

ALITEK

PO BOX 2049  
WEST ASHGROVE  
QLD 4060  
AUSTRALIA

PO BOX 1455  
TOC  
QLD 4169  
AUSTRALIA

TEL: 61 7 3366 8808  
FAX: 61 7 3366 8818

TEL: 61 7 3891 6987  
FAX: 61 7 3891 7787

## ALITEK DECISION- MAKING TOOL

### 3

### “Now-Where-How” Problem Solving

The Now-Where-How process is an extremely effective way of solving problems. It can be applied to problems needing a solution now, or tomorrow, or next week, next year or next decade! Given its applicability over various time frames, it can be applied to both strategic planning and operational improvement within the one organization. This is really good because it means you have a single approach that can be applied by the executives to long-range problems and by the front-line staff to production efficiency problems ie a common language from top to toe!

Start the process by identifying what you know about the situation NOW – this will be your foundation for problem solving. To get this information you may like to consider what are your current issues, what has happened in the last year or so, what are your current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, objectives, threats, restraints, barriers and risks. What do your current problems look like—what is causing them? What information can you get from your computer systems to suggest why things are as they are? Why not get a few people together and share your views so that you come up with a short list you can all agree on.

Having developed your list of NOW issues, the normal problem solving approach is for someone in the group to state “Well, I think we’ve got a sufficient view of what the problems are now, so how are we going to address them?” STOP RIGHT THERE!

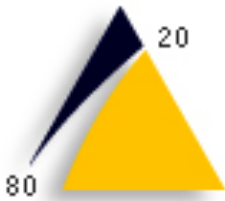
You are likely to find that there are as many ideas on how to solve the problem as there are people talking in the group. In other words, people come from different backgrounds and have different perceptions of how to solve the problem, and they will want some element of their pet approach to be part of the solution. Here’s where we can make some incredible gains.

Let’s assume for a moment that everything is ideal and that suddenly your problems are solved. What does the solution look like—what things will be in place if it is all solved? WHERE will you be once the problem is solved? We have found over the years that it is far easier for a group of people to agree on what the ideal solution looks like, rather than trying to agree initially on what to do about it.

Get your group of people to brainstorm and agree on what a successful end-result will look like. You don’t need everything here, just the 20% of things that will provide 80% of the success. When you have done this you will have determined the gap between your current situation (NOW) and your ideal solution (WHERE). It is now time to work out HOW to bridge this gap.

Bridging the gap with a few key strategies or actions will be much easier to determine when you have the end-points. And everyone in the group is working towards the same goals, because you agreed on these earlier. So all the solutions put forward are nearer the mark than further, and you will find that it is much easier for all to agree on the HOW. Of course, it does not stop people thinking creatively and these creative ideas should be encouraged at this stage.

Once you have a list of great HOW ideas from the group, then apply the 80/20 Principle to determine which of these will comprise your starting point to give you the greatest opportunity of success. Tools to achieve this can be found elsewhere in Alitek’s Decision Makers Toolkit.



**ALITEK**

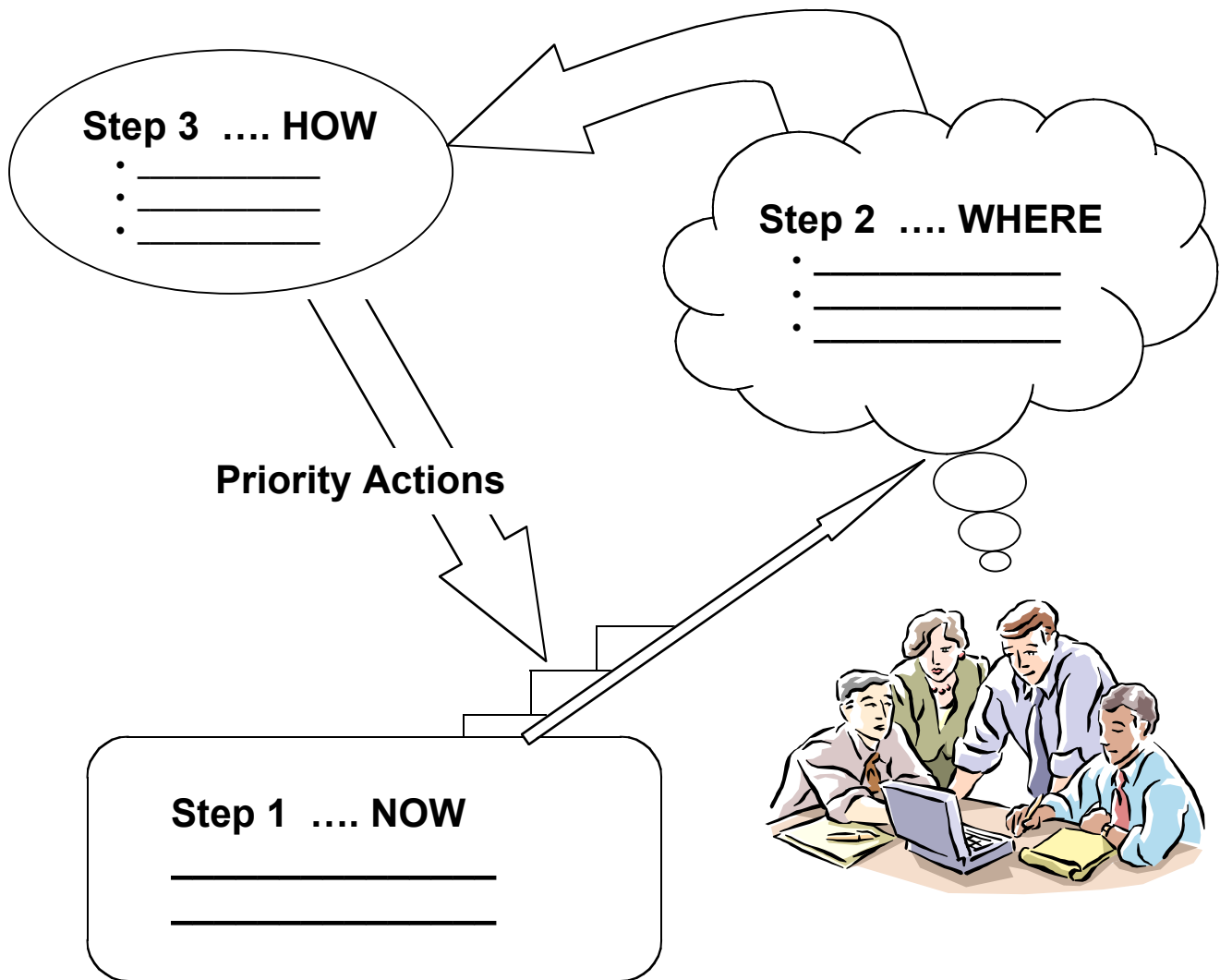
PO BOX 2049  
WEST ASHGROVE  
QLD 4060  
AUSTRALIA

PO BOX 1455  
TOC  
QLD 4169  
AUSTRALIA

TEL: 61 7 3366 8808  
FAX: 61 7 3366 8818

TEL: 61 7 3891 6987  
FAX: 61 7 3891 7787

## The Alitek 'Now-Where-How' process simplified



The key success factor in the Now-Where-How process is the identification of the "successful end point" to the issue or problem. It is easier to get people to agree on this, then to agree on "How" to get there. Try to get people to define their thoughts on paper as this will save many hours in a workshop environment.