

1.1.1 Purpose and objectives of CSI

The purpose of the CSI stage of the lifecycle is to align IT services with changing business needs by identifying and implementing improvements to IT services that support business processes. These improvement activities support the lifecycle approach through service strategy, service design, service transition and service operation. CSI is always seeking ways to improve service effectiveness, process effectiveness and cost effectiveness.

In order to identify improvement opportunities, the measurement of current performance is an important factor. Consider the following sayings about measurements and management:

You cannot manage what you cannot control.

You cannot control what you cannot measure.

You cannot measure what you cannot define.

If services and processes are not implemented, managed and supported using clearly defined goals, objectives and relevant measurements that lead to actionable improvements, the business will suffer. Depending upon the criticality of a specific IT service to the business, the organization could lose productive hours, experience higher costs, suffer loss of reputation or, perhaps, even risk business failure. Ultimately it could also lead to loss of customer business. That is why it is critically important to understand what to measure, why it is being measured and what the successful outcome should be.

The objectives of CSI are to:

- Review, analyse, prioritize and make recommendations on improvement opportunities in each lifecycle stage: service strategy, service design, service transition, service operation and CSI itself
- Review and analyse service level achievement
- Identify and implement specific activities to improve IT service quality and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the enabling processes
- Improve cost effectiveness of delivering IT services without sacrificing customer satisfaction

- Ensure applicable quality management methods are used to support continual improvement activities
- Ensure that processes have clearly defined objectives and measurements that lead to actionable improvements
- Understand what to measure, why it is being measured and what the successful outcome should be.

4 Continual service improvement processes

Many activities have to be completed to ensure continual service improvement (CSI) across the service lifecycle. Some of them could be regarded as processes in their own right but in order that readers get the full picture they have been pulled together into a single contiguous process: the seven-step improvement process.

4.1 THE SEVEN-STEP IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

Chapter 3 introduced the seven-step improvement process shown in Figure 3.4 and its interaction with the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle and the CSI approach. The PDCA cycle provides steady, ongoing improvement, which is a fundamental tenet of CSI.

Figure 3.4 also shows how the cycle fits into the Data-to-Information-to-Knowledge-to-Wisdom (DIKW) structure of knowledge management. The integration of the PDCA cycle and the seven-step improvement process is as follows:

- Plan
 1. Identify the strategy for improvement
 2. Define what you will measure
- Do
 3. Gather the data
 4. Process the data
- Check
 5. Analyse the information and data
 6. Present and use the information
- Act
 7. Implement improvement.

4.1.1 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the seven-step improvement process is to define and manage the steps needed to identify, define, gather, process, analyse, present and implement improvements.

The objectives of the seven-step improvement process are to:

- Identify opportunities for improving services, processes, tools etc.

- Reduce the cost of providing services and ensuring that IT services enable the required business outcomes to be achieved. A clear objective will be cost reduction, but this is not the only criterion. If service delivery or quality reduces as a result the overall impact may be neutral or even negative.
- Identify what needs to be measured, analysed and reported to establish improvement opportunities.
- Continually review service achievements to ensure they remain matched to business requirements; continually align and re-align service provision with outcome requirements.
- Understand what to measure, why it is being measured and carefully define the successful outcome.

It is important to note that improvements in quality should not be implemented if there is a cost associated with the improvement and if this cost has not been justified. Every potential improvement opportunity will have to have a business case justification to show that the business will have an overall benefit. For small initiatives the business case does not have to be a full blown report but could be a simple justification. The seven-step improvement process is not free-standing and will only achieve its desired outcomes when applied to technology, services, processes, organization or partners.

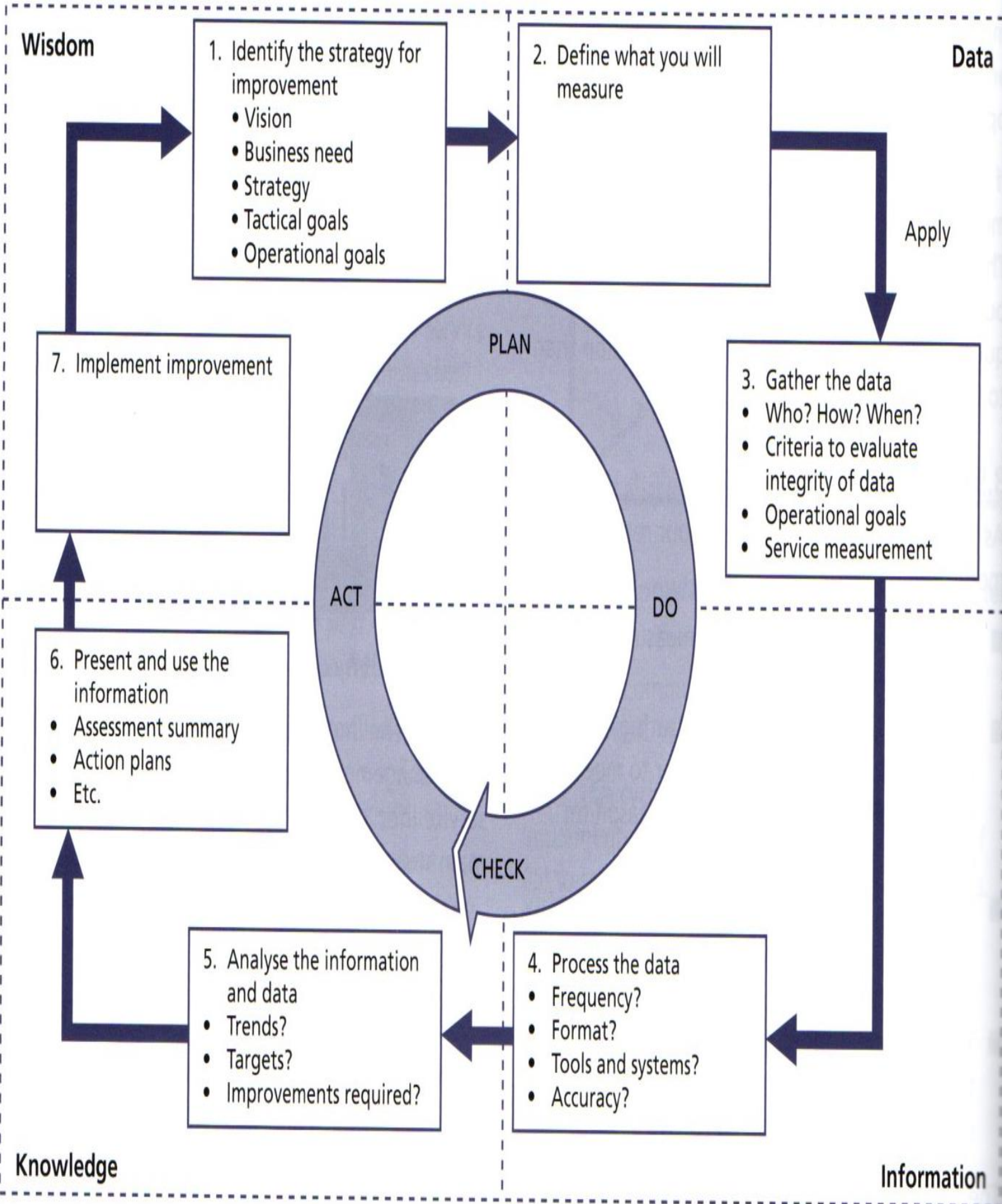


Figure 3.4 The seven-step improvement process