

# Business Process Improvement (BPI)

## 1. Introduction

The objective of this document is to provide an overview of Business Process Improvement (BPI). It outlines a proven and well established process designed to provide a 'common sense' approach and how we can assist you in this process.

## 2. An overview of Business Process Improvement (BPI)

BPI is a systematic approach to improving an organisation's business processes. BPI activities seek to make business processes more effective, more efficient, more transparent and more capable of adapting to an ever-changing environment. Process mapping is a tool to create the starting point for a structured approach to BPI and a very visible methodology to show all the activities taking place in an organisation and how they relate to each other.

Many companies often engage in BPI projects as a pre-requisite to system implementations or major organisational changes, to seek productivity and efficiency improvements or simply to find ways to improve their bottom line results. BPI projects are often seen as a threat by management and staff, as it is perceived that they will result in change and sometimes job losses.

Undoubtedly BPI is an essential tool to assist in change management programmes, but organisations would benefit far greater from adopting BPI without the forgone conclusion that change is required. An open-ended approach with active participation from management and staff would be seen as less threatening.

In addition BPI projects are too often used as just a one off project with no follow up and therefore organisations do not gain the continuous benefit of BPI. We therefore recommend adopting BPI with the aim to seek continuous improvement of employee and customer satisfaction, as these are key objectives of any successful business. If driven by **employee and customer satisfaction** other objectives of BPI will follow automatically:

- Improved quality through reduction in errors
- Improved production and efficiency
- Improved customer service
- Reduction in staff turnover through higher staff motivation
- Acceptance that change is normal and not to be feared
- Improved financial results

## 3. The BPI steps – an overview

The key deliverables of a BPI project are:

- Mapping of current process
- Provide basis for future change and process reviews
- Identify interdependencies between departments and/or processes
- Identify key process milestones and measurable key performance indicators (KPI)
- Recommendations to improve efficiency of current process (if any)
- To provide standardised material for future staff training
- Provide staff with a better understanding of their job role

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A BPI project can be split in 7 distinct phases. We would recommend phases 1 to 3 be done as a minimum and phases 4 to 6 as optional, depending on your business requirements. Phase 7 (Post implementation) is often neglected but should be given serious consideration.

## 3.1 Planning – Identifying your needs

- Decide which processes are to be mapped
- Set clear objectives
- Establish Project Steering Committee
- Presentation to all staff to explain project and its objectives
- Invitation to staff to become involved in project (normally via workshops)

## 3.2 Process Mapping – As Is

- Map the current process using work flow diagrams. This should be done in interactive workshops with staff involved in the process to be mapped. In smaller organisations this may not be feasible in which case it can then be done through one on one interviews.
- Process issues should already be registered (but not reviewed).
- Workshop participants and steering committee to sign off on mapping current process.

## 3.3 Review Current Processes

- Discuss output of process mapping and analyse process issues already identified, review whether process improvements should be made and identify opportunities to improve process efficiency.
- Clearly identify interdependencies and internal controls within the agreed process and identify measurable KPI's to review process efficiency in future.
- Recommendations to be made to steering committee for sign off.
- Subject to agreement, adjust current process mapping and reflect changes in new process to be implemented.

## 3.4 Procedures and KPI's

- Identify and write procedures required to support process mapping output.
- Develop tools to measure agreed KPI's, if not already in existence.

## 3.5 Review Job Roles

A process will only be efficient if employees understand their role and work together to achieve the required end result. The logical next step is to ensure that job roles and job descriptions reflect the agreed process. A review of current job descriptions would need to take place and any changes to be recommended to the steering committee. This can also be extended to include a review of the employee performance criteria used in an existing employee appraisal system.

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## 3.6 Implementation

Any implementation would be subject to the outcome of the BPI and what changes are to be implemented. Even if no changes to the current process are recommended it is still advisable to present output to all staff to create a clear understanding of their role in the process, the interdependencies that exist and the KPI's used to measure efficiency of the process.

Training of staff on changes in the current process will depend entirely on the severity of changes and whether their job roles change significantly or not.

## 3.7 Post Implementation

In order to ensure your organisation continues to receive benefits from the BPI project post implementation, the following should be considered:

- Appoint a focal point to maintain process mapping output for future reference
- Structured training needs to be organised to:
  - Update staff with any process changes
  - Train employees when changing job roles in the organisation
  - Train new staff as part of their induction training
  - Refresher training where required
- Maintain management information system to report on agreed key process KPI's
- Perform a periodic audit to ensure compliance with agreed processes and procedures

## 4. How can we assist you in this process?

A BPI project needs to be driven from within your organisation and the extent and level of assistance you require to run this project will depend upon the resources and expertise available. It could be that you only require advice on the various phases of the project or hands on assistance with various parts of the project. The following outlines how we can assist you in each phase of the project.

### 4.1 Planning – identifying your needs

We are able to use our experience to assist you in evaluating the need to commence a BPI project within your organisation, the scope and objectives of the project and advise you how to prepare your organisation for this project.

### 4.2 Process Mapping and Evaluation

We can facilitate and organise workshops to map your current process or, subject to availability of staff, conduct one-one interviews to map your current process. We can also organise the recording of your process in workflow diagrams.

After completion of the process mapping exercise we can facilitate a review of the current process to recommend areas of improvement, identify the critical milestones and handovers within the proposed process and which KPI's are critical to measure process performance.

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## 4.3 Procedures and KPI's

We are able to assist you in writing procedures to support the process mapping output and ensure you have the right tools to measure agreed KPI's in an efficient manner.

## 4.4 Review Job Roles

If you decide to extend the BPI project to include a review of job roles and employee performance criteria, we can assist you in this using our practical experience. However, this part of the project will require active support from your HR department to ensure recommendations made are in line with company HR policy and fit within the legal framework.

## 4.5 Implementation

The implementation phase involves presenting the results and findings of the BPI project to your organisation and, where necessary, the training of employees on changes in their job roles and/or working procedures. We can assist you in preparing presentation and training material and in the delivery of the presentation and/or training.

## 4.6 Post Implementation

We can advise you how to provide internal support to ensure your organisation continues to have a focus on maximising business process efficiency and continues to keep the BPI project output up to date.

We can also perform an independent periodic audit to ensure compliance with agreed processes and procedures.

*Emcee Consultancy are independent specialists in Business Process Improvement..*

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