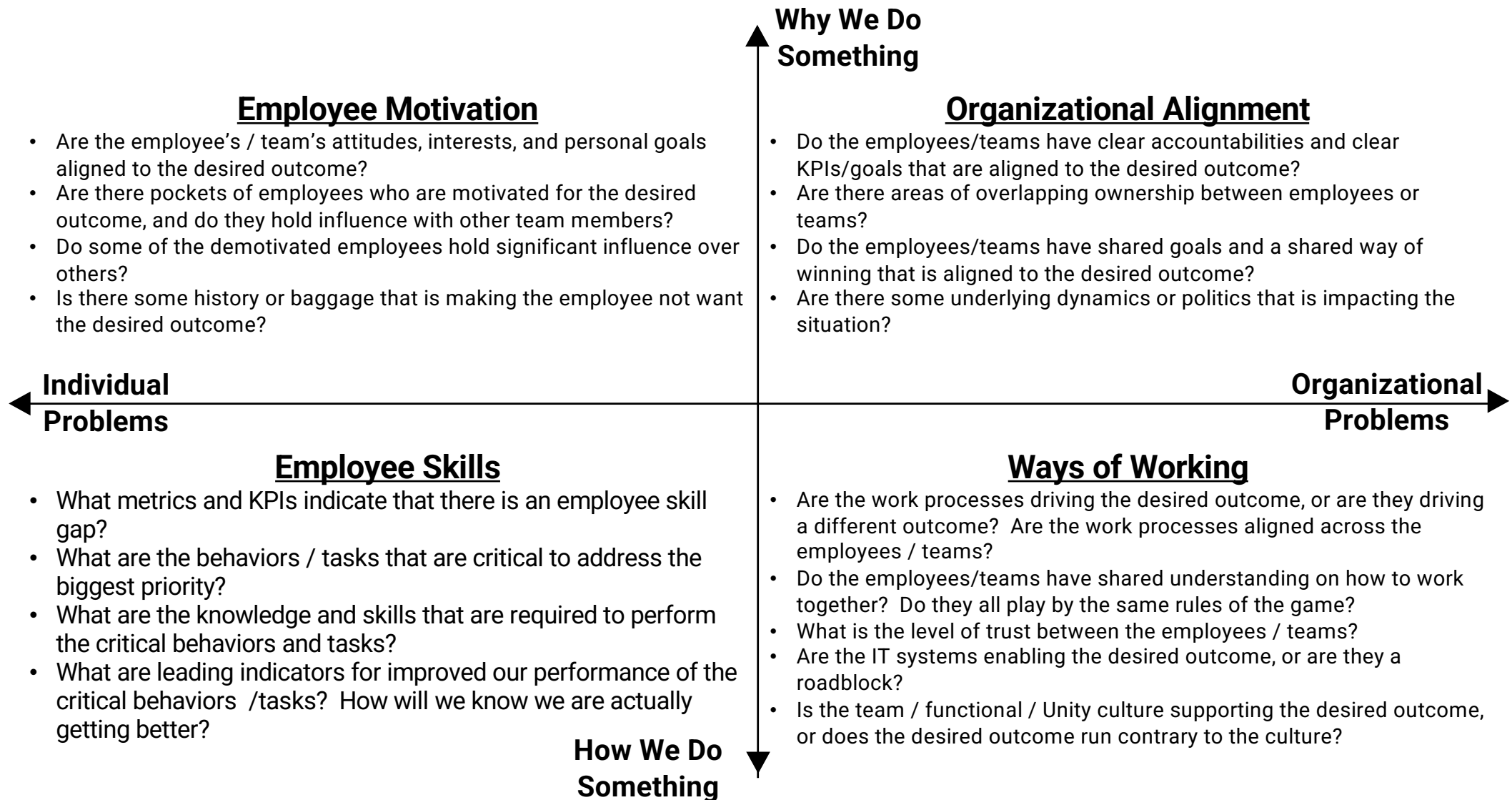# Solving The Right Problems
A 3 Step Approach

Step 1) Frame the Issue

1. **Identify** – What is the critical issue/s you are trying to resolve?

2. **Define** – What are the Business Results / KPIs / process metrics (financial, engagement, functional, etc…) that indicate there these issue are important, and needs to be resolved?

3. **Map** – If multiple issues have been identified, you should map all the issues on a simple graph. On the vertical axis you should plot the issues' "Level of Complexity" (high complexity vs low complexity). On the horizontal axis you should plot the issues "Criticality" (not critical at this moment vs emergency level criticality).

4. **Select** – Don't try and resolve multiple highly complex issues in the same meeting. Focus on 1, and build your plan around addressing that issue. Multiple low complexity issues can be combined and resolved in 1 meeting.

5. **Set Goal** – What would change, or how would the results improve if we addressed this issue? Be specific (from XXX to YYY).

Step 2) Find the Root Cause

Why We Do Something

Employee Motivation

Organizational Alignment

Individual Problems

Organizational Problems

Employee Skills

Ways of Working

How We Do Something

Root Cause Diagnosis Questions

HEALTHY PERFORMANCE CULTURE

Why We Do Something

Employee Motivation

- Are the employee's / team's attitudes, interests, and personal goals aligned to the desired outcome?
- Are there pockets of employees who are motivated for the desired outcome, and do they hold influence with other team members?
- Do some of the demotivated employees hold significant influence over others?
- Is there some history or baggage that is making the employee not want the desired outcome?

Organizational Alignment

- Do the employees/teams have clear accountabilities and clear KPIs/goals that are aligned to the desired outcome?
- Are there areas of overlapping ownership between employees or teams?
- Do the employees/teams have shared goals and a shared way of winning that is aligned to the desired outcome?
- Are there some underlying dynamics or politics that is impacting the situation?

Individual Problems ← → **Organizational Problems**

Employee Skills

- What metrics and KPIs indicate that there is an employee skill gap?
- What are the behaviors / tasks that are critical to address the biggest priority?
- What are the knowledge and skills that are required to perform the critical behaviors and tasks?
- What are leading indicators for improved our performance of the critical behaviors /tasks? How will we know we are actually getting better?

Ways of Working

- Are the work processes driving the desired outcome, or are they driving a different outcome? Are the work processes aligned across the employees / teams?
- Do the employees/teams have shared understanding on how to work together? Do they all play by the same rules of the game?
- What is the level of trust between the employees / teams?
- Are the IT systems enabling the desired outcome, or are they a roadblock?
- Is the team / functional / Unity culture supporting the desired outcome, or does the desired outcome run contrary to the culture?

How We Do Something

Examples of Root Causes

Why We Do Something

Employee Motivation

- The employee says they do not have enough time to perform the desired behavior.
- An employee / team prefers the old way of doing things
- Certain high influencers in the team are openly negative about the desired behavior

Organizational Alignment

- Two team leaders cannot align their teams on shared priorities. Each keeps pursuing his/her own individual goals.
- The top priority of one function is a low priority for critically dependent function
- A critical task is falling between the cracks between two teams, cause neither is accountable for it

Individual Problems ← → **Organizational Problems**

Employee Skills

- Hiring managers want to conduct great interviews, but they don't know the best interviewing techniques.
- A developer needs to learn a new system in order to work on a new project
- A new employee doesn't know the critical ways of working in Unity.

Ways of Working

- The sales people want to pull sales information from our finance systems, but our finance systems don't keep real time sales information.
- Two teams perform a lot of duplicate work because they don't trust the other team
- Two teams have different ways of doing the same work, making handover and touch points very difficult

How We Do Something

Step 3) Identify the Right Solutions

1. **Align** – Align around the key root causes, and which are critical to solve. There can be more then one root cause per issue.

2. **Define** – Once you know what root causes you want to address, define what a positive outcome looks like. How will you know if you resolved the root cause?

3. **Brainstorm** – After you know what root problems you are trying to resolve, brainstorm as many possible solutions as possible. Do not limit the ideas in this phase.

4. **Map** – As soon as all the ideas have been generated, you should map all the ideas on a simple graph. On the vertical axis you should plot the solutions' "Ease of Implementation" and on the horizontal axis you should plot the solutions "Effectiveness is solving the issue".

5. **Sequence** – Decide which solutions offer the best mixture of Ease and Effectiveness, and put them in a rough timeline. Identify if any solutions have dependencies on other solutions, and place them in the sequence accordingly.