<h2> <a href=””>Incremental or Step-Level Improvement?</a> </h2>

<ul class=”articlestats”>

<li><strong>posted:</strong> 11 June 2011</li>

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<p>Each day your business changes: volumes, customer needs, product/service changes, competitive offerings, etc. Human nature is to increment what you already have; what has been working for the past x years. This invariably results in a decrease in efficiency and frequently, an attendant decrease in quality. Step-level improvement in efficiency and quality can only be achieved by starting from scratch; that is, answering the question, "What would be the optimal workflow, protocols, staff skills, if I built this today from zero?".</p>

<p>Using this as an intellectual starting point, a business can overlay the very real constraints that prevent a complete rebuild of the operation. However, in this analysis, there will be one or more idea/concept that are so powerful toward achieving the business goals, it would be worth the time, effort and potential disruption to &quot;build it from scratch&quot;. A business rarely discovers these penultimate opportunities without the intellectual exercise of challenging all aspects of the operation that have worked in the past. </p>

<p>"Starting from scratch" really means from the top-down. Begin by re-visiting the business strategy, customer and competitive market analysis and pricing. Once the policy makers in the business are in alignment, the operations requirements can be defined. This becomes the basis for defining the operations deliverables, timelines and expense. </p>

<H2> <A HREF=””>I know what is supposed to be happening; but what is REALLY happening in the workflow?</A> </H2>

<UL CLASS=”ARTICLESTATS”>

<LI><STRONG>POSTED:</STRONG> 10 August 2010</LI>

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<p>To really understand the potential for re-engineering operations protocols and workflows, you need to know what is really happening in the workflow. The actual process often varies from protocols or documented workflow; frequently as a result of ‘on-the-fly’ solutions to issues/problems encountered. Despite good intentions, the more frequently this occurs, the further the actual process deviates from what managers, senior manager and executives think is happening. This gap is inherently inefficient and incapable of accurate measurement. The hallmark of this gap is the advent of ‘surprises’, or unanticipated results or impacts.</p>

<p>The answer to this question cannot be found in protocols, workflow documentation or procedures; it can only be found by physically watching and documenting each workflow step. This is accomplished one-on-one by sitting with operations staff, observing the work and based on observation (and discussion) comparing the observations with the protocols and workflow documentation.</p>

<h2> <a href=””>Why engage Samuels Consulting?</a> </h2>

<ul class=”articlestats”>

<li><strong>posted:</strong>21 March 2010</li>

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<p>Your business has personnel that know the problems/issues, the players and the troublesome protocols/workflows that are hindering results in their areas - and they are motivated to improve. So why can’t these key personnel define/design and implement the necessary improvement processes?</p>

* The Forest for the Trees – The nature of operations re-engineering from within a functional area is hindered by a view that is too tactical, or self-limiting (the trees) and cannot encompass the possibilities of more strategic solutions (the forest). Possibilities such as changing functional or reporting structures, defining new/additional staff skills or defining meaningful and timely metrics for periodic reporting to senior management are usually beyond the scope of their experience and are therefore less likely to be proposed or adopted.
* Limited by perceived barriers – This is the, “We tried that before”, “We asked for that and were told that it was not possible” or “You cannot do that” limitation. If I believe that a proposal has been made in the past and turned down, I am not likely to propose it again. In fact, even the most radical re-engineering suggestion (as long as it is legal and does not violate the corporate ethics) will be considered if the expected return of business results warrants the impact of the change. These proposals frequently have the potential for step-level improvement of the business results; but they must be identified, articulated and dimensioned from a strategic viewpoint for the business policy makers to consider them.
* Vested Interest – Justified or not, internal improvement suggestions are frequently seen as territorial or self-serving and therefore not worthy of real consideration.
* “I don’t know what I don’t know” – The range of potential solutions is limited by the knowledge and experiences of the persons suggesting solutions. A common example of this is the use of technology for management data or to perform workflow tasks. If one does not know the capabilities of current technologies (within the business or available externally), they are unlikely to suggest this type of solution.
* Flying a kite or the Space Shuttle – Do the persons suggesting solutions have a local view or a global view of the business? Those with a predominantly local view are well versed on the issues/problems in their functional area, but frequently have a limited understanding of the issues/problems in other areas; proposals from the local view often create or exacerbate problems in other areas. Conversely, those with a strong global view do not have an appreciation of what it really takes to complete the workflow in a timely and accurate manner at the local level. Often their proposals fail for a lack of practicality or an inability to successfully implement.

<p>Samuels Consulting offers global level executive business experience, wide ranging local level re-engineering success in operations for both products and services, a deep knowledge and experience using technology for management data and workflow automation and a strong Human Resources sensitivity.</p>

<p>Samuels Consulting will provide solutions that are strategically aligned and that address the global and local perspective needs.</p>