Improving Organizational Performance

Expectations of both public and private services and organizations to do more with less continue to rise. The drive for ever increasing efficiency, productivity, quality, cost savings, and value delivery is constantly pressuring organizations and leaders to improve performance.

High-performance organizations consistently deliver more with less, produce higher quality outcomes with less risk, and simply put, outperform their peers and competitors. These organizations include some of the oldest companies and most iconic brands. They understand that it takes a great deal more than simply performing activities, working hard, and producing results for an organization to perform well. Generally speaking, these are the organizations that are superior in areas such as:
• Clearly defined performance measures and metrics
• Leaders are clear and concise with their message
• Well thought out, consistent, clear, strategy
• Stakeholders hold high ethical standards
• Employees are innovative in their work

Hard work, staying busy, training, or even the actual accomplishing of goals does not necessarily translate into high-performance. Higher-performance is achieved through the consistent application of successful repeatable practices and processes throughout the organization and amongst all its investment initiatives. Consistent application of defined best practices increases transparency and makes it easier to identify anomalies and areas of potential improvement against which corrective actions can be taken. Actions then lead to improvement in organizational efficiencies and delivery of more successful outcomes more often.

Learning from the proven consistent success of high-performance organizations, leadership should constantly assess how well investment of limited organizational resources is allocated, utilized, managed, and performing.

Resulting from such actions are some basic process inputs and outputs that include defining, measuring, analyzing, and improving the portfolio of investment initiatives and related decisions. As well as evaluation of management controls and document rigor most appropriate for each initiative.

Improving organizational performance involves, amongst other things, qualitatively and quantitatively evaluating the cost-benefit balance of performing activities within the context of ensuring that all efforts are directly aligned to a clearly defined and understood mission, goals, objectives, and strategy of the organization.

Organizations must understand and manage risk and require assurances of value delivered from tactical investments that support strategic objectives. These requirements increase the need for control, information, communication, and transparency. Including identification and measurement of costs/benefits, risk/reward, and value delivery.

Enabling this demands repeatability, consistency, measurability, and transparency across all units and functional areas of the enterprise. Accomplishing this requires leadership support and a strong and prominent commitment to continuous improvement by champions of enterprise-wide methodology. The institutionalization of integrated standards and methods then simplifies the efficient convergence of people, process, and technology and helps maximize the strategic value of every investment.

For initiatives to harness their full value potential, efforts must be well integrated, managed, and utilize consistent approaches to initiating, planning, and delivering results. Such practices applied consistently across the enterprise reduce portfolio risk and improve outcomes by promoting consistency and cost efficiencies, enhance transparency, and improve interoperability, quality, and reliability. They also provide leadership with the ability to accurately measure performance, better coordinate efforts, assess activities, improve

implementation of responsibilities, and efficiently assist stakeholders in delivering value.

Future successes increases exponentially through the application of repeatable processes, relevant tools, and proven techniques that evolve through continuous integration of lessons learned to incrementally improve best practices that have been proven over time. Some additional activities for improving organizational performance include:
- Reducing risk and improving the probability of investment success
- Delivering greater value/benefit from every invested dollar
- Improving control, communication, and transparency
- Ensuring investments align with strategic objectives
- Enabling the ability to measure performance
- Understanding and manage risk
- Increasing efficiencies
- Promoting consistency

Some recognized approaches, models, and systems to improve organizational performance include:
- Business process reengineering
- Outcome based evaluation
- Total quality management
- Management by objective
- Continuous improvement
- Federal IT Dashboard
- Value management
- Performance Prism
- Benchmarking
- Six sigma

Although no one approach is applicable to all organizations some overarching similarities do appear when comparing various models.
- Consistent mission and top-down strategy that cascades throughout the organization
- Exacting alignment of portfolio investments and tactical activities/projects to cross-cutting organizational goals, objectives, and strategy
- Consistency of data across the enterprise and how it is used to deliver consistent results
- Transparency of work, activities, and performance across organizational units
- Defined standards, methods, practices, processes, measures, and metrics
- Defined and measureable performance
- Active risk and resource management
- Easy access to data and tools

For more information on improving organizational performance, the Project Management Community of Practice or the CDC UP please visit the CDC Unified Process website at http://www.cdc.gov/cdcup/. ▮

Project Management Community of Practice

- *August 24, 2012*
  Enterprise Performance Life Cycle (EPLC)
- *September 28, 2012*
  A Conversation with CDC Policy Leadership
- *October 26, 2012*
  The Value of Alternative Analysis
- *December 07, 2012*
  Managing Risk

For more information on the Project Management Community of Practice visit the PMCoP website at http://www2.cdc.gov/cdcup/library/pmcop/ ▮

CDC Unified Process Presentations

The CDC UP offers a short overview presentation to any CDC employee and/or contractor group. Presentations are often performed at your facility, on a day of the week convenient for your group, and typically take place over lunch structured as one hour lunch-and-learn style meeting.

Contact the CDC Unified Process at cdcup@cdc.gov or visit http://www.cdc.gov/cdcup to arrange a short overview presentation for your group. ▮

Contact the CDC Unified Process

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