Are You Solving the Right Problem?

The Wilder Diagnostic Confidence Check

You know something isn't working. But do you know why?
Think about one specific business challenge you're currently trying to solve.

Before you begin, consider the stakes: *Where is this problem costing you today?* It might be showing up in revenue, growth, profitability, customer retention, employee engagement, time, or progress against an important strategic objective.

Answer **YES or NO** based on what you know today. Don't overthink it. Answer YES only if you can point to something concrete, such as evidence, analysis, a conversation or a test, that supports your answer. If you're not sure, answer NO.

Section 1: DEFINE THE GAP

1. Can you quantify the gap between where you are and where you need to be?
The clearer the gap, the easier it is to know what you're trying to change.

YES NO

2. Can you point to data that shows where the problem is occurring, not just where it ultimately shows up?
An outcome (revenue is down, leads are down) indicates something is happening. The cause may sit further upstream (fewer prospects in the funnel, lower conversion, customers buying less).

YES NO

Section 2: WIDEN THE LENS

3. Have you asked the people closest to the problem what they think is causing it, and heard at least one explanation that's different from your own?
Different vantage points can reveal different parts of the problem and surface assumptions you may not have recognized.

YES NO

4. Have you compared the perspectives you've gathered to see where they agree and where they differ?
Agreement builds confidence, but different answers are clues to where more understanding is needed.

YES NO

5. Have you considered whether more than one thing may be causing the problem?
Sometimes one explanation is true without being the whole answer.

YES NO

6. Have you looked beyond the most obvious place for the cause?
A sales problem may not start in sales. A marketing problem may not start in marketing.

YES NO

7. Have you considered what may have changed outside your organization?
Customers, competitors, technology and markets don't stand still.

YES NO

Section 3: TEST THE EXPLANATION

8. Does your explanation account for all the data you're seeing, or are there some things that don't fit?
Sometimes the exceptions are where the most useful clues are hiding.

YES NO

9. Have you looked for something that might prove your explanation wrong?
Evidence that challenges your theory can be as useful as evidence that supports it.

YES NO

10. Do you have evidence that the solution you're considering will address the cause you've identified?
A logical connection is a good start. Evidence that the solution has worked in a similar situation makes the case stronger.

YES NO

11. Have you seriously considered a solution other than the one you currently prefer?
Considering alternatives can help separate the problem from a preferred answer.

YES NO

Total number of Yes:

SCORING

Your score reflects how much confidence you can place in your current explanation. Think of the ranges as guideposts, not verdicts. Your NOs may be even more useful than the score. Look back at the questions you answered NO. Which one, if answered, could most change your understanding of the problem?

9 - 11: Tested and Holding

You didn't just form an explanation. You tested it. You've heard other points of view, looked for evidence that could challenge your thinking, and checked your explanation against what you're seeing inside and outside the organization. So far, it holds up.

From here, the job is less about further diagnosis and more about staying alert as your customers, market, or business change.

7 - 8: A Working Hypothesis

You have a credible explanation, and you've done some work to test it. Much of what you've found supports your thinking, but there are still assumptions or unanswered questions worth exploring.

Look at your NOs. Which assumption would be most important to test before you commit significant money, time, or organizational energy?

4 - 6: An Emerging Picture

You have real pieces of the picture: some data, some conversations, some experience and instinct. But those pieces haven't yet come together into an explanation you can place a lot of confidence in.

Identify the unanswered question that could most change your understanding of the problem, and start there.

0 - 3: Early

Something isn't working, and you know it. What's driving it is still largely unclear. That's not a reflection of how well you know your business. It simply means there's more to understand about the problem before settling on the solution.

Resist choosing the solution just yet. Start by getting clearer about where the problem is occurring and what evidence might help explain why.

Sometimes the problem is important enough to diagnose before you invest in fixing it.

Wilder Marketing Group helps leadership teams understand what's happening, what may be causing it, what the evidence supports, and what deserves to happen next.