THE ELEVATE EFFECT

July Jams   *15 July 2025*

SIF Project Updates

As a result of HAF-level reprioritization, our Squadron Innovation Funding (SIF) allocation for FY25 will be lower than initially projected. Thus, we were only able to fund two projects—both of which are with contracting for award. The two projects are the CES Artificial Intelligence (AI) flood dashboard and the FSS MPF customer service portal. Elevate thanks all squadrons who submitted projects in FY2025!

How can Elevate help my Squadron?

Elevate can help Squadrons find innovative solutions to their problems in three different ways: Small Project Submissions, SIF Council, and Outside Networking.

Small Project Submission: this is a great option for low-cost projects that require tools, capabilities, or connections Elevate might have! Examples include: mobile Wi-Fi for unit events, 3-D printed products, DV placards, and more.

SIF Council: this option is for those big, more pricey projects, and is available once every FY for squadron submissions. This process starts in Q1 of each FY and squadron projects are selected by the SIF Council based on graded criteria. Past examples include: Scott Pass, CE pipe rovers, and more! Ask your squadron SIF Council reps for more info!

Outside Networking: this option is best for those projects that fall outside our scope here at Elevate, but can still be accomplished through external partnerships. Elevate can help find assistance from local universities, other DoD organizations, & small businesses to find solutions for you.

Please reach out to Elevate if you'd like more information about finding solutions through one of these three avenues: 375amw.safb.elevate@us.af.mil or 618-256-4925

Go big or go home!

MSgt Matt Sabo and SSgt Brad Vickers are expanding Elevate's 3D printing capabilities by combining two broken 3D printers into one larger printer. The new printer will effectively double the size capacity for single printed items. This allows for faster print & assembly times and stronger final products; at a fraction of the cost of a brand new printer of the same size.

Define the Right Problem: Your 1st Step Towards Greatness

Every great achievement begins with a single, crucial step: defining the right problem. It's easy to get swept up in the rush to find solutions, but without clarity on what you're solving, even the best efforts can fall flat. The truth is, the way you define a problem shapes everything that follows. It's the foundation of success, the compass that guides your journey, and the spark that ignites innovation.

Why Defining the Right Problem is a Game-Changer

Imagine pouring your heart and soul into solving a challenge, only to realize later that you were addressing the wrong issue. Frustrating, isn't it? That's why defining the right problem is so powerful—it ensures your energy, time, and resources are directed where they matter most.

- **Laser-Focused Efforts**: When you clearly define the problem, you eliminate distractions and zero in on what truly needs attention. It's like sharpening a blurry photograph; suddenly, everything comes into focus.
- **Uncover Hidden Opportunities**: A well-framed problem often reveals insights you might have overlooked. It's not just about fixing what's broken—it's about discovering what's possible.
- **Inspire Collaboration:** A clear, compelling problem statement unites teams. It gives everyone a shared purpose and a rallying cry to work toward.

The Art of Defining the Right Problem

So, how do you master this art? It starts with curiosity and a willingness to dig deeper.

- **Ask "Why?" Again and Again**: Don't settle for surface-level answers. Keep asking "Why?" until you uncover the root cause. For example, if sales are declining, don't stop at "We need better marketing." Ask why sales are declining in the first place.
- **Embrace Diverse Perspectives**: Sometimes, the best insights come from unexpected places. Talk to people with different experiences and viewpoints—they might see something you've missed.
- **Reframe the Challenge**: Shift your mindset from fixing problems to creating opportunities. Instead of asking, "How do we fix this?" try asking, "What's the best possible outcome we can achieve?"

A Story to Inspire You

Let's look at a real-world example. An airline once faced a flood of complaints about lost luggage. At first, they focused on improving tracking systems. But when they stepped back and reframed the problem, they realized the real issue wasn't tracking—it was the time passengers spent waiting for their bags. By speeding up baggage delivery, they solved the actual problem, and complaints dropped dramatically. This story is a powerful reminder: the way you define a problem can completely change the trajectory of your solution.

Your Journey Starts Here

What challenges are you facing right now? Are you addressing the symptoms, or have you uncovered the root cause? Are you solving the right problem, or is there a deeper opportunity waiting to be discovered?

Defining the right problem isn't just a step in the process—it's the key to unlocking your potential. It's the difference between spinning your wheels and making meaningful progress. You have the power to solve smarter, dream bigger, and achieve greatness. The first step is yours to take. Let's make it count!

Elevate offers some unique opportunities like 3-D printing classes.
Check out our quick Links!

To request services from Elevate: *click here*
To request a seat for a 3D printing class: *click here*