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Processes Are Your Business

A process is a set of tasks, steps, or activities performed to create a finished product or service. Businesses operate as one overall process made up of multiple processes working together to achieve its goals. Therefore, managing your business requires managing your business processes.

Interdependencies

Processes are linked to other processes and should work toward the same business goals. Functional and/or departmental siloes are the archenemy of processes to the extent that they exist. In order to avoid conflict and instability, all tasks, steps, or activities should be viewed collectively as interdependent flows that build value, and resources should be optimized.

Process Components

Within a given process, all events, inputs, tasks, decisions, and outputs are also related. Final outputs are where value is handed off to the end-user, which may be an internal or external customer, or another process.

Process Owners

A process owner may be a team supervisor or manager, a person responsible for a certain process or function, or an executive.

Process owners are responsible for monitoring performance measures, understating the entire process and impact on business goals, and ensuring processes are documented, that staff are resourced and staffed, and that a control plan is documented and regularly reviewed and maintained.

Data

All processes generate some form of information, even if data isn't currently captured. Tapping in to data can be extremely valuable. Data provides insight into determining whether a process is in

control or needs improvement. Anything can be measured, whether tangible or not. An important distinction to note is that not everything should be measured. Special attention and thought may be needed, but if measuring something in a process is deemed valuable, and if more or less of the item can be observed, then it is measurable.

Key Takeaway

Businesses are defined by their interdependent processes and require focused management oversight, which is achieved by optimizing resources, data, and controls, all working toward the same common business goals. It's your business to manage your business processes.

Conclusion

Business processes are like a chain that link events, inputs, tasks, decisions and outputs that pull toward common business goals. Process owners are responsible for ensuring that the links in the process chains for which they are responsible are properly documented, staffed, trained, and measured to identify improvement opportunities. Identifying weak links early and fixing them are important steps to maintain the strength of the overall chain.

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