

Commentary Issue 13 - September 2007

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How many points of view drive your organisation?

Whose views drive your organisation?

Reader of this piece will know that each of us sees the world in a slightly different way.

We all carry on doing what we do and many of us have at the back of our minds the fact that the way we see the world isn't necessarily how the person sitting next to you on the train, in a traffic jam or at work sees it.

If we put this in the context of the workplace, colleagues seeing the world in slightly different ways present risks to the way an organisation operates. If the people we work with see the purpose of their role, the purpose of the organisation or the way a task should be carried out in different ways, there will be confusion. A symptom of this is that service provision to external and internal customers will be inconsistent as the quality and level of service will depend on the provider's point of view of what constitutes "good service".

Establish the business objectives

The only way to prevent individuals' points of view driving the business instead of business objectives and customers' requirements is to ensure that the way things must be done, by whom, with what and by when is written down and distributed to all those involved in the activities in question.

Document what is done

The way activities should be done and criteria for successful completion must be written down in an easily understandable format and distributed or shared via network drives intranet sites or knowledge libraries. In other words, document and publish your business processes.

Document who does what

As the "what" is documented as described above, this must also include who does what. "Who" might be a person, a team, a business function or an external provider.

The key is to state who is responsible for completing the tasks described in "*document what is done*", including which aspects of success criteria rests with them.

Document what with

In addition to documenting "what" and "whom", always include the tools, systems, policies and legislation used or referred to in order to complete the "what". This ensures that everyone who uses the process does so consistently and accurately and customers who are recipients of the outcome of the process receive the same level of service regardless of whom they contact.

Note: That's why it is essential that you continually review and revise your processes to ensure that the standard of service your customers receive is a level of service which pleases them and ensures those customers keep coming back.

By when

This will form part of your success criteria. The output of all processes must be delivered in a timely manner. In your success criteria, state precisely what timely means. For example, "answer telephone within 2 rings", "respond to e-mail enquiries within 3 hours of receipt", or "have items ready for courier collection by 16.00 each day". You will need a method to record whether these targets are met or else setting them is pointless.

These are simple examples which, hopefully, demonstrate the importance of leaving nothing to someone else's interpretation.

Timeliness is only one possible success criterion. The needs of your customers matched with the capability within your organisation will help you to define other meaningful measures for success.

Finally

Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

I'm thinking: "I hope the points I've made in this document are clear".

What were you thinking?

What does your team think?

Contact us

If you would like further guidelines on how to set targets against your business processes, please contact us by e-mail at info@amosbutler.com or by telephoning 0845 125 9612 (voicemail), where one of our analysts will call you back before the end of the working day.

Disclaimer

The information provided above is not comprehensive and should, therefore, only be used as a guide. If you would like more detailed guidance or an initial talk with one of our analyst, please call +44(0) 7960 588 834 or e-mail info@amosbutler.com.