



Business Process Re-engineering

A Simple Process Improvement Approach to
Improve Business Performance

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Business Process Re-engineering: A Simple Process Improvement Approach to Improve Business Performance

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Cutting Through The Confusion

This book is a tool to help you find some quick improvement approaches for your business. It is not designed to be the gospel on business improvement. It is designed to be a huge kick start.

There is so much information available through the Internet, books and colleagues that it can sometimes be difficult to work out where to start. There are so many methodologies and systems available to you that you would be forgiven if you found the whole prospect daunting.

This book is a remedy to the confusion. The information and recommended actions are taken from my experience. The information is intended to be highly practical, ideas that can be implemented immediately and usually at low cost. The sections are based upon my practical experience of generating fast results for clients.

After about five years of delivering improvement projects for my clients I started to see patterns emerging. Different businesses with different problems, but similar needs and solutions were starting to emerge. Due to the variety of projects the solutions were all different, but nonetheless there were common parts that were implemented. Pulling these common elements out and using them in a more controlled 'holistic' fashion generated even better results for my later clients and these building blocks form the basis of this book.

Two parts

The first part of this book covers the main building blocks that I mentioned above, the second part of the book looks at some of the other tools that I have found to be beneficial in making improvement activities work even better. If part one is the engine then part two is the fuel.

As you read the chapters you will most likely recognise some of the principles, especially if you have read books on Lean and Six Sigma. This will help you, but don't worry if you haven't. The whole idea of the book is to help you in making improvements and not get lost in philosophical battles of what is the right way to improve a business.

There are many businesses who get on and improve - they do it naturally - it's part of what they do. Other businesses look to these businesses and try to pull apart what they do and try to emulate their systems. I don't think that there is a perfect way to improve. I do think that some of the systems work well, but there are also some

principles sitting behind the systems that will always work. The hard part of making sustainable changes happen is contained in two tasks:

One: Maintaining an ongoing conversation in the business about improvement.

Two: Continuing to try new ideas and plugging away until improvement occurs.

Many businesses want a perfect improvement plan and get nowhere. Others pick a direction (and goals if appropriate) and work out the best plan to their knowledge and get going. They refine their ideas along the way and by chipping away they soon arrive at a brilliant destination. Sometimes this happens quickly, and sometimes it takes longer. There are so many variables present within a business that working out and predicting the precise plan can be nearly impossible. So, keep aiming for better and keep going.

Structure

Each section of the book has a number of points and always concludes with some action points. The sections aren't designed to be formulaic; the idea is that you understand the principle of the section and then work out how best to do something similar in your business. As you read through the text you may possibly see a larger improvement approach lurking in the background. If you know how to expand upon the approach great, come up with a plan and go to it. If you don't recognise the approach then don't worry, that's why I wrote this book. Don't spend ages getting lost in theory, review the practical aspect of each section, come up with a plan for your business and then get on and do something about it.

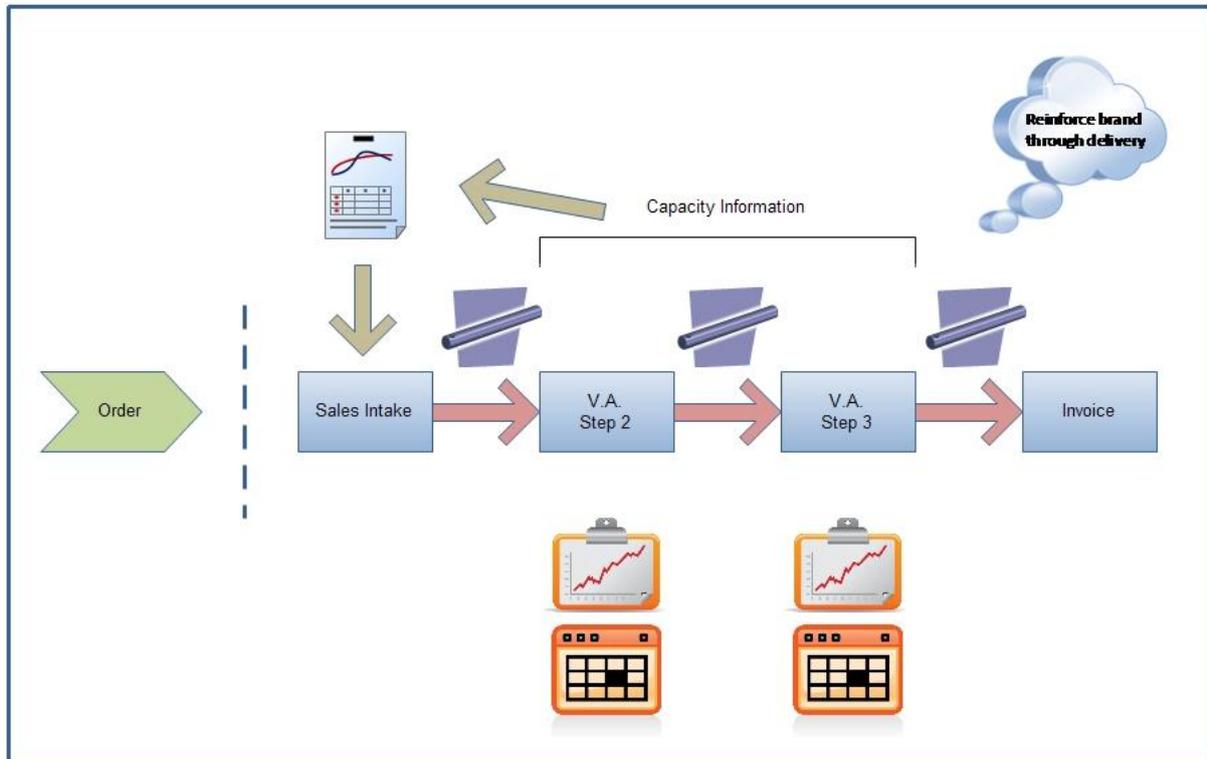
Also, don't worry about the work involved. Get a team in your business to work on these ideas, engage in discussion and exploration and then try some ideas out. You will almost certainly be improving your business just from having some meaningful conversations. There are so many businesses out there that hope that the next system will be the one that gives them the answers. The systems don't have answers - you and your team do. Use the ideas in this book to develop your own conversations and don't worry if the approach gets messy. Keep moving forwards and keep improving, that's the only formula.

Action steps

- Read the rest of the book!

- Start an ongoing conversation with your colleagues about improvement.

Part One - The Engine (Overview)





Brand and Value

Know what is important to the business and to the customers so as to create a direction for making improvements.



Key Performance Indicators

Drive the performance of your business through having the right information in the right place at the right time.



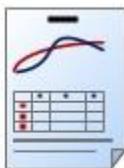
Handovers

Remove the delays and mistakes between stages for big results.



Sales Intake

Ensure that the way that you accept work doesn't cripple the business.



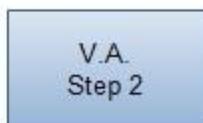
Regulation

Optimise your resources by making sure things are happening the right way and through the control of your capacities.



Routines

Improve the discipline/regimen in the workplace for repeatable results.



Processes

Find the best way to do your work

Brand and Value

Value

Value is a term that often confuses businesses. Value is what your customer is willing to pay for.

If you have followed any of the books around Lean then you will be aware of the balancing act in every business between value and waste.

- Value is what your customers want.
- Waste is everything else that you do to satisfy their needs / wants.

In many businesses this distinction leads into how profits are generated in the business. If the market forces are strong enough then reducing the wastes present in your business may be the only way to increase your profitability.

The key point I want to get across here is that by understanding what value you offer your customers you will be in possession of some simple principles that can help guide your improvement activities.

The objective of this section of the book is to define a compass for your business so that when improvement opportunities are discovered you can consider them against this compass and decide what action needs to be taken. Also, if there are no obvious opportunities and you find yourself in limbo then this compass will help you to decide where you need to focus your efforts.

If this is new to you and you are trying to discover your value proposition then you will need to realise that it will be something really basic, something a ten year old child will be able to comprehend. There are many other things that we do as a business that are impressive, sexy or clever. In a lot of cases our customers aren't that bothered. They just want the end result or product. Don't feel too depressed when you strip your business down to its value proposition, you still get to do everything else, but perhaps you will change how much of each activity you will do going forwards.

Think of your value - what do you offer?

- Do you mow lawns?
- Do you cut metal?
- Do you assemble microwaves?

- Do you design buildings?

Keep thinking about your business until you get to that 'Aha!' moment when you realise that most of the things you do in your business don't contribute to the value that your customers want.

Brand

The impression you leave upon your customers is your brand. Your operational brand is the way that you deliver your products and services and the way that your customers feel about that experience. Brand is so much more than a logo or your stationery or your website. Your brand is enforced or betrayed with every interaction with your customer. By understanding where you are now and where you want to be you can define a path for your improvement activity to take place.

Hopefully you will have some idea of how you would like to be perceived, this is your 'ideal brand'.

Voice of the customer

A great place to start in identifying your own brand is to understand what your customers think of you. In many cases there is an ongoing dialogue between you and your customers and suppliers so tapping into this is the best place to start. Remember the customer will see your business differently to you and uncovering this distinction is of paramount importance to establish your current brand.

If your customers aren't speaking to you then that is possibly a sign that they are not happy with you and aren't saying anything. Most healthy relationships will lead to some dialogue. You may have received complaints or unofficial grumbles. You may have been awarded prizes. Every contact with the customer tells both parties something about the other.

Compile a list of the feedback you get and create a view from the customer. This is your 'actual brand'.

Ideal brand versus actual brand

In many cases there will be a gap between the ideal and actual brands that you have defined. This gap gives you a guide to what needs to change in your business.

This is also a great time to review and update your ideal brand. Align the brand with the mission or goals of your business. There might be other things that have come

up from your customer feedback that could be incorporated – things you had never considered before.

The intention of doing this is to help build our compass. To provide decision making and guidance when opportunities for improvement come flooding in.

Our focus

How we look at our business affects what we do with it. When we use our simple top level view of our world (our value [what] and our brand [style]) we get a simple tool to apply to make our business great. If we don't have a focus then all of the opportunities for change will look good. We need to be able to discriminate and be selective. Some of the improvements will make a big impact on our brand whilst others will not. Some will make a marginal improvement to our ability to create value for our customers and other will give a huge boost.

Every improvement has its place, but when time is limited we need to be able to make swift decisions about which of the options available are the best to pursue. If time and need allows we may get round to resolving some of the options that were in second or third place when we evaluated them. The choice has to be made however to make the most important and most effective changes first.

Once we have effectiveness then we can look at efficiency. Most of the practical sections of this book are aimed at increasing effectiveness. Some of these changes however will improve efficiency by default, so don't worry, efficiency is also covered.

Principles for change

Now it is time to distil the brand awareness and value insights into some principles for change. This requires you (and your team) to come up with some simple statements that can help guide your thoughts during the upcoming activities. This set of statements will become your compass.

Don't worry about getting these statements perfect the first time round, your thoughts will most likely change as this period of change takes effect, but it is a great place to start.

An example may help you get started:

If you want to be seen as the 'go to' people for a certain manufactured part but you find out that your late deliveries and unclear e-mails are causing distress for the customer you may wish to have some of the following principles:

- E-mails are to be standardised, simple and clear.

- All steps in our order conversion process are to start on time and to finish on time.
- All order problems are to be flagged up at a daily meeting.
- Admin tasks are to be minimised.
- Value adding tasks are to be supported to reduce stoppages.
- All phone calls are to be answered within three rings.

I hope you get the idea now. Write down a handful of statements for future use. When you are generating improvement ideas these statements can help you prioritise which actions are the most important in order for you to live your brand.

Summary

If we get a handle on what our business creates from a **value** point of view, and combine this with an honest look at how we are performing, our **brand**, then we can create a compass for our business' improvements. Improvement doesn't need to be guesswork and the actions that we need to take can become self evident.

Action steps

- Determine what value your business creates for its customers. Keep this as a focus for your improvements; we want to spend as much time on value adding work as possible.
- Compare your ideal brand with your current brand – where you want to be and where you are. All your changes need to help you move from your current brand to your ideal brand.
- Define some statements / principles for change to help you achieve your ideal way of working. Your changes need to help you adhere to your ideal brand and help your business to spend more time on value adding.

These three items will be your compass for change. Reflecting upon these from time to time will help you to ensure that your efforts are moving you in the right direction.

END OF SAMPLE

[Click here to purchase the book.](#)