Business Process Improvement

A two-day course providing participants with a systematic approach to business process improvement from identifying processes that need attention through to presenting proposals for approval

Overview

Today, organisations are looking increasingly at their businesses in terms of a series of inter-linked activities that we refer to as business processes.

A business process can be defined as:

> *'Any activity or group of activities that takes an input, adds value to it, and provides an output to an internal or external customer'.*

This focus on the customer provides us with a means to assess the value of each step in the process by asking specifically to what extent each contributes to the final output, giving rise to questions such as, 'Can we do this step in a quicker, cheaper or less resource-intensive way?' and even, 'Do we need this step at all?'

The likelihood is that you have been doing that, making small adjustments to each of your processes in response to changes in technology, materials, skills or customer requirements ever since the processes were first initiated. That's evolution. However, unlike human evolution that has taken place over eons, processes evolve over a few years, if not months, and often in an unplanned or uncoordinated way. It is this latter point that causes the problem. A change to one step in a working process can have unintended consequences for activities further along the chain, or in interfacing processes, ultimately leading to one or more processes becoming inefficient, ineffective and uneconomic to operate. It is for this reason that, from time to time, we need to take an 'end-to-end' view of each process to determine its overall:

- Economy – can we do it at a lower cost?
- Efficiency – can we do it quicker?
- Effectiveness – can we achieve better, more consistent results?
- Adaptability – can the process cope with emerging expectations?

This analytical approach provides the foundation for the business process improvement workshop.

Aims

This course provides participants with a systematic approach to business process improvement from identifying processes that need attention through to presenting proposals for approval. After working on a case study, participants have the opportunity to apply the techniques to one of their own processes.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the programme, you will be able to:

- Explain the concept of the business process
- Explain how process maps can help an organisation
- Describe how to illustrate the decomposition of operations into processes and tasks
- Define a process in terms of its objectives, boundaries and key components
- Explain the benefits of defining end-to-end processes
- List the steps involved in improving a business process
- Explain how to identify and prioritise improvement opportunities and set new goals
- Demonstrate how to produce and validate a business process map
- Use a variety of data collection, collation and analysis techniques to help identify and select improvement opportunities
- Use a range of tools for deciding on the options for change
- Explain how to present proposals to gain commitment for change.

Workshop Content

What is a Business Process?
- Input-output model
- Business controls
- Control systems
- Control versus risk
- Evaluating process risks

Business Process Improvement
- The change process
- Drivers for change
- Prioritising effort

Mapping the Process
- Identifying the Key Elements
- Producing the Process Map
- Validating the Process Map

Collecting Data
- Data collection methods
- Planning for data collection
- Options for change

Collating and Analysing Data
- Collating data
- Analysing data

Selecting Options for Change
- Selecting the tools
- Validating the selection

Gaining Approval for your Plan
- Framework for evaluation and approval

Applying the Learning
- Working with your own process.

Project and Process Management