



Understand Your Business Processes

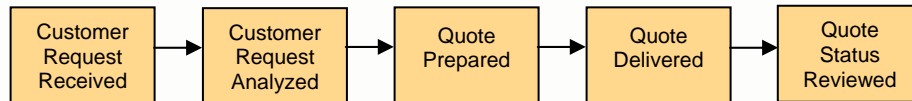
Are you comfortable with your key business processes? Business owners and management tend to look at their organizations in terms of departmental structure, leading to a “functional silo” mentality. Examination and improvement of cross-functional processes lead to bottom line improvements across companies.

WONDERMENT® Project Steps:

1. Think about your business in terms of its core processes (based on the definition at right) and list them.
2. In your opinion, how well does your company perform each process? Rate each from A = Best to E = Embryonic, i.e., not really performed at all.
3. Take one poorly performed process and map out the major blocks of activity performed. The Quoting Process is shown below as an example.

Process Definition

A group of activities that creates or changes (transforms) physical items or information. A process should add value to an outcome.



4. What would you like to improve within this process?

Example: Metal Plating Company

At Silver & Gold Plating, Inc., the communication across functional departments was so poor that, once an issue that surfaced in one department was determined to be part of another group, it was thrown over the wall to that area for resolution. Finger-pointing and assignment of blame were the norm.

Alex C., President and CEO, listed 3 critical processes that crossed functional lines and stated that he wished to see improvement in each. He started with one, the Quoting Process, and chaired weekly Process Improvement Team meetings to cover major problems with the existing process. Over a period of 2 months, holding one meeting a week, the team streamlined the existing process and reduced the cycle time associated with providing a quote to a customer in half! The team went out to celebrate and they even had a beer together.

In Your Company ...

Use the sample list below and prepare an inventory/list of your critical business processes. Follow the Wonderment steps to analyze one core process.

- Quoting
- Production Scheduling
- Accounts Receivable Collection
- Employee Development
- Performance Measurement and Review
- Strategic Planning
- Pricing
- Other

What questions does this raise?

- What are your “core” business processes?
- Where are you cross-functionally performing the poorest?
- Where are the best “leverage points” or opportunities for improvement?
- Are you focused on process performance versus individual performance?
- How is quality management a part of this analysis? What targeted improvements are involved?

If you have questions or comments please contact us. Log on to www.jacquard.com or call us at 847.945.8700.