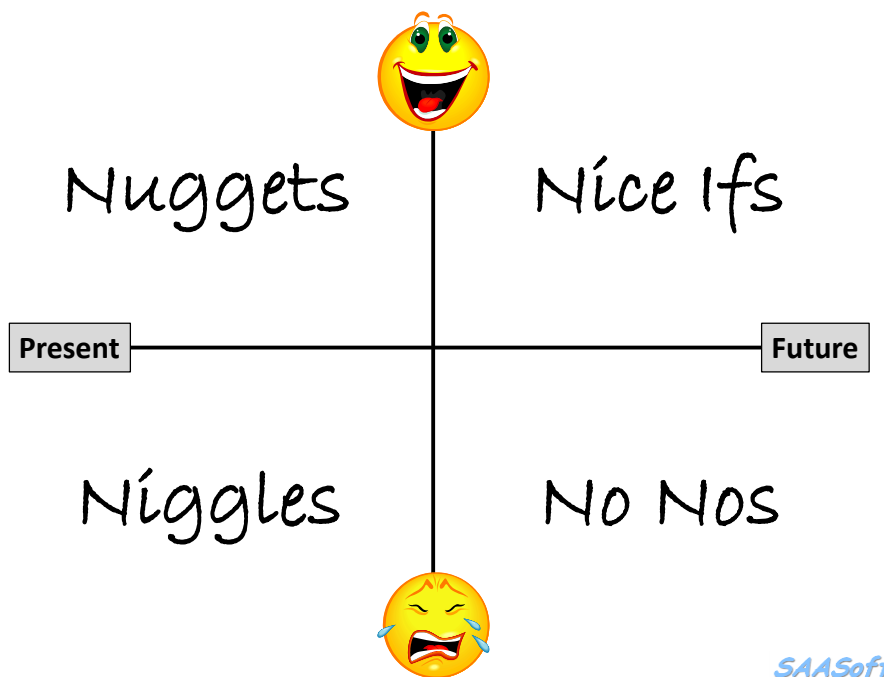


The 4N Chart®

The 4N chart® is an easy, quick and effective tool for gaining a balanced, qualitative perspective of any issue. When used as part of the improvement process it can help to focus on where an individual or team will get most benefit for least effort.

To create the 4N Chart® ...

1. Take a blank piece of paper.
2. Draw a vertical line down the middle to separate the Present from Future.
3. Draw a horizontal line across the middle to separate the Positive feelings above the line from the Negative feelings below the line.



4. Put the ideas about the topic on the chart, grouping them according to the four boxes.

5. Ask the question "What is the feeling?" Then ask "What happened just before to cause it?" Feeling first, fact second.

6. Start bottom-left and focus on negative feelings that we have now - these are our **Niggles**. Work backwards to expose what causes the feeling. e.g. "*I feel anxious when I am late for work because I set off late because I could not find my car keys*".

7. Move to top-left and focus on the positive feelings that are generated by what works well now. We may be taking success for granted. e.g. "*I feel supported because we look out for each other*". These are our **Nuggets** and there are always more nuggets than we see at first glance.

3. Move to bottom-right and list the negative feelings we do **not** want in the future. These are our **No Nos**. e.g. "*I do not want to feel overburdened by bureaucracy*".

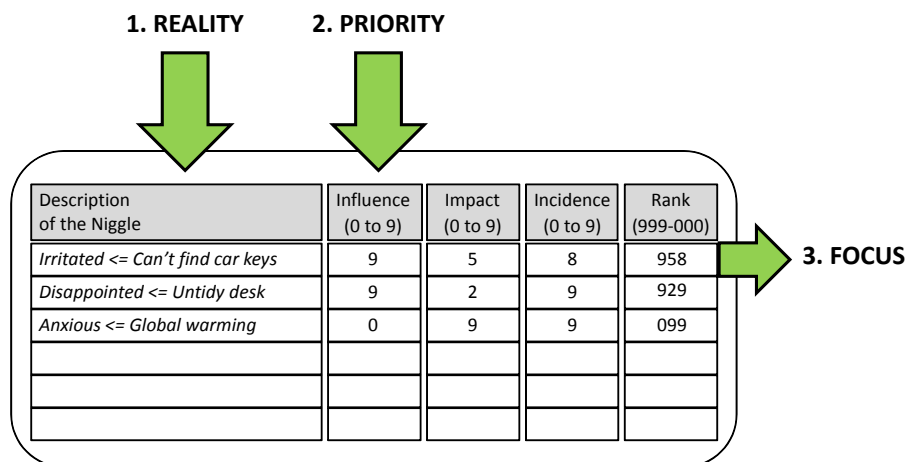
4. Finally we go to the top-right and we focus on the positive feelings that we want more of in the future and how we could get them. These are our **Nice Ifs**. E.g. "*I would like to feel secure by having a clear expectation of my role and responsibilities*".

The process of improvement has two linked challenges:

- 1) Finding ways to start doing some Nice Ifs and then to keep doing them, i.e. converting Nice Ifs into Nuggets. This is the creative pull.
- 2) Finding ways to stop doing some Niggles and then to avoid doing them, i.e. converting Niggles into No Nos. This is the reactive push.

The engine of improvement usually starts with nailing a Niggle because this will release the resource required to invest in creating a Nugget. When we find a way to stop doing a Niggle we will liberate emotional energy, time and money and these are the three "currencies" that we need to invest in converting a Nice If into a Nugget.

We need to **focus** on where to start, and we use the Niggle-o-Gram® to do that.



For each of our Niggles we ask three questions and we score our answer as a number:
 Q1. How often it happens - the **Incidence**. (0=Never to 9=Always).
 Q2. What is the effect - the **Impact** (0=No Effect to 9=Showstopper).
 Q3. How much **Influence** do we have over the root cause (0=None to 9=Complete).

The weighting is Influence >> Impact >> Incidence and we create a rank score for each Niggle that will range between 999 and 000

The Niggle with the rank that is closest to 999 is the one to focus ALL our effort on first because this will give the maximum return on our investment of time and effort.

In the example above the "Can't find car keys" is the top ranking Niggle, so we might convert it to a No No by installing a key hook next to the front door and use that to help us develop a habit of putting our keys on it when we come in ... so they are always where we expect them to be when we go out. ☺