

BUSINESS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT 2022 BLOG
by Susan Page
Author of: *The Power of Business Process Improvement*

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Employee Involvement in Business Process Improvement

9/2/2022

Most employees intellectually understand the importance of improving business processes, but sometimes they become hesitant when the work actually begins. They realize their world will change—the way they do things will change, the tools they use may change, and who they interact with may change.

Even though change “is the only constant in life,” as said by Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher, not everyone reacts well to change. In all the BPI efforts I’ve led over the years, I’ve found that when you involve employees (and especially the troublesome ones), the work sticks.

As the facilitator, though, it does not feel good to face a challenging employee, and it places an extra burden on your skill set. Try to view difficult employees as a “gift.” When you open a gift, you untie the bow, unwrap the paper, and anticipate what’s inside. Listen to what he or she says and use their words to delve into their pushback. For example:

- *Why do you say that?*
- *Can you explain more?*
- *How would **you** handle it?*
- *What other alternatives to you see?*

Other employees will notice how non-defensively you handle a difficult employee and will respond more openly to the ongoing work and support it if you handle the troublemaker well. As John C. Maxwell, the New York Times bestselling author, says “Change is inevitable. Growth is optional.”

Help employees grow.

Is Continuous Improvement Part of Your Company’s DNA?

8/19/2022

Continuous process improvement (CPI) is the last of the ten steps in *The Power of Business Process Improvement*. After completing the prior nine steps, you do not want to ignore this last step because you may have to start all over again examining your business processes in a few

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years if you skip it. Business continually changes and you have to keep up with what customers want from your company.

Make CPI part of your company's DNA. DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) is one of two types of molecules that encode genetic information. You cannot change it; it is inherent in who you are as a human being. Make business process improvement part of your company's DNA by incorporating CPI.

Just think of the power your company can gain if all employees think of CPI every day and it becomes part of your company's DNA. Eventually, your culture will change and you probably know the saying, culture trumps process all the time. The management guru, Peter Drucker is credited with saying, "Culture eats process for lunch." Until CPI becomes part of your company's DNA, you will always struggle to keep up with changing needs.

Exit Interviews

4/27/2022

With companies struggling to find employees as we recover from the pandemic, it makes sense to work hard to keep the employees currently working for you. Recognition, a simple thank you, or allowing a flexible schedule can contribute to happy employees. But, what about the employees who left your company? How hard do you work to find out **why** they left?

Did your company continue to conduct exit interviews during the pandemic (if they ever did conduct them to start)? Many colleagues tell me their company dropped this "nonessential" step in the termination process.

Conducting exit interviews though always help to provide insight into what you can do better as a leader or as a company. Asking about the **business processes** you have in place may provide additional improvement efforts you never thought about in the past. Ask if any of your business processes impeded their ability to deliver customer service.

How to Incorporate Continuous Improvement at Your Company

3/17/2022

Someone asked me the other day how she could position continuous improvement in a presentation she was putting together for the top level executives in her company since all they care about is the bottom line.

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I suggested she bring the “customer” into the conversation and stress how continually improving her company’s business processes ensures the company delivers what the customer wants. What is more bottom line than the customer? Only they can make a company profitable, so linking all the talking points in her presentation back to this fundamental core makes sense. And, customer needs do change over time so building a continuous improvement plan makes sense too. It’s how you make sure your business does not lose touch with their needs.

I also suggested she might want to call continuous improvement something else that resonates in her company. Often the name you decide to use makes a difference in the acceptance rate at a company because as we all know "culture trumps process all the time."

Business Process Improvement During a Pandemic

3/8/2022

How do you continue to move business process improvement (BPI) forward in these challenging days when co-workers and your staff work remotely? Many people have shared that they gave up trying to improve business processes; they’re just focusing on keeping the business afloat. Just trying to survive. Does BPI even matter anymore?

Not only does it matter, but it matters even more because employees now work in new settings, perhaps in a home office or in their bedroom. They still work in four walls, but not the same office walls. Processes can bring structure and enable everyone to operate under the same rules.

Remote working has forced businesses to ensure they have **efficient** and **effective** processes. You may see bureaucracy increase or decrease, preferably the latter. Efficiency relates to how you use resources, especially human resources these days. Every employee has to count and every employee should retain a focus on delivering against customer needs. Effectiveness focuses on what the customer requires and you cannot lose site on such a key success factor, even in a pandemic. Your customer needs may have changed because of the pandemic.

When was the last time you evaluated your customer needs?