

product configuration, or project deliverables. Engineering changes that were internally or externally introduced must be avoided. Manufacturing changes that resulted from part shortages or labor issues should be left out. Purchasing changes resulting from bill-of-material substitutions as well as manufacturing part shortages and finance cost accounting changes should all be set aside for this trial.

The benefit of a clean production order results in the Order-to-Cash timeline producing the best case order-to-cash cycle time. If the organization has existing targets or perceptions of the cycle time, this provides a good reality check. A clean production order helps the process team avoid getting bogged down with process issues that need not be addressed at this time. The objective is to produce a best case production order.

The Order-to-Cash timeline should include the following information:

- **Department:** Localize which functional group is responsible for the task.
- **Task:** The description of a particular vertical process in use in a particular department (for example, approval of inspected items).
- **Role:** The description of a particular set of skills required to complete the task (for example, shipper/receiver).
- **Duration:** The estimation of how long a particular task will take to complete by a person assuming a particular role.

Describing the Task The task description should be small enough that one or two tasks are completed by an individual or role. If the task definition is too wide, the risk is that more than one role may be involved in the task. If the task definition is too narrow, then the risk is that the task detail adds complexity that overshadows the intention of the Order-to-Cash timeline.

Describing the Role The roles need to be independent of any individual. When an organization creates roles and assigns these to tasks, the organization has the freedom to move individuals between roles. This provides an avenue for employee development and succession planning. Roles need to be thought out carefully with the help of the organization's Human Resources Department. This ensures that roles are developed and skills sets defined based on the need of the task and not based on the individual who happens to be currently completing the task.

Describing the Duration Avoid conducting detailed time studies of task duration. It is best to obtain a solid estimate from the individuals currently completing the task in question.

NOTE To avoid inflated/deflated estimates, obtain a duration estimate from more than one individual in the same role. ■

The process team is assigned the responsibility of gathering the necessary department, task, role, and duration information. The process team members are responsible for the department from which they were assigned. The process team members can collect this information in a relatively short time. It's not exact, and it's not overly detailed—the objective is to create an end-to-end description of the business in a short period of time. The process team leader is