

Encouraging commitment (Deploying the QFD)

The mechanics of creating the basic QFD covered in the preceding three chapters provide an effective framework for channelling the commitment of the management team to achieving the organisation's goals. But the mechanics do very little to fundamentally stimulate and encourage that commitment. Agreeing common goals, developing team roles, and establishing a common process, of themselves will not inspire passionate pursuit in all who hear it.

But implicit also in the three foregoing chapters was the fourth essential of teamwork: Encouraging people to throw their whole commitment into the work by providing opportunities for them to submit their own ideas and dreams for making the plans happen.

The mechanics provide the necessary structure for teamwork, but the way that the mechanics are implemented and used is what will either inspire commitment, or foster antipathy and resentment.

People become committed to things that they can understand; that they can see the need for; that they can contribute to; that they believe in; that they feel confidence in tackling; and for which they feel that they will be recognised fairly. The framework provides an opportunity for this to happen, but it is the relationships and interpersonal skills of the leader and the team members that will ensure it happens effectively. Commitment is born out of the ways in which people are recognised, included, talked to, listened to, and questioned.

Within the management team, the members may have been given these opportunities. But how do we ensure that the same opportunities to commit themselves will be given to the next layer of

When people are treated as the main engine rather than interchangeable parts of a corporate machine, motivation, creativity, quality, and commitment to implementation well up.

Robert H. Waterman
Management consultant and writer
in *The Renewal Factor* (Bantam, 1987)

Chapter 10

When they met the next day, everything seemed back to normal. For his part, Richard was too confused about things, and felt the risks were too high to progress things intentionally, but his mind continued to fantasise about how things might progress unintentionally. For her part, Lucy had been stirred by his kiss. She was attracted to him. There was something sincere and boyishly enthusiastic about him now she had got to know him. He was fun to be with, and he was attractive and in good shape. But he was married! And he was in England. And he was her client. She could resist him, and let's face it, resisting him was by far the most sensible course of action for her.

And so the next three weeks passed without further incident, and by the end of them, one could easily believe that nothing had happened.



Lucy busied herself with arranging meetings and attempting to support Richard's team with their process proposals. Some of the team seemed to resent her intrusion, and held her at arms length, but others welcomed her help and eagerly involved her in their thinking. The extremes were typified by Daniel and by Deborah.

Daniel's responses tended to be aloof. No, he had not made any progress. No, he did not want her help. No, he was not sure that he would meet the deadline, but that was between him and Richard Frewer. Thank you!

Deborah, on the other hand, had sought Lucy out on the day following the QFD work. She had ideas for involving her whole team, and wanted Lucy to help her to design and run a few simple workshops to build team commitment and to develop the process proposal. Deborah was like a sponge. She absorbed all that Lucy presented, and then drew out more.

Deborah was clearly very clever, and when she had bought into something she embraced it wholeheartedly, almost like a zealot. The combination left Lucy feeling drained, both physically and mentally, after every meeting. Lucy found the impact of this situation on herself difficult to comprehend. She had always imagined that working with someone like that would be energising and inspiring, but there was something about Deborah's style, something about how she drew control of

management and to others more junior? Their commitment to making things happen will be vital if the plans of the management team are to be translated effectively into actions.

In this chapter we will look at how that commitment can be harnessed through:

- creating process teams and drawing out their ideas and understanding¹
- providing for the process team to make a commitment, and to gain the support it needs
- ensuring that debates remain objective and informed, and that contributions are recognised.

Creating process teams

The purpose of the process team is to support the process owner in designing, operating and managing the performance of their process.

The team will ultimately be the sole means of managing the process as a whole, and a lot of care needs to be exercised in selecting its membership. If the process is particularly large, the process team may well need to develop a number of smaller sub-process teams to manage sections of it. And if the process is particularly small, the owner may in fact be the only full time member of the process team - involving others only in those activities for which they have time.

Wherever practically possible, it is good practice to involve those people who run and administer the process. They are the people who have the most detailed information on the process; they are the ones

¹ Some managers have the knack of asking for contributions and implying that they would fire anybody who made one. Organisations which have such issues regarding the manner in which managers communicate with their staff, would be well advised to address these before undertaking this work.

all of the conclusions and decisions to herself, that actually worked the other way. However, she was at least making progress.

Like Richard with the top-level workshops, Deborah introduced her meetings and wrapped them up at the end. Everything else she handed over to Lucy to run. At least that was the model in theory. In practice, Deborah was very clear about what outcomes she wanted, and very vociferous in ensuring they were delivered.

Deborah had pulled together her process team from her existing management group. She had reasoned that whatever transpired from this would be the ‘new way’ of managing, and she wanted to make it absolutely clear to her people that this was not an add-on. This was not simply a project, or this year’s management fashion accessory. This was ‘it’ from here on. Fail to change at your peril! She had also annexed Abs’ Industrial Engineering Manager for her team. The proposal had not been well received initially, but Richard had stepped in and resolved it. Industrial engineering was part of ‘*Developing products and processes*’.



Deborah’s first workshop was held barely a week after the main QFD workshop, and the whole Process Team attended. Deborah ran through all of the history to date in her introduction, and then handed over to Lucy.

Lucy stood in the middle of the room while people visibly recovered from Deborah’s impassioned whirlwind tour of what had been happening. She took the few seconds pause to cast her eyes round the group. She had met all bar one person individually in the preceding week, so she had built at least some level of rapport with them, and she had thought out her strategies as to how to work with them. Her first step was to draw them out from under Deborah’s shadow, so that they could build their own enthusiasm for the potential of this process.

“I wonder,” she said, “what the potential is for ‘*Develop products and processes*’ to really transform Cylek UK?” She paused for them to consider the implied question. She could see some of them beginning to think about it, but not everybody, so she pushed a bit more. “I’ve heard what the Cylek management team think about the potential. But I wonder what the people who really understand it believe?” She paused again, and looked around. One or two more seemed drawn into thought, but a few just seemed to be waiting for her to continue.



that need to be committed to implementing any change and making it work; and they are the ones who can help share the burden of process ownership. The process team should therefore include the key people in the management of the process, and may well include a key customer and/or supplier. But the team should in no way develop into a bureaucratic committee. The owner has the executive power, and if the means of involvement proves a barrier to progress, then the owner is responsible for resolving this.

Once the process team have been identified, every effort needs to be taken to engage them fully in their new role.

- Ensure they understand the background to what the company is trying to do.
- Develop their understanding of the QFD, and the role of process ownership.
- Inspire them with ideas of what process ownership means for them.
- Explain what is changing and what will remain the same.

Two other key aspects of engaging your team are: one, formally appoint them to their new roles¹; and two, help them to develop their own vision of what is possible.

The closer you can align what needs to happen to what the team really wants to do, the more likely you are to succeed in managing the delivery of both. In tackling this, many people seem to start with what needs to happen, but unfortunately this tends to suppress or distort information on what the team really wants to do. It is almost as though our desires lose their validity in the face of expressed business need.

¹ See section on formally appointing owners on page 120.



People don't resist their own ideas.

William Werther
University of Miami
in *Nation's Business*, March 1988

“What ideas could you dream up for transforming the performance and competence of Cylek UK?” She paused again and looked around. Her observations of how people were engaging with the question largely accorded with her perception of them from her one-to-one meetings. So far, so good!

“What we are going to do is to understand what Cylek UK’s expectations are of us, and then to develop a proposal that will blow their socks off!”

“Why?” The question came from Tom Lewis, the Industrial Engineering Manager. Tom was Abs’ right-hand man, and Lucy had the impression that he was even more pragmatic than his boss had been. She looked at him, waiting for him to continue.

“Why ‘blow their socks off’? What possible commercial value is that? We have enough problems trying to implement hare-brained schemes as it is!”

One or two, Deborah included, distinctly bristled at this, but others seemed sympathetic to Tom’s view. In hindsight, Lucy began to doubt the wisdom of her use of the phrase ‘blow their socks off’. It seemed good and emotive at the time, but it clearly carried some baggage. But she could not afford to lose credibility this early in the proceedings by backing down on the phrase, so she frantically searched for a way to anchor its interpretation at a mutually acceptable level.

“Mmm,” she said, “sort of like the Edsel, or the Sinclair C5?” She looked at Tom, and he responded: “Yes, and...”

But she interrupted him. “Or the Apollo moon landings, or the Millennium Wheel, or the personal computer?” Tom looked a bit less sure, and continued: “Yes, but...”

Lucy continued across him again. “Or the Cityrentable, or the MR3, or the Renewal Project?” she said, naming three recent disasters Technical had created for Production.

“Exactly!” chipped in Tom, seeing his point illustrated clearly. Others in the group were nodding.

Lucy continued: “Or the Plus K...” she said, naming a recent success that had been really radical. “Or 90% error-free production, or halving cycle times,” she continued, listing things that production had been

Conversely, by starting with the team's desires, and developing a complete picture of them, it is possible to gain far greater insight into how the energy of the group can be best focused on the needs of the business. Starting with desires does not diminish the priority (in a business sense) of the needs, but it can inspire a greater collective will to address them as part of some larger intent. Addressing the immediate needs can be seen as the first logical step in a much longer-term horizon.

It is vital that we don't underestimate the importance of a collective team vision. A group of people who don't aspire to grasp the future, can only fear changes from the past. 'Change' only has negative value to them because they've not linked it to anything positive. They can see the costs but not the benefits. If people are to embrace change it is vital that we inspire, nurture and develop a compelling vision within them. And if we start by building on and developing any personal vision they might have, we are likely to be far more successful than if we start with needs, and drive their vision back underground. Who knows, maybe their visions reflect opportunities that the organisation has not yet envisaged!



Visioning exploration

Visioning is a process which enables us to select a preferred future from a range of possible futures. In this process, if our understanding of the possible futures is rich and varied, we increase our opportunity to select a vision that is worthwhile, inspiring and practical. Thinking about the questions in the box below will help with this:

Questions to inspire thoughts about vision

- To what areas of your customers' operations could your service provide additional impact; areas where your service is not currently used to its full potential?
- What are your customers' biggest blind-spots in the area of your service and offering?
- Where could you transform the operations of your customers over and above what exists now?
- What is the most outrageous thought you have in your head about how your service could develop?
- What is it impossible for you to do at this point, but if you could do it would make all your current projects obsolete?
- What sort of future for your organisation would you personally find so inspiring that you would move heaven and earth to get it?

seeking for years. She paused. There was no interruption this time, and so she continued.

“Being radical doesn't inherently require that we suspend our common sense. To me 'blowing their socks off' cannot practically be achieved by hare-brained schemes. I, you, they, ... only have our socks blown off by people really understanding us and what we need. And by delivering simple, practical and previously unforeseen solutions which meet those needs.”

“What we need to think through today, is what we believe will really make a practical difference to Cylek. Something that will begin to transform the way we do things. Something that we feel is worth investing the next year of our lives in. Something that is challenging, but will work. So let's start by understanding what our 'customers', Cylek UK, see our potential to be, and we'll carry on from there.”

Lucy then proceeded to explain each relationship in the column of the QFD under '*Developing products and processes*'. She had developed the transcript of the original discussions into some simple slides to help with this. And when objections or reservations were voiced by the team, she noted them carefully on a flipchart to come back to later, and then moved swiftly on.

By the end of it, everybody seemed to be re-engaged in what was happening. She called for a coffee break so that they could share and build on that energy informally.

During break, Deborah came up to her “That was good!” she said. And Lucy waited for the 'but', for Deborah to come back on the way Lucy had bulldozed the group at the start. But it never came, and Deborah walked straight out for coffee leaving Lucy slightly puzzled. Had Deborah not noticed? And then Lucy realised Deborah had not. What Deborah and the group had seen was normal for them, it was Deborah's normal approach. Lucy smiled to herself, and shook her head, and got on with preparing for the group's return.

After the break, Lucy split the group into two syndicates, and posed each the question: “What performance should the '*Developing products and processes*' process deliver if it is to ensure Cylek UK reaches its goals?”

“You are to imagine that you are two rival groups competing for the contract to develop Cylek UK's products and processes. Imagine that everything will be outsourced to the winner, and that you have got to *win!* What

Another way of drawing out the team's vision is to present it with its process as a blank column on the QFD, and ask it to work through the potential relationships. This also provides an opportunity for reconciling the team's view with the organisation's view, by using the notes from the QFD grid session to supplement the arguments. The row developed by the management team can then be explained to the team as the customer's current expectations and understanding, and any differences from its own thinking can be pulled out and reconciled.

It does no harm for the team to understand that the top-level QFD belongs to the customer, and, as the supplier, it has no executive rights to simply change what it doesn't agree with. Business is not a democracy, and the differences in perception between the process team and the organisation represents either new opportunities for the process team (e.g. unforeseen potential), or areas where it needs to further influence the organisation's thinking (e.g. where there is room to improve the organisation's understanding of the process's potential).

Once the potential of the process is clearly understood, the team will be in a much better position to secure authority over it.

Where is the leverage to really make a difference?

Address new market areas	Business from new markets	> 34%	?
Provide excellent customer service	Customer retention	> 85%	?
Build leadership in platform technology	Innov. copied by compet'n	> 5 p.a.	?
Reduce production and delivery lead times	Production cycle	< 6 days	?
Maximise asset utilisation (incl. IP)	Asset utilisation	> 55%	?
Reduce unit production costs	Cost of goods sold	< 70%	?
Build effective supplier partnerships	Supplier led business	> £80m	?

Developing a process proposal

When a 'successful' external agency bids for your business, particularly where that agency is a service supplier or consultancy, they take every effort to ensure that they can answer the following questions.

- In what ways does their offering meet your business needs better than their competition's (internal or external)?

Examples of specific outputs	Examples of generic measures
Product range 'X'	Consumer satisfaction
Features	Industry awards
Sales of product 'X'	Average product ranking
Market position of 'X'	Sales margin
Meeting launch date	Time to market
Correction of production problem 'Y'	Production satisfaction
Meeting target date	Unit production costs
Within budget	Average response time
No lost production	Support costs
Adoption of technology 'XYZ'	Machine down time
Implementation date	Innovations ahead of competition
Sales generated	Percentage revenue from new products

will you promise Cylek UK? What level of service will you maintain? What benefits will you assure us if we give you the contract? Use the column of the QFD to focus and tailor your offering, but don't feel you have to be constrained by it."

"What resources can we assume?" someone asked.

Deborah replied: "What we have currently, or less if you feel that is appropriate. Remember, cost savings are not only to do with our impact on the rest of the business."

"Supposing we can justify more?" someone else chipped in.

"If you are convinced we'd buy it, given our current situation, then put it in," replied Lucy. "But I suspect it will be an almost impossible sale in the current climate."

Deborah nodded in agreement.

The two groups split, one crowding into the area round the flipchart, and the other went off to use Deborah's office.

Deborah wandered over to Lucy. "I thought you were going to use that Competition Question exercise you used on us," she said, half as a question.

Lucy replied: "I could have, but I felt this would provide a more focused result. One that it would be easier to pick up and work with."

"Oh," said Deborah, nodding, but clearly reserving judgement.

Lucy smiled to herself again. Deborah's reaction had amused her. She liked Deborah, but she was glad she did not have to work for her.

The groups took to the exercise with real fervour. The element of competition drove them to be ambitious, but within the bounds of practicality. In her first visit to the groups, Lucy found she needed to push both groups away from specific products and process changes toward more generic statements of delivery performance. But she had expected that. People always seemed to drift towards tangible and specific examples. One group got it easily, but the other one, the one with Tom in, struggled. So Lucy asked: "Okay, what do you undertake to deliver in terms of service in three years' time?"

This question confused them. "We don't have any projects planned beyond eighteen months," one responded.

- How does their strategy and approach ensure that they can deliver their solution more economically than the competition?
- What are the interdependencies between both parties that are key to success?

The edge that the successful external agency brings is in the quality of understanding of the business need, and the effort they apply to developing a successful case.

Successful agencies apply this degree of rigour not because of any lack of experience and skills, but because they know it is crucial to developing the right answer. And if such rigour is appropriate for a professional external agency, how much more true is it for an internal one? How many internal teams can answer the questions posed above, confidently and accurately?

The principle that underpins process proposals is that our internal teams need to apply just as much quality thinking to what they are planning to deliver as the external professionals do. In developing a very clear and logical picture of *what* they are trying to do, *why* and *how*, they will inevitably build their commitment to making it happen.

The steps to developing the process proposal are conveniently described by the sections of the process proposal form¹. This is expanded below.

Scope; sub-processes; outputs; customers; inputs; and suppliers...

...provides the opportunity for the team to clarify their understanding of the process role and boundaries. Where possible the



Contract bid exercise

One way of developing the team's vision is to get them to think radically about what the true potential of their process might be. What could they offer if they too were an independent agency offering this service?

Imagine you are an outside contractor, wanting this organisation to outsource this process to you. You literally want to win the work away from the internal team. What do you promise, in order to secure the contract?

Scope of process and probable sub-processes			
Output	Customers	Inputs	Suppliers

¹ See page 140. A (correctly proportioned) proforma for the Process Proposal form can be found on the associated web-site (see Appendix 7).

“You will have!” replied Lucy.

“Yes, but we don’t know what they will be!” challenged Tom.

“But is there any way you can describe how well you will do them, or the impact the benefits of them will have on our status or competitive position?”

“No, not really!” responded Tom belligerently.

“Then I expect you’ll lose the contract,” said Lucy calmly, “because your competitors can!”

Tom was about to respond, when Jack reached out and touched him on the forearm and said: “We could describe our performance in terms of time to market, unit production cost improvement, percentage revenue from new products - that sort of thing.”

Tom subsided.

Jack was clearly on track. He was Deborah’s Research Manager, and Lucy had got the impression from his interview that he could be a bit of a dark horse.

Arising from Jack’s lead, the debate began to develop again. So Lucy quietly extricated herself and left them to it.

Deborah had gone off to answer some urgent telephone calls during the syndicate exercise, but she was back for the feedback. She sat next to Lucy as the groups stuck their outputs on the wall. Deborah scrutinised the flipchart sheets, and then turned to Lucy and said urgently: “They look a bit general! Where are the references to the new products we should be working on, and the types of projects we will have next year?”

Lucy’s mind suddenly shifted up two gears as she wondered how to correct the forthright Deborah on something she clearly felt strongly about. It would have to be done quickly and quietly before she reversed everything Lucy had achieved with the team. But before she could get her thoughts straight to respond, Deborah was up on her feet.

“Excuse me! ...,” she bellowed to get everyone’s attention above the general chatter. Some of the colour drained out of Lucy’s cheeks as she struggled frantically to think of how to intervene. This was the situation that her consulting nightmares were founded upon – the choice between losing all credibility by publicly backing down on something

team should write their purpose in terms of the difference their process makes to the organisation or its customers. For example 'Acquire and disseminate information to support the organisation' carries a less challenging emphasis than 'Stimulate and guide the development of the organisation, through the acquisition and dissemination of information'. The latter definition would require not only the fulfilment of the former, but would also continually encourage the process team to think ahead about how the process adds value.

The process scope should be defined primarily in terms of the activities the process encompasses. Here the process team can also describe how they see the process boundaries, and what flows across them. It defines the area within which the team will take responsibility.

The team can develop its understanding of this by reviewing the top-level process model, and through discussions with other process teams, especially those with which they share a common 'boundary'.

QFD objectives; process objectives; targets; and measures...

...provide the opportunity for the team to show how, in practice, it intends to support each of the QFD objectives for which their process has a relationship on the top-level QFD. It is important that the team fully explores the nature of each relationship and identifies process objectives and measures which reflect the unique contribution their process will make. In some cases the top-level objective and measure may be appropriate simply to adopt without interpretation, but often they will not, and in these cases the process team needs to think carefully about what exactly it is undertaking to deliver. There are a number of tools that may help with

Process objectives			
Top QFD	Related proc.	Target	Measure

Product and process development			
		Proposed measures and targets	
W1	1	Top management approval of project	100% by 1/1/01
	2	Customer requirements for the product	100% by 1/1/01
	3	Customer requirements for the process	100% by 1/1/01
	4	Customer requirements for the service	100% by 1/1/01
	5	Customer requirements for the support	100% by 1/1/01
	6	Customer requirements for the training	100% by 1/1/01
	7	Customer requirements for the documentation	100% by 1/1/01
	8	Customer requirements for the maintenance	100% by 1/1/01
	9	Customer requirements for the disposal	100% by 1/1/01
	10	Customer requirements for the recycling	100% by 1/1/01

you have just pushed through, or humiliating a client in front of an audience of her people.

As the attention of the room was drawn to Deborah, Lucy had still not found an easy way out, nor decided which of the two equally unappealing options to take. She waited, her mind dreading the next words out of Deborah's mouth, but seemingly impotent to avert them. Her apparently limitless supplies of resourcefulness and confidence brought to nought by this 'no-win' situation.

Then Deborah asked in a much quieter voice: "Could someone please push the door to? We are about to start!" Then, with a smile at Lucy, she sat down again and whispered: "Got you good, eh?" She laughed, and Lucy smiled weakly back.

The outputs from both syndicates were excellent, and between them covered all the expectations posed by the QFD. Lucy encouraged the group by saying so.

Through subsequent exercises, the group then further refined the outputs into a list of six measures and targets which they wanted to propose to the Cylek UK board.

Deborah closed the meeting by outlining the next steps. And then she took some feedback from the group by splitting the flipchart into two columns, and heading one 'What Went Well' and the other 'Room for Improvement'. Lucy was impressed by the effectiveness of this simple device, and made a mental note to use the technique herself in future.

As they were clearing up, Deborah said: "Thank you Lucy, that worked really well! Oh, and sorry about my little joke. Jack mentioned the struggle you had in his syndicate, so I thought I'd play on it." Lucy smiled back "It's okay. I owe you one!"



Over the subsequent week, Lucy helped Deborah's team to work through the steps of refining their process proposal. The team was split into three groups in order to spread the load. The teams reported back just over a week later.

The first team made appointments to meet with all those departments and individuals they considered customers of their process. In each meeting, they outlined the objectives the team had agreed, and gained feedback

this: reviewing the Why-How chart¹; the competition question²; or the contract bid exercise on page 158.

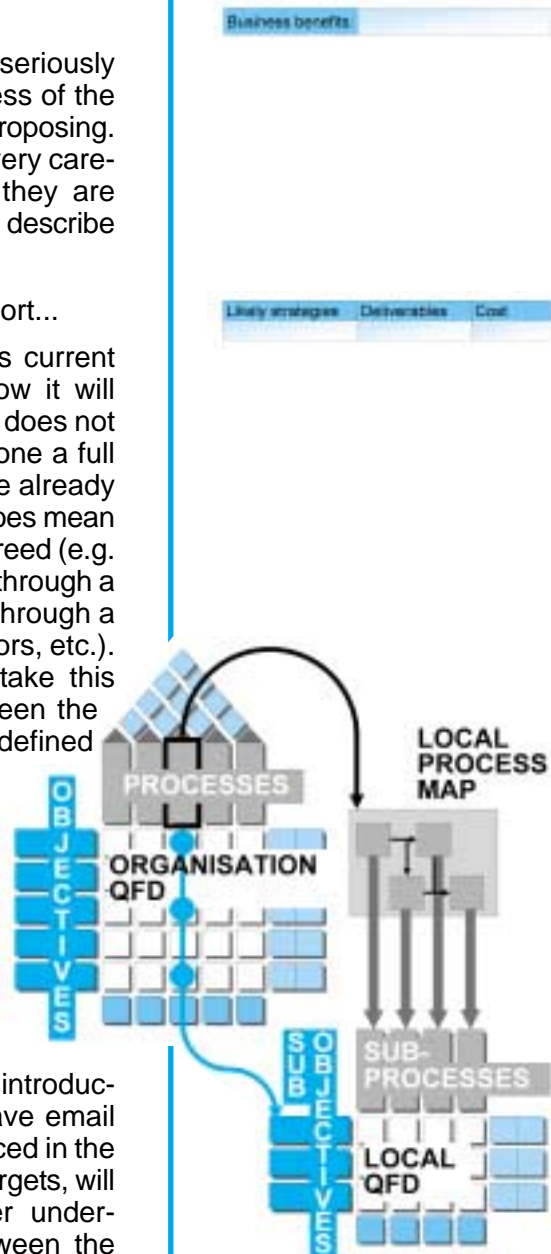
Intended business benefits...

...requires that the team think seriously about the benefits to the business of the objectives and targets they are proposing. It provides a challenge to think very carefully about the value of what they are undertaking, and of being able to describe it clearly in 'customer' terms.

Strategies; deliverables; and effort...

...requires that the team use its current experience to think through how it will begin to pursue its targets. This does not mean that they need to have done a full root cause analysis, and to have already decided detail solutions. But it does mean that broad strategies must be agreed (e.g. achieving delivery performance through a 25% reduction in downtime, or through a 50% reduction in production errors, etc.). Clearly the best tool to undertake this thinking would be a QFD between the process objectives and their defined sub-processes - see the diagram on the right.

Please note that strategies are best expressed in terms of delivering a change in performance of a critical success factor, not simply as activity. For instance, implementing email is not a strategy, but improving office productivity by 20% through the introduction of email is. Those who have email systems that have been introduced in the absence of clear performance targets, will probably have a much clearer understanding of the difference between the two.



1 See chapter 2.

2 See chapter 4.

on them. It was surprisingly heavy going, not only in arranging the interviews, but also in disarming the cynicism from those customers they did manage to see. But they persevered and returned to the next meeting with the conclusion that their objectives were okay, but needed some additions.

“You’d think they didn’t want us to improve,” said Andrea, the team leader. “I had not realised how much cynicism there was!”

“What do you think causes their cynicism?” asked Lucy.

“Well, reading between the lines, I think that we’ve had a pretty poor relationship with them over the years. It was almost that we got on by tolerating each other, by doing just enough to prevent things falling over. They don’t really believe that we will change.”

“Do they want us to change?” asked Lucy.

“Yes, definitely, but they want us to focus more on them. They are worried that in pursuing our objectives, we will drop things that will screw up their work.”

“Such as...?” prompted Lucy.

“Well, apart from those things that are already reflected in our objectives, the main thing appeared to be filling in the paperwork.”

At this, there was a huge groan from the assembled group. Lucy looked round.

“Is this a common issue?” she asked the group.

“Are you kidding?” replied Jack. “It’s bureaucracy city out there! They’ve got forms for everything. You can’t even raise an eyebrow unless you’ve got a pink slip signed in triplicate!” His vehement outburst brought nods from everybody, except Tom Lewis.

Tom looked straight at Jack. “You just don’t understand! You never have! It’s your cavalier attitude to anything that doesn’t benefit you, that has cost us hours of wasted work!”

Lucy stepped in quickly. She could see it getting out of hand. She wondered whether she could park the issue until later, but it seemed directly relevant to establishing a complete set of objectives. “Hold it! Hold it!” she interjected determinedly. “Whoooo! I bet we’ve been down this track a few times, haven’t we?”

The intention is not to bind the process team to these initial strategies, but to ensure quality of thinking behind the target commitments.

Assumptions/implications...

...demonstrates the extent to which the team has fully considered the risks and implications of its current model of improvement. This section should challenge the team, both to look at the external impact of its processes, and to be pragmatic about external influences coming back in to the process. The potential problem analysis, right, illustrates one means of undertaking this work.

It is probable that working through this section of the form will encourage the team to reconsider its answers to earlier sections, but that is the main point of asking this question here - it is cheaper and easier to correct things on paper than in practice.

Standards; schedules; and stakeholders

...outline the team's understanding of the management and reporting disciplines they will employ in pursuing their goals. In many ways this is the final part of the contract, and states exactly to whom they will be accountable, how they will comply with reporting and management standards, and how often they will review their progress

Ensuring debates remain objective and informed

As teams work on the possibilities for their processes, and become inspired by the potential of their new responsibilities, it is all too easy for them to lose sight of reality. This can present two major problems. The obvious one is that their conclusions become impractical; the less obvious one is that it becomes more difficult to objec-



Assumptions/implications

Potential problem analysis (the fun version)

Imagine that you are a group of saboteurs, intent on derailing the plans of the team

List out, down one side of a flipchart, everything you could do to make sure that the plan fails, or has disastrous results

...

Management standards Meeting schedule
Stakeholders

...

Then come out of role, and create a second list, on the other side, of all the ways that these things could happen accidentally

When you have finished, work through the second list and evaluate the probability and impact of these things happening on a scale of high, medium and low

Think out what you will do to avoid, remove, or cope with the high-risk items.

Jack nodded and Tom looked a bit sheepish, others smiled.

“I thought so, it seemed quite well worn to me!” Lucy continued. “Look we need to resolve this, but perhaps if we work through the other areas first, and then come back to it at the end?”

Lucy walked over and wrote the word ‘Paperwork’ on a sheet of flipchart paper headed ‘Car Park’.

“Okay,” she said, turning back to Andrea, “was there anything else that the customers wanted to add to, or change about, our objectives?”

Andrea thought for a moment and said “No, I think it all comes under paperwork one way or another. It’s pretty much all about communication and fitting in with their systems.” She looked around her team and they nodded back to her to affirm her conclusions.

“Okay,” said Lucy. “What about the team that was looking into getting current data on the process performance measures?”

Jack stood up, walked to the front of the room, placed a view foil on the overhead, and switched it on. A list of the agreed measures came up on the screen.

“Like Andrea,” he said, “this wasn’t as easy as it looked. But let’s go through them one by one.”

Jack worked down his list of measures. His team had now put mechanisms in place for all but two of them, and had gathered enough historic data to provide an indication of current performance in about half the cases. Lucy was impressed. She could see why Deborah valued Jack so highly, but she wondered who had done his day job while he had done all this. She asked him at the break.

Jack looked at her slightly quizzically. “It only took three days!” he said. “The biggest issue was getting the team back together to approve it at the end.”

“But, how did you find three days?” she pressed.

“I’ve got a good team,” he said, “and we often do this. Deborah encourages us to simply opt out when we’ve got an important project, just like we would if we were sick or on holiday. We get to focus 100% on the task, and our people get used to taking the responsibility. And Deborah covers it if there is a real issue.”

tively resolve conflict in the team and, as a result, some members may feel uninvolved and lose commitment. In other words, maintaining a grasp of the practical realities of the situation is crucial to maintaining the commitment you have worked so hard to engender.

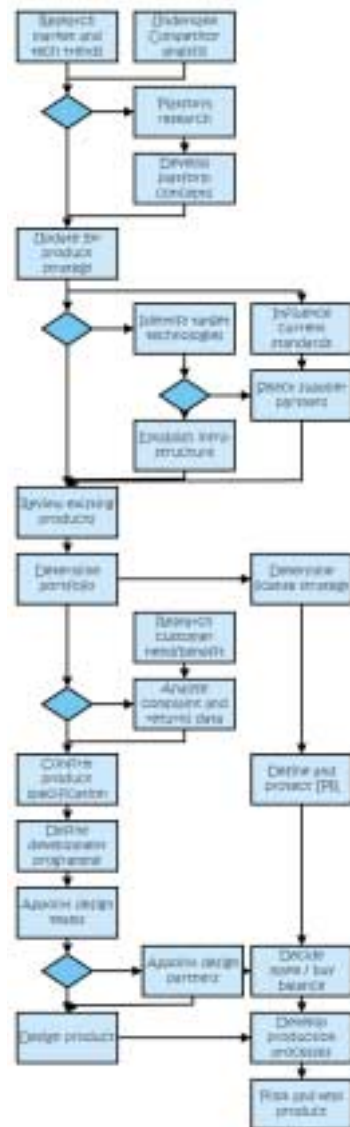
To ensure effective commitment, process teams need to maintain a practical reality-based bias to the discussions in three ways:

- mapping current reality and ensuring all proposed change is practically reflected within the map
- ensuring that customers review and provide feedback on the proposals
- establishing clear measures of progress.

These are explained in more detail in the following paragraphs. In the novel, Richard's approach to driving his people in these areas is fairly laid back, and he pays the price for it. In practice it is important to establish a clear and rigid timetable for doing this work, and for reviewing progress and performance against it.

Mapping current reality

Process mapping¹ is a hugely underrated tool in most organisations, perhaps because of the lack of emphasis on the 'design' side of management. A process map is simply a graphical logical representation of the flow of work, information and resources through the activities of the process. As with an architect's drawing, a programmer's flowchart, or an engineer's circuit diagram, the manager's process map provides the schematic representation of reality that is so essential to planning change and considering its implications. Even from the outset, the



¹ A basic guide to the protocols of process mapping is included on the associated web-site (see Appendix 7).

Jack had a 'Why is this so strange?' look on his face, but Lucy just shook her head and said "Amazing!" It was the sort of attitude she had spent years trying to drum into other clients to no avail.

Then a thought struck her. "But, if your people are doing your job, don't their own projects slip?" she asked.

Jack smiled. "We only ever allocate resource to 80% capacity," he said. "It was the first thing Deborah changed when she was appointed."

Lucy felt a 'Yes, but' coming on. "But, surely that lengthened all your delivery timescales?" she challenged.

"No, not at all," Jack replied. "We used to plan at 100%, and end up with 30-40% overruns. We now plan to 80%, and we get an average of 5% under-run. The business actually gets things earlier because we are better co-ordinated." Lucy smiled, and shook her head, and walked away.

The third group reported back after the break. They had been working on mapping out 'Develop products and processes' into a flowchart of its constituent activities. A large roll of brown paper was fixed to the far wall and unfurled across the room. Literally hundreds of different coloured rectangles and lines adorned the sheet. And no sooner was it fully in position, than the debate started.

Lucy stepped in quickly. "Let us at least get an overview before we start on the detail." She nodded to indicate to Malcolm, the third team leader, to continue.

Malcolm quickly ran through the separate sub-process areas on the map to provide the overview, and then started to explain the detail. Lucy interjected again "Can I propose that instead of a large debate, that people take a good look at the map individually, and note any inconsistencies for Malcolm and his team to resolve after the meeting?" The group seemed happy with this and settled to the task. Lucy sat down on a table to watch.

After about three quarters of an hour, people had largely finished understanding the map, and noting the issues, and had sat down.

Lucy sensed it was time to return to the first issue of the meeting, but before she could do so, Andrea chipped in. "Can I just commend the mapping team on an excellent effort?" A few people mumbled "Yeah!" and somebody started a little clap which most people seemed to join in.

basic activity of developing the diagram provides practical insight as understanding is reconciled, waste identified and obvious improvement opportunities become evident.

Customer review and feedback...

...provides a basis for the process team to seek to validate their conclusions, before presenting their proposal back to the organisation as a whole.

In part, they will have done this at the broad level through reviewing their scope (see page 158). But clarifying exactly how teams plan to perform at those interfaces where their process meets with others, should help resolve any misunderstandings, and will help to reconcile the various process proposals from the outset. The best way to achieve this is through direct face-to-face meetings with customers and supplier processes. If at all feasible, these meetings could be through physically involving customers in the objective and target setting work, and similarly being involved in suppliers' goal-setting activities.

Establishing clear measures of progress

...provides objective evidence as to the effectiveness of the team in improving the process.

Measurement¹ proves a very emotive issue for many process teams. Normally this is because the measures identified require a lot of work to implement and maintain, and there is little confidence that they will provide significant value. Unfortunately, in many organisations, both of these arguments contain a significant element of truth. The effort required to implement the measures arises not only

¹ A basic guide to measurement can be found on the associated web-site (see Appendix 7).



Steps to implement process measurement

1. Identify measurement needs based on critical QFD relationships.
2. Explore measurement issues/ opportunities with customer processes.
3. Review existing measures.
4. Reconcile duplication of measures.
5. Identify missing measures or current weaknesses in measurement.
6. Develop/improve measures, and plan for implementation.
7. Implement and review.
8. Establish measurement routines and integrate into management process.

Lucy stood up and said: “Yes, excellent effort!” and then continued: “In fact, I have to say that what I’ve seen today has all been excellent. I have been overwhelmed by the effort you have put in. In all honesty, I have never previously seen such a determined start to this sort of work, and I’m convinced you’ll reap the benefits quicker as a result.”

“We already are,” Malcolm interjected, pointing to the map. “I’ve noticed three nonsenses in my area already, and my people are already now putting them right.” Others nodded. There was a tremendous feeling of energy about the place. This was clearly a team that had grasped their future and were determined to control it.

Lucy started again: “But before we move on to ‘Next Actions’ and ‘Wrap Up’ we just need to tackle this item on the Car Park.” She looked round at the group. Some of the energy evaporated. Swept away by the thought of conflict and unresolved issues.

Deborah stood up. “I am going to propose,” she said, “that we add another objective of ‘100% conformance to customer systems!’” There was a shocked muttering around the room. Jack was about to explode in indignation, but subsided when Deborah looked at him, her face set. Even Tom looked surprised.

Deborah continued: “For as long as we feel it is okay to simply ignore another department’s systems, we’ll simply avoid the issue. Nothing will change, and conflict will continue with our customers. If we set this target, we’ll have to either understand and acknowledge why they need the information, or help them to find a better way. I am set on this. I feel it is the only way to resolve a long-standing issue.”

“But... but...” sputtered Malcolm.

“Spit it out Malcolm!” said Deborah, slightly mockingly, but not unkindly.

“It’s going to involve us in hours of extra form filling!”

“Good,” said Deborah. “I wondered how we were going to use the time we will save in arguments and conflicts with them over not filling in the paperwork!” A number of people sniggered.

She paused, and then looked more kindly at her troops. “For years we’ve ignored it, and things have just festered. It’s time we took control of this issue, and we’ll only do that if it’s on our objectives!” Her tone was con-

because companies have invested insufficiently in this area, but also because important parts of the process are often missing¹. Also, measures typically provide a lack of value because the information they provide is frequently not acted upon.

This unfortunate situation arises because the 'design' role of management has been long neglected in many businesses. As a result the 'control' role of management has been deprived of key objective data, and has been undertaken by managers getting personally and directly involved in the operations of the business. Without objective measures how else can a manager control crucial aspects of the business?

The solution to this issue is, unavoidably, to replace the missing investment. Accept that crucial things are missing and bite the bullet in replacing them. Success in implementing process measures requires the adoption of this simple mindset. But the consolation is that effective measurement alone can pay for itself even if it isn't integrated into the systematic management system. It is common for the provision of measurement data to drive up performance by 10%, purely through the focus and diligence it encourages, and it is very rare for the servicing of a measure to cost anything like 10% of your resources.

In many cases, effective measurement will provide the means to 40% improvement when integrated with the rest of your management system, and, once established, will consume less than 1% of your resources.

¹ Predominantly documentation of the strategy and planning aspects.

ciliatory, and she was rewarded with nods, some reluctant, but most determinedly supportive.

“Good,” she said, and looked back to Lucy to continue.

Lucy walked further into the middle of the room and looked at Jack. “Seems like you’ve got another set of data to collect,” she said. And Jack smiled.



Administering measurement

One area that does need to be thought about in some depth, however, is the means by which the data for the measures will be collated. One key rule is that the incremental effort put into the measures should never be greater than the incremental benefits that are obtained as a result. So start by thinking simple, thinking samples, thinking existing data and thinking ease of getting hold of them. Then move away from this only where the increased accuracy and reliability is warranted by the benefits generated.