

## Define the structure of the organisation (Columns of the QFD)

Establishing a clear set of common goals will ensure that your team are all headed in the right direction, but it won't ensure that they will work as a team to get there. Teamwork implies that the team members each play their part in achieving the goal, and that each part is complementary and combines with the other parts efficiently and effectively - like a football team for instance. If the parts that people are required to play are unclear, then the result is often a free-for-all, with some tasks being done twice and others completely forgotten. Clarifying and agreeing a defined role for each team member is vitally important if the team is to work efficiently and effectively in pursuit of the goal.

In this chapter, we look at how the columns of the QFD can be used to establish what those roles are by:

- clarifying the structure of the organisation, and
- clarifying responsibilities within that structure.

Because QFD is simply a matrix that relates *'what you want to do'* to *'how you want to do it'*, it places no restrictions on the models you might use for *'how'*. As such, *how* the management team choose to view the structure of their organisation through the QFD is entirely up to them. They could, for instance, view it as:

- divided into market areas, with each column representing a separate product line
- divided into geographic areas, with each column representing a separate region
- divided into disciplines or specialisms, with each column representing a different skill set



## Chapter 8

Back at the hotel, Richard and Lucy celebrated the success of their first joint project. The meeting had been a tremendous success all round.

Richard had to admit his reservations about what Lucy called 'The clothes-line' had proved foundationless. The idea of his management team standing along an imaginary number line, moving up and down it, and arguing their positions had seemed a bit bizarre. And yet in practice it had proved to be the most focused and efficient discussion they had ever had.

At the end of the meeting, everyone had bought into the outcomes, and felt they had developed a clear set of measures and targets that they could commit to delivering by the end of September – Cylek's financial year-end.

Correction – make that nearly everyone. Daniel was proving an increasing concern to Richard. On a number of occasions he had taken a different stance from the group and refused to consider other viewpoints. The process had highlighted his differences, and had ultimately isolated him in them. His attempts to steamroller the conclusions fell foul of Lucy's ground rules for the meeting, and he had grown increasingly sullen. Richard was worried about how he might bring him back on board.

Yet he did not regret the process in the slightest. It had illustrated to him how the price for Daniel's involvement had been acceptance of Daniel's agenda and politics. And it was a cost, that now Richard had been clearly shown the price tag, he knew he could not afford to keep paying. Working with the session plan had been a real eye-opener for Richard, and he was beginning to see meetings more clearly as a process. A process which, in the past, had been all too often wasteful and ineffective.

Lucy put down her fizzy water and said: "Richard, you know you were explaining developing the QFD between the objectives and the departments? Well I was wondering, have you considered linking it to business processes instead of departments?"

"Say some more," prompted Richard.

- divided into improvement areas, with each column representing a different project or initiative
- divided into traditional business functions, with each column representing a different department
- divided into areas of functionality, with each column representing a different business process.

In practice, however, most of these have limited value as an ongoing management tool. In the case of the first two options we tend to find that the columns on the QFD become very similar, because in practice geographic and market areas represent microcosms of the complete business and have to fulfil all of the objectives - so the debate becomes sterile and provides little new insight. In the case of the third option, we may develop a good understanding of the skills we need to develop and recruit, but little insight into how they should be integrated into the systems and facilities of a multidisciplinary organisation. The fourth option provides excellent guidance on how improvement should be focused - but in practice, because it separates improvement activity from day-to-day performance responsibilities, it tends to become a wish list.

The fifth option reflects the position many companies adopt when they first start to use QFD. It ensures that increased clarity is brought to bear on the existing lines of responsibility in the organisation, but it does not require any reorganisation of those responsibilities, or the attendant disruption and potential confusion that that may entail. By retaining current models of operating, organisations can evaluate most of the potential of QFD without committing themselves to its use.

The sixth option, however, combines real insight with the means to focus it on the day-to-day management of the business.



#### The benefits of process thinking:

- Breaks down functional silos
- Focuses on customers and delivery
- Links operation with improvement
- Highlights hand-over problems
- Better flexibility and responsiveness
- Increased efficiency / reduced cost
- Reduced cycle times / more speed
- Better teamwork and communication
- More fulfilling involvement/activity
- Improved quality assurance.

“Well, I was extending the concept of product design, and how it might work in business. If you think about the sub-assemblies, are they not more likely to represent various forms of systems? Yes?”

“Ye-e-es, go on.”

“For instance, in telescope design, I imagine the QFD works better if you separate out optics, casing, and adjustment into columns than if you have columns of eyepiece, object lens assembly and main tube, each of which might contain elements of all three.”

Richard thought about this for a while and related it back to his own experience of QFD. “Yes, much better!”

“Well, if we were to extend that thinking to Cylek UK. Would the QFD work better if we considered a process such as ‘logistics’ for the storage and movement of goods, rather than a series of activities grouped separately under Operations, Site Services and IT?”

Richard thought about it.

Lucy let him ponder briefly and then cut in with: “You see, process thinking is adding a lot to business improvement currently. Good tools have been developed to help design processes and manage their performance.”

Richard nodded. He was aware of some of them. “But some of our departments are processes,” he responded.

“Some, but not all, and not completely,” challenged Lucy. “Wouldn’t it make sense to refine the model of Cylek UK to better reflect processes before we launch into QFD properly?”

Richard thought some more. She had a point. But there were a number of down-sides. “Possibly,” he allowed, “but, point one, it could take a long time to think that out and get it agreed, and, point two, it would confuse the accountabilities and that could be disastrous for us.”

“Well perhaps, but taking those points in turn: firstly, I’m sure we could come up with an approach that would have business processes sufficiently defined and agreed by the next meeting, and secondly, accountabilities can often become a lot clearer when they are defined in terms of processes.”

Richard sat back, and look upwards for a while. It certainly made sense, but it was more ambitious than what he had in mind.

In practice we have found this by far the best basis for the columns on the QFD. So the rest of this chapter is dedicated to ensuring a clear understanding of:

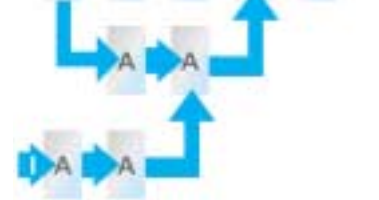
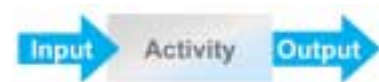
- the concept of business process
- business process modelling
- the steps to developing an effective business process model
- roles and responsibilities within the process model.

### The concept of business processes

All businesses contain processes, whether we recognise them as such or not. A process is simply described as a sequence of activities that transform an input into an output, whether that output is a product, a service, or your expenses claim.

Processes can be defined as short sequences of activities, such as *'assembling a wheel nut'* or long sequences, such as *'building a complete car from new materials'*. Processes can be described specifically, such as *'fitting the driver's seat in a Ford Focus'*, or generically, such as *'making a phone call'*. Processes can be directly related to delivering output, such as *'producing product'*, or indirectly related to it, such as *'maintaining facilities'*, or even more indirectly related, such as *'planning improvement'*.

What then do we currently do that is not a process? The short answer to that question is 'nothing'. Even the activity of identifying processes, is in itself a process, or at least part of one. As a process, it can be defined, evaluated, improved and managed. And that is the benefit of seeing activities as processes, or parts of processes - the opportunity to improve, objectively and systematically, the per-



Examples of process concepts



Not only is there but one way of doing things rightly, but there is one way of seeing them, and that is, seeing the whole of them.

John Ruskin  
English art critic and historian.

“Try this,” she said. “You and I sit down and develop a logical model between us. Not too radically different, but with the processes defined a bit more clearly. Then we propose the model to the management team, and conclude any further refinements, and agree the model in principle. And then you appoint numbers of the management team to take responsibility for those processes and adjust any remaining confusions.”

“Yes,” he said hesitantly, “but will we really get extra advantage out of it?”

Lucy thought for a moment. She was a little puzzled that Richard seemed to be struggling with something that seemed so obvious to her.

“I’m sure we will,” she replied, “but let’s go over the logic step by step and see that I haven’t missed anything. Firstly, processes give us a way of breaking down the business into clear sequences of activities which lead to identifiable performance.” She looked at Richard to ensure he was with her on this point, and he half shrugged and then nodded in reply.

“Secondly,” she continued, “assigning responsibility for these processes means that each manager has a clear picture of what he or she is intended to achieve, and has direct influence over the means to achieve it.” She looked at Richard again, and again he nodded.

But then he stopped and challenged. “But how does that differ from what we have now?”

“Well in some cases it doesn’t,” she replied, “because in areas like production the clarity is already there. In fact they already are a process! But in other areas performance and responsibility are a lot more woolly.”

Richard looked at her quizzically, so she continued, “Well, take the problems you are having with availability of components at point of use. Who has clarity over performance and responsibility over putting it right? Wouldn’t it be more clear if it was seen as one process rather than three parts of separate departments?”

Richard nodded, but Lucy could see he was still slightly hesitant.

“We could take an initial stab at it right now, and if it doesn’t get us anywhere we can abandon the idea from the outset. Shall I see if they’ve got a room we can work in? I imagine we are going to have to spread out a bit for this one.”

formance of that activity in the context of what the organisation is trying to achieve.

Because all work that takes place in an organisation can be defined as part of a process, it is possible to develop a model of the business, which is comprised entirely of interlinking and complementary processes. The performance of the organisation can then be described in terms of the performance of its processes. Examples of such models for a number of different organisations may be seen on the right.

Because of the variety of work that takes place in an organisation, there are clearly different types of processes. The four most common types of processes are as follows.

- Direct processes, which are concerned with the routine activities of directly producing and delivering the main products and services of the organisation to its customer.
- Indirect processes, which are concerned with the routine of supporting the operation of direct processes through the provision of facilities, labour, finance, paperwork, etc.
- Control processes, which tend to be cyclical, and manage the operation of other processes, through measuring their performance and effecting adjustments where required.
- Design processes, which tend to either be on an annual cycle or more ad-hoc, and establish the parameters and means for improvement.

### Business process modelling

There is, however, no preordained model of business processes. There is not one set and constant answer stating exactly what the business processes for a company should be (see the variety in the examples of the diagram on the right).



Richard nodded, and Lucy headed for the reception desk, glass in hand. He watched her shapely legs, which were accentuated by her high-heeled shoes, and how they blended into a very attractive bottom. As his thoughts wandered, he realised that it was becoming increasingly difficult for him to keep them focused on business, and that he would have to fight to keep his mind on the subject in hand.

He was still fighting when Lucy returned to wake him out of his reverie.

“No luck! They are fully booked, but we could always use my room. It is big enough!”

Richard’s imagination temporarily took him hostage and demanded a ransom, he paid in full with images that caused him to flush. But he caught himself quickly, and looked back obviously embarrassed. “No, I couldn’t do that,” he said tightly.

Lucy saw the expressions on his face, and heard the tone of his voice, and caught on quick. “Excuse me. Let me get one thing straight. I don’t screw my clients. I’m a country girl from the Bible Belt and I still have my faith and my values!”

Richard was taken aback by her bluntness, and blustered: “I never thought for one minute...” but he stumbled to a halt, realising that his face was telling quite a different story. He caught himself and started again. “My apologies. I was taken off guard. I merely meant that it would not seem right. That it could be misinterpreted by others.”

Now it was Lucy’s turn to look embarrassed. “I’m sorry! People tell me that I’m too open, that things I do and say get misinterpreted. And then I get paranoid that people have got the wrong end of the stick, and I change from Dr. Jekyll into Miss Hyde. I didn’t mean anything by it. Of course you didn’t think that!”

Richard was once again disarmed by her frankness, and felt guilty that he was going to let her think that it was she who had been in the wrong. He could not, or would not, do anything about that. But he could at least take a more conciliatory approach.

“We’re business colleagues. We are responsible senior people in a large multi-national and we have work to do. If people around us want to misinterpret that, that’s their problem. Lead on McDuff!”

Each organisation is free to consider the main elements of how they do business in many, equally valid, different ways. The key is to develop a model which provides the greatest insight and potential for improvement and control of your business. And to accept that the chosen model is unlikely to be perfect, but should provide a practical basis for targeting improvement.

One other important note to make from the models shown on the previous page, is that none of them reflects metaprocesses: the processes which 'control' and 'design' the organisation.

These metaprocesses are the mechanisms which ensure your management team works effectively. While such mechanisms benefit from improvement in their own right, such considerations are best separated from the consideration of how to manage and improve the more functional aspects of the organisation. An analogy would be to consider the designing of a washing machine, and whether considering the designer's set square or drafting pen in the product QFD would be apt to clarify or confuse things. To include the control and design processes within the business QFD tends to create circular arguments and confusion, and it is best to restrict your QFD to routine 'direct' and 'indirect' processes.

### The steps to developing an effective business process model

Developing process models can be a fun activity, and can in itself provide new insights into how your organisation can be developed. What follows here is a practical guide to developing an effective process model with your management team. It breaks process modelling down into five steps.



#### Examples of direct and indirect processes for a manufacturing business

##### Direct processes:

- Sales Order Management
- Product Manufacturing
- Purchasing
- Order Despatch
- Product Distribution.

##### Indirect processes:

- Quality Assurance
- People Development
- Facilities Management
- Financial Management.

She looked at him with slightly narrowed eyes, as if to say 'Are you sure?' and he responded: "Sexual equality! If you were Daniel, would people assume I was gay?"

"And down on your luck," she said, and laughed.



Lucy's room turned out to be opulent and massive. "Wow, I'm glad this isn't out of my budget!" he said. And then with the faintest note of anxiety: "It isn't, is it?"

She smiled, and went over to her briefcase to pull out the ubiquitous sticky notes. "It's all part of the strategy," she replied. "If people think you cost a lot they seem to value the outcomes more." Richard gave her a disbelieving look. "It's true actually!" she replied, and then conceded: "And, of course, it is more fun to live in luxury."

This was a side to Cylek that he wanted to explore further. "And Cyrus doesn't have any problem with that?" he asked.

She looked at him quizzically. "I'm not actually employed by Cylek, I'm just retained by them. These," she indicated the surroundings, "are part of my normal terms. It is just as important that Cyrus values what I have to say. And anyway, I've made him many more times in benefits what I've cost him in fees."

She sat down at a large circular mahogany table, put down the sticky notes and a pen, and cleared the various hotel literature on to the bed behind her. Richard sat down opposite, and waited.

"Let's take the departments one by one, and list out the activities that each is responsible for. I'll write each activity on a separate sticky note and we'll stick them up on that wall over there. We'll put them up initially in their departments, then we'll try moving them round and see if we can develop a better, more process focused model. How does that sound?"

"Fine," said Richard, shrugging.

"Okay. Go!" she said.

They worked through the task as she had outlined it. When the sticky notes were up on the wall, Richard spotted a few activities he had missed.

- List the activities of the organisation.
- Develop a number of possible models.
- Review the models' strengths and weaknesses.
- Select a model and refine it.
- Define the scope and boundaries of each process within the model.

This approach is intended for the management group that will ultimately develop the QFD, and take responsibility for the processes. It is intended to enable them to contribute their ideas and experience, and to build their commitment to implement the conclusions.

#### List the activities of the organisation

The first step is to list the activities of the organisation. It is important that the activities listed are at a similar level of detail. This can be achieved by asking each member of the management group to break down the area he/she is responsible for into ten to fifteen activities that collectively represent all that their department/section etc. should be doing.<sup>1</sup> The next step is to get the group to call these out, and to list them not only on a flipchart but also separately on four sets of sticky-notes.<sup>2</sup> Calling out the activities helps people to identify areas they have forgotten, and to ensure that the final list is comprehensive.

When the list is finished the group should have four complete sets of sticky-notes, each one identifying an activity that takes place in the organisation.

#### Develop a number of possible models

The group is then split up into three syndicate teams, each with a set of all the

<sup>1</sup> Listing what 'should' be happening ensures that valuable activities which are not currently happening are considered in the model.

<sup>2</sup> The reason for this will become clear in the next step.



Example of listing activities under headings of existing departments

HR	Technical	Operations
Catering	Returns and repairs	Packing and despatch
Recruitment	Special products	Equipment maintenance
Pay awards	Product design	Manufacture
Safety management	Product quality inspection	Industrial engineering
Succession planning	Competitor analysis	Goods receiving
Training	Platform research	Machine setup
Library	Standards development and follow	Stores
	Legal and IPR	
	Vendor selection	
	Complaints management	

Lucy wrote them up and added them to the wall, but Richard became concerned with the overall integrity of what they were trying to do.

“If we have still got activities missing then our conclusions will be flawed,” he protested.

Lucy stopped and sat down on the edge of the bed looking at the yellow rectangles that now decorated her wall. “We could end up missing out some of the activities,” she conceded, “but I think we’ll remember the key ones. Looking at this, I think we have a good chance of developing a logical framework that is right in principle. We can always get the management team to refine it further and ensure everything is included. That can be part of their buying into this.”

Richard still looked sceptical. Lucy continued: “Look, we’ve come this far. Why don’t we just try moving things round a bit and see what emerges. If we’re not happy with what we get, we can abandon it at that point, and stick with the departments as they are. But don’t you think it’s worth a try to explore our options before we lock in the existing solution?”

She had spoken to the designer in him, and he responded. Within a couple of minutes he was enthusiastically shuffling the sticky notes, conjuring up new arrangements and visualising the result. Every so often, Lucy would see an alternative pattern and start to build it, but it was as much to stimulate Richard’s thinking, as it was to propose a solution.

Within half an hour, Richard had developed a pattern that he was reluctant to change any further. Lucy thought it looked good in process terms, even though three of the existing departments remained virtually the same as they were originally. She had earlier moved activities out of them, only to see Richard return them minutes later, so she was happy that they were not left by default.

“Okay,” she mused. “Now, if these really are processes, we ought to be able to give each of them a simple description consisting of a verb and a noun, so let’s give it a try.” She pointed to one of the departments that had not changed. “How about this one to start?”

“That’s Human Resources,” said Richard.

“Ang Arrgh!” Lucy imitated a quiz show buzzer for a wrong answer. “Verb and noun, at least!”

activities on sticky-notes. The team's role is to group the activities into a logical set of business processes for the organisation. The fourth set of sticky-notes is developed into the current organisational model.

When the syndicates have completed their models they should present them back to the group, and explain their reasoning.

#### Review the models' strengths and weaknesses

The group, as a whole, should then work round each of the four models, including the current model, and for each one, they should list out what they see as its strengths and weaknesses. These should be flip charted into two columns, on one sheet of paper for each model. Extended debate of the feedback should be avoided. At the end of this step, each model should be pinned up on the wall, together with its sheet of strengths and weaknesses.

#### Select a model and refine it

The fourth step is to pick one of the models as a basis for developing it into the model for the organisation. This does not necessarily mean picking the best model, because it may be easier to correct and refine one of the other models. The preferred model should be agreed through consensus reaching<sup>1</sup>, so that the whole group can support the conclusion.

Having selected a model, the next step is to refine it. This is done by working through the 'weaknesses' feedback, and incorporating ideas from the other models to address the issues. Consensus reaching should also be used through this process.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 9 for an explanation of Consensus reaching.



Examples of moving activities between department groups to create processes (above) and of identifying suitable process



Richard thought about this for a while. “Okay,” he said. “How about ‘Providing and Growing Human Resources’?”

Lucy grimaced “‘Human Resources’?” she said, as though she had tasted lemon juice. “Why don’t people call them ‘People’?”

“Who’s process map is this?” challenged Richard in mock indignation. “But you’re right! ‘Providing and Growing People’ it is!”

Lucy wrote the words up on a different colour sticky note and stuck it above the collection of activities. And so they worked though each of the groups. Sometimes, having defined a name, Richard would pull off one of the activities and find a better home for it, one that fitted it better. Sometimes he did it in reverse, pulling an additional sticky note into the new process, and twice he spotted activities that he had missed, and added them in.

By the time they’d finished he was very happy with the result. “Great! So what happens next?”

“You go home!” she said pointing to her watch. It was gone 11pm Where had the time gone?

“Uh, oh!” he said. “Major brownie point trade deficit!” Then he thought about it a bit more seriously. “Shit!” he expostulated, and shook his head. Things were bad enough with Laura at the moment. He did not need this. “Got to go,” he said, “but thanks, you were right.” And he left abruptly, all thoughts of next steps evaporated.



Laura closed the book in front of her and placed it on her bedside table with a sigh of resignation, and as she retracted her arm the duvet settled back over her recumbent form.

She had hoped that reading a few verses from its pages might stem the tide of resentment that was building inside her, but she hadn’t really been able to see the words through the angry pictures in her mind, and as she looked at the hands of the clock wind their way past another hour a resurgent wave of bitterness engulfed her.

Shaking her head, she reached back out for the book, and placing her hand palm down on the large gold cross that was embossed in its cover she muttered a silent prayer.

## Define process scope and boundaries

The fifth and final step is to remove ambiguity from the processes by clarifying their scope and boundaries. This is achieved by looking at each of the process groups in turn, and raising questions about exactly where their boundaries lie. The conclusions of these discussions normally result in some of the activities being rewritten or subdivided to ensure the scope and boundaries are clear.

At this point it would be beneficial to give the processes appropriate names that reflect what they are trying to achieve. Normal convention for naming processes is that the name should contain a verb and a noun, such as 'test product' or 'distribute report'. This is a valuable discipline that can help prevent subsequent problems.

## Other methods of developing the process model

The method of developing the organisational model outlined above, while effective, can prove very disruptive in practice. This is not an issue if you are open to reconsidering your management and reporting structures, but can be problematic if there is a need to keep existing structures relatively stable, for instance if your management group is not confident with process management.

An alternative is to map up the current organisational model in sticky-notes, and then consider proposals to modify the model and bring it more in line with process thinking. In this way existing structures can be largely preserved. This method is the one used within the story on the right-hand pages.

There are also generic models of business processes, and models that have been developed by other organisations. It is



But the sound of the car pulling up outside the house gave renewed focus to her ire. She could see in her mind's eye her husband shutting the car door as though he hadn't a care in the world. Her mind dwelt on a picture of him out enjoying himself over some business dinner while she explained to her son that he couldn't stay up any longer to surprise his dad with his hard-won trophy. She imagined Richard's laughing face while Nicholas's look of broken disappointment, far more poignant than the expected tantrum, had torn a hole in her heart. Damn! She hated the man's insensitivity, his selfishness!

Richard shut the front door quietly, and carefully mounted the stairs, hoping that Laura had fallen to sleep. He looked into the bedroom. Laura was lying quietly, her back towards him. He switched off the light and stepped back into the hall to get undressed. Then he stealthily made his way up his side of the bed.

"This isn't fair!" Laura's voice was loud, abrupt, without any trace of sleep in it. Richard paused where he was, and then turned on the bedside light. Laura kept her back towards him as she spoke in measured tones, her resentment clear in the pauses between each sentence: "We came down here as a family. Nicholas and I left friends and a life we knew, because we're a family. And now we're not a family. You are Richard Frewer, business tycoon, and Nicholas and I might as well not exist!"

"That's not true!" retorted Richard.

"Oh no?" She sat up and twisted round to face him. "Then tell me exactly how many hours we've had as a family doing things together last month, and then tell me whether it's been getting better or worse!"

"Laura, it's not like that!" he pleaded.

She looked at him aghast. "Then tell me what it is like," she shouted. "Tell me what it is like, week in, week out, for Nicholas and I. Tell me from your expert position of the odd few minutes that you spend here. TELL ME!!!"

Her voice had risen to a crescendo, and the last two words were shouted at him. And then she burst into tears.

Simultaneously, he heard Nicholas cry out from his room. The unexpected noises had woken him. Richard got up to go to him, but, at the foot of the bed, Laura pushed past him barging him out of the way.



possible, with care, to adopt and adapt appropriate elements of these models for your own organisation.

## Roles and responsibilities within the process model

There are two aspects to achieving improvement: design and operation. While the 'design' may make provision for improvement, that improvement is not actually delivered until the activity is operated effectively in line with the design requirements. In practice, we have found that improvement is best achieved when authority for these two aspects is held by one person, i.e. the manager responsible for delivering the performance is also responsible for designing how it is achieved. Whenever authority has not been coincident, we have found that the effectiveness of the improvement tends to be diminished by politics, communication issues, and wildly differing priorities.

The key factor in your success in delivering transformational performance depends on how well you identify and assign responsibility for process improvement.

If you appoint the right people as process owners, and establish them properly in that role, then your performance will take off.

If you appoint the wrong people as process owners, or fail to establish the authority and resources they need, then your performance will, at best, drift slowly to a plateau.

In many cases, however, you may have little choice over who your initial process owners are. They are most likely to be your current management team for two very good reasons.

- What will you do with them if they aren't managing the business?



### Reflection on the appointment process

List three issues where one of your people is not performing as you would like:

.....  
.....  
.....

To what extent is the problem exacerbated by differing or unclear views of their responsibilities?

.....  
.....  
.....

How could these have been better addressed when they were first appointed to this project or role?

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“I can do it,” he protested, but before he could continue she glared at him, her wet eyes full of anger and scorn. He backed away and let her go, and sat on the edge of the bed. The bedside light illuminated a single Polaroid photograph. It was of a kindergarten class. A small boy was holding up a trophy, and at the bottom Laura had written ‘Nicholas awarded prize for best pupil’, and today’s date.

Under it was a piece of paper with a scribbled note that simply said, “Just in case you miss all of Nicholas’s childhood!!” Richard looked back at the boy’s face. He imagined his son waiting at home to tell Daddy the good news, and eventually going to bed sad and disillusioned. And as he thought about what might have transpired, he felt a lump rise up in his throat, and he slumped down onto the bed swearing forcefully: “Shit! Shit! Shit! Shit!” Then self-pity cut in, and he raged against the unfair demands placed upon him. He could not do everything!



In the subsequent management meeting, the management team was given a free hand to refine the processes that Richard and Lucy had defined. They changed surprisingly little, and, almost without exception, had eagerly taken on the roles of each taking a process forward, continuing to define it, and establishing its boundaries with the other processes.

Almost without exception! Daniel had refused to accept any perspective that had ‘Customer Support and Order Management’ and ‘Developing New Business’ as two separate processes. As the discussion progressed, and it became clear that he was in a minority in his view, his arguments became more and more entrenched and emotive, until he had isolated himself from the group entirely.

By the break, he had completely hijacked the meeting. He was ignoring any and all ground rules, and was fighting tooth and claw to return the protocol of the meeting to the style that he had triumphed in over the years. Richard was at his wits end, and spoke to Lucy urgently over coffee. “Do I concede, or do I fire him? Because it sure as hell looks like it’s got to be one or the other?” Lucy cast her gaze down at the coffee counter and said quietly, “To be frank, I’m somewhat surprised that you haven’t fired him already!”

Richard looked at her for a moment, and then adjusted his position to screen their conversation from the group behind him. Then he replied

- Who will you get to replace their knowledge and experience?

But you will have a lot of choice over exactly how you appoint and establish them in their roles. And it is here that you can turn things for good or ill. Appointing someone to the position of process owner is even more critical than it has been to appoint someone to your management team, and it needs to be done with even more forethought and care. Process ownership is a serious job, but if you appoint someone in a five-minute corridor conversation, or as part of another meeting, it is very unlikely to be seen that way.

In appointing process owners it is important to follow the same disciplines as you would for appointing someone to any other senior position.

- Let them know what jobs they are being considered for and give them time to prepare their questions and answers.
- Interview them properly for the job, outlining clearly the nature and expectations of the role, and drawing out their ideas for fulfilling it.
- Appoint people through the formal channels, and establish a clear job description, and objectives both for their role and for the process they are managing.
- Set up review and reporting expectations and clarify the criteria against which their performance in their role will be evaluated.
- Agree resources and authority levels for the role.
- Circulate relevant notices concerning the appointment, and consider a pay rise to reflect the increased responsibility.

The responsibilities of the process owner reflect a more intense and onerous role

Forget return on assets.  
What is most important is  
how a company is leveraging  
its scarcest resource, its  
management.

Paul Strassmann  
Former Vice President, Xerox

softly, “I guess I should have done in any normal circumstances, but it’s really not that easy in this case.”

Lucy tilted her head to one side and raised an eyebrow quizzically.

Richard continued, “Our business is very dependant on a limited number of good customer relationships, about twenty in all, and he tends to keep them very much to himself. He has kept the way things happen in his area very much a black-art, and as a result anybody who was any good has moved on.”

Lucy grunted a quiet acknowledgement a gazed back down toward the coffee counter in thought.

“Added to which,” continued Richard, “he has a lot of clout in head office. There are lots of people who think very highly of him, ironically precisely because of his ‘black-art’ approach and the results he gets through it. My credibility with them is not enough to withstand the resultant questioning of my judgement or the inevitable drop in sales while we tried to fill the void he has created around him.”

Lucy continued to gaze at the counter for a few moments longer, and when she looked up again she had clearly come to a decision.

“We can afford to let this one go,” she said. “After all you were originally going to go with departments anyway. The issue lies in how we let it go. How we let Daniel get his way without validating his behaviour. How about...” And she outlined how Richard might reach an agreement with Daniel.



“Daniel?” Richard approached Daniel holding court with Peter and Abs. Daniel looked up, clearly hostile, but he allowed himself to be drawn to one side. From her vantage point by the coffee counter, Lucy watched the body language intently for clues as to how things were going.

“We need to sort this out,” Richard said and paused. “Perhaps I should apologise...”

Daniel was taken aback. This was not what he had been expecting. Richard had clearly spent too much time around that Derring woman, he was even beginning to speak like her.

than those of a traditional manager. It is vitally important that your team wake up early to this fact, and develop new habits quickly. An effective appointment process will help to initiate this.

To do anything less may leave your team with the feeling that this is just another add-on project to be handled in largely the same way as countless previous others.

### Responsibilities of process ownership

When appointing process owners, it is vitally important that we don't confuse their responsibilities with those of the processes they own.

All too often we see managers' job descriptions written in terms of output, quality, customer satisfaction, etc. These are not the responsibilities of the manager, they are the responsibilities of the process and their team. The manager's responsibility is to ensure that their process and team are able to systematically fulfil *'output, quality and customer satisfaction'*.

To achieve this effectively they need to:

- understand clearly the needs and expectations of their process by the business, their customers, and their colleagues
- translate these needs and expectations (aspirations) into clear and specific performance improvement targets agreed by the business, their colleagues, and their customers
- convene a team of people who have a strong interest in the process, and to build a commitment in that team to improving its performance to meet the agreed targets
- develop and document (e.g. in a process map) an accurate under-



How do your people fare on these for their current areas of responsibility?

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continued...

Richard continued: "I'm not sure I fully understood what you were saying in there."

Daniel grunted: "I think you did!"

"Okay, let me just make sure. Was the essence of what you were driving at, that Sales and Marketing, or rather, Customer Support, Order Management and Developing New Business, should be under the same person?"

Daniel stared back impassively. Richard pushed. "Was it?"

"You know it was!"

Richard had not actually known any such thing. Daniel had dragged them all round the houses and back again. Richard had just suspected that Daniel's motive was to avoid any reduction in his job.

"Okay," said Richard. "In order to move forward, let's say I accept that point, and that the person will be you. Let me then ask, although Sales and Marketing are closely linked, do they work in exactly the same way and produce exactly the same output?"

Daniel remained silent. The same argument had raged earlier and he had avoided it then too.

"Let me ask this another way. If sales and marketing reported to the same person, would there be anything to stop that person managing it as two or more, albeit closely linked, processes?"

Daniel sensed Richard was holding out an olive branch. If he did not take it, he could not see any practical way forward from here either. "No-o?" he said hesitantly.

Richard went for closure. "After the break I will appoint 'owners' for the various processes; people who will continue to work with the processes and refine them, and ultimately manage them. If the model I put forward for that fits in with what you think is required, will you support us in moving things forward?"

Daniel thought for a moment. Nodded, and then said pompously: "Yes, providing what you are proposing is practical, I will support you. But I do have to say that I am disappointed that we have wasted so much of this morning on things that have ultimately proven not to be in the best interests of the company. We could move forward a lot faster if we took

standing of how the process works in practice, and how its operation is controlled and influenced

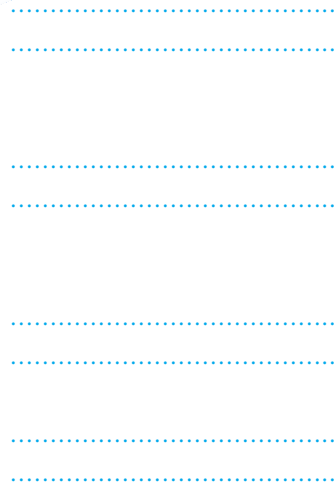
- routinely measure process performance against target, graphically trend it, and undertake rigorous analysis of any adverse trends or performance deficiencies
- develop plans for addressing the root causes of any issues; ensuring commitment for their implementation; and forecasting the impact of this on future performance to meet target
- seek best practice related to their process, review it for applicability and implement it where appropriate.<sup>1</sup>

But above all of this, to adopt as their first responsibility, as part of the top team, the overall performance of the organisation as a whole.

It is these responsibilities that managers must be able to demonstrate that they are fulfilling effectively. And when they do, *'output, quality and customer satisfaction'* will be ensured.



continued...



more account of the years of experience that we have available to us in the team!” And he turned and walked back into the room.

Richard looked at the ceiling for strength, and then looked at Lucy and nodded.

After that, the rest of the morning went without a hitch, and Lucy facilitated the meeting flawlessly.

<sup>1</sup> These points are further developed in Chapter 14.