

WHAT'S NEXT AFTER REDESIGNING YOUR PROCESSES

Let's say you've done some good architectural work on the process. You've got it designed to create value for the customer. And let's assume that people's jobs are well aligned with the process. Their performance goals position them to make meaningful process contributions.



Now what?

Now's the time to make sure you're managing sideways. West to east, mainly, rather than north to south.

Instead of supervising people, manage the white space. Keep your focus on the handoff zones. On results. Don't get caught up in issuing instructions, policing people's individual performance, or being too handy with helpful advice. That's the old-fashioned vertical approach. Here we're looking for horizontal management, and that means you don't want people raising issues up through the chain of command. You want them to resolve problems at their level. You want them to be self-directed, finding solutions on their own, operating with a high degree of personal autonomy.

This can be a big adjustment for everybody involved. Old habits keep interfering. For example, people may keep coming to you for decisions. Maybe because they honestly believe you have the best answers, or just because that gets them off the hook. Some folks may expect you to urge them on. To provide generous job structure. To be there to monitor day-to-day performance and pick up after them.

Don't do it. You've got to wean everybody from this sort of behavior. Yourself included. So long as the work group is dependent on you, the process is at risk. You're responsible for holding people accountable for the desired outcomes. Their responsibility is to deliver them. Let it end there.



If you handle your side of the situation appropriately, people will soon come to the party. For example, if you don't burden the troops with too many rules, they'll learn to improvise. If you show an appropriate tolerance for failure, they'll become willing to take reasonable risks. When you get comfortable distancing yourself from the details of how the job gets done, they'll form the habit of thinking for themselves and making their own decisions. If you'll take pains to see that they don't have to waste their time on routine and repetitive drudgery stuff, they'll have a chance to get creative and resourceful in seeking continuous improvements. So you go first. That sets the stage for the kind of individual performance the process deserves.

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