# Do they really need critical thinking training?

"We need people who can think critically" is a claim. Before you build anything, test it the way you'd want any good employee to test an answer.

Goes with the blog post Critical Thinking Is the Junk Drawer of Training Requests at learningrebels.com

## 1 State the hypothesis

_____ needs critical thinking training because _____

(role)

## 2 What's the evidence?

Two or three real, recent decisions that went wrong. No examples, no hypothesis.

_____

_____

_____

## 3 What else could explain it?

Check every rival explanation that could also be true.

- ☐ They don't know enough about the job yet
- ☐ They don't have authority to decide
- ☐ They're afraid of getting it wrong
- ☐ They trust the AI output without checking
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ They've had no practice with real decisions
- ☐ They don't have time to think it through
- ☐ They're scored on speed, not judgment
- ☐ They overthink and stall (analysis paralysis)

## 4 How would you know?

| If it's a thinking gap, you'd see… | If it's something else, you'd see… |
|---|---|
| *e.g., top performers catch what others miss* | *e.g., everyone knows the right call, nobody makes it* |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

*Sit with the team for an hour. Which column matches what you saw?*

## 5 Verdict

- ○ **Supported:** go to page 2
- ○ **Partly:** page 2, plus fix the rest
- ○ **Not supported:** back to the leader

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HYPOTHESIS SUPPORTED? NOW GET SPECIFIC.

# Define the job thinking

The same question means something different in every role. Translate each blanket question for *this* job, then name what someone needs to know to answer it well. Stuck? See the worked example on page 3.

## 6 Translate the question

| Blanket question | In this role, it sounds like… | To answer it well, they need to know… |
|---|---|---|
| **What am I missing?** in this situation, with this customer or project | | |
| **How do I know this information is right?** the data, report, or AI answer I'm about to rely on | | |
| **What else could explain this problem?** besides my first assumption | | |
| **If my call is wrong, what happens next?** who or what does this decision affect | | |

## 7 Write one practice rep

A real moment from this job where someone has to use one of those questions. This is where the training starts.

## 8 Write the outcome (HBLO)

**Be able to** _____

**by** _____

**so that YOU** _____

**in order to** _____

**Blanket:** "Participants will improve their critical thinking skills." **Job thinking:** "Be able to evaluate AI-generated recommendations by checking them against three source questions so that YOU catch errors before they reach the client in order to reduce rework and protect client trust."

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WORKED EXAMPLE

# Call center rep

**1 · Hypothesis:** *Call center reps* need critical thinking training because *they transfer too many calls to supervisors and miss customers who are about to cancel.*

**2 · Evidence:** A rep refunded a customer who'd already been refunded twice. Three customers who called about billing cancelled the same week, and none were offered a reason to stay. Reps transfer "tricky" accounts instead of handling them.

**3 · Rival explanations checked:** newer reps don't know the warning signs yet · refunds over $50 need a supervisor · scored on handle time · the last rep who made a judgment call got written up

**4 · What you'd see vs. what you saw:** A thinking gap would look like experienced reps catching signals newer reps miss. Something else would look like reps knowing the right call but transferring anyway. After an hour with the team: *both.* Experienced reps catch "I'm looking at my options." Newer ones don't. But everyone transfers refunds over $50.

**5 · Verdict: Partly.** Newer reps have a job-thinking gap. The transfers are a system issue: the refund limit and handle-time scoring go back to the leader.

## 6 · Translate the question

| Blanket question | In this role, it sounds like… | To answer it well, they need to know… |
|---|---|---|
| **What am I missing?** | "Is this billing question really a cancellation?" | The warning signs a customer is about to leave, and what the rep can offer |
| **How do I know this information is right?** | "Does the account history match what the customer is telling me?" | How to read the account history quickly, and the most common billing errors |
| **What else could explain this problem?** | "Is this a billing error, or a price change nobody told them about?" | Recent pricing and policy changes |
| **If my call is wrong, what happens next?** | "If I don't flag this, do we lose this customer this month?" | What a lost customer costs, and when to bring in a supervisor |

## 7 · Practice rep

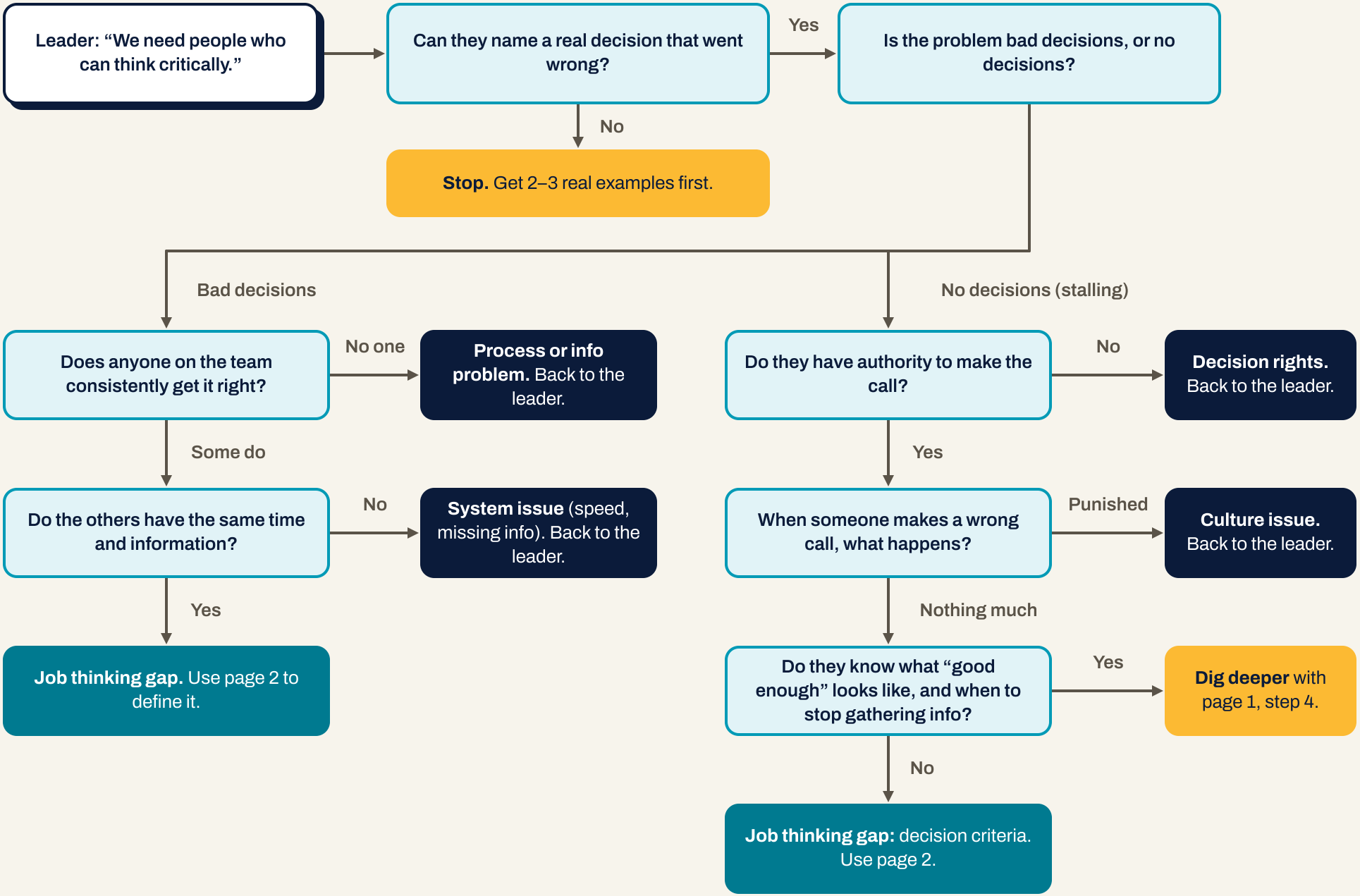
A longtime customer calls about a $14 charge they don't recognize, then mentions that a friend switched providers and pays less. The rep has about 90 seconds to decide: is this just a billing fix, or a cancellation signal that calls for an offer to stay?

## 8 · The outcome (HBLO)

**Be able to** spot early cancellation signals during billing calls **by** listening for "options" and comparison language and checking the account history **so that YOU** can make the right retention offer before the call ends **in order to** reduce customer loss.

# Is it really a critical thinking problem?

**Teal** = job thinking gap, use page 2 · **Navy** = take it back to the leader · **Gold** = stop and get more information




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