

Root Cause Analysis Meeting Agenda

Problem / incident: _____

Date and time: _____

Facilitator: _____

Method chosen: _____

Where (room or link): _____

60 minutes

Min	Block	What happens	Output that must exist before moving on	Who leads
0–5	Frame the problem	The facilitator reads the problem statement aloud exactly as written and asks one question: is anything in it factually wrong? No causes yet.	Everyone is working on the same problem, in the same words.	Facilitator
5–15	Agree the facts	Walk the timeline and the data from the pre-read. Anything nobody can source is marked unverified rather than argued about.	A short list of agreed facts and a separate list of open questions, each with an owner.	Closest to the event
15–35	Find the cause	Run the chosen method: 5 Whys down one chain, or a fishbone first if the cause is contested. Every step has to point at evidence, not at a plausible story.	One candidate cause with its evidence — or two candidates and the test that separates them.	Facilitator
35–45	Test the cause	Two questions, asked out loud. If we remove this, does the problem stop? And does it explain why nothing caught it?	The cause survives both questions, or the team knows exactly what to test before the next meeting.	Whole room
45–55	Decide the actions	One action per cause, as high in the hierarchy as is feasible. Owners are named in the room, out loud, while they are in it.	Owner, date and the verification method for each action.	Process owner
55–60	Close	Read the actions and dates back. Agree who writes the summary and when the follow-up happens.	Follow-up date in calendars and a named summary owner before anyone leaves.	Facilitator

90 minutes

Min	Block	What happens	Output that must exist before moving on	Who leads
0–5	Frame the problem	As above: the statement read aloud, corrected for facts only.	One problem, one wording.	Facilitator
5–20	Agree the facts	The longer version: walk the data together on screen rather than referring to it. Quantify what is known — how many, how often, since when, against what target.	Agreed numbers, not impressions. Open questions listed with owners.	Holds the data
20–30	Bound the problem	Is / Is Not: what is affected, and what could equally have been affected and is not. This is the half hour the 60-minute version does not have.	A boundary that every candidate cause has to fit.	Facilitator
30–55	Find the cause	The method, run properly, with the boundary in front of the room. Candidates that cannot explain the IS NOT column are dropped on the spot.	A cause supported by evidence, with the contradictions named rather than smoothed over.	Facilitator
55–65	Test the cause	Removal test and detection test, plus the question the 60-minute meeting usually skips: why did our controls not catch it?	Cause of occurrence and cause of escape, both stated.	Whole room
65–80	Design the actions	One action per cause. Challenge anything that depends on people remembering. Decide the acceptance criterion before the action exists.	Actions with owners, dates, acceptance criteria and the control that will hold the fix.	Process owner
80–90	Close and plan verification	Read back. Agree who verifies, on what data, and on what date — not just who does the work.	Verification owner and date, summary owner, follow-up in calendars.	Facilitator

Who is in the room

Relationship to the problem	Why they are in the room	What breaks without them
Saw it happen	First-hand facts about what the process actually does, rather than what the procedure says it does.	The room reasons from the documented process — which is rarely the one that produced the failure.
Owns the process	Can say what may change and what the real constraints are.	You agree actions nobody present has the authority to implement.
Can approve the change	Money, downtime, people: the decision that turns an action into a date.	You leave with intentions instead of commitments.
Holds the data	Brings the numbers and can say how reliable they are.	Twenty minutes disappear into debating what the data probably says.
Facilitates	Runs the method and the clock, and has no stake in which answer wins.	The most senior voice in the room becomes the method.
Sees it from outside	Downstream, support or customer-facing: knows what the failure looked like to whoever received it.	Nobody asks the escape question — why the problem was not caught before it left.

Five to seven people. Invite by relationship to the problem, not by job title: one person often covers two rows, and a title on its own covers none. Anyone attending only to be informed gets the summary instead — every extra person in the room costs airtime that the method needs.

Send 24 hours before — six lines, not a deck

- The problem statement in one paragraph, with no cause and no blame in it.
- The data: how many, how often, since when, measured against target.
- The method you will use, and one sentence on why that one.
- The ground rule: we are looking for the cause, not the person.
- What each person should bring — a document, a sample, a screenshot, a number.
- The decision this meeting has to produce, stated as a decision.

Before anyone leaves the room

- A cause with evidence behind it — or a named test, an owner and a date.
- One action per cause, each with a single owner rather than a team.
- An acceptance criterion written before the action is carried out.
- A verification date, and the name of whoever checks it.
- A follow-up meeting in calendars, not in intentions.
- Every unresolved point written down as an open question with an owner.

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