

Processes are how we get work done. They are at the very core of every business and organization. Processes are in motion, transforming inputs to outputs that provide value to customers, both external and internal to the organization. Establishing and maintaining healthy business processes is critical to business performance.

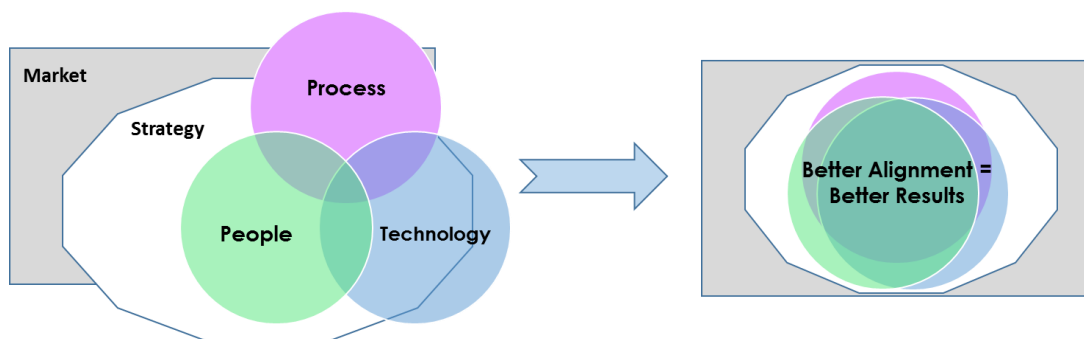
A Continuous Improvement Culture

There is no one “right” process. As marketplace, strategy, and business needs shift, so must our processes. What worked last year, may not meet the challenges today or the challenges of the future. Trying to create the perfect process leads to frustration and process paralysis. Avoid the elusive search for process perfection, and intentionally design processes that create high-value outputs, utilize capable people and technology effectively, align to strategy, and manage risk. Processes must also be measurable. Set in motion the right monitoring mechanisms to ensure outputs align to targets and expectations. Create a culture that continuously gathers metrics and feedback, learns and improves. Nothing becomes stagnant. Work flows with the pace of business and meets the expectations of customers.

Context and Alignment Principles:

To understand the nature of healthy, sustainable processes, it is important to see them in context within the business. A few foundational principles of context and alignment are:

- Processes don’t exist in a vacuum. They perform the work of the business, and are enabled by people and technology.
- Processes, people, and technology exist in tension with one another. If one is not aligned properly to the others, the other components compensate for what’s lacking, and the overall “system” suffers.
- Processes grow and mature as the supporting people and technology develop and mature.
- It’s never just about the process. It’s about intentional process enabled through capable people and technology. They are inseparable.
- When process, people and technology align to each other, and to the business strategy and marketplace, performance is maximized.



Some Helpful Process Design Principles:

- Processes add value – they transform something. Each step in the process must be meaningful and contribute to the value of the output.
- Processes must be intentional. If you don't know what you want, any way of performing work will do. Set process targets, and establish measures for monitoring process performance.
- Utilize process metrics to identify when processes require improvement.
- Consider the Customer experience when designing and implementing processes.
- Consider the Employee experience when designing and implementing processes.
- Eliminate duplication and rework.
- Minimize hand-offs.
- Capture data at the source of the information.
- Processes create, use, and transform data. Do not include data that is unnecessary to the process or its outputs.
- There is no "risk free" process. Determine appropriate risk tolerance, and define controls to manage process risk.
- Model a process to the level of detail for which you need to control variability, and no further.
- Use "business language", and clearly define terminology.
- Overlay process design with people (roles engagement) and supporting tools / technology to see a more holistic picture.
- Automate processing and decision-making where appropriate.