

MECE THE MCKINSEY WAY

by M. Susan Miller



Recently I have been introduced to the worldwide consulting firm named McKinsey and have found out about a technique they use in problem solving or critically viewing issues in businesses that they work with around the globe. The term is **MECE** and stands for Mutually Exclusive Collectively Exhaustive. Now you may ask yourself, «how does this apply to me as an ESL/EFL administrator?»

In our daily work as program administrators, we are faced with a myriad of problems from simple to complex. Does this sound familiar? If we look at these problems with our normal high stress levels, we often have more added stress. However, if we look at them through *MECE eyes*, then our lives can become less chaotic and much more organized. The outcome could be that we will not end up with the same problem again in the future.

How does MECE work? In order to be MECE, you must make a structure into which your problems fit. McKinsey consultants work with clients on developing Logic Trees that break the problem down to its roots. It is easy to view the problem with the tree and see any gaps that may exist. Filling in these gaps makes your tree more MECE. When you see the gaps, you can generally find out why the problems have begun or continued to happen. Through using the Logic Tree and MECE approach, you can make your life easier. As administrators, we will always face new problems each day. Using the MECE tool can make your approach to these problems less stressful.

For more information on MECE, get a copy of *The McKinsey Mind* by Ethan M. Rasiel and Paul N. Friga, McGraw Hill Publishers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Submitted by M. Susan Miller, Director, English Language and International Programs University of California Extension, Santa Cruz.