



Rob De La Espriella: BlueDragon's Creator

Rob De La Espriella is a former nuclear submarine officer and the founder/owner of DLE Technical Services, LLC (DLE), a small prime contractor at the Department of Energy. Rob is one of the foremost experts in root cause analysis, with over 29 years of experience in leading and facilitating root cause analyses, event investigations and assessments at commercial nuclear power plants, the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), the DOE, the US Department of Defense (DOD), Engineering firms, and Princeton University.



Rob became a root cause subject matter expert and practitioner in 1989 as a member of the Florida Power & Light team that won the Deming Prize¹, the first company in the world outside Japan to win the award. He has received formal training in root cause analysis and problem-solving methods such as Kempner Trego, Management Oversight Risk Tree (MORT), TapRoot, the Phoenix method, Human Performance Evaluation System (HPES), Total Quality Management (TQM), Lean/Six Sigma and Kaisen.

Since 1990, Rob has led or facilitated hundreds of root cause evaluations, audits, assessments and complex problem solving efforts. In 1995, Rob received several awards from the NRC for leading root causes and for bringing Total Quality Management Concepts to the NRC. In 2003 and 2005, the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations (INPO) listed Rob's Nuclear Assurance organization as one of the strongest in the US, in large part, due to their problem-solving skills and problem-solving culture. The World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO) also sought Rob's expertise for improvement projects in South Africa and Slovenia.

In 2010, at his clients' request, Rob began teaching his unique approach to root cause at DOE sites. In 2015, he registered the BlueDragon® trademark with the US Patent Office. Using the BlueDragon® lean and agile approach to root cause, Rob has completed numerous root causes on complex, technical issues (including near fatalities) across the DOE campus and at the DOD. In 2011, Rob was the lead root cause evaluator for the explosion that took place at Idaho National Laboratory's Experimental Breeder Reactor (EBR-1). More recently, Rob has led root cause teams to investigate complex issues such as the flooding of the Molten Salt Reactor Project, a near fatality at the K-1652 site in Oak Ridge, and seven consecutive Compressed Air System 4160V motor failures at the Blue Grass Chemical Agent Destruction Plant.

In 2016, Rob launched an initiative to bring valuable, real-world critical thinking and problem-solving tools and techniques to Veterans transitioning to civilian work, Hispanics entering college, Historically Black Colleges & Universities, and graduate/undergraduate college students. Since then, Rob has awarded free tuition to over 80 full-time college students and faculty to attend BlueDragon® workshops and seminars. He has also taught BlueDragon® tools and techniques to Design Thinking Teams at Princeton's Keller Center for Entrepreneurship every summer since 2016 and continues to be invited back each year.

¹ For additional information on the Deming Prize, visit: <https://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/fl-xpm-1989-10-19-8902040936-story.html>



Recent BlueDragon® Root Cause Analyses Completed by Rob

- *Independent Root Cause Analysis of Seven Failures of Compressed Air System Motors at the Blue Grass Chemical Agent Destruction Pilot Plant (a Bechtel Project)*
- *Independent Root Cause Analysis of Trend of Dropped Objects at the Uranium Processing Facility Project in Oak Ridge, TN (a Bechtel Project)*
- *Independent Root Cause Analysis of an Adverse Trend of Procurement Issues at Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (Aiken, GA)*
- *Independent Root Cause Analysis of a Longstanding Trend of Untimely Completion of Condition Reports and Action Items at the Bechtel Infrastructure Global Business Unit*
- *Independent Root Cause Analysis of the Cutting of Energized 208V Conductor During Demolition of Building K-1652 (an AECOM-Jacobs Project)*
- *Independent Root Cause Analysis of the Response to the Flooding of the Molten Salt Reactor Experiment (MSRE) Sump at Oak Ridge National Laboratory*
- *Independent Root Cause Analysis of the Design Feature Inspection Failures at the Melton Valley Solid Waste Storage Facility in Tennessee*
- *Independent Root Cause Analysis of the Unreviewed Safety Question Involving Removable Lid Canister Overpacks at the Melton Valley Solid Waste Storage Facilities in Tennessee*
- *Independent Accident Investigation of the Explosion at the Experimental Breeder Reactor in the Idaho National Laboratory Materials and Fuels Complex*
- *Independent Gap analysis of the Purchasing, Receiving, Storing and Tracking Spare Parts at the Portsmouth and Paducah Depleted Uranium Hexafluoride Conversion Facilities*
- *Independent Apparent Cause Evaluation of the Six Radiation Protection Findings Identified during the DOE Operational Readiness Review Conducted at the DUF6 Facility in Paducah, KY*
- *Independent Investigation and Causal Analysis of a Near Fatality at the Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Paducah, KY*