Ross Maynard FCMA

The Three Laws of Improvement and Unleashing the Power of your People for Improvement:

Getting Started with Business Improvement

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The Aims of this Course

1. To understand that successful improvement is not about tools and methodologies but about creating an environment where change can happen

2. To appreciate the principles that underly successful improvement activity

3. To present some simple tools that you can use with your people to drive improvement

4. To show how you can unleash the power of your people for improvement

5. To provide a simple process to start that improvement activity

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Rather than focus on improvement methodologies

Perhaps we should focus on principles for process improvement

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If we adhere to these principles - The Three Laws of Improvement - our chances of success are greatly increased

1. Marginal Gains
2. Engage your people
3. Learn from mistakes

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The Three Laws of Improvement

1. Many small changes in a process add up to large improvements at the "system" level

2. The people in the process are best placed to understand its problems and constraints, and improve it

3. The effect of "blame" is to push information about mistakes underground

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The First Law: Many small changes add up to large improvements at the "**system**" level

- This is the Doctrine of Marginal Gains

- Improve each step in the process by 1% and you will get major gains at the top level

- Even better, eliminate unnecessary steps, combine others, and simplify more to get major efficiency gains

- The best way to deliver many small improvements is to harness the energy of those working in the process (see Second Law)

- This is a great way to get started with process improvement – people get involved and enthused, using simple tools to improve their own work processes

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The Second Law: The people in the process are best placed to improve it

- Your people know your processes better than anyone. In particular they know the barriers, constraints and problems

- Given time to work together, using simple methods, they can implement improvements that add-up at the top level

- Engaging your people will fire up their enthusiasm and boost morale, as well as teamworking and communication

- Using your own people for improvement is much more cost-effective than using consultants – all it takes is regular time devoted to improvement: perhaps ½ day per week

- Management must provide support to remove obstacles and facilitate change
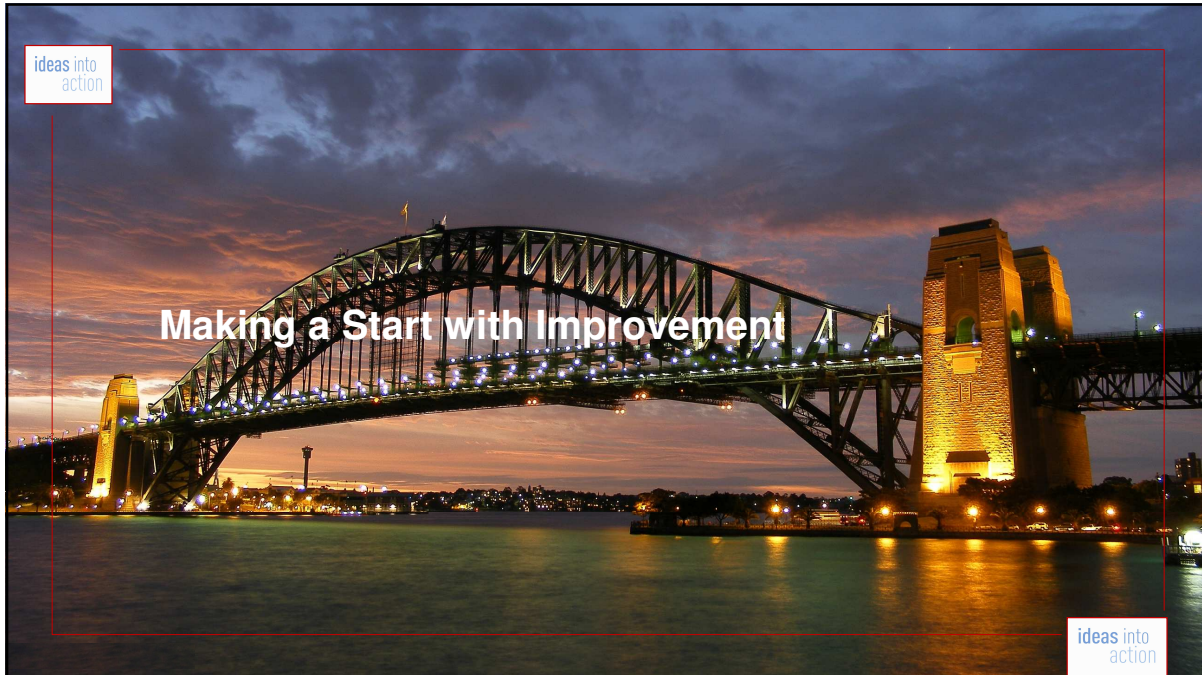
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The Third Law: The effect of "blame" is to push mistakes underground
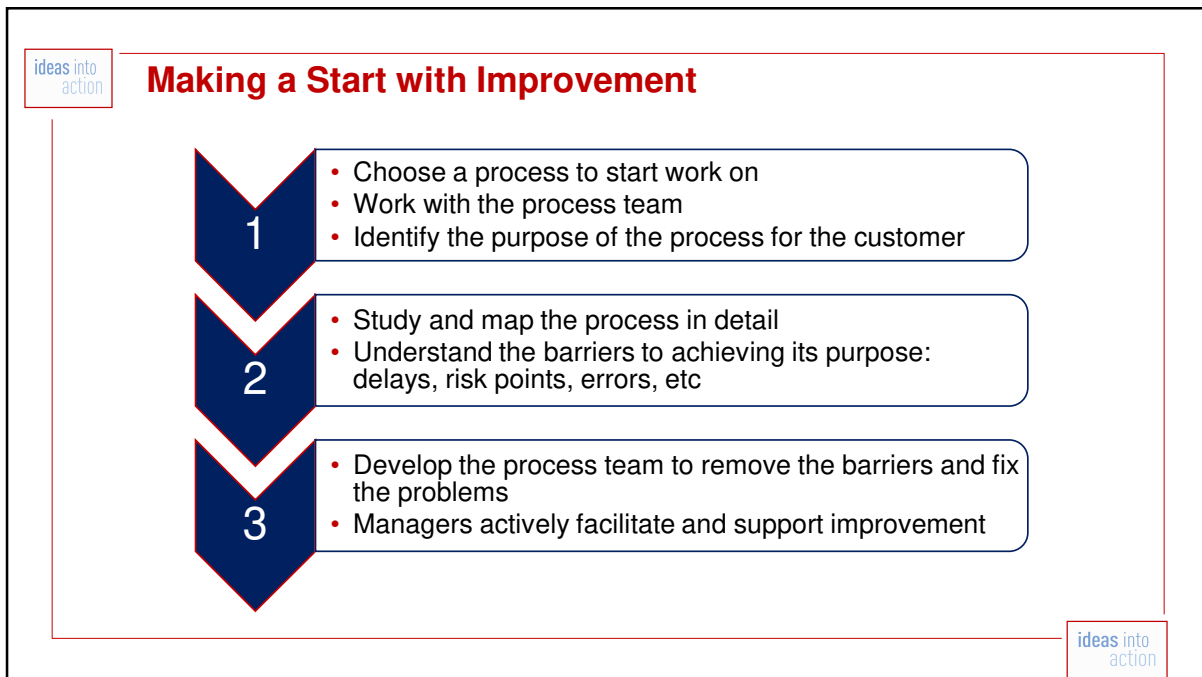
HIS FAULT
HER FAULT
THEIR FAULT
NOT ME

- "Blame" is criticising people for mistakes or not meeting targets

- Most problems and errors are caused by issues with the process rather than by individuals

- Not meeting targets is the symptom of an unstable process not an individual's performance

- What is it about the process that allows this mistake or performance issue to arise?

- Unless we encourage the open discussion of mistakes without blame we will never be able to learn from them and improve
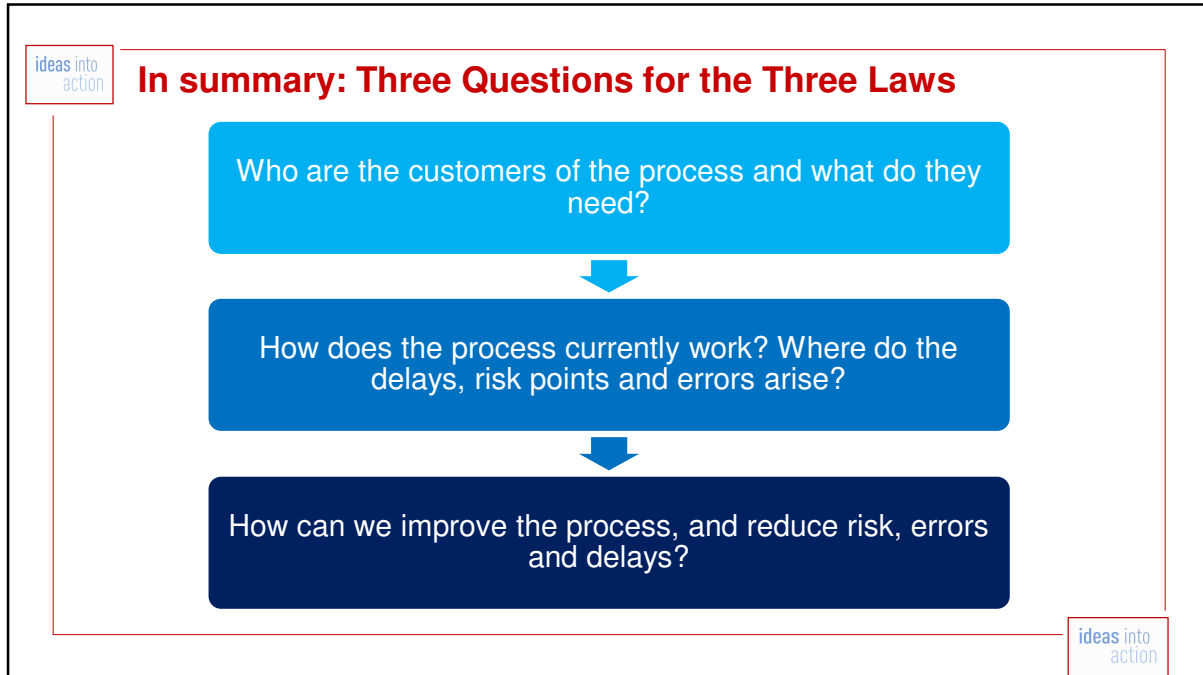
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Making a Start with Improvement

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Making a Start with Improvement

1
- Choose a process to start work on
- Work with the process team
- Identify the purpose of the process for the customer

2
- Study and map the process in detail
- Understand the barriers to achieving its purpose: delays, risk points, errors, etc

3
- Develop the process team to remove the barriers and fix the problems
- Managers actively facilitate and support improvement

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In summary: Three Questions for the Three Laws

Who are the customers of the process and what do they need?

How does the process currently work? Where do the delays, risk points and errors arise?

How can we improve the process, and reduce risk, errors and delays?

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***Actually*, there's a fourth law too: The Fourth Law of Improvement**

- Always focus on the customer.
- Anything that doesn't benefit the customer should be eliminated.
- Controls and checks should be the minimum required to be effective

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The Fourth Law: Always focus on the Customer

- The customer defines the purpose of your process
- Understand the customer's true requirement in terms of outcomes, service, quality, price, and delivery = "customer value"
- Seek to maximise that "value" to the customer
- Structure your organisation around delivering value to the customer, not around internal operations
- Ensure that everyone in the organisation understands that the customer comes first

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Tools for Improvement
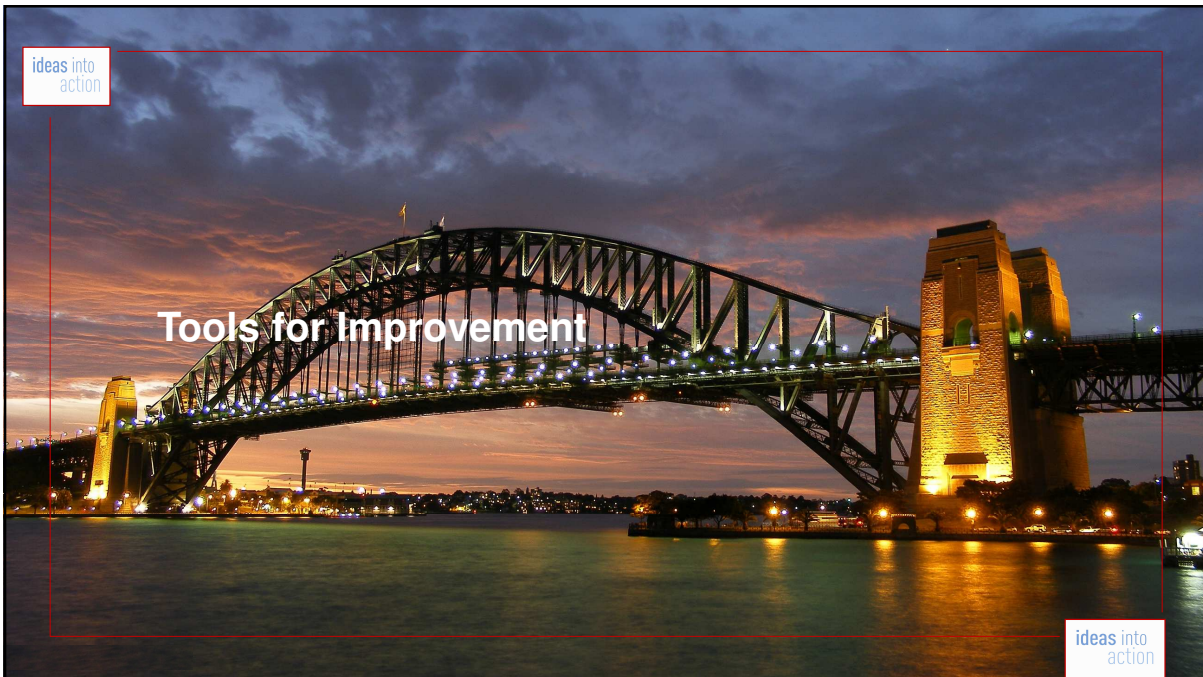
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Simple Improvement Tools to help the Team

1. Value Stream Mapping

2. Ishikawa Diagram

3. Stakeholder Analysis

4. The Problem Statement and the Goal Statement

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Improvement is a People Process

The people in the process are the best placed to understand its problems and constraints

Processes are improved by people working together using problem-solving tools

Involving people in improvement is more important than tools.

Creating a culture of improvement is about people feeling free to raise issues and concerns

Improvement is the responsibility of the team. Managers facilitate the team by provide support, expertise and training as necessary
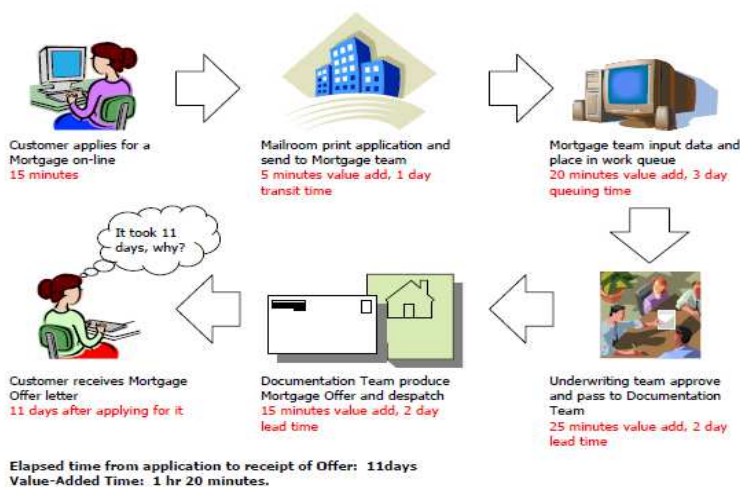
All of this requires Trust

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What is Value Stream Mapping?

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- The "Value Stream" is the series of activities and processes that deliver products and services to the customer

- Value Stream Mapping is a way to help us see the "big picture" of business processes

- VSM helps us to identify every step in the process flow from when the customer places an "order" to the moment when he or she receives the product or service

- By mapping each activity and step we see the "flow" and can identify issues and constraints such as delay, duplication and unnecessary steps

- VSM makes us to "go and see" the work in the workplace. This is the best way to understand the process and how value is created for the customer

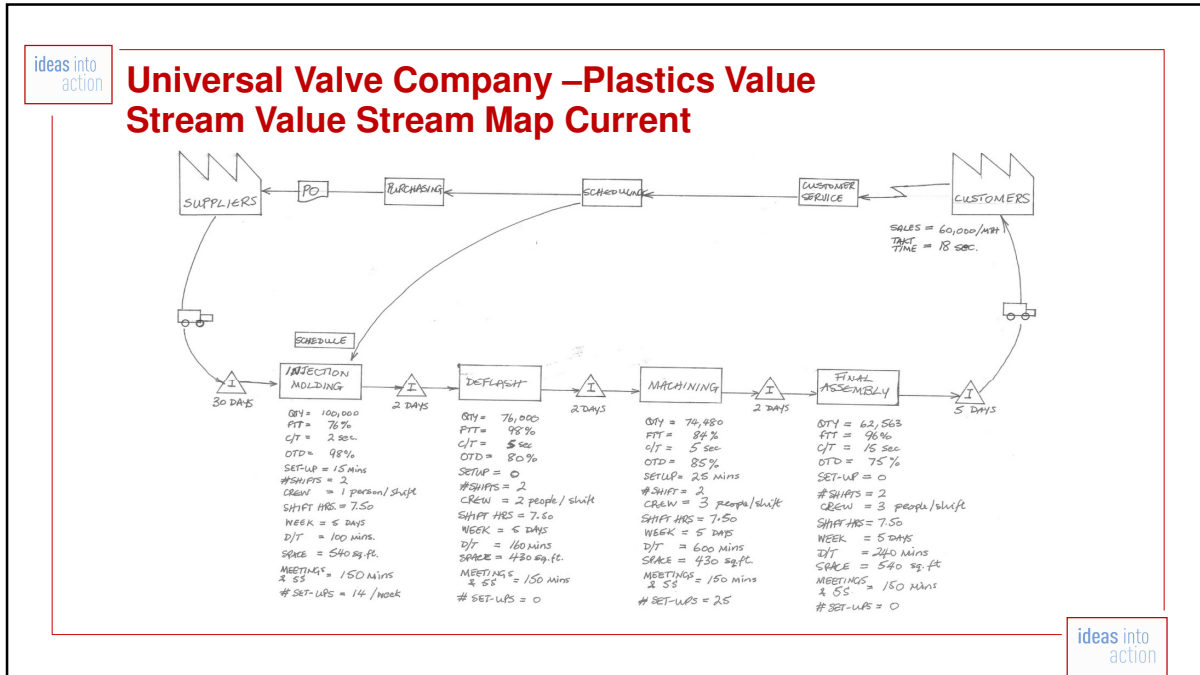- By working with people in the process, we identify problems and ideas for improvement

The aim of improvement is to improve the speed and efficiency of the process by removing non-value adding steps (waste)
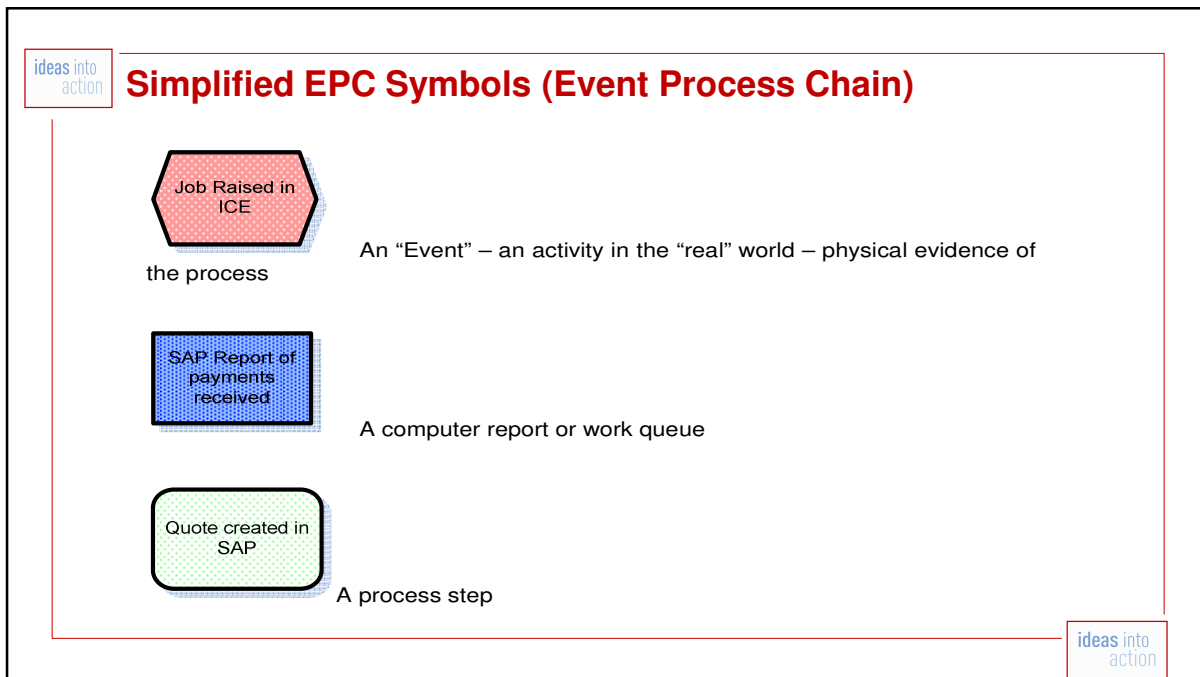
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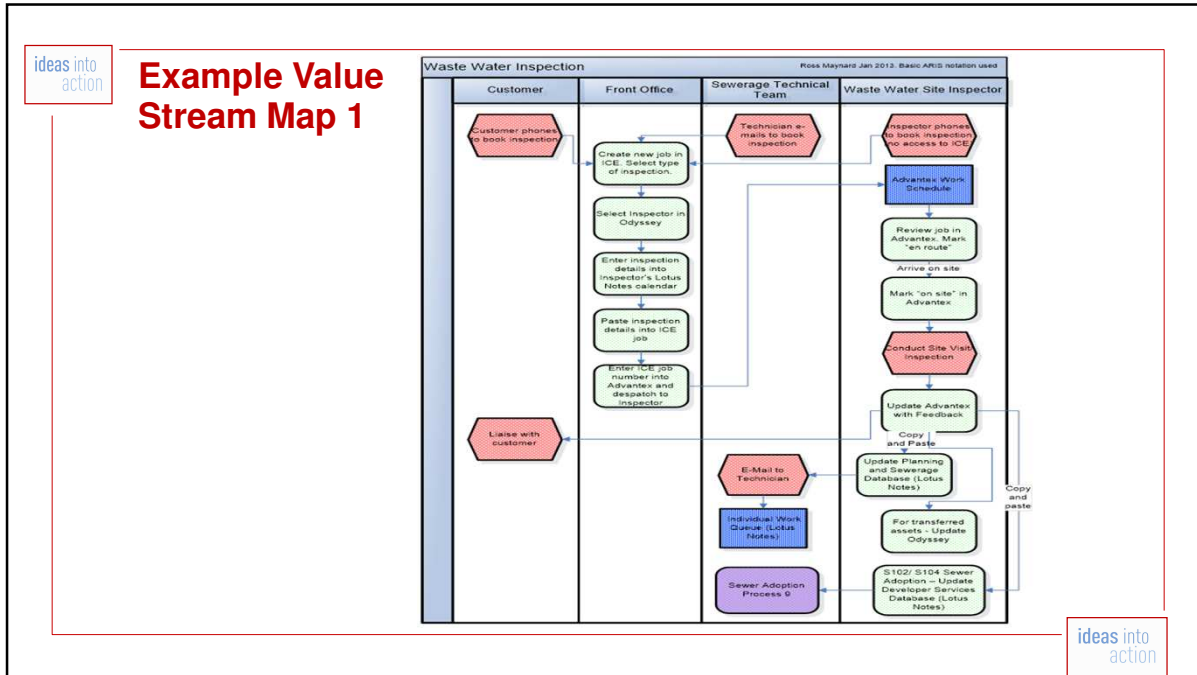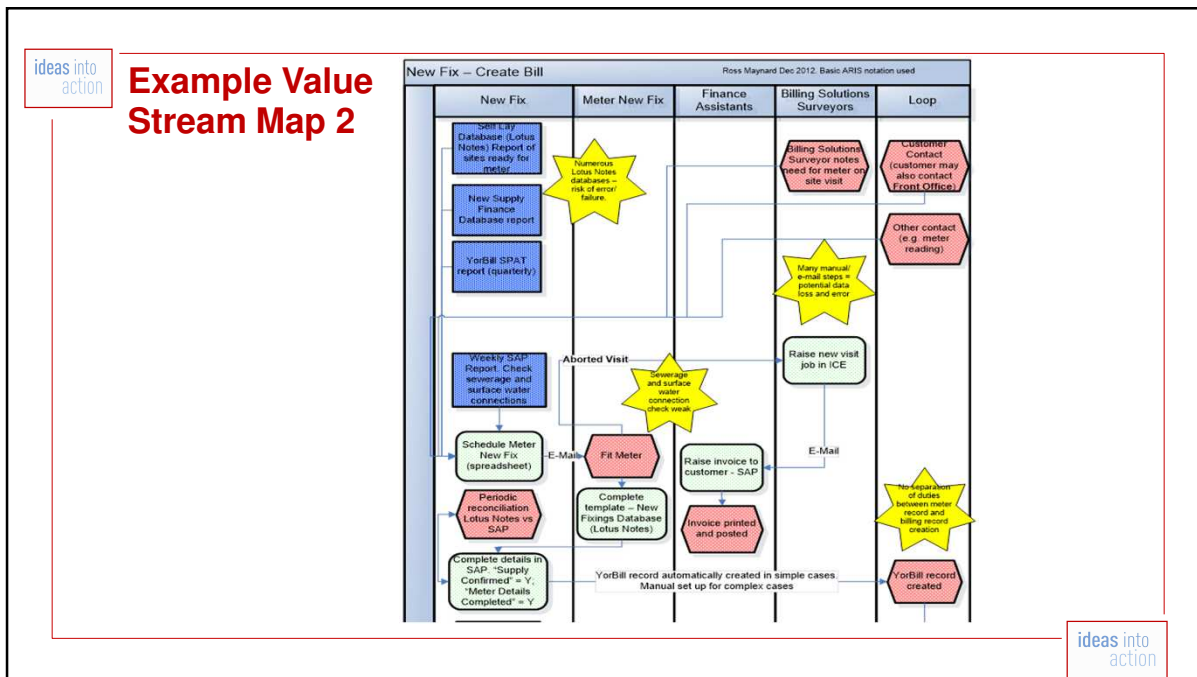## An Overview of a Value Stream

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Customer applies for a Mortgage on-line
15 minutes

Mailroom print application and send to Mortgage team
5 minutes value add, 1 day transit time

Mortgage team input data and place in work queue
20 minutes value add, 3 day queuing time

It took 11 days, why?

Customer receives Mortgage Offer letter
11 days after applying for it

Documentation Team produce Mortgage Offer and despatch
15 minutes value add, 2 day lead time

Underwriting team approve and pass to Documentation Team
25 minutes value add, 2 day lead time

Elapsed time from application to receipt of Offer: 11days
Value-Added Time: 1 hr 20 minutes.

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Universal Valve Company –Plastics Value Stream Value Stream Map Current

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Simplified EPC Symbols (Event Process Chain)

Job Raised in ICE

An "Event" – an activity in the "real" world – physical evidence of the process

SAP Report of payments received

A computer report or work queue

Quote created in SAP

A process step

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Example Value Stream Map 1

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Example Value Stream Map 2

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Ishikawa Diagram

Materials
- Poor Packaging
- Faulty Products

Methods
- Insufficient time to pack
- Rush Orders
- Friday PM or Monday AM

Measure - ment
- Returns "easily" counted as damaged
- Count Bias

Why are so many items getting damaged when sent to customers?

People
- Customer damages to avoid paying
- Poor Packaging
- Wilful Damage
- Poor Handling

Machines
- Poor Transport
- Damaged by Sorting
- Damaged when being wrapped

Mother Nature
- Potholes on route
- Accidentally dropped

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Ishikawa Diagram 2

Materials
- Problems with composition of clay
- New styles and shapes are fragile

Methods
- Work instructions not updated
- Inexperienced delivery company
- Poor packing

Measure - ment
- Method of defining "breakage" changed

What is causing increased breakages?

People
- Experienced staff have retired
- Inadequate supervision
- Poor staff training
- No comprehensive training programme

Machines
- Kilns are too hot
- Inadequate maintenance
- Old machines

Mother Nature
- Potholes on road to factory

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Stakeholder Analysis

Define the problem from the point of view of all the stakeholders involved

Source: "Breakthrough Thinking" Nick Souter

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Stakeholder Analysis Example

Company Problem: A rising level of breakages during production, and in transit to customers

Problem for Owners: Delays and cost increases leading to unacceptable margins

Problem for Employees: Risk of cut-backs and job losses. Threat to pay and conditions

Problem for Customers: Perception of poor quality products. Loss of confidence in business. Delays in getting desired products. May seek other supplier.

Source: "Breakthrough Thinking" Nick Souter

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**The Problem Statement
and the Goal Statement**

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The Problem Statement

- The **Problem Statement** summarises the issue we are addressing in three or four sentences:
  - What is the business problem?
  - What are the consequences of the problem?
  - Who is affected, and how?
  - What are the impacts of the problem on the process or organisation? (quantify if possible)

Avoid identifying the cause of the problem, or solutions at this stage

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Often the problem statement looks like this:

"Currently the XYZ Process is [*deficient in this way*]. This results in [*specific problems*] for customers and [*specific problems*] for the organisation"

If you can't define the problem in two or three sentences then you don't understand the process or its problems well enough!

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An Example Problem Statement

"Currently our delivery service is unreliable with 20% of items not arriving in the delivery window specified to the customer.

An average of 40 customer complaints a day relate to poor delivery performance. This results in dissatisfaction and frustration for customers, significant compensation costs, and loss of future sales."

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The Goal Statement

- The Goal Statement is effectively the opposite of the Problem Statement and should also comprise a couple of sentences

- The Goal Statement is a short vision statement of what we would like to achieve by addressing the problem

  - What would we like the process to achieve?
  - What will the impact be on customers and on the organisation?
  - How will key metrics be impacted by the improvement? (targets are appropriate here)

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An Example Goal Statement

"To consistently reduce the number of deliveries outside of the specified window to less than 5%, reducing customer complaints, and reducing compensation claims due to poor delivery performance to 10% of the current level."

Think Ahead

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Principles for Process Design

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10 Principles for Process Design

1. Enable the customer to drive the process - self-service

2. Serve the customer, not the process - Voice of the Customer

3. Do the "work" close to the customer - minimise hand-offs

4. Enable the customer to understand where they are on the journey - provide process visibility

5. Provide "escape" routes for non-standard work, and work requiring additional attention

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10 Principles for Process Design

6. Build quality assurance into the process; check work at the correct point and don't duplicate checks

7. Allow flexibility to meet peaks and troughs across processes

8. Directly integrate data between systems

9. Share common process steps between processes

10. Separate steps that can be completed "off-line"

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In Summary

Many small changes in the process add up to large improvements at the top level	The people in the process are best placed to improve it
The Four Laws of Improvement	
Always focus on the customer. Eliminate work that doesn't benefit the customer	The effect of blame is to push mistakes underground

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It all Adds Up

- In one school in the US, children were taught to think of weaknesses not as embarrassing, but as opportunities to learn. They became more inquisitive and resilient. **They also performed better**

- In business, the most significant improvements in performance come not from buying new "kit" but from studying business processes in detail and improving each component by a small amount

- We must learn from mistakes, errors and constraints, and work to eliminate them

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Virginia Mason Hospital, Seattle

- Staff were encouraged to file reports if anything went wrong or if they made mistakes

- Blame was not allocated. Instead an improvement team examined what it was about the process that allowed the mistake to arise

- Many small changes were made – changes to drug labelling; use of colour coding and symbols; checklists in the operating theatres; ergonomic changes; etc

- Each improvement seemed small, but they rapidly accumulated

- Since the new approach was taken, Virginia Mason has seen a 74% reduction in liability insurance premiums. It is now regarded as one of the safest hospitals in the world
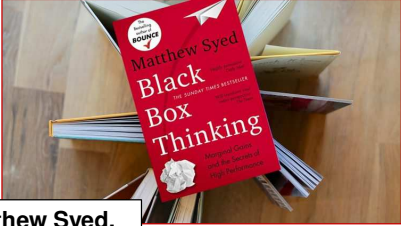
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"Blame is pervasive in the modern political, cultural and corporate world; and what the effect of blame is, is to push all of the information about mistakes deep underground.
….
Unless we're prepared to have open and honest cultures where people are not blamed for honest mistakes, that information will never be surfaced enabling learning to take place"

Matthew Syed,
"*Black Box Thinking*",
2015

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Unleashing the Power of your People for Improvement

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ideas into action **Unleashing the Power of your People for Improvement**

Improvement programmes can often seem to be all about methods and tools

THEY ARE NOT

Improvement is about people

Your people working together using problem solving tools to improve the processes they know and work with everyday

The Four Laws of Improvement are all, ultimately, about unleashing the power of your people to make improvement happen.

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ideas into action **So, How do we get people involved in Improvement?**

Vision
Lead by example
Inspire
Team work
success
Goals
Mentor
Teach
Motivate

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"People do what you count; not necessarily what counts"

John Seddon

- People want to do the right thing

- Management paying attention to the issues that matter will result in action in those areas

- Where that attention is focussed on improving the process for the benefit of the customer, then improvement will begin

- Where attention is focussed on "making the numbers no matter what", then staff will keep their heads down and avoid getting involved

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It's about Engagement

EMPLOYEE TRIFECTA

- Making change happen is about clarity and focus

- Clear objectives and a focus on values

- Leaders need be clear about what matters to the organisation, and then establish that very clearly in the minds of everyone involved through procedures, policies, measures and feedback

- Laying out some "customer first vision", and then just reverting to the old management behaviours about making the numbers will not work!

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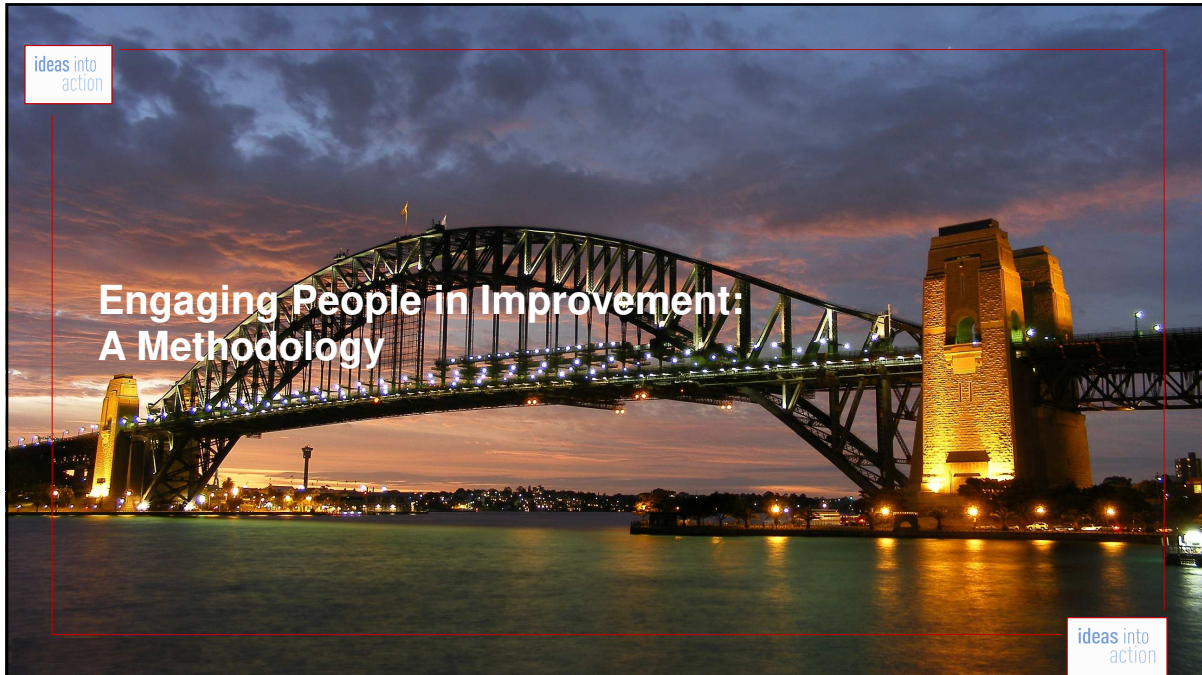
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Making the Time for Improvement

- In many ways the hardest part of improvement is making the time to do it consistently and regularly

- The improvement team need time to meet and to work through the stages

- Typically, ½ day per week is a good starting measure and projects can last 4 – 6 months

- This still requires people from different teams across the organisation to be available at the same time on a regular basis

- There are no easy solutions to this – it requires senior commitment: you have to give to gain

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Engaging People in Improvement: A Methodology

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Engaging People in Improvement: A Methodology

1
- Get to Know your People
- Pick a Process

2
- Understand the Purpose of the Process
- Identify the Problems and Constraints

3
- Identify and Test Possible Solutions
- Implement the Best Solutions

4
- Start all over Again
- Management provide support and training

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1.1 Get to Know your People

- Walk the floor, visit offices, talk to everyone.

- Begin to get a feel for the effectiveness of your business processes

- Take soundings for the most dysfunctional processes in your business

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1.2 Pick a Process

- Pick a process to start your improvement activity
- This should be one of the most dysfunctional processes you you identify by talking to staff throughout the organisation - a process that causes a lot of grief!

- Ideally it should also be a process that impacts your customers: causing them problems too

- That way the improvements made will have a big impact on customer satisfaction
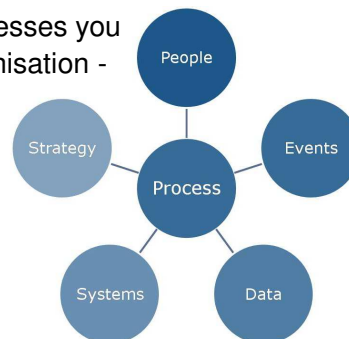
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2.1 Understand the Purpose of the Process

- Talk to the process team and agree the purpose of the process from the point of view of the customer

- Understand the customer's true requirement in terms of price, service, delivery and quality

  – Who are the customers of the process?

  – What outcomes do they actually want?

  – What do those customers value about the process as it currently works?

  – What do those customers not value about the process?

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2.2 Identify the Problems and Constraints

- Work with the process team to identify the problems and constraints of the process as it currently works in detail

- Through support and training, help the team map the process

- Understand how the process works through all patterns of demand and other conditions

- Identify the constraints, bottlenecks, delays and risk points in the process

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3.1 Identify and Test Possible Solutions

- Support the team to identify possible solutions to the constraints, bottlenecks, delays and risk points in the process

- Test the solutions in a "safe" environment – an offline simulation, or with a small sample

- Retain sufficient controls to maintain financial control and minimise risk, whilst avoiding excessive checking

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3.2 Implement the Best Solutions

- Identify the "best" solutions to the problems, barriers, constraints, delays and risks in the process

- Solutions which remove barriers with minimal risk and with no "knock-on" consequences

- Early engagement with other teams potentially impacted by the proposed changes in the process is essential. The aim is to improve the end-to-end process not push problems down the line or create conflict

- Management support the implementation of the solutions, providing "air cover" as needed

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4.1 Start all over Again

- Encourage the team to start again – on a new process or to further refine the same process

- Involvement in improving their own work processes in this way is a great way to get people involved and enthused

- Building on the energy and experience gained will soon show significant impacts at the top level – costs, profits and customer satisfaction

- Be prepared to give employees a share of the gains: profit sharing will further boost engagement

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4.2 Management provide Support and Training

- Management need to set the tone for improvement to take hold

- Regular time needs to be devoted to improvement - perhaps ½ day per week - and identified as a core requirement (not a "nice to have")

- Training in problem solving skills is essential

- Managers at all levels need to encourage improvement activity and the discussion of problems and ideas

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Dealing with Resistance to Change

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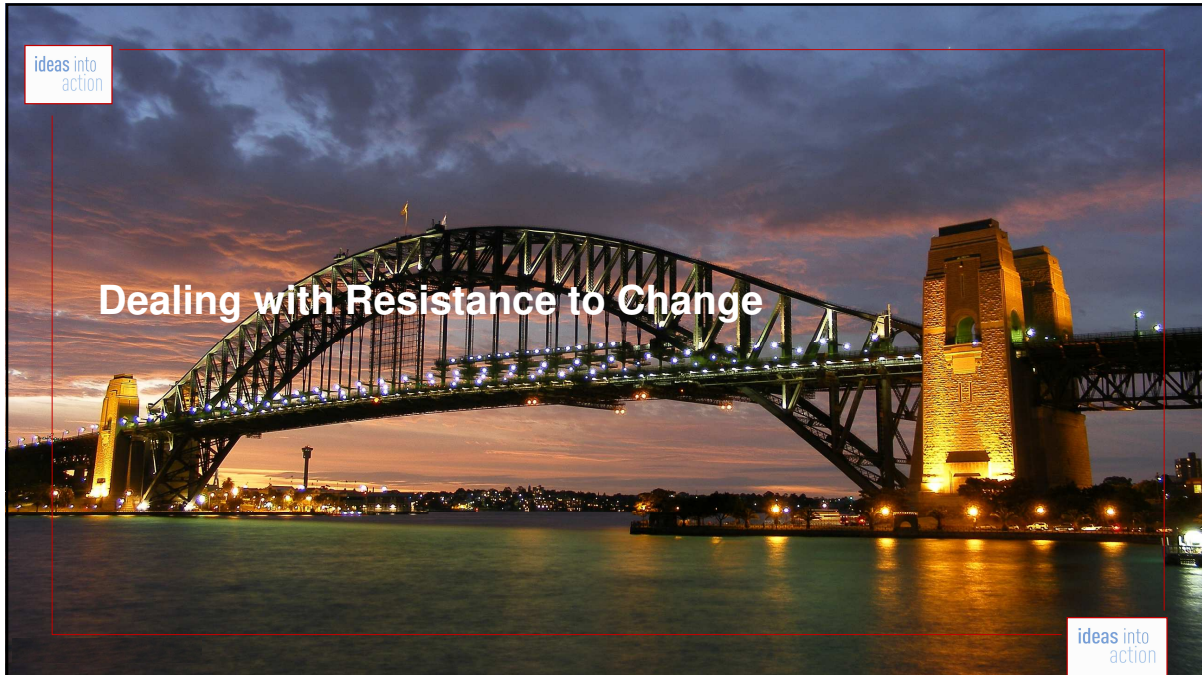
Dealing with Resistance to Change

- We humans like to be in our comfort zone, and moving out of it generates stress.

- Resistance to change, therefore, is hardly surprising, and is simply a stress-avoidance response.

- Most people want to do the right thing in their work.

- Where the needs of the business change, then the people working in it need a clear understanding of the way forward and what it will mean for them

- Facing up to the issues and concerns openly, is the best way to minimize resistance to change

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Steps to Dealing with Resistance to Change

1. State the reasons for the change clearly and explain the facts that lead to it. Invite others who support the change to state their reasons.

2. Lay out a clear path of what changes are necessary, and what it will mean for people's jobs/ roles. What training and support will be put in place?

3. Be sensitive to the other people's feelings and be empathetic.

4. Actively explore the position of others. What do they stand to lose? What do they stand to gain? What new opportunities will help remove their resistance?

5. Involve those affected by the change in developing the plans for the new ways of working.

6. Approach the resistance with a positive spirit of curiosity and desire to help others. Be flexible to amend your plans to meet others "halfway".

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In Summary

- Listen to your People
- Understand the barriers they face
- Provide the skills and support they need to improve things

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A Postscript

- **True**: those working on the bottleneck steps in the process will have the greatest impact on end-to-end performance

- **Still**: it is important to engage as many people as possible in improvement

- The impact of some improvements may be minor

- But the energy generated by working in teams to address problems, and the gains made by improving communication and understanding across the organisation, will make your efforts more than worthwhile

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Quantifying the Benefits of Improvement

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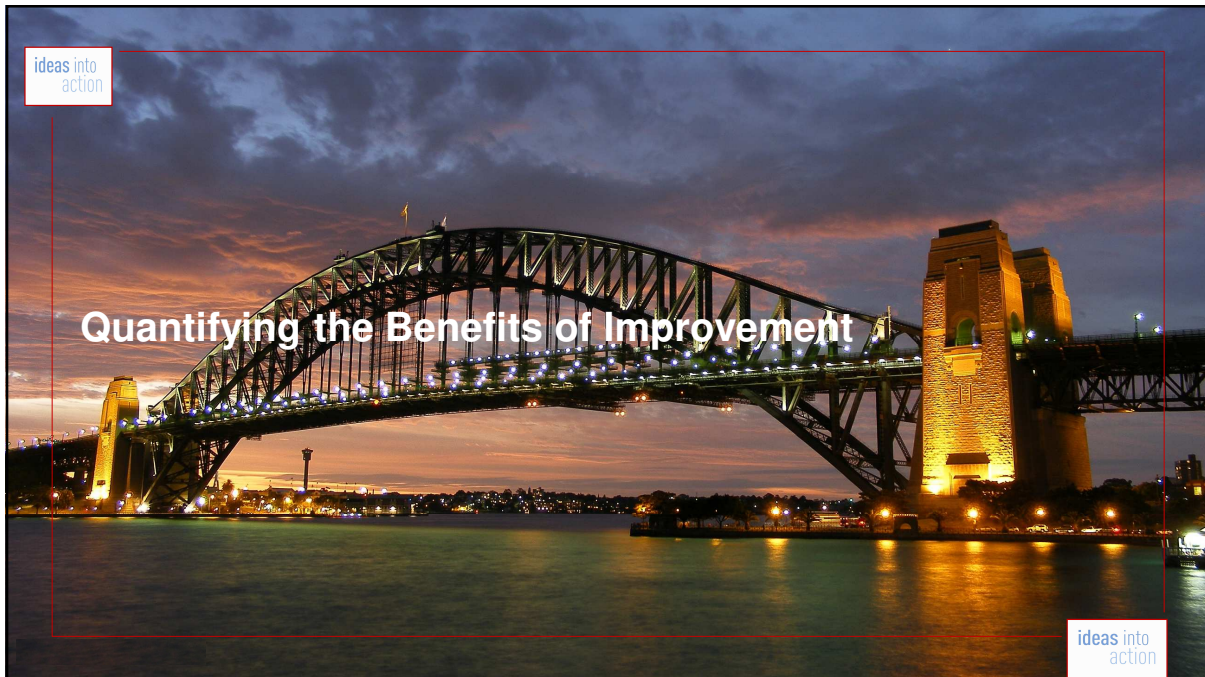
What is the purpose of improvement?

- We talked about the investment required in improvement – a team of six people meeting half-a-day a week for six months = 84 person-days

- But the primary purpose of improvement is not cost-saving!

- The purpose of improvement is to improve the speed and efficiency of the process by removing non-value adding steps (waste)

- This creates *capacity* to do more profitable work

- Some costs will be saved – for example from reduced scrap and rework; and reduced energy costs from a swifter process – but the main purpose is to create capacity

- The investment in improvement is justified by the increase in contribution that using this additional capacity brings

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1) Valuing the Increase in Capacity from Improvement

- Lets say a process currently costs $100,000 a month to run, delivering sales of $150,000 per month. That's a contribution of $50,000 per month (33%)

- We have the opportunity to expand sales – new customers, new markets – to $200,000 per month but we do not currently have the capacity in-house

- We could invest in new capacity, but we may not have access to capital, or may not wish to add to overheads and gearing

- The alternative is to improve the capacity of the process to absorb the extra work.

- If the end-to-end time of the process (order entry to delivery) is currently 10 working days, and, through our improvement efforts, we can reduce this to 6 days, we will be able to cope with the order in-house

- Contribution will increase to $66,600. **Our investment in improvement generates nearly $200k additional contribution per annum**

The cost of running the process remains the same – same people, same equipment – apart from the marginal cost of materials and energy

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ideas into action 2) Other Benefits of Improvement (there are cost-savings)

- Reduction in the cost of scrap and rework = material costs saved; energy costs saved

- Reduction in inventory: a swifter process means less WIP and less finished goods as we satisfy customer orders more quickly. This has a cashflow benefit.

- A streamlined process takes up less space – freeing up space for other revenue generating activities. Estimate the opportunity cost of the space freed.

- Fulfilling customer orders more quickly means better customer satisfaction = more orders. It may mean more premium-priced "express" orders too. Can you estimate the value of these additional orders?

- A more engaged and involved workforce means less employee turnover which means less recruitment and training costs

We do not attempt to reduce headcount. That would stifle the improvement culture. Who wants to improve themselves out of a job?
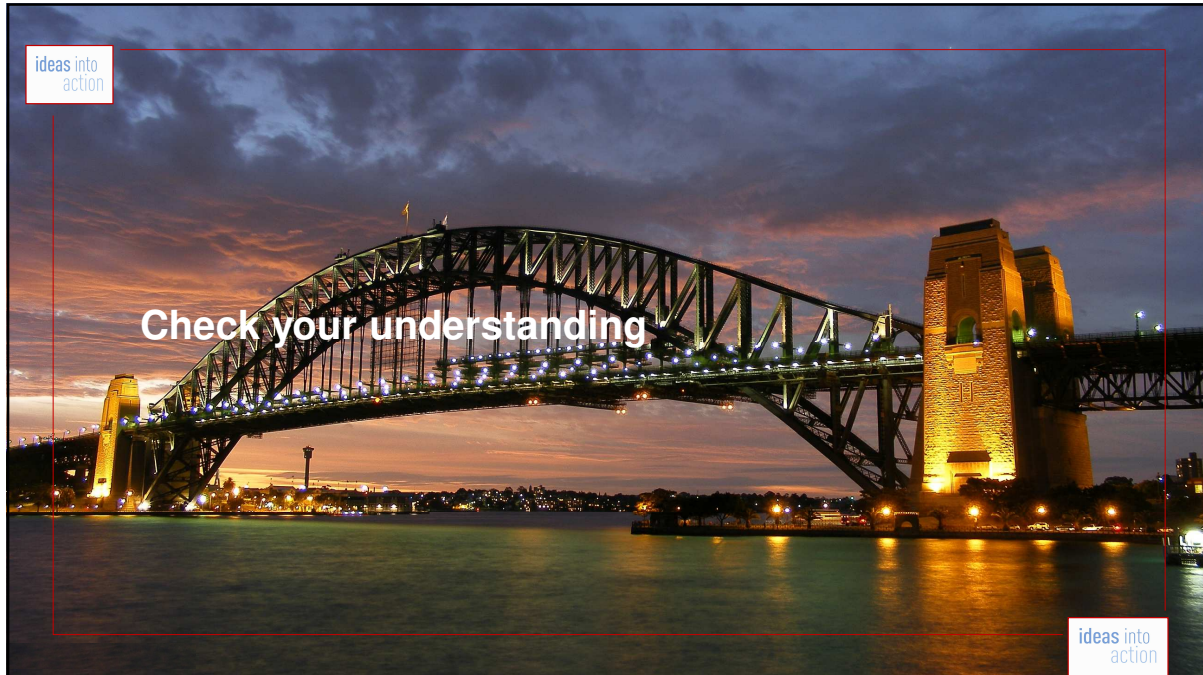
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ideas into action The Benefits of Improvement vastly outweigh the Costs

- The Four Laws of Improvement provide the foundation for successful improvement activity

- Unleashing the power of your people for improvement is much more cost-effective than hiring external consultants. The improvements are more likely to stick too

- The key tools of improvement are easy to teach and to apply

- An engaged workforce is more committed to the organisation and will generate a self-sustaining culture of improvement

- Improving processes create capacity to do more profitable work, leading to step changes in profitability. There are cost savings too.

- **Now get started!**

Better thinking. Better results.

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Check your understanding

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Question 1:

The Doctrine of Marginal Gains argues that:

a) Small improvements at each step in a process generate a marginal gain at the process level

b) Only marginal costs and revenues should be considered when planning which processes to improve

c) Small improvements at each step in a process add up to significant gains at the process level

d) Involving the people who work in the process in improvement gives marginally better results than getting consultants to do it

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ideas into action **Answer 1:**

c) Small improvements at each step in a process add up to significant gains at the process level

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ideas into action **Question 2:**

Why should you involve the people who work in a process in improving it?:

a) They are the cheapest resource available

b) They are the people who know the process in depth, including its problems, weaknesses, constraints and risk points

c) They're much cleverer than anyone else in the organisation

d) You shouldn't involve them in the improvement activity because production will be affected

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Answer 2:

b) They are the people who know the process in depth, including its problems, weaknesses, constraints and risk points
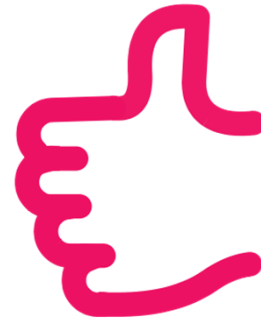
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Question 3:

True or false: Finding who is to blame for a problem is good management because they can be disciplined. Select all that apply

a) True: the person who caused the problem needs to be told off and probably retrained

b) True: once we find who caused the problem, they won't do it again and the problem goes away

c) False: The vast majority of problems are caused by a poor process. We must fix the process not blame individuals

d) False: Unless we encourage the open discussion of mistakes without blame, we will never be able to learn from them and improve

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Answer 3:

c) False: The vast majority of problems are caused by a poor process. We must fix the process not blame individuals

d) False: Unless we encourage the open discussion of mistakes without blame, we will never be able to learn from them and improve
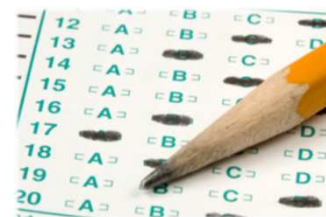
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Question 4:

What was the fourth Law of Improvement that I slipped in there?

a) Always focus on what the customer wants

b) Remove all checks and inspections from the process

c) Provide training in improvement skills and problem solving to everyone in the organisation

d) The effect of blame is to push mistakes underground

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Answer 4:

a) Always focus on what the customer wants

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Question 5:

What is the purpose of the Problem Statement?

a) To summarise the problems and issues in a process in a way that everyone can understand

b) To lay out the objectives for improving the process

c) To identify potential solutions for the problems in a process

d) To keep senior management quiet as they won't understand the detail of your analysis

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Answer 5:

a) To summarise the problems and issues in a process in a way that everyone can understand

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Question 6:

Why is it useful to map a process in detail? Select all that apply

a) It helps us see the "big picture" of business processes in all its complexity

b) It helps us to identify every step in a process from "order" to the moment when the customer receives the product or service: highlighting delays, duplication and unnecessary steps

c) It makes us to "go and see" the work in the workplace. This helps build the relationship with the people who work in the process and know its problems

d) It shows us where resources are consumed in the process and, thus, where savings can be made

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Answer 6:

a) It helps us see the "big picture" of business processes in all its complexity

b) It helps us to identify every step in a process from "order" to the moment when the customer receives the product or service: highlighting delays, duplication and unnecessary steps

c) It makes us to "go and see" the work in the workplace. This helps build the relationship with the people who work in the process and know its problems

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Question 7:

How can you make change happen in your organisation? Select all that apply

a) Be clear about the priorities for the organisation – and stick to them

b) Develop policies and procedures which clearly reflect the priorities and values of the organisation

c) Focus on "making the numbers" and drive down on individuals and teams who don't

d) Implement performance measures which support the priorities and values of the organisation

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Answer 7:

a) Be clear about the priorities for the organisation – and stick to them

b) Develop policies and procedures which clearly reflect the priorities and values of the organisation

c) Implement performance measures which support the priorities and values of the organisation

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Question 8:

What are the first four steps of our methodology to engage people in improvement? Select four

a) Pick a Process

b) Select suitably qualified consultants for the improvement project

c) Identify the savings in terms of cost and headcount

d) Get to know your people

e) Identify the problems and constraints in the process

f) Understand the purpose of the process

g) Implement solutions to process problems

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ideas into action **Answer 8: In the Correct Order**

d) Get to know your people

a) Pick a Process

f) Understand the purpose of the process

e) Identify the problems and constraints in the process

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ideas into action **Question 9:**

You know that working on the bottleneck or problem steps in a process will generate the biggest gains, so why should you seek to engage as many people as possible in improvement?

a) It is useful training for the staff you are going to made redundant in your cost-saving efforts

b) It helps keep their minds off the boring repetitive work you make them do the rest of the time

c) The impact of some improvements may be minor, but the energy and momentum generated by people feeling empowered to resolve the work problems they face will boost all aspects of performance

d) It's less expensive than setting up team-building away-day events

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Answer 9:

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c) The impact of some improvements may be minor, but the energy and momentum generated by people feeling empowered to resolve the work problems they face will boost all aspects of performance

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Question 10:

The hardest part of improvement is making the time to do it consistently and regularly. How might we get started? Select all that apply

a) Speak to customers and staff; identify their 2 biggest bugbears and work to improve those – freeing up time to use for further improvement

b) Plan your initial improvement activity for a "quiet" period of work. Use the capacity that you free up for more improvement work

c) Use scheduled staff training sessions to work on "live" problems

d) Find out where in the process the most errors or rework occur. Work to resolve those problems – freeing up lots of time for improvement

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Answer 10: All of the above!

a) Speak to customers and staff; identify their 2 biggest bugbears and work to improve those – freeing up time to use for further improvement

b) Plan your initial improvement activity for a "quiet" period of work. Use the capacity that you free up for more improvement work

c) Use scheduled staff training sessions to work on "live" problems

d) Find out where in the process the most errors or rework occur. Work to resolve those problems – freeing up lots of time for improvement

Congratulations!

Thank you

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Ross Maynard FCMA

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