

TEMPLATES FOR PROCESS IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Considering a Process to Improve

WHAT IS A PROCESS?

A process is a series of tasks done in sequence to accomplish a particular outcome. A process is NOT tasks or activities done by individuals (these may be a step within a process but not the process itself). Examples of processes – disbursing paychecks, collecting tuition, managing grants, financial information reporting, etc

IDENTIFY THE PROCESS YOU WOULD LIKE TO IMPROVE:

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| 1. What is the process to be improved? | |
| 2. Will improving this process be compatible with department goals? | |
| 3. Who are the stakeholder/units involved in this process? | |
| 4. Is this problem causing disturbances that would motivate people to improve it? | |
| 5. Are there any groups currently studying the problem? | |

CONSTRAINTS TO CONSIDER:

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| 1. Are there financial resources available to support the improvement? | |
| 2. Would the people you would select as team members have time to work on this initiative? | |
| 3. Is there a history between individuals or groups that could negatively affect the effort? | |
| 4. Would you have support from management/others on this initiative? | |

Defining the Project & Building a Team

Project Name:

Project Charge:

Identify Project Sponsor:

(This person will set the scope of work and approve or define the project charge. Additional responsibilities will include communicating with team leader throughout the process on any questions or observations from the team. It may also be necessary for the sponsor to provide high-level communication and support with leaders in other units.)

Identify Team Members:

- Team Leader:

- Members: *(When identifying your members list their strengths/skill sets to help assist the group leader in determining appropriate tasks to assign or subgroups to form)*

| Name | Strengths/Skill Sets |
|------|----------------------|
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Key Issues to Consider:

How Will Success Be Measured:

What Resources Will the Project Require:

Mapping the "As-Is" Process

Map the "As-Is" Process:

Before mapping a process, be sure that the process is well-defined. Anticipate that the more complex the process, the more time it will require to understand that process. A perfect, flawless flow chart is not the ultimate goal. A process map is simply a tool for understanding the process and keeping track of the steps. A process map provides a visual representation to communicate the process and facilitate analysis of the process for improvement.

- When developing a process map:
 - Identify and engage process stakeholders
 - Keep asking WHO does WHAT, WHEN, and HOW
 - Revisit the process beginning to end and check that the map is an accurate representation
 - Share the map with stakeholders to clarify and finalize

Analyses of "As-Is" Process Map:

- Does the work flow in a logical and sequential process or are the steps random and chaotic?
- Does the work get passed multiple times between people/departments in order to be processed/approved?
- Which steps substantially change the product or service?
- Which steps just move the work on without adding value?
- Are there many complex steps to accomplish the process?
- Are there numerous decision points that create rework?
- Is there variation in how the steps are executed or how long each step takes?
- Is it difficult to identify what really happens at a particular step?
- How long does it take from the first step to the last?

Determining "To-be" Process and Implementation Planning

"To-Be" Process:

Once the solution(s) have been selected, re-do the original flow chart (or start with a blank paper) to represent how the new and improved process will work.

Create an Implementation Plan:

After the solutions have been identified, the team must plan the implementation. The steps should be detailed enough to provide direction but not so detailed that the plan looks like a "to do" list for someone. (Example: After developing a solution to decrease the time between receipt of an invoice and payment, the team created an implementation plan.) Some of the action steps are listed below:

Select which of these steps you will need to do:

- Rewrite the training material to follow the new process
- Conduct training session on new process with staff
- Move equipment and offices for two staff into new work area
- Re-label mail baskets to reflect new process
- Set up new email account
- Revise feedback forms for departments
- Develop report on invoice payment time

Create the communication plan

The team also needs to identify who needs to know about the coming changes. People do not like to be blind-sided by change. Think broadly in listing all those who need to know about the improvement: what staff members need to know about the change and when; what do senior leaders need to know during the implementation; and what impacts will be felt by process partners and customers.

Select which of these steps you will need to do:

- Meeting with all staff in the department to explain the change
- Newsletter via email with updates
- Meeting with major process partner to describe the new process
- Daily updates with the sponsor during implementation
- Open session to present the results of the implementation

Identify Roles & Responsibilities for the Plan

Once the action steps are outlined, additional detail is needed to complete the plan:

- Who will be responsible for each step?
- When will each step begin?
- How will the team monitor the process?
- Will you consider running this for a short trial or testing period? How long?

Measure and Sustain the Project

Measure

Following the implementation of the new procedures, policies, and/or systems, managers should start measuring increased performance on a routine basis.

Continuous Improvement

- The Process Owner qualifies the process by identifying the process data that will be tracked.
- The Process Owner performs periodic qualification reviews.
- The Process Owner defines and eliminates process problems.
- The Process Owner evaluates the impact of change on the business and on customers.
- The Process Owner benchmarks the process.
- The Process Owner provides advanced team training.