



Tips for Removing “Burning Hassles”

Has your team or organization identified a list of frustrating road blocks that impede everyone’s productivity? Here are some tips for getting rid of those “burning hassles” that are driving you, your colleagues, or your customers crazy. Overall success may be more likely if you do the following:

- 1. Subject each hassle to a three-question test.** Use the answers to help prioritize the order in which to tackle your issues:
 - Are your customers bothered?** For example, if an obstacle has the potential to delay customer shipments, or makes your offerings tough to use, it could easily pass this test! A hassle that doesn’t visibly affect your customers might not pass *this* test, but it may pass the others.
 - Can you get a quick resolution?** Try to determine which hassles you can reduce or remove in the shortest time, such as within three to six months. While you shouldn’t ignore the obstacles that require more time, you can create a *stronger feeling of momentum* by tackling the easiest ones first. A few quick successes can really boost morale!
 - Can you more easily achieve a business goal?** For example, will removing a certain hurdle help the organization attain a goal such as *cutting production time*? If, say, people are bogged down entering the same data over and over again, and it’s causing production reports to be perpetually late, this hassle passes the test. If there’s no solid reason to keep doing this, make changes!
- 2. Consider a variety of possibilities.** Although you can attempt to fix a given problem, you could try this: Simply *stop performing* annoying tasks if they no longer add value. Another scenario: If you’re aware that a cure for a big hassle is in the works, but it might not be available for a while, a *temporary work-around* may be the best short-term solution.
- 3. Tackle the problems under your control first.** If you’re in control, you can decide which methods and timing to use. That way, you can reap the benefits more easily. If a hassle isn’t under your control, it’s probably a *system-level obstacle* that involves other people and processes. To resolve any system-level issues, you can get that ball rolling if you: a) identify the factors beyond your control, b) research them, and then c) propose a solution others can perform.