How-How Diagram

When to use it

Use it when you are seeking to create a practical solution to a problem.

Use it as a way of exploring the details for a plan.

How to use it

State problem

State your problem clearly and write it the leftmost box of the diagram below. Make sure that the problem is written as a 'need', so the 'how' question will work. When working with a group of people, make sure they all are very clear about the meaning.

Ask 'How can this be done?'

Asking this question should result in several possible solutions, which you can write on boxes (one per box) and stick up to the right of the problem box.
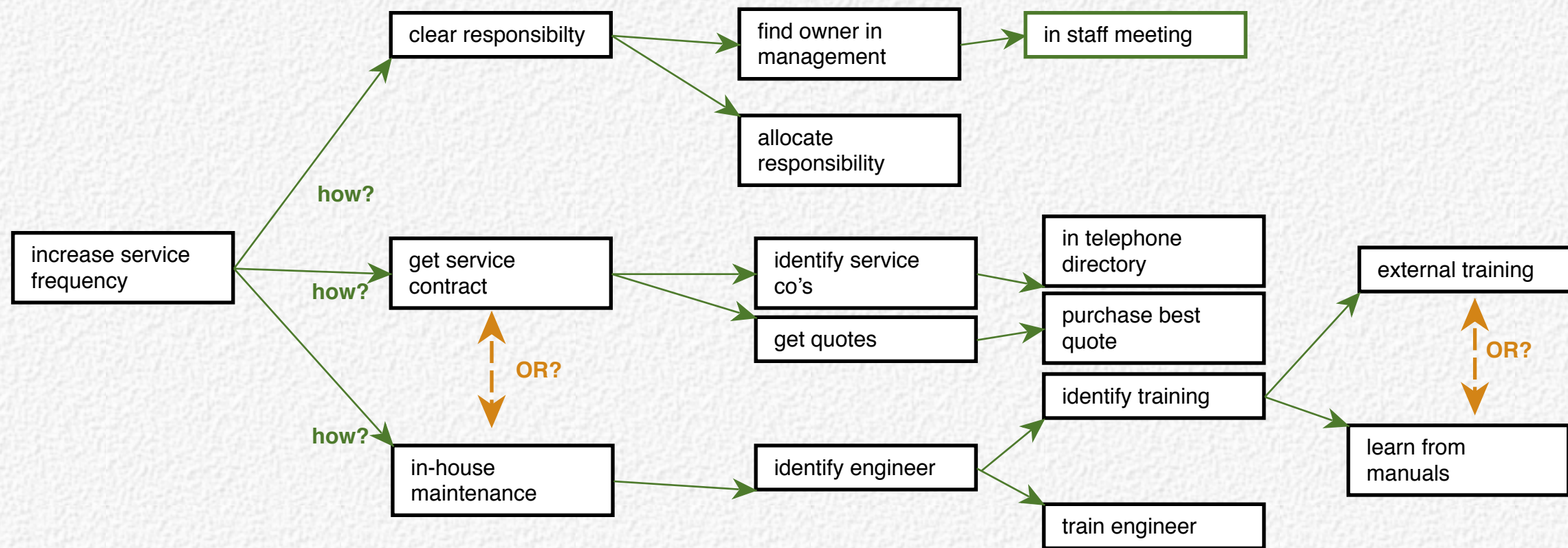
Note that there can be boolean relationships between these - that is, some may be alternatives and some may need to happen as well as other solution boxes. Show these either by using different colors of boxes or by writing 'and' or 'or' as in the example below.

You can draw in connecting lines at this stage, but if you need to shift the box to make space, then these will be out of place. It is often better to leave line-drawing until later.

Repeat and conclude

Repeat the process of asking 'how' for each box, building up a hierarchy as below.

Example

How it works

The How-How Diagram works by repeatedly asking the same question of a problem, breaking down the solution into more and more explicit elements. At each stage, there can be multiple answers to the 'How' questions, which results in a hierarchical tree-structure.

Making this tree visible gives several advantages:

§   It allows a group of people to share the mental model of the situation and hence work more harmoniously on it.

§   It allows re-examination of parts of the analysis, so you can change, remove or add to it at any time. This supports the non-linear way in which we tend to think.

§   It allows you to consciously not to follow some paths, digging only into the most likely areas.

With thanks to: http://creatingminds.org/tools/how_how.htm