

PROBLEM



CHECKLIST

WHY?



The problem isn't just technical.

Systems problems are complex, with interconnected parts and unpredictable outcomes. Technical problems, while complicated, can be solved if given enough time and money.



The problem affects your organization and at least one other systems actor.

A systems problem presents difficulties for many people, who may see it in different ways. This can cause unexpected problems for communities and nature. To avoid such problems, it's important to have a holistic view considering how each actor sees the issue.



It's truly a problem, and not a missed target or failed goal.

Systems problems are imperfect issues that can be fixed. For example, a missed sales target is often a symptom of a problem, not the problem itself. The problem may be inefficient sales processes, poor customer engagement, inadequate product positioning, or ineffective sales team training.



The problem is not a solution in disguise.

It's tempting to position the problem as the absence of something, such as a lack of a customer service system. Instead, consider it as the presence of something, such as increasing amounts of waste or rising energy use.



The problem is not a friction in disguise.

A friction is something that prevents you from achieving where you want to be (Near Star). In the earlier example of increasing amounts of waste, the friction is that people don't see the waste they generate.