The process team must be sure to prioritize the candidate processes for the steering committee. The steering committee is responsible for selecting which processes are to be aligned. This review meeting's result must be a clear agreement on which processes the process team will target for improvement.

Aligning the Order-to-Cash Business Process

Aligning a business process is less drastic than reengineering a business process. By alignment, it's assumed that the business is, to some degree, already on a path of continuous improvement. Reengineering a business is the tearing down of the process walls and a complete rebuilding from the ground up. The concept of process alignment is attractive to organizations that are already comfortable with the process of change.

NOTE Most organizations do not have the luxury of stopping what they are doing and rebuilding their business. In other words, the process alignment is referred to here as *good-enough reengineering*. ■

Processes that are aligned to what the organization most values produce results that benefit the organization. The objective of process alignment is to create processes that are well-defined, repeatable, and stable.

A *well-defined* process is one that can be easily explained by any participant in the process. These participants were previously defined as role players. Although each participant has a different role in the process, any single role player can define the entire process.

A *repeatable* process is one that, when initiated, follows the same set of steps to the conclusion. Given the same set of process inputs along the way, the process produces the same results. It's somewhat similar to a well-structured computer program.

A *stable* process is similar to a repeatable process, but is more resistant to process input variation. This input noise, although disturbing, can be dampened by the process enough to produce the expected result. The process noise may come into play when different participants (with varying skills) assume the same role. In all cases, the process inputs can be provided by several role players.

Some characteristics of Hammer & Champy's aligned processes are as follows:

- A role expands to consume additional process steps.
- Workers make decisions.
- Process steps are performed in natural order.
- Processes have multiple versions.
- Work is performed where it makes the most sense.
- Checks and controls are reduced.

For the process team to become comfortable with this definition it is best to develop some example processes in a pilot environment. The process team leader can facilitate an exercise in