Root Cause Analysis Report: example

Illustrative example, not customer data. The same report, blank, is on the next page.

Report owner: CX lead | Team: Customer support + mobile product | Date opened: Week 2 after release 5.2 | Status: Closed: fix verified in week 6

1. Problem

Field	Answer
What	Refund-request complaints (tickets tagged "refund request") rose after mobile app version 5.2
Where	Orders placed in the mobile app, iOS and Android. Web orders: no change.
Since when	Week 0: app 5.2 released to all users with a redesigned order screen
How much	About 120 a week before (4-week average 118); 240 in week 1; 310 in week 2
Impact	More full refunds instead of replacements; 38 one-star app reviews mention refunds in two weeks (4 in the two weeks before)
Problem statement	Refund-request complaints rose from about 120 to 310 a week after mobile app version 5.2.

2. Timeline

When	What happened
Weeks -4 to -1	Baseline: 118 refund-request complaints a week on average
Week 0	App 5.2 released to all users; order screen redesigned
Week 1	240 refund-request complaints
Week 2	310 refund-request complaints; CX lead opens this report
Week 3	Evidence pulled, fishbone session, 5 Whys; root cause verified with funnel data
Week 4	App 5.2.1 puts "Report a problem with my order" back on the order screen
Week 6	Check: 131 complaints; report-a-problem flow starts back to 1,780 a week

5. Top complaint reasons (Pareto)

Reason	Count	%	Cum. %	Top 80%
Could not find how to report a problem with the order	158	51.0%	51.0%	Top 80%
Wanted a replacement, only saw Refund	96	31.0%	81.9%	Top 80%
No update on refund status	27	8.7%	90.6%	
Refund takes more than 5 days	15	4.8%	95.5%	
Shipping fee not refunded	8	2.6%	98.1%	
Other	6	1.9%	100.0%	
Total	310	100%		

3. Evidence

Source	What it shows
Ticket tags	Refund-request tag: 118 a week before 5.2, 240 in week 1, 310 in week 2. The rise is in app orders only.
App reviews	38 one-star reviews mention "refund" or "report a problem" in the two weeks after 5.2, against 4 in the two weeks before.
Release notes	5.2 "simpler order screen": order actions grouped under the Refund button; "Report a problem with my order" moved into that menu.
Funnel data	"Report a problem" flow starts fell from about 1,850 to 240 a week; Refund button taps rose from about 700 to 1,600 a week.

4. Possible causes (fishbone)

Category	Candidate cause	Evidence	Status
Product	5.2 moved "Report a problem with my order" behind the Refund button	Release notes, funnel data	**Verified**
Product	No refund status tracking in the app	Existed before 5.2; 27 complaints in week 2	Minor
Process	Release checklist has no support-flow review	Release checklist	**Verified**
Process	Refunds take up to 5 business days	Unchanged since before 5.2; 15 complaints	Minor
People	Agents not briefed on the new order screen	Ticket review: slower answers, not more complaints	Minor
People	Weekend shifts short-staffed	Staffing unchanged; the rise is on weekdays too	Ruled out
Policy	Replacements can only be requested through "Report a problem"	Returns policy, app flow	**Verified**
Policy	Shipping fee not refunded on partial refunds	Unchanged policy; 8 complaints	Minor
Channel	Android crash on the order screen	Crash rate unchanged after 5.2	Ruled out
Channel	Customers moved from chat to email	Channel mix unchanged	Ruled out
Communication	Help centre article still shows the old order screen	Help centre	Minor
Communication	Release notes did not say where the option moved	App store release notes	Minor

Verified: data supports it and it changed when the problem started. Minor: real, but it did not change when the problem started. Ruled out: data contradicts it. To check: no evidence yet.

6. 5 Whys on the top cause

Step	Answer	Evidence
Why 1	254 of 310 complaints (82%) come from customers who could not find how to report a problem with their order, or wanted a replacement and only saw Refund	Pareto of week 2 tickets
Why 2	In 5.2, "Report a problem with my order" is no longer on the order screen; it sits inside the Refund menu	Release notes, app screens
Why 3	Customers with a missing or damaged item do not look under Refund, so they tap Refund or contact support	Funnel data: flow starts down from about 1,850 to 240 a week
Why 4	The redesign grouped all order actions under one button to simplify the screen; support was not asked to review it	Design ticket, release notes
Why 5	The release checklist has no step for support-flow changes, and no one owns checking them before release	Release checklist

7. Root cause

	Answer
Root cause	The 5.2 release moved "Report a problem with my order" behind the Refund button, and no one owned checking support-flow changes before release.
How we verified it	The rise started in the week 5.2 shipped and is limited to app orders; web orders, which kept the old screen, did not rise. Report-a-problem flow starts fell by 87% the same week.

8. Actions

Type	Action	Owner	Due	Metric	Check date
Corrective	Put "Report a problem with my order" back on the order screen (app 5.2.1); update the help centre article; brief agents	Mobile product manager	Week 4	Report-a-problem flow starts above 1,600 a week	Week 6
Preventive	Add a support-flow review to the release checklist: any change to report, refund or contact entry points needs CX sign-off	CX operations lead	Week 5	Every release from 5.3 has a signed support-flow review	Release 5.3

9. Check and close

	Answer
Metric and target	Refund-request complaints under 140 a week (baseline 118)
Check date	Week 6, two weeks after 5.2.1 reached all users
Result	131 complaints in week 6; report-a-problem flow starts at 1,780 a week. Fixed.
Closed by	CX lead and mobile product manager, week 6

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Root Cause Analysis Report

One report from problem statement to verified fix. Every cause needs evidence before it counts.

Report owner: _____ | Team: _____ | Date opened: _____ | Status: _____

1. Problem

Field	Prompt	Answer
What	What is happening, as a fact? No causes here.	
Where	Which product, channel, segment or region?	
Since when	When did it start? What changed around then?	
How much	Baseline and now, with numbers.	
Impact	Why it matters: customers, cost, revenue, ratings.	
Problem statement	One sentence: what, where, since when, how much.	

2. Timeline

When	What happened

5. Top complaint reasons (Pareto)

Reason	Count	%	Cum. %	Top 80%

3. Evidence

Source	What it shows
Ticket tags	
Reviews / surveys	
Release notes / changes	
Funnel / product data	

4. Possible causes (fishbone)

Category	Candidate causes	Evidence and status
Product		
Process		
People		
Policy		
Channel		
Communication		

Verified: data supports it and it changed when the problem started. Minor: real, but it did not change when the problem started. Ruled out: data contradicts it. To check: no evidence yet.

6. 5 Whys on the top cause

Step	Answer	Evidence
Why 1		
Why 2		
Why 3		
Why 4		
Why 5		

7. Root cause

	Prompt	Answer
Root cause	Which cause, if fixed, stops the problem coming back?	
How we verified it	Does it explain when the problem started, and where it did not happen?	

8. Actions

Type	Action	Owner	Due	Metric	Check date
Corrective					
Preventive					

9. Check and close

	Prompt	Answer
Metric and target	Which number must move, and to what?	
Check date	When will you look?	
Result	What happened on the check date?	
Closed by	Who signed off, and when?	

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