

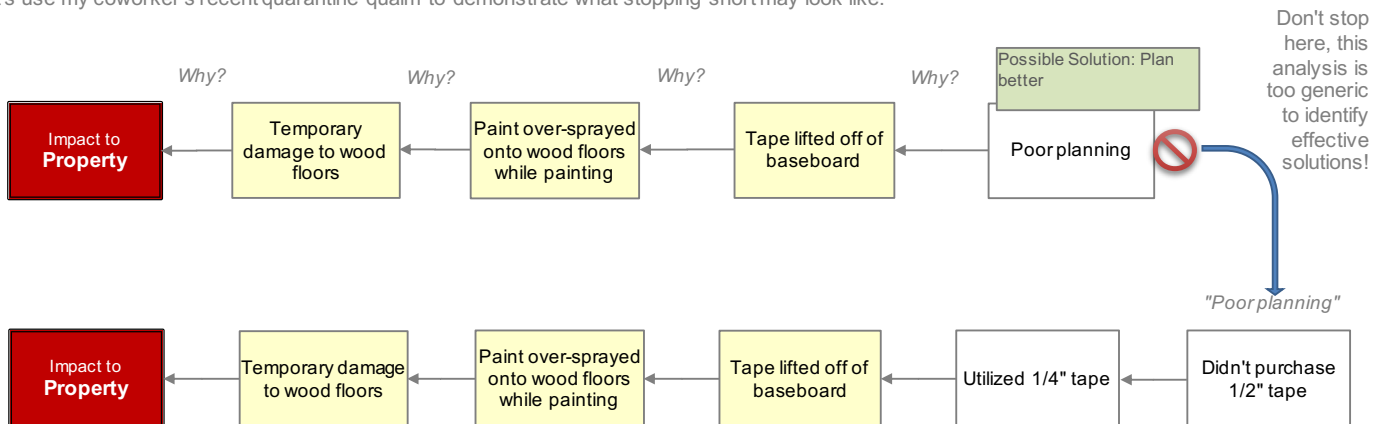
Facilitation Tip 3: Avoid Generalizations

It's human nature to group people, places and things into categories, so it's not surprising to see organizations categorize their problems. Generalizing investigations to a single root cause like "human error" or "procedure not followed" does not yield effective solutions.

The intent of the categorization is often beneficial. For instance, recording the type of problem or failure mode into a database allows for the tracking and monitoring of incidents. However, your investigation should NOT stop with these type of generalizations. By asking a few more Why questions, the investigation moves past those artificial stopping points, so more specific causes can be revealed. This allows the investigation to:

- Uncover specific organizational breakdowns
- Reveal sustainable, actionable solutions

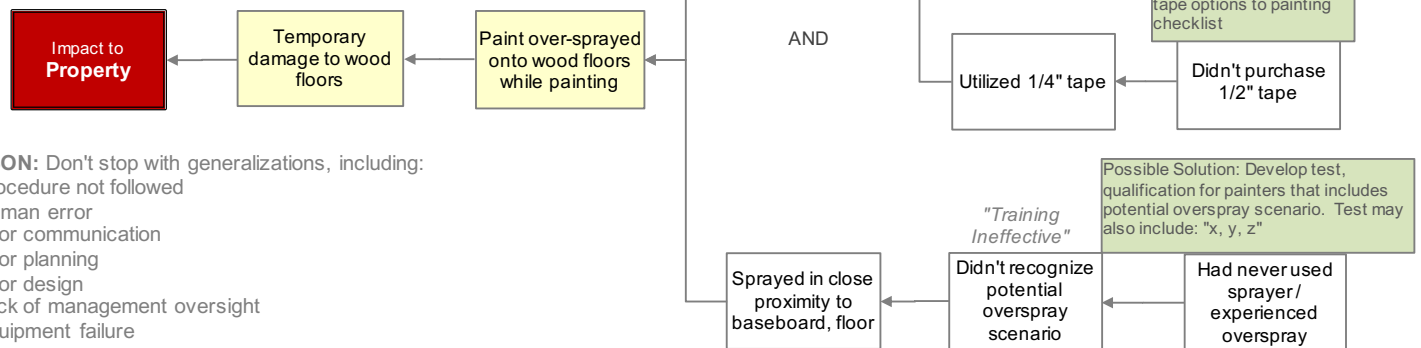
Let's use my coworker's recent quarantine qualm to demonstrate what stopping short may look like:



Going a little bit further in the analysis, we reveal a few more causes that may have been generalized initially.

Below, you'll see an example that shows how revealing additional causes and being more specific helps identify more specific solutions.

10-Why Cause Map™ Diagram



LESSON: Don't stop with generalizations, including:

- Procedure not followed
- Human error
- Poor communication
- Poor planning
- Poor design
- Lack of management oversight
- Equipment failure

If you get to this point (or hear it) during your investigation, keep asking, "Why?" By adding specificity, there are learning opportunities within your organization that will yield long-term, sustainable solutions.

Being an effective cause-and-effect analyst is a career skill. For more training opportunities, consider one of our free webinars, online short courses or a full online workshop.

Facilitation Tip 3

For a more in-depth explanation of how avoiding generalizations reveals better solutions, watch this video.



(5 minutes)

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email: info@thinkreliability.com phone: 281-412-7766