



# Art of the Possible

## Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 7

October 2017

### AIR FORCE SUSTAINMENT CENTER

The AoP Newsletter is a monthly bulletin to communicate the latest enterprise AoP activities to the AFSC workforce. It provides updates on significant AoP institutionalization and implementation activities and tools. More detailed information is available on the AFSC AoP SharePoint site at <https://cs4.eis.afmc.af.mil/sites/1508/AoP/default.aspx>. If you have a question or would like to submit content for a future AoP Newsletter, please contact the POCs listed below.

#### *Art of the Possible (AoP) Cycle*

The AoP cycle summarizes AoP in its simplest form. Its four tenets are: establish flow, which was covered in the Sept newsletter, identify Work in Process (WIP), identify constraints, and resolve constraints. This newsletter focuses on the final three tenets. The first two are used in AoP in a new area and establishing a process machine. Establishing flow is necessary to understand the movement of work at an operational level through a process. This flow becomes the basis for gates in a process machine.



#### *Identify Work in Process (WIP)*

WIP is defined as the unfinished work in the process machine. The first step in identifying WIP is to identify the end product that is delivered to the customer. WIP can be a physical asset, like an aircraft or a part. It can also be a document, a report, or data that is turned into information. As WIP progresses through a process, value is added and WIP is transformed into the product or service wanted by the customer. All current WIP within a process should be identified and reconciled to the process flow. The WIP should be visually mapped within a process machine to its current gate based on its current progress through the process machine. This allows stakeholders to identify the gate where WIP is building up within the process machine. Gates with the most WIP, typically are the slowest gates of the process machine. Gates with the slowest throughput rate contain the process machines constraint.

#### *Identify Constraints*

A constraint is a problem or issue that negatively impacts the critical path of a process machine. It is identified as the gate with the lowest throughput rate. This may manifest itself with queue before the gate or excessive WIP in the gate. It can be a resource that is not available at the point of use exactly when and where the production schedule requires it. A constraint must be identified, exploited, understood, communicated, and resolved appropriately. Some causes of constraints may include, but are not limited to; a lack of skilled manpower, the lack of parts, improper tools and equipment, funding shortages, conflicting or absent technical data or regulatory guidance, shortage of facilities, and unresponsive technical support.

#### *Constraint Resolution*

Constraint resolution is a key concept to keep the AFSC process machines operating smoothly. Once the constraint is identified Continuous Process Improvement (CPI) is applied to resolve the constraint. Effective constraint resolution is a highly collaborative process as many organizations provide the resources and conditions necessary to achieve AoP results. Each process machine relies on synchronized resources executing a well scripted plan; examples include skilled manpower, the right parts, tools, equipment, data, facilities, and technical support. Any resource that is not available at the time and location necessary represents a constraint that must be understood, communicated, and resolved appropriately. The cycle continues with the identification of the new constraint.

#### **NEWSLETTER POCs**

Primary: Mr. Tommy Strahan,  
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#### **Upcoming Events:** *Advanced Level Workshops*

7-8 Nov 17, Robins, AFB

30-31 Jan 18, Robins AFB

#### *AoP Implementation Performance Reviews*

22 Nov 17, VTC

2 May 18, VTC

5 Sep 18, VTC

#### **AoP FAQs & Common Misperceptions:**

What does the word  
NETWORK mean when  
used with AoP?

The Radiator Chart uses the word "Networks" on the second horizontal bar. A Network is the process flow. The execution plan, paced to the road to...goal. It defines critical path/chain & serves as basis for creating repeatable, disciplined processes. Set your process machine to your goal.

**Please NOTE the AoP SharePoint URL has changed:**  
<https://cs4.eis.afmc.af.mil/sites/1508/AoP/default.aspx>