Operations Focus — Work Processes

What is a process?
All work that occurs in an organization is the result of a work process and each work process is designed to produce a product or service for a Stakeholder. Therefore, an organization is just a bunch of work processes that are organized within a few broad Work Systems (displayed in Work System Maps). Work Processes are designed to meet specific Work Process Key Requirements and are controlled by Key Measures.

Why are great processes important?
For organizations, managing well-designed work processes, that effectively and efficiently produce Stakeholder value, are critical to success and sustainability. Work Processes must be continuously improved to stay in alignment with an organization’s changing needs.

How do you design, manage and improve your processes?
Every organization needs a great approach to designing, managing and improving work processes. This includes great work instructions or Work Instruction Sheets (WIS) that outline the steps of Work Processes and a great Performance Improvement System to manage Innovation, Corrective Actions (non-conformities) and Opportunities for Improvement. Effective and efficient Work Processes must be designed to meet their Work Process Key Requirements and have appropriate Key Measures with goals, accountability and benchmarks. All processes should be documented in end-to-end Work Flow Maps so all stakeholders know who does what and why. All great Work Processes are designed with a systems perspective and are well aligned with what’s most important to an organization and work in harmony throughout the organization. Improvement and Innovation are extremely important to strengthen Core Competencies. Work Processes have to be kept in alignment with the organization’s changing needs and direction. This takes great process stewardship and a great Project Management process to effectively execute improvements.

Important Definitions:
- **Core Competencies** — An organization’s areas of greatest expertise. Strategically important capabilities that are central to fulfilling the mission, are challenging for competitors to imitate and provide a competitive advantage. Innovation should be directed here.
- **Corrective Action Report (CAR)** — Taking action to eliminate the cause of a work process defect or nonconformity (broken/wrong).
- **Innovation** — Meaningful change to improve products, processes or organizational effectiveness and create new value for stakeholders.
- **Key Measures** — Numerical information about the performance of processes, products, programs, projects, services and the overall organization. All measures should have goals, benchmarks and be achievable. Goals are important Process Requirements.
- **Key Support Process** — Processes that support an organization’s value-creation processes.
- **Key Work Processes** — Processes that contribute or relate to an organization’s Core Competencies. They produce value for Stakeholders, determine organizational success and are important for growth. They are accomplished by an organization’s workforce.
- **Opportunity for Improvement (OFI)** — Incremental, non-strategic changes or improvements.
- **Performance Improvement System** — An organization’s overall approach to performance improvement.
- **Process** — Linked activities that produce a product/service for a Stakeholder. Some involve a sequence of steps, others involve a general understanding of performance. Processes are evaluated on Approach, Deployment, Learning and Integration (ADLI).
- **Project Management** — The management of unique, one-time improvement projects or processes intended to produce an outcome.
- **Work Flow Map** — Postings that display the entire end-to-end Work Process (all the steps of the entire process).
- **Work Instruction** — Documentation outlining the sequence of steps necessary to execute a process.
- **Work Instruction Sheet (WIS)** — A one-page reference document that outlines the key process steps of work instructions. WIS’s are typically posted in the location where the work is performed.
- **Work Process** — A series of steps to complete an activity (linked activities are area/section processes) that do not have subordinate processes. Work processes are documented with work instructions.
- **Work Process Key Requirements** — What a process is designed to accomplish. This can be a desired output, goal, strategy, business rule or Stakeholder Key Requirement. When a process fails to meet a key requirement, it’s called a non-conformity (CAR).
- **Work System** — How an organization’s work is accomplished. The work processes and resources required to deliver an organization’s product or service to its Customers. Work Systems are displayed in Work System Maps.
Operations Focus — Work Process Management

1 Design

Purpose: To design products and work processes to meet the determined key requirements (6.1a)

Plan
- Determine where process fits in the work system and assign process as key or support
- Budget financial resources necessary
- Benchmark top performers to determine best practices
- Review Long-Term Goals document to ensure design today will meet changing business needs in the future

Gather Requirements
- Define process value to stakeholders
- Create and determine:
  - Current state workflow map
  - Process inputs
  - Interrelated processes
  - Edge cases, or exceptions to the standard workflow
  - Key measures and goals (controls)
  - Desired process outputs, noting improvement or direction (6.1b)
- Process performer executes process as indicated by the work instructions/WIS to meet the process work requirements.
- Employees are encouraged to enter ideas as an OFI or CAR as appropriate based on executing or observing the process.

Design
- Create desired future state workflow map using Lean principles
- Review/incorporate relevant Performance Improvement System entries
- Review governance document to determine accountability
- Assign process owner and performer

Review & Validate
- Test and redesign as necessary
- Gather feedback from stakeholders to ensure design requirements are met
- Finalize future state workflow map
- Acquire final approval
- Create process measurements system (reports and measures)

Update Documentation
- Determine/validate important terms for Company Glossary
- Create work instruction and WIS
- Create system narrative, if necessary
- Update department work system map

2 Manage

Purpose: To determine how we manage, incrementally improve and fix our work processes to keep them in alignment with the business’ needs and direction (6.1b)

Implement (6.1b(1))

Process Improvement

Process performer, owner & internal auditors review work processes on a systematic basis to assess alignment with business needs & direction and to assess opportunities for improvement. Performance requirements are validated and CARs and OFIs are reviewed, incorporated, or issued as appropriate. Process owner provides training to process performers.

- Performance Improvement System on the Bucket List. The CAP Identification and Analysis process is used to analyze the idea. SLT reviews and prioritizes innovation in the monthly Strategic Planning meeting.

Continuous Improvement (6.1b(3))

Continuous Improvement Implemented

Continuous improvement is implemented as a CAR or OFI in alignment with the Continuous Process Improvement process.

Continuous Improvement Captured

Ideas for continuous improvement are captured in the Performance Improvement System as CARs and OFIs. DLT reviews and prioritizes CARs and OFIs monthly in the Department Baldrige Meeting.

Other Sources of Continuous Improvement and Innovation
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- Employee Satisfaction & Engagement Surveys
- Employee Focus Groups
- Voice of the Customer (VOC):
  - Social Media
  - Customer Complaints
- Department Baldrige Meetings
- Supplier Satisfaction Surveys
- Supplier Meetings
- BOD Meetings
- President & CEO and Chairman of the Board Meetings
- Brainstorming

3 Innovate

Purpose: To develop, manage and implement strategically important ideas (6.1c)

We manage for innovation. Systematic meetings conducted to stimulate and capture innovation include the following:
- Monthly Strategic Planning Meetings
- Sales & Marketing Team Meetings (area of focus below)
- Voice of the Customer (Quarterly)
- Marketing Plan Management (Bi-monthly)
- President & CEO Promotions Presentation (Annually)
- Customer Policy Review (Annually)
- Employee Policy Review (Annually)
- Web Improvement (Quarterly)
- Focus on the Future Meetings (Quarterly)
- State of the Business Meetings (Quarterly)
- Department Knowledge Sharing Meetings (Quarterly)
- Workforce Focus Meetings (Annually)

Innovation Captured

Ideas for innovation are captured in the Performance Improvement System on the Bucket List. The CAP Identification and Analysis process is used to analyze the idea. SLT reviews and prioritizes innovation in the monthly Strategic Planning meeting.

Innovation Implemented

Innovation selected for implementation is elevated to the Strategic Plan as a Company Action Plan (CAP). The Project Management process is used to effectively execute the innovative idea.