

# What are Business Process Improvements? How are they conducted?

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## I. What are Business Process Improvements?

Business Process Improvements are a systematic approach to determining how to optimize an organization's underlying processes to achieve more efficient results. The methodology was first documented in Dr. H. James Harrington's 1991 book Business Process Improvement; and 1997 Business Process Improvement Workbook-Documentation, Analysis, Design, and Management of Business Process Improvement. Dr. Harrington was an international Quality Advisor for Ernst & Young and discussed how to apply manufacturing quality improvements to service industries.

The goal is to develop customer focused process improvements which are in alignment with an organization's goals.

## II. How are Business Process Improvements Conducted?

Business process improvements require observing how an organization does what it does; studying its leaders' and operators' policies, daily procedures and time management; and interviewing the organizations' team and customers to get their opinion on problems and possible solutions.

Business process improvements may include implementing:

- Organizational Improvements
  - i. Reorganize the office
  - ii. Restructure processes
  - iii. Develop a procedure manual
- File Management Improvements
- Customer Service Improvements

For example, a Site Plan Review office for reviewing land development plans for compliance with a city, state and federal codes can be assessed. The Site Plan Review office operations can be studied. Recommendations can be made on how to improve existing procedures. The office may need to be reorganized. The plan review process may need to be restructured to better track plans, reduce lost plans, and reduce plan review time.

Business process improvements can help an organization reduce customer complaints; reduce wasted time and materials; alleviate conflicts between team members; and prevent, catch, or fix errors.

The ultimate goal is to improve the organization's performance. The key to sustainable success is to get buy-in from process owners.

