## Chapter 1 : How Continuous Improvement Can Benefit Your Business | Kanbanize Blog

*There is a lot of room for improvement in the way top managers involve more people in formulating and executing strategic plans! Most organizations can enhance strategic planning motivation, and thereby improve the quality of the strategic planning process, and the effectiveness of strategic plan implementation.*

Thus, it is important to arm team members with an understanding of the fundamentals of effective team operations. Applying a set of principles based on positive experiences will significantly increase the probability that teams will generate data-based recommendations for process improvements at all levels of an organization, and in the end benefit the customers. Project Selection and Ownership Ideas for processes to target for improvement can come from anywhere within an organization. However, most organizations have some type of quality infrastructure that reviews and takes ultimate authority for prioritizing and selecting processes for improvement. That infrastructure in these guidelines is referred to as the quality council. In Six Sigma terms, this individual, heavily vested in the success of the team, is referred to as the Champion. The charter and objectives for the team will be developed by the Champion and possibly supported by a number of other supervising members. Team recommendations are eventually pre-briefed to the Champion, who provides additional insight to the team in preparation for any final briefings to the quality councils or representing members. A number of Six Sigma terms are used here: What is important is that the responsibilities of these positions are carried out. A one- or two-page written charter is the vehicle for accomplishing this, and must contain sufficient description of the topics below to help guide the team: What is the process or portion of the process that the team is being tasked to improve? Listing the process products or services may be helpful. Why is this process considered a priority? What leads the Champion to believe a concentrated improvement effort is required? Clearly defined team objectives: Specifically, what is the team tasked to do? How will the members know when they are done? Process boundaries and scope: What are the limits to what the team can explore? Where does their responsibility for the process end? Clear description of expectation: What does the Champion expect of the team, such as what data will be needed to sufficiently justify recommendations, the format of the deliverable, etc.? Who is on the team, including Champion, team leader, members, facilitator and technical resources? Also included should be clear expectations regarding the amount of time that each team member will be available to the project. What help, equipment, facilities, etc. Are there any other givens regarding time charges, team duration or meeting schedules? Activities of this meeting should include: Explanation of the background of the charter by the Champion. Discussion and clarification of the charter. Inclusion of any appropriate inputs or changes to charter by the team leader. Clarification of the roles and responsibilities of each member. The charter should be given to team members prior to the first meeting for their review and to allow them time to formulate questions. It is extremely important for the Champion to be present at the team kickoff to clarify the charter and objectives, and to inspire the team toward success. Team Member Roles and Responsibilities Team membership must be based on personal involvement and vested interest in the process selected for improvement. It also is important that each player selected for the effort fully understands what is expected of them. The guidelines below are helpful in describing the roles and responsibilities of each member in the improvement process. Facilitators are recommended when available. Process Improvement Team Methodology and Resource It is the situation that dictates what is the most appropriate size, shape and format for a project team. However, there are some steps that must be taken if the team is to address its task in a logical, effective way. Process Definition â€" The process targeted for improvement must be defined and diagrammed by the team at a level of detail sufficient to give members an understanding of how changes will affect the overall process and output. Many easy-to-use software tools are available, but often flip charts and butcher paper tacked to a wall are sufficient mediums for capturing a jointly developed process flow diagram. Process Requirements â€" A clear description of what is expected of the process from the perspective of the customer of the process output. If any doubt exists, direct feedback from a sample of customers is strongly recommended. Data regarding how well the process is generating output that meets customer expectations will serve as one of the process performance baselines used to evaluate team

recommendations once implemented. Data-based Justification of Recommendations â€" This must be a requirement of all teams. Some processes lend themselves to measures much easier than others. For those that do, the team should determine the measures that provide individuals involved in the process with information that enables them to see how well the process is meeting customer requirements. Other processes are more difficult to evaluate using performance measures, but can always be baselined by more qualitative means when necessary. The objective is not to measure but to improve. Measurement does, however, provide the information needed to determine if a process is in control. The team should not let measures become a barrier to the improvement effort. And the team must remember that its work is not complete without a plan to evaluate recommended changes against the baseline at some predetermined future point. Identify and Prioritize the Key Issues â€" The issues addressed should be associated with the process as it is currently designed. The root causes to poor process quality can then be identified by a variety of techniques. These root causes must be addressed for the process to be permanently improved. It is important for the team to remain within the confines of those boundaries that it has the authority to influence. Root Causes and the Customer â€" Any solutions generated by the team must address the root causes, and have a direct and measurable improvement in the ability to meet customer expectations. Input from the Champion regarding team progress and direction can be helpful here. The team should consider the perspectives of all individuals affected by the changes, and seek their input if needed. This will allow the team to develop early support for the changes, gain additional perspective and reduce any resistance to the changes once implementation has been approved. The Required Briefing â€" At the briefing to the Champion on the team background, objectives, methodology, findings and recommendations, the team should be prepared to explain the rationale behind its decisions and justify its recommendations by logic and data when appropriate. Things should be kept simple, concise and clear. It is a good idea to rehearse the presentation. The entire effort should not be documented in the briefing material; rather, there should something left for verbal responds to questions at any level of detail with backup material if asked. Briefing Review Guidelines for Management The following considerations must be made by the Champion and quality council members prior to any process improvement team out-briefing: Review all recommendations objectively: If the process will be improved, approve the recommendation. If it cannot be implemented because of some other concern, explain why and give the team another chance. If not, the team will perceive that management values something other than process improvement. This can usually be avoided if the team remains in close contact with the Champion throughout the effort. Be willing to take some risks: If there is supporting data, allow the recommendations to be implemented on an experimental basis and then re-evaluate the check step of the plan-do-check-act cycle at some predetermined time. Require sufficient data-based justification of recommendations: This is the key to demonstrating and developing responsible management and decision making. Send the team back for more data or analysis if necessary, but be sure to approve any other sound recommendations. As mentioned earlier, require teams to plan for future evaluation of recommendations against the baseline performance. Champions and quality council members reviewing project team out-briefings must remember that the greatest reward for the team is for its recommendations to be approved and implemented. If team member participation in the rigorous process is ever to be repeated, every effort must be taken to allow members to pursue the improvements they think most appropriate. Management should reward teams in any way possible. Encouraging worker participation in analysis-based decision making is the objective. To continue that behavior, participation should be rewarded in a manner that is of value to team members. Even more important are the softer factors, like involving the right people from the organization in the right roles, and facilitating the team through the project. Most important of all is to empower the team, support it and then challenge the team to successfully complete the project.

## Chapter 2 : Six Phases of Process Improvement | Information Technology

*Small business owners can often face an impasse when dealing with employees on a large project. It is all too easy to lose focus and motivation when dealing with a goal that is far on the horizon.*

Employees must be motivated to make improvements above and beyond their normal work. There is no silver bullet for motivating employees â€" senior managers must determine what works best through constant trial and error. Many find setting stretch targets and then recognizing and rewarding the team on achieving those targets to be effective. Motivating rank and file for CI is an absolute necessity. Edwards Deming, the statistician and management consultant, realized this decades earlier: Many organizations either overdo training or have misdirected training efforts. Instead, they should identify the exact skills required for the problems at hand and the type of improvements that must be delivered, and tailor the training courses accordingly. For instance, an organization faced with operational problems that need only a low level of data analysis may only need employees trained in a method such as structured problem solving, rather than a statistics-heavy DMAIC program. Organizations also should ensure they are using an education system that encourages innovation and creative thinking to help their chances of discovering solutions for problems. Implementation Once the other three pillars â€" awareness, motivation and competency â€" are adequately addressed, organizations must concentrate on actually implementing improvements. Many organizations use software tools to help with project tracking, but it is equally important for leaders to conduct workshops, coach employees and work to align projects with senior management goals to trigger the optimum number of improvement projects. Additionally, when the projects actually start, close monitoring and review are necessary to ensure success. Maintaining Success While these four pillars may be implemented chronologically at the start of the improvement journey, mature programs must address them simultaneously. Additionally, every organization should build a maturity scale for the pillars based both on the various activities that need to be done in each of the four areas and the results expected and achieved. Organizations also should conduct periodic quarterly or semiannual assessments of the maturity and take corrective actions as necessary. For example, to assess the awareness quotient of CI program, an organization may survey its employees. The success of CI programs based on Lean and Six Sigma depends on meticulous planning and continuously monitoring and adjusting several parameters of the program. It is like flying an airplane though the mountains in a turbulent weather condition with heavy rains and very little visibility. To be successful, just like an adroit pilot, the program manager must not simply depend on gut instincts, but rather simultaneously monitor the vital key indicators and adjust interventions accordingly. The AMCI approach to CI deployment helps both in charting the roadmap and also in indentifying those critical few lead indicators.

*planning your project and 20% of your time writing and packaging the grant application. Once your team is in place, the planning process generally begins with an assessment of community problems and issues involving various methods to gather community input.*

Many governments establish long-range strategies focused on community development and sustainability through the use of Master Plans. Regular updates to these plans are imperative to ascertain development or infrastructure needs as local conditions change. Master Plans are the foundation for: In addition to a long-range Master Plan, governments utilize Capital Improvement Plans CIP to identify present and future needs requiring capital infrastructure. Such plans operate for a shorter duration, often three-to-five years, and list the projects and capital programs planned for the community with corresponding revenues and financing sources. Paying attention to financial factors during the development of master plans allows for a smoother transition of long-range plans to implementation and lessens the impact on the CIP and future operating budgets. Subsequently, to adequately guide the fiscal, operating, and land use needs of the community, finance officers should use Master Plans as a framework for capital project requests that go into the CIP. Master Plans should provide a vision for capital project plans and investments. Such plans forecast the outlook for the government, illustrating the lignment between demand generators, capital improvement programs, and funding policies. In doing so, Master Plans help address the management factors that are critical in rating analysis and investor communication. Governments should make capital project investment decisions that are aligned to their long-range Master Plans. The list of potential projects for inclusion in the CIP comes from a variety of sources, including department requests, plans for facility construction and renovations, long-term capital replacement programs, citizen requests, neighborhood plans and projects for which grant funds are available. The CIP should be viewed as a financial blueprint that helps prioritize needs to achieve implementation of the public improvements identified in the Master Plan. The level of funding in the CIP defines the financial capacity to reach the desired goals set forth in the Master Plan. The finance officer should play an active role in the early planning process. Master Plans can be useful for projecting long-range service demand generators, facility capacity needs, and stakeholder communication. Knowledge of facility capacity needs coupled with financial policies and revenue comparisons allows for the development of a more fiscally prudent Master Plan. This balance can be accomplished by considering financial implications during the development phase of a Master Plan. Financial factors should be considered as part of the development of Master Plans. The master planning process should be an in-depth analysis, incorporating the financial factors that bridge the gap between planners and finance officials. When integrating plans with financial policies, governments should consider both the costs and revenue streams. Possible revenue streams include bond programs, pay as you go alternatives, grants, impact fees, and public private partnership alternatives. Reviewing the revenue generating potential under the plan assumptions will help identify the capability to finance needed capital projects as well as any gaps in the ability to do so. Planning documents should incorporate scenario testing during development and the jurisdiction should, at a minimum, understand the plan cost drivers, alternative scenario outcomes from both a need and revenue generating potential and options for meeting the desired goals. This Recommended Practice utilizes the title Master Plans to denote the long-range plans 10 - 25 years that act as a framework for capital project requests that direct the Capital Improvement Plan. Capital Budgeting and Finance:

## Chapter 4 : Well-run Process Improvement Teams a Key to Success

*Quality Improvement Process Using Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) - Planning for Action Kathy Hybarger, RN, MSN - Define project unit.*

Here are some ideas that will help you improve your planning skills. Force yourself to plan. If you fail to plan, you are by default planning to fail. Schedule uninterrupted time every day to do your planning. Anticipate possible problems you could encounter in your project because of people, material, or mechanical failures. Purposely provide preventive actions and contingency plans in important high risk situations. When planning a project, plan in thinking time. Plan for tomorrow, tonight. Your subconscious will help organize while you sleep. Each day anticipate the sequence of activities that you will do to attain the objectives you are after. Think about your entire week. How will important projects be sequenced? Do your planning in writing to capture all of your ideas and to be sure none of them get lost. We can only work mentally with about seven pieces of information without losing some-thing. Write your thoughts down and you will be able to utilize everything you think of during your planning process. When developing a specific plan, list the activity steps individually on small pieces of paper and then sequence the pieces of paper. Then write the whole plan out in sequential order. If you must, leave your office and get away to do your planning in a quiet place where you can think. Something will get overlooked. When things go wrong, it can generally be traced back to a poor job of planning or failing to follow an existing plan. List key words that relate to a project. They will fit into and help you in planning. Keep records of how long it takes to do an activity. You can use this information for future scheduling. Take the first of any time block and dedicate it to planning that block. Schedule one weekend away each quarter and make it a top priority. Encourage your staff to create their own plan and then to explain it in detail to you. Sit quietly and mentally rehearse the steps in your plan. Use your imagination to visualize the steps being taken. You will sense where additional steps need to be added and will anticipate problems to prevent. Use the first 10 minutes of each day to plan or review your plan for the day. When starting a new project or activity, take a moment to quietly review, mentally, the steps you will follow. Set your own due dates for projects earlier than the actual deadline. If you cannot identify the objectives and steps to take to get to a goal, it is "unrealistic. Publish them and then follow up with them. Mentally organize before proceeding. Create and use Gantt charts. Create and use PERT charts. Stick Post-It-Notes on paperwork to indicate or highlight scheduling and due dates. Schedule formal planning meetings with your staff regularly. Top 30 Tips to Improve Your Planning Skills Planning is important to managers, because the whole point of management is to allow a business to operate more efficiently, and to be more able to achieve its goals. If there is no planning, managers cannot do these things. Effective Delegation Techniques Decision-Making: Are You Fit to Be a Manager? For information on how to get cheaper quotes on shorter terms see one month car insurance and also short term car insurance. For first time drivers information see cheap car insurance for new drivers. How about obtaining cheaper premium rates for mature women? If you are interested in a half year duration see 6 month car insurance for helpful tips on the topic. How about getting more favorable premiums costs for younger drivers? Here is another list of drivers insurance useful articles, As for helpful tips regarding no deposit premium payments see car insurance with no deposit and for a list of low cost brokers, agents and companies see car insurance with no deposit companies. Read the following informative article if you are looking for better rates for the young drivers in your family, cheaper vehicle insurance for young drivers. Now, for discovering new ways to get lower quotes go to general car insurance Read this article if your after high risk car insurance information. How about getting a better deal on first time driver? Our drivers insurance hub page features a list of guides that can surely help you get dirt cheap car insurance for teens drivers rates. For those of you who seek cheap quotes for a shorter term policy, read this article. If you have first drivers in your family look here for useful advice regarding cheap drivers first car insurance on getting very very cheap car insurance quotes , other types of policies can include the following: And here is a list of car insurance companies cheapest. And the list concludes with a way to calculate car insurance estimate without personal information. While the content of this site is provided in good faith, we do not warrant that the information

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*Introduction. The process improvement plan is a component of the Project Management Plan. The purpose of the process improvement plan is to document how the project team will analyze various processes, determine where improvements can be made, and implement improvement measures.*

It is all too easy to lose focus and motivation when dealing with a goal that is far on the horizon. To improve motivation and productivity on large projects, it is necessary to take a few vital steps along the way. By following basic techniques, it is possible to keep employees on task and motivated to keep doing their jobs and not lose sight of the future goal. Assign the right employees to the right tasks. If an employee is not qualified for a task or does not enjoy doing his appointed task, chances are he is going to get lost and lose all motivation to continue. Assigning the right person for the job is essential in long-term project planning. Find what your employees excel at and make sure to tailor their role in the project to their specific strengths. Set short-term goals along the path to the final goal. It is only human nature for an employee to want to feel that she is accomplishing something for their effort. If the goal and as such, the reward, are far off in the future, she may lose her motivation. Setting short-term goals or milestones that are part of a larger, long-term project can help employees feel as though they have accomplished something. In addition, breaking up a long and arduous task into several smaller portions can help employees feel as though they are able to complete their goals in a shorter period. Offer incentives for reaching milestones early. Humans are by nature driven by rewards and results. Once you have set milestones for your project, you can motivate your employees by offering them incentives for reaching these milestones ahead of schedule. This will help keep the team organized and productive and give it the motivation it needs to keep going. Assign a team manager to oversee productivity. It is all too common for team members to begin to drift during a long or large project. By having one central person in charge of keeping the team motivated and on task, you can reduce down time and productivity slumps. Make sure that this manager has an enthusiastic personality and is good at motivating employees. Reduce timewasters in the office. Productivity is directly impacted by the amount of distractions in the office. These timewasters can slow down a team and keep it from focusing on the tasks at hand. If one employee is distracting others, take him aside and let them know that his behavior, if not changed, will have consequences.

## Chapter 6 : Planning for Scale: A Guide for Designing Large-Scale Improvement Initiatives

*Using a project-planning program such as Microsoft Project or Basecamp is extremely helpful when planning a project. If you don't have access to one of these programs, do a general search online for free project planning software.*

Submittal Guide Illustrates each planning cycle phase and each submittal item. Project requests and associated budget estimates for all proposed Major Projects and Instructional Space Projects. Proposed capital project solutions array to provide campus context and a complete and realistic capital projects plan. All buildings, site development, and site utility issues proposed to be addressed in Capital Plan. All Agency Project Requests: Proposed All Agency Project Requests and associated budget estimate support documentation. Briefly describes and justifies the proposed capital plan projects, sequence and timing, mixture of project types and funding sources, and demonstrates the need for the plan as a whole. While the majority of capital plan documentation describes the issues in various contexts or constructs, or specific project solutions on their own, this document is the only one that describes all proposed project solutions and the capital plan in its entirety. Chart sourced from the Project Priority and Sequence Chart document. Documents and illustrates the capital plan through capital project type, biennium of approval, title, cost and funding source estimates, and schedule implications based on standard durations by project type and size. Provides a context for capital funding decisions and capital planning forecasts. Details budget estimate for new construction area and renovation area s , unit costs, special scope items and considerations, bid date and escalation, project overhead percentages. Formula-based tool to estimate the number of classrooms or instructional laboratories required by section instance and course level summary s, s, etc. Summarizes the total sections and required room periods by course level, and the fill rate per section instance. Allows analysis of block scheduling patterns, room use, and enrollment to room capacity ratios. The documents themselves are not required submittals, nor are they required to be maintained by institutions. Includes brief narratives of background and history, campus character, main campus property, and non-contiguous property. Briefly describes and summarizes the unique aspects of an institution, its history and origins, main campus landholdings, non-contiguous landholdings, and a current statistical profile of prescribed categories and items. Briefly summarizes the main planning issues to be addressed in the capital plan. Identifies current and emerging trends in the academic programs that will have an impact on facilities. Typical topics include degree programs and majors, minors, certificate programs; most popular majors; colleges and schools organization; and distinguished or unique programs. Where appropriate, pertinent charts, tables, diagrams, graphics, maps, and plans may be used to help enhance or illustrate the narrative sections. Outlines the prioritized and comprehensive academic, financial, and physical development vision for the institution. Summarizes the most important goals to achieve for each institution, including those that impact the capital budget. Strategic goals should be specific enough to be measurable and provide context for proposed capital projects without being so specific as to be inflexible or unattainable. A brief summary of the functional and physical condition issues related to all facilities buildings, site development, and site utilities and provides a chart to illustrate the building construction chronology age of buildings for the entire campus. Provides context for the capital plan, documenting the planned moves and building occupancy changes proposed for the near term 6 years. Each building included in the capital plan is represented in the diagram, including those buildings or space on and off campus used for temporary surge space. Includes brief narratives of infrastructure issues, background and history, current occupants and uses, and future building plans. Includes all items that impact site footprint, building footprint, and site development. Briefly assesses the current functional and physical condition issues as they relate to potential future capital projects. Illustration and brief summary of the proposed near term next 6 years main campus site central utilities modifications. Includes all items that impact above ground and underground site central utility systems. Includes chilled water, communications, compressed air, domestic water, electric power, fuel, natural gas, sanitary sewer, storm water management, steam and condensate return, and utility tunnels. Prioritized list of All Agency Project Requests by funding category and work type. Documents a prioritized list of all proposed All Agency Project Requests for a biennium and organizes the project requests by funding category

facilities maintenance and repair; utilities repair and renovation; energy conservation; capital equipment; and land acquisition and work type. Used as priority reference documentation for project request evaluation.

*Organizations can follow a simple framework the Awareness-Motivation-Competency-Implementation (AMCI) approach to deploy a continuous improvement program that will help maintain structure but also achieve strong results.*

Click on the orange links below to view the detail for each of these phases. Identify a process to evaluate Collaborative team input Voting Brainstorming is a technique used to spontaneously tap creativity to generate ideas. The goal is to produce as many ideas as possible, capturing ideas as they emerge. Once idea generation is exhausted, the pros and cons of each idea are considered, and solid candidates for process improvement are selected. Invoke a brainstorming session to rapidly generate a lot of ideas or possibilities. Team members individually, without discussion, record their recommendations for process evaluation on sticky notes. These notes are then visibly displayed to the entire team. VOTE Team members review ALL process evaluation recommendations and select their top 3 choices This process helps move the team from many options to fewer options Team members have an option to publicly support ideas Team members review all options and select top processes that they believe warrant improvement SELECTION Top processes are presented to appropriate management for review. Senior management selects and approves process es to undergo process improvement Announce and authorize the work to be undertaken by the team Develop boundaries of the process evaluation A Charter is a statement of the scope, process boundaries, objectives and resources that are authorized for the project. A Charter is a tool used to announce and authorize the work to be undertaken by the team Components of a Charter: Describes the problem to be solved Problem statement is composed as a question as you cannot solve a problem without a clear understanding of the project Example: I am constantly fighting with them to put their dirty dishes in the dish washer; i. Develop Current State Process Map Identify all the steps, decision points and major assumptions about the process and the way things are currently done Current State is the terminology used to describe a series of workflows developed to depict business processes as they currently function. During Phase 3 a map is created to reflect all the steps of the process, who is responsible for each step, and the time it takes to complete each task. There are several ground rules that are typically enforced during the development of the current state process map. The current state process map, described above, establishes a baseline that is used to determine changes that will improve effectiveness and productivity. Sometimes a current state map may also be referred to as a value stream map or a swim lane diagram, depending on how the information is captured and is displayed. A current state map allows you to: See how a process is actually working "What really happens next? Consider the straight through process; be sure to include processes that are executed in parallel Document each step in the process, but do not focus on exceptions as processes should not be developed based on exceptions but on straight through processes. If exceptions are a main source of concern, note them within the process map for future consideration.

## Chapter 8 : How to plan, execute and monitor a project effectively

*It can also increase project team motivation when everyone is aware that the entire team will be posted regularly about how each group and individual are faring with their respective duties. Hand out "report cards" to praise team members for commendable performance and to point out areas that require improvement.*

It almost seems too simple, but this industry buzzword is about continually improving your business, processes, and way of working. How you go about studying, planning, implementing and evolving that improvement is where it gets more complicated. You need to encourage a philosophy of constant, logical, and sustainable improvement throughout your organization. This allows continuous improvement to go beyond being a slogan on a poster, so it becomes the way your company operates at all times. While continuous improvement can range from simple changes in the day-to-day workings of your company to major shifts in focus and procedures across a global structure, in all cases, you will require the right instruments to achieve success and keep it going. While the call of the unknown is appealing to some, it is a natural and reassuring thing to resist putting ourselves in new situations. In the business world, this is no longer possible. Competition is a good thing. It gives us a basis for comparison amongst our peers and pushes us to do better. For most industries and businesses these days, you not only have to be concerned about local competition but also with foreign competition. More and more borders are coming down, and mature products and services from other markets can catch you by surprise. They have access to information at their fingertips. Whereas previously a product, service or marketing plan was designed for longevity, nowadays you need to be ready to react to shifts and trends in the market. The old walls around products and services have been torn down, and intelligent, flexible companies are reaping the rewards. Mobile apps are turning the taxi industry upside down. Online banks are offering an alternative to brick-and-mortar banks. Home delivery is changing the way we buy everyday products. On the contrary, realizing and accepting that there is a new way of doing business is exciting and can create many great opportunities for you and your organization, company or group. Formalized in the s in countless textbooks and publications, the notion that we should always strive to do our jobs better has existed for a very long time. It comes naturally to some people. Look at the case of the caveman: The poor caveman struggled to catch his food, which was too fast to catch by hand. He discovered that if he used a stick, he had a longer reach and a better chance. Throwing the stick gave even better range and improved his odds of catching his prey. Adding a sharp stone to the end of the stick meant even greater success. Involving other cavemen in the hunt also multiplied his chances of catching dinner. This is continuous improvement. Once that goal is met, you start again, finding ways to improve further. With the wealth of information available on the subject of continuous improvement, it can be difficult to know where to start. What we suggest is always starting with analyzing your current situation. You need a full understanding of how you operate today so you can follow the principles of PDCA. First you establish your baseline, your starting point. Plan your improvements, including setting goals. Put in place the actions required for improvement. Measure your success relative to your baseline. Adjust or tweak your changes. As you progress through each step, you keep the wheel moving, representing continuous improvement. When you arrive again at your baseline stage, you take into account your previous improvements and plan the next improvements. This is where the notion of a culture of continuous improvement comes into play. When you first broach the subject of continuous improvement with your employees and collaborators, most will agree in the necessity but not necessarily know where to begin. Creating a formalized plan that works for your structure is critical. There are many reasons why formalizing your continuous improvement strategy is important: It gets everyone using the same language. Formalizing documents, procedures and work instructions makes it easier to get everyone on the same page. It creates a mindset. Instead of viewing continuous improvement as something to restart with every new project, a formalized and consistent approach to continuous improvement teaches people that the system is inherent to how your business runs. It makes people accountable. Knowing that your business never stops evolving helps your employees see where they can be an active part of continuous improvement. It reinforces the importance. Continuous process improvement needs to be treated as an integral

foundation for your organization, and formalizing how you approach it makes it more concrete. An effective continuous improvement strategy requires a long-term, sustainable mindset and may not bear fruit in the extreme short term. Simply continue your analysis of other aspects. You will always find an area that can benefit from improvement. For example, in the case of a review process for projects that you have in place, you might make the following observations: The steps in place may all be necessary. Instead, search for a fundamental understanding of the entire process and make improvements based on that. You may need to include other departments and divisions to understand the impact of improvements you have in mind. Be aware that the inputs and outputs of your process relate to many other actors, such as suppliers, customers and employees, and that any improvements you make need to continue to satisfy their needs. Including them in your scope can help you work together to make even broader improvements than if you focus solely on what is under your control. It is important to plan for change. Make sure your continuous improvements provide the flexibility for whatever the future may bring. New project types, new customers, new volumes, new products â€" these all need to be taken into account. Let a thorough analysis of your processes, products and procedures dictate the changes you put in place. Other Benefits of Continuous Improvement The direct benefits of your continuous improvements are often easy to predict. You can calculate or estimate cost and time savings even before you implement the changes. There are other significant benefits, however, that you will not realize until your continuous improvement strategy is in place: Your collaborators and employees will benefit from the improvements and increased dynamism that continuous improvement provides. Continuous improvement projects are an opportunity for employees to step outside the box and have a meaningful and rewarding impact on their job. Better Acceptance of New Ideas: When your organization is used to accepting the status quo, new projects and opportunities can be seen in a negative light. With a continuous improvement strategy deployed, your teams will get used to and appreciate working with the notion that change is positive. We have all encountered resistance to change. It happens at all levels of an organization and needs to be managed. When you start communicating your continuous improvement strategy to your teams and employees, make sure you focus on the benefits. Some may assume it simply means more work. Treating continuous process improvement as a one-off project for a small group is a sure-fire way for it to be forgotten as soon as the first project is completed. Instead, make it clear that continuous improvement is a new way of doing business and that it should be applied by everyone and in all aspects of your business. Some great ways to make sure everyone is on board include: Communicate the strategy clearly and to everyone. Create a continuous improvement team and have them come up with a mission statement, guidelines, scope and other details that can be shared for all to see. Let every employee know their ongoing contribution and dedication is vital. Have a kick-off event. Introduce the team and make it clear who is responsible for what and who the contact people are for different activities and sectors. Put in place a simple and inclusive way for employees to share ideas they have â€" like a suggestion box, internet forum, chat group, recurring ideas meeting, etc. Find some pertinent examples for your sector or industry. Show examples where your company has made improvements in the past, and explain how that can be a springboard for continued improvement. The goal is to improve your business by removing waste, overlap, and redundancy and coming up with creative ways to streamline and improve the way you work. Let your employees know that continuous improvement can be applied to every single aspect of your business. Create several kick-off projects. While continuous improvement should become second nature in your workplace, in the beginning, you will need to babysit your strategy. Train and empower team leaders to closely follow the evolution of these projects, and solicit input from as many employees as possible. Find ways of bringing it up often, always highlighting the reason for it and potential improvements. Praise even the smallest improvements, because employees might be hesitant at first to make suggestions. A continuous improvement strategy has no time limit, no end point, no expiration date. Start This Instant Of all the workplace management decisions you can make, continuous improvement is the easiest to begin. Consider what you have to do today and find a way to improve it. Then put in place a way to measure your improvement and check at regular intervals to see your progress. Pick three areas where you want to apply continuous improvement principles. To help you understand just how broad and all-encompassing a continuous improvement strategy is, look for the following examples within your organization:

*If you fail to plan, you are by default planning to fail. Schedule uninterrupted time every day to do your planning. Anticipate possible problems you could encounter in your project because of people, material, or mechanical failures.*

Magazine How to Plan, Execute and Monitor a Project Effectively Using a systematic methodology to approach projects is a key to successful execution. Often planning or monitoring are put into the background in the rush to move ahead with execution or reporting results. Both are a fatal mistake. If the necessary time is taken to plan out all aspects of the project, it saves much time and many resources later on in terms of a failed or less than expected project result. This identification of goals helps drive the project down a clear path. To reach this end, a project team needs to know: Who are the stakeholders? To reach that end, the first step is to correctly identify who the stakeholders are. A successful project is one where all important stakeholder needs are met. Stakeholders to a project may be anyone who is directly or indirectly affected by the project. Identifying the right set of stakeholders may need some careful research. Some possible stakeholders include the end user who receives the output, a customer who receives a finished product, the project manager, his team and a project sponsor or champion. What are their needs? With a list of stakeholders in hand, you can now work on identifying their needs. These can be clearly stated and easy to see or implicit and harder to pinpoint. The most relevant information can be gathered through interviewing the stakeholders. It is important that a seasoned professional conduct these interviews as time needs to be taken to draw out the real issues. Stakeholders may have some needs that cannot be met effectively and these need to be recorded separately to avoid misplaced effort. What are the priorities? As mentioned briefly in the previous step, not all needs identified can be met effectively. Some cannot lead to actionable outcomes, some may not make business sense, and meeting yet others may not end up creating value for the stakeholders. This makes it extremely important to prioritize all the information gathered till this point 4. How do these convert to measurable goals? A prioritized list of goals can now be turned into easy to measure goals. Goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. Formulating goals this way helps to measure them for completion and success. These goals can now be put down into the project plan along with a mention of the stakeholders and their needs. Identify Project Deliverables Almost as important as the goal identification is the breakdown into deliverables. For each goal, it is vital to understand and identify how it translates into outcomes. It needs to be clearly stated when each deliverable is due and how it will be achieved. These deliverable can now be added to the project plan preferable with close to accurate delivery dates as well as acceptable levels of delay. Establish Project Schedule Further breakdown is needed at this point. Each deliverable needs to be converted into tasks that need to be performed in order to produce required results. Here, the number of man hours per task needs to be calculated and resources need to be assigned. This includes both people and other resources. With this calculation, there may be a need to update the project timelines specified previously to present a more realistic image. If there is a drastic difference in delivery date expectations from project head or sponsor and the actuals calculated, then there may be a need to either renegotiate the deadline, increase resources or reduce the scope of the project. Create Supporting Plans With the basic plan in place, the team can now work on setting into place any required supporting plans. These can include â€" Human Resource Plan This plan needs to record in detail, the names of all the people and organizations involved in carrying out the project. Against each name mention their roles and responsibility. Also mention how long they will be working on the project and how resources will be hired or selected to work on the project. This means identifying a common format for reporting and establishing reporting frequency. It is important to identify all possible risks to the project and have a plan in place to address these. Project risks can include unexpected budget cuts, an inefficient flow of required information, suddenly raised costs or an incorrect estimation of resources needed, incorrect understanding of stakeholder requirements or changing requirements among others. Using a simple log, you can identify each risk and outline what will be done to prevent it and what will be done if it ends up happening. This log can be updated on a regular basis. A thorough and detailed plan will mean that a solid foundation has been set for successful execution. The Right Team A high performing team with the right mix

of people working to their strengths is key to project success. Throughout the process, ensure that team motivation is high, communication is flowing freely both upwards and downwards and there is a sense of ownership within the team. Leaders need to be on top of progress and be willing to make difficult decisions at the right time to either steer the project towards the right path or in a drastic scenario, shut it down before further loss of resources is suffered 3. Open and Clear Communication All through the project, there needs to be an open line up and down the project team. An effective reporting system can help keep top management abreast of ground realities to help make the right decisions. Similarly, updates on high level achievements to the team can help keep morale high. Focus on People for Successful Execution Traditional project management suffers the danger of becoming too bureaucratic and focused on the end game, with very little effort being put into the very teams that are needed to achieve goals. Perceived softer issues such as trust within teams, morale, an ownership for the project, a sense of belonging and employee engagement are often neglected or treated as unimportant. Usually, it is so because project leaders find these issues harder to quantify and therefore, plan for. Research has shown that unmet emotional needs can lead to below expected performance, thereby affecting project execution. An engaged team can lead to optimized performance: Engaging the Project team An engaged team knows its goals clearly and is able to achieve them. They are also able make meaningful contributions to project outcomes and work well as a team. Through a participative environment, teams can learn and grow. Engaging Stakeholders An engaged set of stakeholders are confident that the project team can achieve the task at hand. They feel that their best interests are being considered and display passion for the project. Optimizing performance By engaging stakeholders and creating an engaged team, there is a higher likelihood of successful project execution within project guidelines. Monitor project throughout Monitoring is only useful if it is built into the execution phase at the beginning. There is no point to a monitoring activity if all the work has been completed already and all the resources wasted. A system needs to be set in place for this during the planning phase and followed up on strongly. Decide What to measure It is vital to identify which indicators are to be measured. These should be noted in the planning document and communicated with all team members and stakeholders. Acceptable levels of performance should also be identified, so that it is clearly understood when a red flag needs to be raised. A frequency of reporting as well as a format needs to be decided upon and clearly communicated to all those who will be expected to issue reports. Gather the right data If the monitoring framework if clearly defined, then there may not be any need for huge amounts of data collection. Too much irrelevant data will only create confusion and add no value. Quality of data to ensure relevance needs to be the focus of any data collection efforts. Select appropriate tools Decide initially all acceptable methods of data collection. A wide variety can be used including questionnaires, surveys and focus groups. Assign monitoring responsibility Unless someone is assigned the task of monitoring specifically, it is an activity that can slip unnoticed into cracks. It is pertinent to assign a specific person for each type of reporting or monitoring activity and to build this task into their own personal deliverables. Identify who to report to Those tagged with reporting should be told clearly who they are to report to. Reports are tailored according to the management level they are being reviewed by. A senior management team may only need high level timelines, results and resource consumption data, while a middle management group or project team itself may need minute details of each task achieved or delayed. Monitoring Tools and Techniques Tracking Quantitative Metrics Much of project monitoring is focused on hard facts such as the money being spent, man hours being used up etc. These are key metrics and need to be tracked in a systematic and effective manner, providing a ready snapshot of where the project is at any point in time. Some of the ways in which projects can be tracked are: Spreadsheets Spreadsheets are a good way of tracking key metrics. All relevant data can be listed out with values against each important metric. This includes timelines with acceptable delays, projected budgets with expected increases, projected man hours with expected increases, team members and their backups in case of any emergency 2. Project Applications If the project being worked on is very large with complex interrelationships and many sub projects, then a spreadsheet may not be sophisticated enough to offer streamlined tracking and reporting. In such cases, a tracking application like MS Project is the right way to go. Tracking Qualitative Metrics Apart from quantitative metrics, an equal monitoring focus needs to be given to the qualitative side. Are stakeholders

happy with the progress? Are their expectations being met? Is the project meeting the needs it set out to? Some methods to achieve this are: Questionnaires or Surveys This method is simple to create and get results on. A large number of people across various cross sections of stakeholders can be reached relatively easily and it is less of a hassle for them to respond as well. People can chose to withhold their information while still participating. The information needs to be analyzed critically once data is received. Feedback Forms Feedback forms can be distributed and completed at a time where users may have just used a product or been indirect contact with you or your team.