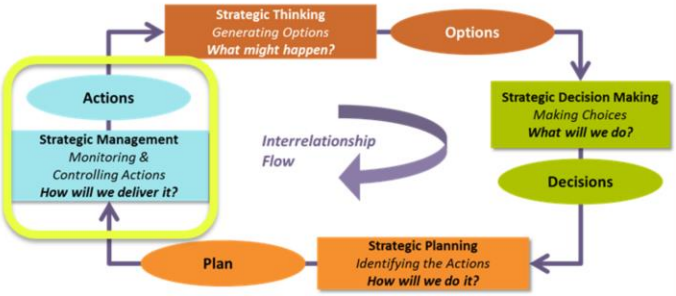
STRATEGIC THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND DECISION-MAKING

Recall: Integrated Strategic Model



Strategic Management:

- Goal: Manage the deployment or plan execution on an ongoing basis; ***monitor and control*** the work underway.
- Focus on the "p***rocess***" to ensure the actions taken yield the planned results.
  - How is the work proceeding, given the performance information?
- What to monitor and control – based on the plan defined:
  - Is there any **variance**?
  - What is the **root cause**?
  - What is the **appropriate response**?
  - How will the response be controlled?

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GROUP BREAKOUT ACTIVITY

Putting into Practice: Problem-Solving Approach to Manage a Strategic Outcome

In your small groups:

- Open the group breakout slide deck
- Select a scribe or use the annotation tool as a group to complete the table:
  - Build an approach to address issues (variation from the strategic vision) during the rollout and deployment of a strategic strategy
  - What high-level process (about 3 to 5 steps) do you recommend?
  - Who shall be involved?
  - What hot topics do you anticipate arising?

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GROUP BREAKOUT ACTIVITY

Problem-Solving Approach to Manage a Strategic Outcome

20 min

Problem-Solving High-Level Process Steps	Owner (1)	Others	Possible Hot Topics?
			•
			•
			•

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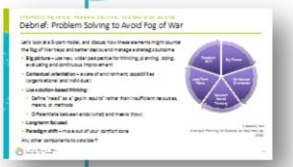
STRATEGIC THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND DECISION-MAKING

Debrief: Managing a Strategic Outcome

- Clear **owner** of strategic management (often different than those driving the strategic visioning work)
  - Monitor and control the deployment (operations' work *performance* and *communications*)
  - Frequent *bi-directional* touch-points
  - Visible status communications by stakeholder type
- Ensure **leadership alignment** on:
  - What – the vision
  - Key metrics by stakeholder type
  - Process for strategic management (who owns it; process flow, metric reporting, communication)
  - Process to escalate and resolve issues (forum, frequency, decision-makers, communication)
- **Simple strategic plan template** that translates the direction to operational teams
  - Communicate and deploy, by stakeholder type
- **Overcommunicate** not only the "**what**," the "**why**," available **resources**, more than once



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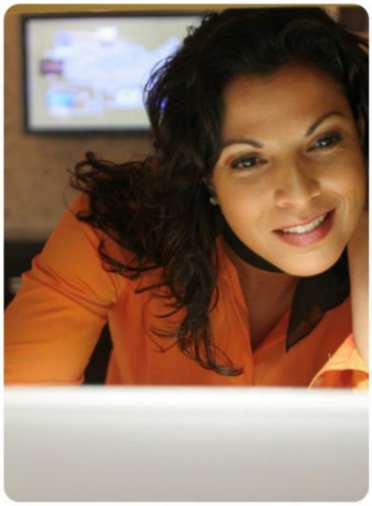
CHAT

Demonstrating Strategic Thinking



To wrap up, type in the chat box:

- What is one action you can take in the next week to *demonstrate strategic thinking* at either an organizational or at a personal level?
- **How** do you plan to implement *this strategic thinking action* and **who** will you involve?

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SUMMARY
Strategic Thinker: Critical Skills
OPEN
Open Minded
Systems Thinker
Accepts Diversity
Thinks Out-of-Box
Thinks Outrageously at Times
Curious
WHY?
Challenge Assumptions...
A Better Place
Hypothesis-Oriented Future Creation
Aware of Own Worldview
Is Compassionate
Is Generous
Seeks and Fosters Collective Wisdom
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SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

Key Insights? How Will You Apply Your Learning?

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NEXT STEPS: BRIDGE WORK

Deepen Your Understanding of Strategic Thinking

Individually, explore these resources to deepen your understanding:

- Read: Five best practices to improve your strategic planning process, https://ourpublicservice.org/blog/strategic-planning-best-practices/
- Read: HBR - How to Demonstrate Your Strategic Thinking Skills, by Nina A. Bowman https://hbr.org/2019/09/how-to-demonstrate-your-strategic-thinking-skills
- Book Recommendation: *Strategic Planning for Success: Aligning People, Performance*, by Dr. Roger Kaufman

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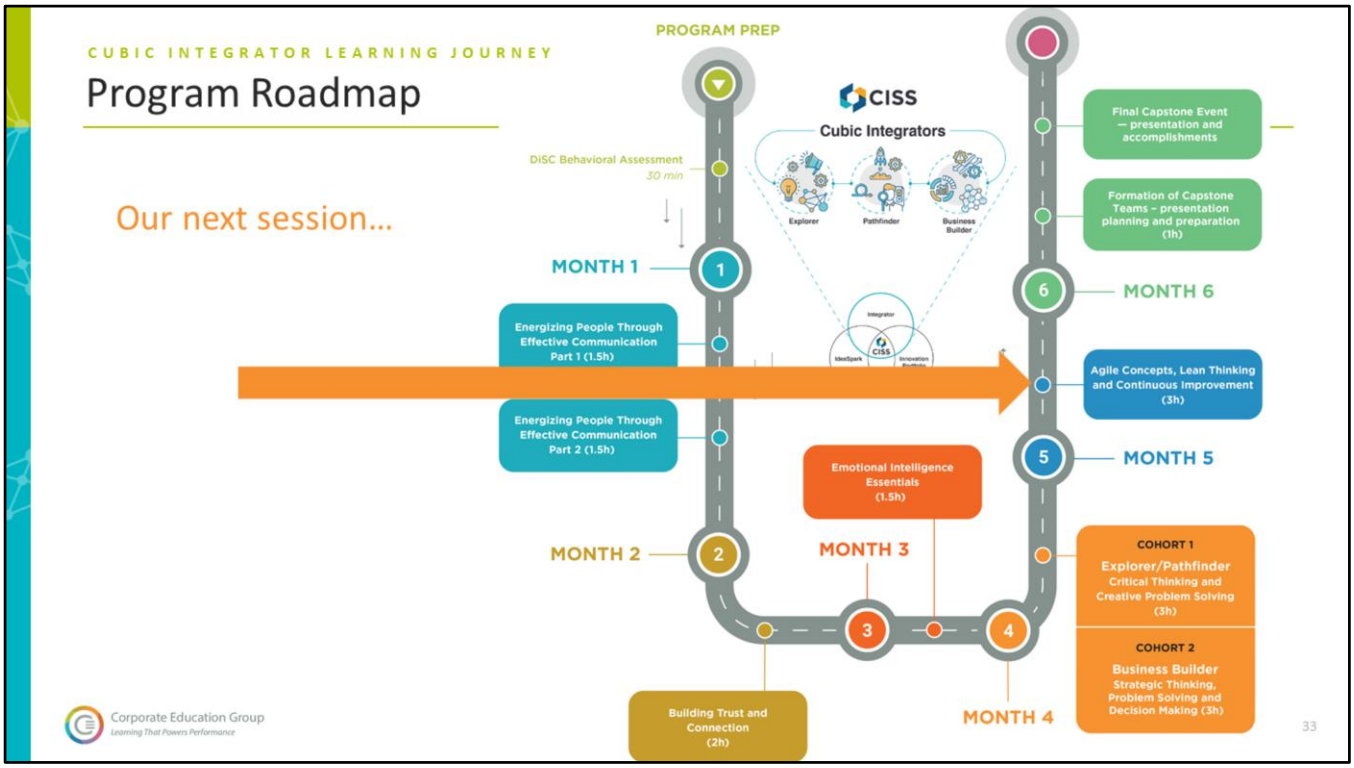
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Program Roadmap
Our next session...
PROGRAM PREP
CISS
Cubic Integrators
Explorer
Pathfinder
Business Builder
DiSC Behavioral Assessment
30 min
MONTH 1
1
Energizing People Through Effective Communication Part 1 (1.5h)
Energizing People Through Effective Communication Part 2 (1.5h)
MONTH 2
2
Building Trust and Connection (2h)
MONTH 3
3
Emotional Intelligence Essentials (1.5h)
MONTH 4
4
MONTH 5
5
Agile Concepts, Lean Thinking and Continuous Improvement (3h)
MONTH 6
6
Formation of Capstone Teams – presentation planning and preparation (1h)
Final Capstone Event – presentation and accomplishments
COHORT 1
Explorer/Pathfinder
Critical Thinking and Creative Problem Solving (3h)
COHORT 2
Business Builder
Strategic Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making (3h)
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