



10 DIY Steps to Improving Your Business Processes

1. Choose the Process Improvement (PI) Project

Decide where you want to start. Tackling a smaller project at first is a good idea, particularly if your staff doesn't have the bandwidth or PI experience. Otherwise, you can choose a more challenging project.

2. Define & Document Project Scope

Determine the plan for improving the process and the timeframe you want to accomplish it in. Define it in as much detail as possible to prevent scope creep.

3. Map the Process

Bring together your Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to document the workflow based on the "Current State" of the process. It's important to have someone facilitate this activity who is experienced in process mapping; otherwise, the basis of your whole project could be built on a faulty foundation.

4. Estimate Process & Cycle Times

Estimate timeframes and costs associated with the steps in the process. This is done to highlight areas where inefficiencies exist and unnecessary resources are being utilized.

5. Review the Process Map

Do this to ensure accuracy and completeness of the map, making sure that the process matches reality. The end goal is to get buy-in from your SMEs.

6. Improve the Process

Look at each section of the map to identify problems. The team needs to brainstorm and determine the most efficient way to perform the process that results in the most ideal outcomes for the customer. It's also good to look at whether another person or team can more efficiently perform certain steps.

7. Develop Metrics, Controls & Tools

Determine areas you want to measure and create metrics around those areas. Develop tools and documentation to support the process, and develop a plan to control/prevent process deviations.

8. Test & Revise the Process

"Try Storm" the process. Take a mock run through to see if it functions as intended. If it doesn't, make adjustments so the work will flow as intended.

9. Prep for Process Roll-Out

Do these three things to ensure a successful roll-out and better process adoption: make sure it's thoroughly documented so that end users can properly follow it; create a Communication Plan so end users are aware of the new process you're rolling out; and train them so they'll know how to use it.

10. Drive an Organizational Continuous Improvement Mindset

Create an expectation in the organization that you'll continue to improve processes on a regular basis. It's definitely not a one-time event, and driving CI starts at the top!