More with Less | Improvement is a Systematic and Deliberate Process

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SUMMARY

- Businesses are required to be as efficient as they can be.
- People are an integral part of any needed improvements.
- Process improvement is a systematic and deliberate process focused on doing the work in the most effective and efficient way.
- Business value is achieved by focusing on the production system and the results

Getting More with Less

Everything cycles, seems like yesterday when we were having this same conversation in 2001 and 2002. Some people called that a perfect storm with a terrorist attack on US soil and the internet bubble bursting. Here we are again, we could debate on what got us here, but the fact is that lots of folks are losing their jobs as company's cut back. The work hasn't changed, but the resources we have to do the work certainly have been reduced.

So how do you get more from less?

A while back, I wrote a [paper] [1] on Quality Excellence, it describes a process for getting the most out of your processes.

Your Team
As with all things, it all starts with people. In order to get the most from your folks, it's important to enable them to be the best they can be. That means giving them [training] [2] so that they have an accountable attitude, know how to organize themselves and their work, and have a method that they've personalized to help them get the most out of their day. Then challenge them with new responsibilities, hold them accountable for results, because the people you want on your team are the folks that will take getting results personally and deliver.

Value Proposition
Reaffirm or reassess your business value proposition. A value proposition is the business' statement of value that encompasses the vision, mission, and values as evaluated by the leadership, customers and stakeholders. It articulates the three to five year strategies that are necessary in achieving the vision, and sets the foundation for creating the next twelve months objectives that will achieve your mission.

Understand Where You Are
Baseline your current performance as it relates to internal goals and external benchmarks. Use your internal change agents, or hire an outside firm to help get an unbiased, unpolished perspective. Serious change can only come from admitting that one needs to change. Just doing better than last year is most likely not going to cut it, so get real and get serious about understanding where you are.

Describe Where You're Going
Evaluate your value proposition and your current state, and create [SMART] [3] objectives that form the basis of your improvement plan. Create improvement initiatives that will address the objectives and then evaluate them for the highest return on investment [ROI] [4], which can include quantitative and qualitative factors. Assign a champion and challenge a team with an initiative, have them evaluate the [problem statement] [5] to assure the initiative will indeed help achieve the objective(s) and then

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expect results.

Manage Improvements
Establish a governance structure that will support managing the improvement initiatives and assure that results are being achieved. It's okay to change, refocus, or redirect if specific results are not being achieved. The key is to keep the initiatives visible, show results, and achieve the objectives.

Conclusion
By enabling your people, focusing on the process and holding people accountable for results, the business will weather all storms. A one size fits all improvement method doesn't work, so working on your specific improvement program tailoring it to the business culture will yield the best results.

Good luck!

- Quality Excellence [6]

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