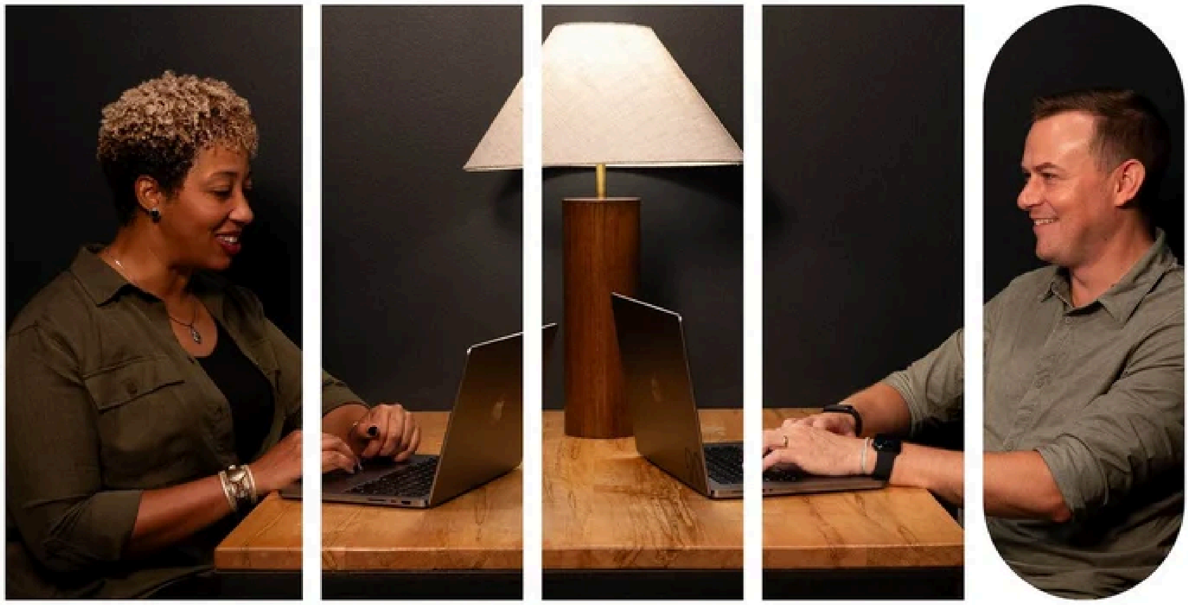

BRIEF

Raise, Discuss, Resolve (RDR)

By Mark Abbott and Mike Frascolla

Introduction

Every organization faces challenges, whether they're obstacles to overcome or opportunities to embrace. At Ninety, we call them Issues. How we identify and address Issues determines how our organization moves forward.

Most **Business Operating Systems** include a proven framework to do just that. At Ninety, **Raise, Discuss, and Resolve (RDR)** is our method of tackling Issues, whether they're **Short-Term Issues** in our **Weekly Team Meetings (WTMs)** or Long-Term Issues in our **Quarterly Planning Meetings (QPMs)**.

Solving Issues is a crucial component of these meetings, which makes it all the more important to have a practiced process to guide us through efficient problem-solving as a team.

Context

To set the framework for the RDR process, let’s first identify the four main types of Issues:

- A team member wants to share information with the team.
- An Issue needs to be resolved. The Issue’s owner has a recommended solution and wants to make sure they're not missing anything.
- A team member needs the team’s help to deal with a difficulty.
- A team member has an Issue to share with another team member and wants the team’s help in finding a solution.

Once Issues are on the list, we do a quick keep/kill/combine review as a team. Issues that are essential and relevant, we keep. Issues that are outdated or irrelevant, we kill. And Issues that are closely related, we combine. Once we've completed this review, we rank all remaining Issues.

At Ninety, we use this priority or ranking system to sort Issues:

- 5 = Must resolve today and want to discuss early in the meeting
- 4 = Must resolve today
- 3 = Should resolve today if we have time
- 2 = Don't need to resolve today, but should do it soon
- 1 = Not urgent, but would be good to resolve soon

Once Issues are sorted in order of priority, we work down the list in order of importance. (Of course, if it's a short list, there's certainly no harm in powering through them all.)

Ready to resolve? Let's RDR.

RAISE

The first step is to **raise** the Issue. This task falls to the Issue's owner. While there are different ways to raise an Issue, we like to use the system Who, With, One, What, and Why.

This approach helps the owner and team members deconstruct the Issue and verbally process it in real time.

- **Who** — Who are we solving for? Most often, this is the Issue's owner.
- **With** — With whom do you have this Issue? This may be an individual team member or a whole team, represented by the team leader.
- **One** — Summarize the Issue in one sentence. The one-sentence limitation, though challenging, simplifies the Issue, making it easier to resolve.
- **What** — What does the Issue's owner need to resolve the Issue? The owner may need information, assistance, confirmation, or something else entirely.

- **Why** — Why are we talking about this Issue in this forum? This highlights why the Issue needs to be discussed with the entire team.

The meeting Facilitator manages this process to ensure everyone who needs to be involved in the discussion has complete clarity on the Issue.

DISCUSS

The second step is to **discuss** the Issue. Collaborative, solution-focused discussion may feel unnatural at first, but it can be mastered by following these key principles:

- The Facilitator and team should ensure everyone participating in the discussion is heard. It's most vital to hear from those either closest to the facts or directly impacted by the Issue.
- Everyone should appreciate that each individual has their own way of processing an Issue. Some may be analytical, while others may take a more improvisational approach to solving matters.

- Speakers should be brief. Team members should focus their questions and comments on what matters most about the Issue and, ideally, avoid repeating themselves or riffing. As we like to say, RDR discussion time is not an open mic event.

RESOLVE

The third step is to **resolve** the Issue. Since it has already been clarified and discussed, resolving — or defining a clear path toward resolution — is often straightforward.

If follow-up is needed, we create a **To-Do**. If it's a big Issue, we move it to the Long-Term Issues list to tackle at the next QPM.

The RDR process concludes with the Issue's owner declaring the Issue resolved.

Hopefully Helpful Hints

It helps significantly to accurately identify and fully clarify Issues before discussing them. Doing so increases the chances that the Issue can be resolved and reduces the likelihood of conversations veering off path. Instead, high-value discussion centers on finding a solution.

Our experience suggests it's helpful to take into consideration both the "thinkers" and the "feelers" in the room. (If you don't have both in the room, that's almost always an Issue.) It's important to consider different perspectives, communication styles, and the manner in which people perceive certain Issues.

We recommend adding Issues to your team's list as they arise throughout the week. Then, closer to meeting time, look at the list to begin prioritizing them.

Try to stick with the Who, With, One, What, and Why structure to raise an Issue. It's succinct, saves time, and identifies exactly what's needed from team members to resolve the Issue at hand.

Takeaway

Raise, Discuss, and Resolve helps teams tackle the obstacles, difficulties, and opportunities we face as an organization. We first prioritize and sort Issues, then resolve them through solution-oriented conversation and collaboration. Our cloud-based platform lets teams document and organize Issues right in the **Meetings tool**.

RDR takes some practice to master, but once a team finds its rhythm with the process, they'll resolve Issues efficiently. This helps the team, department, and organization move forward.

What's next? Visit the **90u Library** or **try Ninety today**.

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