Norovirus Outbreak on Cruise Ship Sickens Over 600

A norovirus outbreak on Royal Caribbean's Explorer of the Seas sickened nearly 700 hundred people during a cruise that ended on January 29, 2014. Noroviruses are extremely unpleasant and cause extreme stomach cramps, vomiting and diarrhea. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention there have been 56 gastrointestinal outbreaks on cruise ships in the past five years, but this outbreak is notable because it was one of the largest in 20 years.

Cause Mapping is a Root Cause Analysis method that captures basic cause-and-effect relationships supported with evidence.

CAUSE MAPPING

Problem Solving • Incident Investigation • Root Cause Analysis

Step 1	Problem	What's the Problem?
Step 2	Analysis	Why did it happen?
Step 3	Solutions	What will be done?

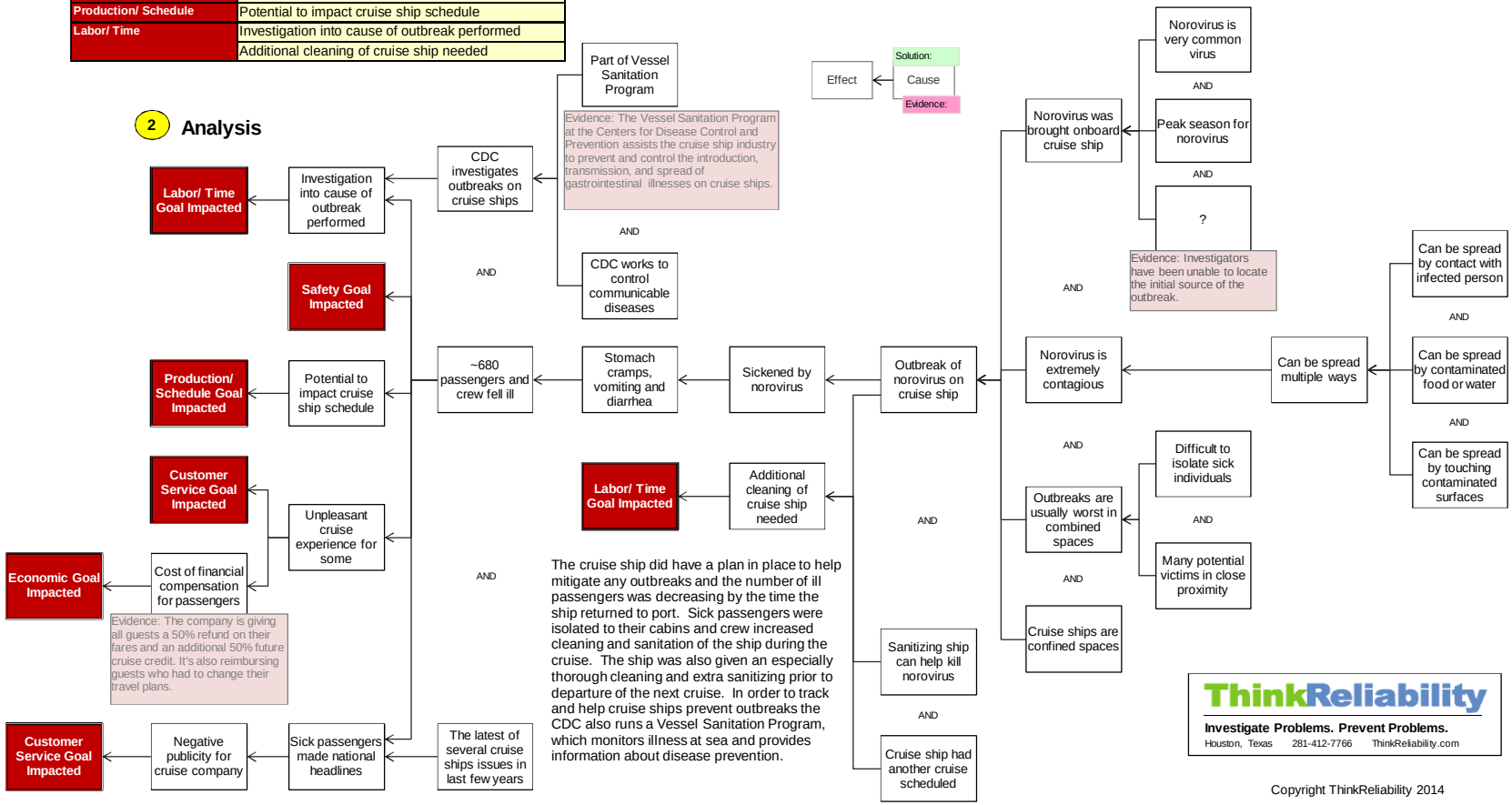
1 Problem

What	Problem(s)	Norovirus outbreak on cruise ship
When	Date	Returned to port January 29, 2014
	Different, unusual, unique	??
Where	Facility, site	Royal Caribbean ship Explorer of the Seas
	Task being performed	Standard cruise

Impact to the Goals

Safety	~680 passengers and crew fell ill
Customer Service	Unpleasant cruise experience for some
	Negative publicity for cruise company
Economic	Cost of financial compensation for passengers
Production/ Schedule	Potential to impact cruise ship schedule
Labor/ Time	Investigation into cause of outbreak performed
	Additional cleaning of cruise ship needed

2 Analysis



The cruise ship did have a plan in place to help mitigate any outbreaks and the number of ill passengers was decreasing by the time the ship returned to port. Sick passengers were isolated to their cabins and crew increased cleaning and sanitation of the ship during the cruise. The ship was also given an especially thorough cleaning and extra sanitizing prior to departure of the next cruise. In order to track and help cruise ships prevent outbreaks the CDC also runs a Vessel Sanitation Program, which monitors illness at sea and provides information about disease prevention.

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