② Underlying Problem Fact Sheet

Required Elements

Condition Phrase (conditions in the future scene that prompted you to select the challenge you are converting into an underlying problem)

Stem ("How might we" or "In what ways might we")

Key Verb Phrase (a phrase that tells what you want to accomplish)

Purpose (why you what to do what you set out to do in the key verb phrase)

Future Scene Parameters (place, time, topic)

Recommended Procedures

1. Select your most promising challenges (3-8 depending on the team preference).
2. Decide on the best challenge based on the importance of the challenge to the future scene, its ability to generate many solutions, and the degree of interest in the challenge's subject matter.
3. Identify conditions in the future scene that led the team to select this challenge.
4. Write those conditions on a scrap piece of paper followed by the stem, "How might we" or "In what ways might we."
5. Convert the challenge into a brief, specific phrase called the key verb phrase (KVP). This identifies what your want to do. Add it to the UP after the stem.
6. Add a purpose for what you set out to do in the key verb phrase.
7. Brainstorm possible solutions for the selected challenge (now your underlying problem) to test its ability to produce solutions ideas. Switch to another challenge if too few solution emerge.
8. Add the future scene parameters – time (when), location (where), and topic. All parameters are found in the future scene.
9. Copy the final underlying problem in the booklet.

Scoring Scales

Structure - Are required elements included? (1-10 points)

Focus - Is the UP well defined and clearly written and does it address the future scene's charge? (1-10 points)

Adequacy/Importance - Does the UP identifies a major, important issue from the future scene? (1-10 points)

Reminders

A key verb phrase contains one, *and only one*, key verb.

Never use absolute verbs such as "stop" or "prevent" as key verbs.

Evaluators will hold you to the exact words you choose for the underlying problem.

Failure to include a purpose is a serious error that generally prevents a team from advancing. It lowers score in step 2, 3, and the overall scale. When teams fail to include a purpose, evaluator imposes a purpose and holds the team accountable for it.

Leaving off future scene parameters is the sign of a careless, poorly trained team.

What *NOT* To Do

• Don't pick a key verb phrase that is too large or too trivial.
• Don't pick a key verb phrase that addressed a generic concern or something not in the future scene.

Power Strategies

Go back and highlight the future scene charge before examining challenges for an underlying problem.

Use a thesaurus when selecting or reviewing a key verb - and no other time.

The underlying problem should deal directly with the problem. Avoid "generic" key verbs such as "educate" and "convince."

Completion of step 2 is generally considered the half-way point in the process. Teams should carefully evaluate their progress at this time and adjust accordingly.