**BLOCKS TO PROBLEM SOLVING**

*Directions:* In the three areas below, indicate which blocks operate in your problem-solving group by placing a check mark in the appropriate box(es).

### Psychological

- □ Desire to control the environment (want things to go as planned with no surprises)
- □ Preference for the predictable and orderly (processes and procedures should unfold as designed)
- □ Unwillingness to tolerate ambiguity (does not like a climate where uncertainty and lack of clarity exist)
- □ High achievement motivation (driven by a desire to be successful)
- □ Quick success orientation (impatient with processes that take a long time; desire is to see things change quickly)
- □ Inability to allow ideas to incubate (want answers and ideas now instead of letting ideas percolate)
- □ Valuing sensory perceptions over intuition (trust what one can touch or see rather than trust hunches)
- □ Fear of failure (afraid to risk for fear of failing)
- □ Fear of success (afraid of high expectations based on past successes)
- □ Assumptions and stereotypes about other departments, locations, levels in the organization (locking people or departments into a certain set of expectations instead of being open to what they actually bring)

Reproduced from *The Global Diversity Desk Reference: Managing an International Workforce* by Gardenswartz, Rowe, Digh, and Bennett. Copyright © 2003 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Published by Pfeiffer, San Francisco, CA.
### Cultural

- Limited knowledge about cross-cultural norms (inadequate information about how cultural norms shape working together in a group)
- Negative judgments about values, attitudes, and beliefs different from one’s own (the belief that one’s way is the right way to see the world or behave; therefore those different from self are viewed negatively)
- Value placed on reason, numbers, logic (trust and value what is provable)
- Limited emphasis on feelings and intuition (hunches and feelings are less valued than numbers)
- Viewing problem solving as humorless and serious (seeing the process of problem solving without humor and fun)
- Having a certain set of expectations that make it difficult to see other realities (preconceived ideas about problem definition and solutions limit options)

### Environmental

- People threatened by new ideas (change threatens existing reality)
- Failure to reward innovative thinking (where good ideas are not rewarded or people are blamed for making mistakes, innovation dries up)
- Work environments where employees do not engage in supportive behaviors (where support is lacking, people take less risk and play it safe)
- Workplace that is too hot or too cold (distracted by the physical environment)
- Ringing phones, beeping pagers, mobile phones, conversations that intrude on your quiet (more distractions in the physical environment)
- Distracting noises
- Interruptions
- Selective perceptions (seeing only what one wants to see)