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://cs2.eis.af.mil/sites/22197/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.

Focus and Finish—AoP in Administrative Areas

When one thinks of AoP, most people think of aircraft maintenance and production activities. Many in staff areas struggle with how AoP can apply to, let alone improve, their functions. Early successes show that AoP does apply and is effective in improving administrative performance. Most AFSC staff and admin areas are extremely competent in their tactical workload. They are experts in the functions and tasks they execute. Unfortunately, another common attribute in staff and administrative areas is chaos. These areas frequently struggle getting ahead of the work as they scramble from one tactical fire to the next. Staff specialists are experts at extinguishing any given fire but struggle to manage the ocean of chaos in which they operate. What is missing is a proactive operational level management approach. AoP is AFSC's answer.

AoP in AFSC/LGS: AFSC/LGS is a staff organization that provides AFSC with executive level decision support. One of its essential tasks is executing enterprise level projects. These projects are special-one time-efforts that vary widely in size and complexity. In Jan 2017, AFSC/LGS set out to implement a 'focus and finish' AoP process machine to establish operational control over its processes. This sort of process machine directs employee focus on a single or small set of projects until they are finished. Once finished, leadership assigns a new project. A more detailed case study of this process machine is included in AFSCH 60-101 and on the AoP SharePoint site.

Establishing Flow: While each special project has a unique implementation timeline, there are common steps, or flow, across all special projects. Flow for special projects goes from project definition, project planning, project execution, reporting, to project documentation.

WIP: The team separated Work in Process (WIP) into three tiers based on the complexity of the project. Projected time to completion is the method used to assess the project as a large, medium, or small project. One of the principles of flow is to manload work. This means putting all necessary labor on a project with a focus on completing the task. The inverse of this principle is multi-tasking. Under multi-tasking, an employee diffuses his or her focus across all available work. It is better to focus the employee on a single task until it is finished. This focus and finish approach minimizes the time needed to generate a single unit of output. Once one project is complete, leadership issues another to the employee. The reality of staff work is there are very few projects that can be worked non-stop for eight hours every workday. Most, if not all, require wait time while they schedule meetings, await email responses, and coordinate documents.

AFSC/LGS developed an Employee Capacity Model to represent the work capacity of a GS-13. This model is not perfect but is good enough to make the machine function. Under this model, an employee may be assigned up to three small projects and either two medium projects or one large project. As leadership assigns projects, it places WIP cards over an available spot of corresponding size on the employee's model. This approach reinforces two principles of flow. First, AFSC/LGS controls WIP by limiting how much each employee can work at any point in time. Second, the team manloads by keeping employees focused on a limited number of projects. At full capacity, the team works with leadership to prioritize projects. Leadership assigns the highest priority projects to employees and places lower priority projects in queue where they are not worked.

Constraint Identification: AFSC/LGS identifies constraints by monitoring each gate's throughput rate. The team measures gate performance using the last 10 completed projects through each gate. While gates 1 (project definition), 2 (planning), and 5 (documentation) are measured against fixed targets, gates 3 (execution) and 4 (reporting) are measured against adherence to each project plan's critical path.

Tactical Management and Wall Walks: AFSC/LGS conducts tactical management twice a week. This meeting focuses on the progress of each project against its planned milestones. The team identifies issues and discusses next steps. Wall walks occur once a month and focus on the performance of the overall process machine. The team identifies operational constraints along with the approach to address the constraint. Using this process machine, AFSC/LGS established operational control over its process and eliminated the chaos so common in staff organizations.

NEWSLETTER POCs

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Advanced Level Workshops

30-31 Jan, Robins AFB

10-11 Apr 18, Tinker AFB

26-27 Jun 18, Hill AFB

Oct 18, Langley AFB

Stock Take III

13 Mar 18, Tinker AFB

Senior Leader Conference

7-9 Aug 18, Tinker AFB

HOT! AFSCI 60-101 AND AFSCH 60-101 have been published and posted on Air Force E-Publishing: http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/

AoP FAQs and Misconceptions:

What is the difference between wall walks and tactical management?

Wall walks are recurring operational level, process-focused reviews to understand process machine performance. Flow through the machine is reviewed as well as the amount and location of WIP to identify constraints, and to coordinate constraint resolution. Tactical management is a more frequent review of WIP flowing through the machine that focuses on the individual items of WIP (tail numbers, commodities, projects, contracts, etc.) flowing through the process machine rather than performance at the operational level.

AoP SharePoint URL: *https://cs2.eis.af.mil/sites/22197/aop/default.aspx*