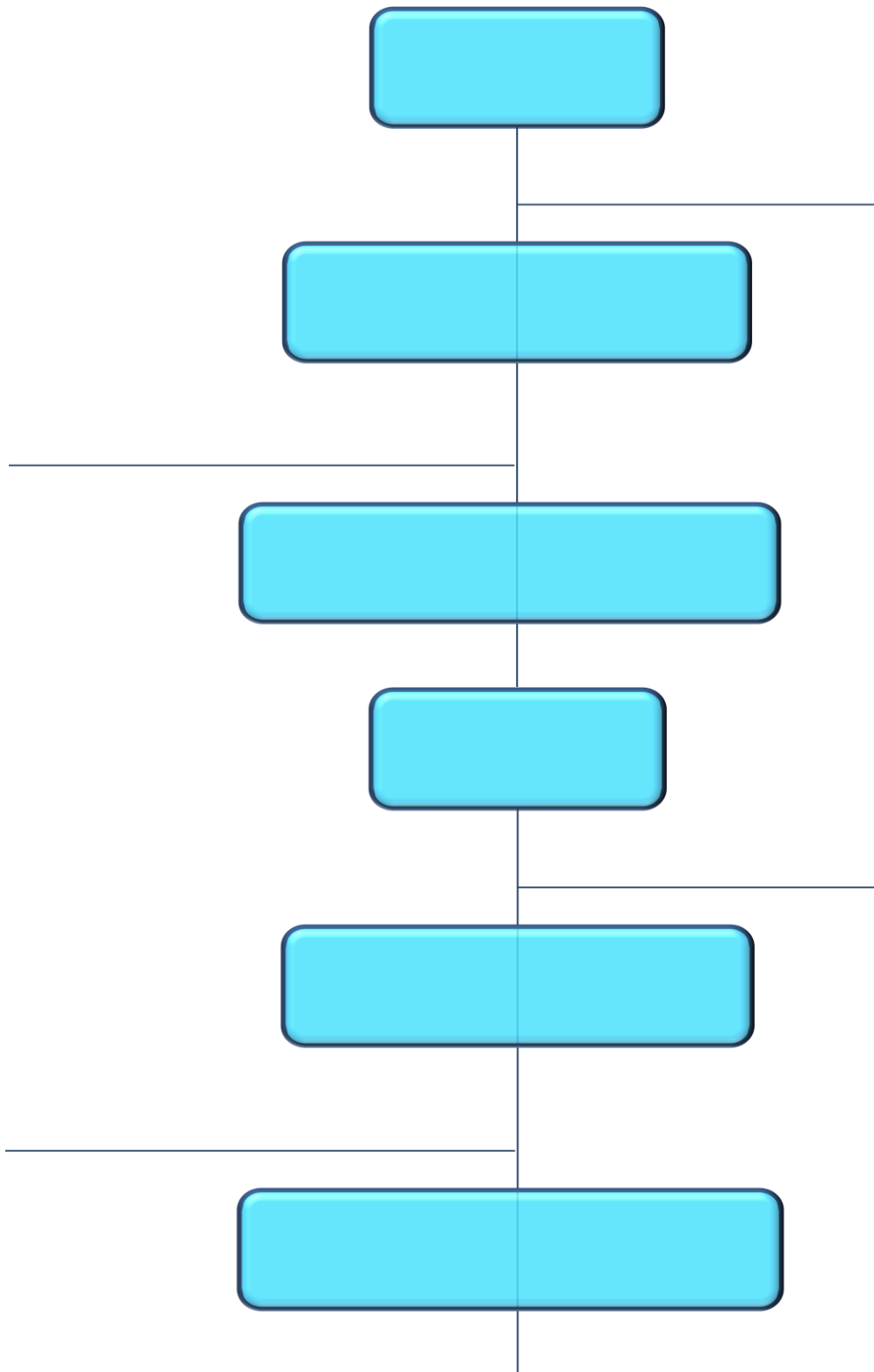


Negative Branch Reservation Template



Instructions for Using NBR

We all know that when we create new processes, procedures, policies, products (almost anything), we expect positive results – or we wouldn't have created the new item in the first place.

However, we realize that unintended consequences may also occur as a result. While some consequences (both positive and negative) cannot be anticipated, with a little proactive thinking and brainstorming of different scenarios, many of them can be... and if they can be anticipated, they can be avoided, eliminated or at least mitigated.

Negative Branch Reservation (NBR) is an extremely effective scientific method of creating “what if” scenarios in an effort to avoid creating unintended consequences due to implementing new actions and policies.

Here's how it works:

1. Create an “Action Tree.” This is the diagram illustrated above, which is created by drawing one box at the top and then drawing a vertical line representing the “trunk” of the tree below it.
2. In the top box, write the new action being considered.
3. Along with your teams, begin brainstorming all of the possible negative consequences that could occur as a result of implementing the action in the top box; these represent your reservations about implementing the new task.

NOTE: There is no need to put the positive consequences into the diagram, because you don't want to eliminate those (although you may want to create a separate list of them for later incorporation into presentations, marketing materials, and other areas where it would be useful to outline the benefits of implementing that action).

4. One at a time, list the potential negative consequences by drawing a line coming off one side of the tree trunk (representing a “branch” of the tree) for each one. Write one consequence per branch; these are your Negative Branch Reservations.
5. For each Negative Branch Reservation, brainstorm ways to eliminate, mitigate, or recover from it. Once you've found a way to do so, cross it out (trim that negative branch from the tree), and write the solution in a box below that branch.
6. Continue identifying your Negative Branch Reservations, solving them (trimming more branches from the tree) and writing the solutions in boxes drawn down the trunk of the tree.

7. There is no limit to the number of branches you can create and trim, nor the number of solutions you can provide to trim those branches.
8. This diagram creates a visual representation of all proactive and critical thinking on the topic, as well as the positive and negative consequences and solutions to any issues that can be anticipated.

Example 1:

What if you wanted to create a new policy that will help everyone do their jobs better. You anticipate many positive results, but here are a few

Negative Branch Reservations:

1. **NBR:** What if people don't read it? You know how everyone is so busy nowadays that they skim over (or skip altogether) many documents they receive.

SOLUTION: Provide details as backup, but create one sheet on top (in LARGE PRINT) that highlights critical points and is entitled: "EVEN IF YOU READ NOTHING ELSE, PLEASE READ THIS!" This trims the negative branch from the tree.

2. **NBR:** What if they don't understand it (or how to use/apply it)?

SOLUTION: Give an example, tell a story, offer a case study – use a method other than words alone to explain the purpose and usage of the new policy.

3. **NBR:** (other scenarios)?

