Three Keys to Enhancing BPM Implementation

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If you're moving up the ladder of CMM or just wanting to better manage your business processes, you need to consider more than which vendor software package to implement. Successfully implementing process management requires addressing all three aspects of the virtual trinity – people, process and technology. While the technology side of the equation is fairly well understood, the people and process side continue to bring challenges. In working with organizations across the country, I've found the following three concepts to bring most value in addressing these challenges.

Get People Involved Early. People can be an enabler or obstacle to change. One of the best ways to promote adoption of change is to get them involved – the earlier, the better. So first, clearly communicate the vision, including the 'what and why'- *what* is business process management, *what* is its value to the organization, *what* will it involve and *why* is it necessary, *why* should we care.

Second, create ways for those involved in and impacted by the process to have a voice. Get them involved in documenting the 'as is' process, give them opportunities to share their frustrations and suggestions for improvement. Jim Clemmer, author of "Pathways to Performance" encourages organizations to "*Get feedback on the management (technology, systems and processes) and leadership (people) strengths and weaknesses of your team or organization from organization and team members, customers, suppliers, and other key partners.*" Use this input to improve and streamline your process either prior to or in conjunction with implementation of process management.

For more information on preparing for and dealing with the people side of change visit any of the following websites:

Change Management Learning Center at www.change-management.com
The Change Management Directory at www.change-management-directory.com
Practical Leadership-articles on change at www.clemmer.net/excerpts/change.shtml

Develop an Infrastructure to Support Change. The term "infrastructure" refers to the basic set of interconnected elements that provide the framework and support for the entire structure, organization or system. Most aspects of the infrastructure are familiar and follow standard organizational project implementation processes. However, there are two unique and often overlooked concepts related to process management - process ownership and procedures for the storage and retrieval of process-related information.

The notion of business process owners was introduced by Michael Hammer in the 1990's as part of the Reengineering discipline, but integration of this notion into business practice has been limited. A process owner, as stated in the iSix Sigma Dictionary (www.isixsigma.com/dictionary), is the one "accountable for sustaining the gain and identifying future improvement opportunities on the process." These folks become your cross-functional link across all facets of the end-to-end process. They are the ones who ensure that improvements in one segment of a process don't negatively impact downstream process segments. Identifying executives who will own the measures, improvements and success of each business process is critical to the implementation and on-going success of your process management efforts.

The second often overlooked structural concept is the storage and retrieval of process-related information. You've created the 'as is' process maps for each of your core processes. You now know what is done by whom, what's being measured, and the technology support involved. Opportunities for improvement have been identified and from that, multiple projects have spawned across the organization. So where is all that process-knowledge stored? Does everyone in the organization have access to it? Is there an easy way to identify the latest version of documentation? Many organizations have a web-based, Lotus-notes based or other type of organizational library or knowledge management tool; but few have built the company-wide structure and procedures to easily find what you need. Some BPM tools will provide a repository for this information once they're implemented. But until then, create a way for folks to get what they need without reinventing the wheel (or in this case, the process maps) every time.

Carefully Craft Your Implementation Strategy. Unfortunately too many companies rush headlong into implementation without taking into account their organizational climate and culture. How well does your organization tolerate change? Are there other significant projects already underway that may limit resources or impact people

across the organization? Are the people involved in these processes accepting or fearful of change? These are just a few of the questions you should be asking to assess the appropriate speed of change.

The answers to these questions should drive your implementation strategy. Rarely should an organization implement process management for all core processes in an all-at-once 'big bang' approach. Best practice - plan a staggered process management implementation starting with the least complex process. This will allow you to hone your implementation process while causing minimal impact to the business.

Ms. Adams is the Managing Partner of Chaosity LLC and specializes in Project Facilitation and Business Process Analysis.   As a certified facilitator and quality manager, Ms. Adams is able to extract the experience and knowledge of Subject Matter Experts and quickly transform it into the specific outputs required to achieve your business objective. She guides teams in identifying and transforming their process knowledge and business requirements into viable project and system deliverables that incorporate quality principles consistent with methodologies such as TQM, Six Sigma, and Lean. Ms. Adams is co-author of the book "Facilitating the Project Lifecycle: Skills & Tools to Accelerate Progress for Project Managers, Facilitators and Six Sigma Project Teams" and a regular speaker at International Facilitator, Quality, Business Process and Project Management Conferences.