

Work process design – a few pertinent questions

It always amazes me when I am engaged by a company (or more particularly, a manager) to discuss their frustrations with regard to a failure to deliver outcomes on a consistent and repeatable basis.

The conversation doesn't always start, but invariably ends in a character assassination of a few individuals who, according to the manager, simply fail to 'get it' or seemingly deliberately hijack the agreed objectives

The truth however, is very often different from perception.

In particular, the evidence points to the fact that most issues relate to a preoccupation with work process design efficiency on the assumption that the fundamentals of work process design effectiveness already exists. The following questions will help to determine whether this is true of your organisation /project or not.

In respect to your current work process design have you:

1. Adequately differentiated and defined the purpose of the core and non-core work processes before completing any mapping activities?
2. Invested heavily in the mapping of current state work processes in the belief that this is a necessary prerequisite for determining future state?
3. Failed to define materiality levels (tolerance for error and what matters most) at the work process level to replace a quest for excellence with a quest for relevance?
4. Overlooked the need to remove inherent ambiguity during process execution by establishing a set of minimum mandatory operating philosophies?
5. Not addressed the issue and consequence of non-compliance to the work process design? Is process compliance discretionary or not and if not, how will you know and what are the consequences to individuals responsible for executing the process?
6. Just focussed on measuring work process design outcomes? If so, it is possible that you are unwittingly encouraging maverick behaviour?

In conclusion, it is simply not good enough for work process design to be efficient; it must first be effective, and then efficient.

Gordon Dunbar

Perth, Australia

gordon@processimprovementmastery.com

+61 (0)403241540