

# TWPP HOW-TO: 4 BEHAVIORS OF EFFECTIVE ROOT CAUSE ANALYSTS

BY ANN M. BUTERA

- 1. Commitment to value creation and addition.** They know that effective root cause analysis is a way to determine the source of control breakdowns AND it makes it easier to understand the nature of the risks in the process they review. By determining the root cause of the risk, they can more easily and rapidly decide which types of controls are needed and whether they are functioning as intended. Their results produce clear, actionable information.
- 2. Professional curiosity.** They don't stop at the symptom (or proximate cause). They study the situation further so that stakeholders can provide a permanent solution to an issue rather than temporary organizational relief.
- 3. Time and budget-consciousness.** They are conscious of the time and budget allotted to complete an audit or review, so they use techniques like the Five Whys, Four Ps, Cause and Effect (or Ishikawa) Diagrams, or data trend analysis.
- 4. Effective communication.** They talk directly to the people involved, visit work sites (or do videoconferences [with the camera on!]) to collect factual data (not opinions or assumptions) concerning the symptom, risk, problem, or situation. Whether it is a de novo or repeat audit or review, they establish trusted advisor relationships and can deliver bad news without creating bad feelings.

