1. **Team Approach**

While the reality is that typically one person (probably, you, if you’re taking this course) is assigned the responsibility of coming up with a corrective action, it’s best if you can corral some people knowledgeable about the issue at-hand to help you work on the problem.

The problem with working on a corrective action by yourself, is that you probably aren’t going to think about all the different possibilities associated with the problem. Back in the old days, when I used to teach this class in an actual classroom, I used an exercise that brought out the effectiveness of the “team approach”. The group would usually consist of 10 or so students. I would place about 30 small items in a shallow box. The items were things like, an acorn, a marble, a coin, a battery, a piece a jewelry … you get the picture. I would arrange the items in the box so that all the items could be seen. Then, I would place the box on a table with the 10 students surrounding it. I would let them look at the contents for about 10 seconds. They weren’t allowed to touch any of the items. After the 10 seconds were up, each of them went back to their seat and wrote down the names of as many of the items as they could remember. Most of the people would be able to remember and list 15 items. But, when everyone compared their lists, in most cases, all 30 items were identified. This little exercise was a good way to demonstrate that a group of people is likely to come up with more ideas than one person working by themself.

Sometimes a person with little or no knowledge about a situation is a good team member because their mind is not cluttered with preconceived notions. I especially like the story, probably not true, but nice to think about … of a truck that tried to pass underneath an overpass and got stuck. The bystanders were flummoxed … trying to think of how to get the truck unstuck when a child walked up and said, “why don’t you let the air out of the tires?”

In other cases, the person closest to a problem might be the best person to start an investigation with; sometimes, they know exactly what happened and they can shed light on the cause of a problem and save you a lot of time. Let’s say there was a customer complaint about the wrong type of container having been used for parts shipped to them. The customer complained because the container wouldn’t fit on their assembly line (the container that was supposed to be used was designed specifically for that customer’s assembly line). You sent out and asked the operators who normally pack the parts if they remember using different containers at some point. They said “oh yeah, we ran out of the regular containers, but we were told it would be okay to use