WHITE PAPER

Process Improvement Projects:

How OPM3 and Change Management can impact process improvement

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March 2015

Abstract

In a business world where continuous change is inevitable, competitive organizations understand the value of quickly adapting to market trends can be the difference between keeping one's head above water and leading the pack in industry innovation. Leading companies are always looking at new ways to improve their processes and seek the latest in process improvement strategies and methodologies to build a more efficient business model and better serve their customers. Whether it's the family of ISO 9000 Quality Management certifications and Six Sigma methodologies common to the manufacturing world, or the CMMI maturity model often leveraged by software development teams and the OPM3 model employed by project-centric environments, business process improvement strategies have proven time and again to deliver on their promises. However, the challenge with any of these valuable process improvement methodologies lies with their effective deployment. Many organizations, do not recognize that process improvement changes are not strictly operational in nature. These highly impactful initiatives are in fact strategic projects that require careful planning, stakeholder management and change management strategies to ensure their success.

Although many organizations initially underestimate the role of project management in their process improvement initiatives, once they have committed to these strategic changes, the implementation of these improvements naturally fall into the hands of a designated project manager to see these initiatives through. This white paper will help organizations identify what to expect when facing the delivery of business process improvement projects and the challenges of dealing with extensive change resulting from these strategic initiatives. Moreover, it will also explore the OPM3 project management process improvement methodology and the role of change management that can impact the overall success of process improvement delivery.

Treating Process Improvement Initiatives as a Project

The first step in moving forward with any new process improvement initiative is to properly plan all the moving parts of this strategic project. More than any other project, process improvement will greatly impact all those who are currently linked to the work in which these improvements will touch. This being the case, preparing all the relevant stakeholders and leveraging their past experiences when building the project plan will allow for a smoother transition to occur. Whether you are implementing a Quality Control process or a Maturity Model, plotting the steps to move from the "old way of working" to the "new way of working" is a critical project that requires a timeline, milestones, deliverables and documentation that needs to be shared with a formal project team. Treating the process improvement initiative as a project will formalize the process change and will ensure the new process improvement will be delivered in a timely manner.

Process improvement projects typically follow these phases:

1. **Project Kick Off** - The team and stakeholders are assembled to discuss the launching of the initiative, timelines and any outstanding questions that need to be addressed.
2. **Indentifying the process improvement need** - Tasks are assigned for documenting the current process. Intensive collaboration is needed between the project lead and those currently involved in executing the work for the process in question.
3. **Analysis of current process in question** - Following documentation of the current process, a carefully selected team of internal and if necessary external subject matter experts provide analysis and shortcomings of the process that is slated for improvement.
4. **Redesign of business process** - Proposed redesign or existing best practice process improvement methodology is documented and aligned with the corporate goals.
5. **Pilot of improved process** - The improved process is deployed to a pilot group for testing and tweaking to ensure process alignment is achieved. In parallel, a change management strategy is defined to ensure a successful pilot and future roll out.
6. **Present process improvement to stakeholders** - the results of the pilot are presented and evaluated by the stakeholders of the project. This is where final buy-in to the improved process occurs and roll out is approved.
7. **Roll out of improved process** - Actual roll out of improved process or methodology takes place fully implemented in the organization. The tested change management strategy occurs in parallel to ensure the project's success.
8. **Measure and evaluate its success** - This final phase occurs at various milestones in the future to ensure the implemented process improvement has successful results and/or requires modification due to changing goals or needs.

It is critical that process improvement projects are consistently headed by a project lead so that potential arising issues in the future can be quickly addressed and that both stakeholders and those part of the new process can centrally communicate feedback. As any organization will confirm, a

successful process improvement project is an ongoing initiative that requires knowledge transfer and tracking in order to reach the goals set forth by the improved process.

OPM3: Improved project processes can impact overall process improvements

The objectives of process improvement projects are to implement best practices and proven methodologies to business processes delivering competitive benefits and an overall improved performance of an organization's operations and bottom line. Successfully implementing these strategic initiative are an incredible task that requires extensive support from both top down executive leadership and bottom up company staffers who are responsible for putting the new process improvement initiatives into action. Whether formally established or not, the vehicle to successfully deliver these projects is the project management team. This being the case, the maturity of an organization's project management practice and/or team are intricately linked to the success of any process improvement initiative. Hence, poor project delivery will ultimately lead to poor process improvement results.

In light of this reality, PMI's Organizational Management Maturity Model (OPM3) is one of those few process improvement frameworks that can impact all process improvement projects. By identifying first the maturity of your project management practice and then providing practical process improvement strategies to this area of business, OPM3 will not only help deliver successful projects but will also provide program and portfolio management strategies and best practices to ensure you prioritize and implement the most valuable process improvement initiatives.

OPM3: Organizational Project Management Maturity Model
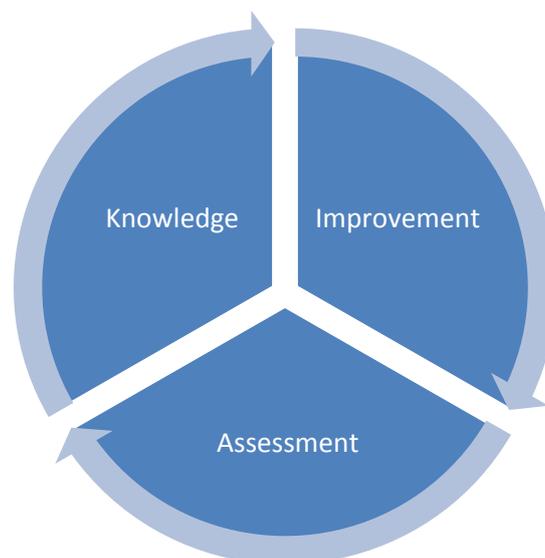
The basic tenets of OPM3 framework include:

1. **Knowledge** - allowing organizations to access hundreds of Best Practices to improve their project management practice.

2. **Assessment** - tools and a methodology that allows for self evaluation and the identification of areas of improvement to reach a higher level of project management maturity.

3. **Improvement** - framework and road map for process improvement to achieve defined goals.

For those going down the process improvement path, OPM3 and other project management frameworks can lay down the foundation in building better processes for the overall organization. After all, the delivery of process improvements projects is equally as important as the improved processes themselves.

Don't forget to manage Change

In addition to successful project delivery, establishing a change management strategy as part of your process improvement project is an area that cannot be ignored. Process improvement needs to move beyond the motions of changing the way your organization works and requires a strategy that will ensure that the people responsible for executing the new changes are on board. Consequently, both resistance to change and organizational roadblocks need to be addressed so that the process improvement project will fully integrate into the organization's business operations and culture.

A key component into effectively managing change requires a deep understanding of the primary stakeholder responsible for the process improvement's success. Typically the natural urge to resist the "New" can cause the most problems with the transition taking place. With this reality looming, it is key for the primary drivers of the process improvement initiative to align and promote the positive benefits of the new processes delivered to the organization.

An effective change management strategy needs to communicate and convince the end user that although change can be difficult, the end result will benefit all parties involved. Creating a positive message around change can be very powerful. In the case of process improvement projects the following positive outcomes can be benefited from the organization:

- Stronger alignment of organizational goals with improved processes
- Higher quality of individual working experiences
- Improved quality of service and/or product delivery yielding more profits
- Better transparency and visibility into operational processes and activities
- Improved productivity and/or decline in wasteful and redundant work

In the end, the goal is to effectively communicate and prepare the alignment of the positive impact resulting from the new and improved business processes in relation to the everyday challenges faced by those inheriting these new changes.

Genius Project will support your improved processes

Process-driven project management software mapped to your business

Genius Project's unique role-based workflow engine can manage any kind of process from the most simple to the most complex. This can include parallel revision and approval, conditional transition of information and the automatic creation of data and documents. In addition, Genius Project can incorporate the desired flow cycles, gates and typical phase reviews and approvals that meet your organizational requirements.

Genius Project's integrated workflow engine delivers:

- Customizable approval cycles
- Roles based workflow engine
- Automatic distribution of information
- Email and to-do notifications
- Business rules engine
- Document creation
- Phase Review support
- Pre-configured workflows

To learn more about Genius Project's workflow engine go to:
http://www.geniusproject.com/workflow-management-software