



Accelerated Process Improvement Some Guidelines

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Scope and Scale

- Scope is the amount of the process to tackle for the defined improvement. An example of scope would be the corrective action process for defective materials. Scale is the extent of organizational involvement.
- Limit scope or limit scale. Usual approach is to keep scale large in order to give the full business process orientation. Limit scale to the people who really want to make it happen.
- If scope and scale is too large, time for the project expands. With increased time, the project is likely to die. People move on to different projects or assignments.
- Scope and Scale includes choices from the following list or possibly a combination:
 1. Define a narrow scope but a broad scale. An example of this would be to work on corrective action for materials including all units for a plant or business site. This process can be quite powerful
 2. Define a narrow scope and a narrow scale. Once this pilot is complete, expand the resultant process to additional units. A drawback of this approach is that as each unit is added it takes time to build understanding.
 3. Work on a broad scope and a broad scale. Spend time as a team to agree upon the current process, vision process, strategies and action plans to close the gap. Obtain full agreement to the chosen course of action. Implement in a "big bang" - all at once. This is a risky approach.
 4. Initiate a pilot. With success of the pilot, make decision to expand to all units. The result typically is that units involved earlier get better treatment. As later units come on board, and as the schedule starts to slip, there is a tendency to "slam in" the new system without building the necessary foundation.
- The goal is ultimately to have an overall integrated system. It is essential, however, for the team to demonstrate results to management and build on this momentum. Use API cycle to build momentum.

Sponsorship

- Give managers a list of commitments including 1) key actions, 2) supportive behaviors and, 3) what to do when times get tough.
- Managers need to constantly communicate that this will require the organization to adjust thinking. For example, share an understanding that without this project, we won't be able to achieve our quality and customer satisfaction goals. In order to do this, managers must be convinced of project importance - keep after them. Define the critical communication needs such as a letter of introduction, discussion at a group meeting, etc. Define timing for actions.
- Set-up routine meetings with management / steering committee to keep the heat on them. This should not be just a status report (e.g. "We've gotten this far, here are next steps, we're having some problems, but don't worry, we'll solve them..."). Report should show graphic of current state and vision with progress made. Vision should never be lowered indicating lack of commitment. Point out how management, by fulfilling commitments, can help progress.
- Sponsor should kick-off the team process. Managers must share the need for participation. Communicate that even if some concepts have been defined, we need ideas from everyone.
- Flow managers or process managers need to have as much or greater power than the functional managers in a matrix organization.

Team Structure

- Gain commitment from team members: over 50% is usually too much to ask, 10 to 20% is minimum, 25 to 30% seems to be reasonable
- If managers have been assigned, ask them to identify someone under their direction who can commit 25 to 30% of time - should be a person who is influential in the organization.
- Identify key people in the organization and back-ups for each of them.
- A large team of 20 to 40 people is better than a small team of 7 to 10, counter to conventional wisdom. With over 50 people the team becomes difficult to manage.
 - Gaining commitment is critical. Critical mass of people gives the organization a large stake in the outcomes of the project. With a small team, the process can be more efficient, but when it comes time to roll out the new process, they meet with significant resistance.
 - We need people that want to change the process.
 - Getting many people to change their thinking can enhance power. They need to share the belief that the envisioned state is actually better than today's state.
 - Divide the team to work on major activities. Sub-teams can work independently and report back to the full team at intervals and when the block of work is done.
 - Include: Process doers or operators, Systems resources and Key decision makers

Team Process

- Disagreement is good. Different opinions should be encouraged. Dialogue is essential. Introduce ground rules, for instance: "no judging ideas."
- It is critical to communicate the need for change: the "Why."
- Input and involvement is critical to success. For example, it is OK for managers or team leader to present a vision but also say "what do you guys think?" Demonstrate we want input!
- Define metrics for the process and assign metric owners. For example - use group to predict cycle time of the process, but assign individuals to gather real process data to support the prediction. Include, for the overall process, measures of cycle time and major defects. Try to limit defects to 10 or less of the major problems with the process.
- Work on two parallel paths: current state with its problems and a compelling future vision state. It is important to have some understanding of what is possible in the future to understand the problems with the present.
- Convert current and future states into six-foot wall charts and keep them in front of people.
- The current vs. future state comparison should include critical measures such as converting from an average of 3 weeks to 2 days to process a corrective action request.
- Current state should clearly point out what is broken in today's process. It should create a "burning platform" that people want to get off! Future state should be compelling, and create pull. Creating synergy and shared understanding is essential.
- Look for problems to occur mainly at interface points. Individuals may be comfortable and happy with existing system. Breakdowns typically take place when units try to share data.
- Do the major blocks of the team's work into 2 to 4-day workshops. It may be advantageous to limit daily duration to 4 hours so participants have time to do other work on those days. Schedule workshops off-site. Consider a fun, relaxing environment such as a park or hotel.
- Set defined goals for the workshop, e.g. by the end of this workshop we will have completed current state process definition, future state process definition and a strategy to close the gap.
- Concentrate on building group synergy. This is especially important with groups from many different organizations. Allow time for informal conversations to take place.
- Set ground rules for participation. For example, have a rule that 75% participation is required to hold a meeting. If attendance slips, address the problem with management.
- It is OK to do some work in sub-teams as long as when the full group is brought together we ask: "Here's what we found - what do you think?"