

Process improvement with a difference

Issue

Many financial service organisations are working harder than ever to manage costs, improve service and drive sales up. Most have at some point focused on improving their processes but found the task frustrating. Efforts can take a long time, tie up the energies of large groups for many months and often deliver disappointingly little. In many cases improvements are short lived - not sustained over time.

Solution

Setanta has developed a new approach to helping you achieve cost, sales and service goals simultaneously. Our unique ServiceChain BlitzSM methodology combines state-of-the-art process improvement techniques with the latest thinking in organisational development and culture change.

Through our research, we've found that only changes in work processes deliver the combined cost, sales and service results you require. But we've also found that 'engineering' those changes can serve to confuse and discourage the workplace. Our innovative methodology employs process improvement technology in a way that delivers both the business results you need and the committed, enthusiastic workforce to sustain it.

How it works

The aim of the ServiceChain BlitzSM is to make things *different* not just better. It is based on the Japanese concept of eliminating *muda* - every moment in a service chain when nothing of value is happening. It consists of five ingredients:

- 1) Contracting with the project sponsor to:
 - identify the key obstacles (such as quality, cost or turnaround time) whose removal will significantly improve operations
 - set aggressive improvement targets
 - select the team members who can achieve those targets.
- 2) Focused, intense, one-week improvement project, during which team members map and analyse the relevant part of the service chain and identify how waste, variability and errors can be removed.
- 3) Month of follow-up, during which the team researches, tests and implements its ideas.
- 4) Report to senior management and sponsor on results and plan for roll out of proven improvements.
- 5) Roll out and activities to make process improvement behaviours and skills common

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How it is different

Though the ServiceChain BlitzSM may look like 'process re-engineering' or 'TQM' or 'problem-solving' it is not. It differs in several ways:

- **Big, fast and inexpensive.** Blitz improvement targets are of the order of 50%. This means each Blitz results in big improvements in quality, cost and timeliness. The Blitz requires less than eight weeks from launch to report, which means you get results much faster than other improvement methods. And because the improvements concern process changes, not system enhancements, the Blitz pays for itself within months if not weeks.
- **Buy-in is built-in.** The improvement team consists of 'the people who do the work.' This means buy-in for the team's recommendations is built-in as part of the Blitz process - not a separate effort tacked on at the end.
- **DIY.** Setanta's consultants teach your people to improve their own processes so that the attitudes and benefits are embedded in their day-to-day work. Blitz becomes a common way to make dramatic improvements.
- **Just the facts, please.** The Blitz uses facts and data to focus all analyses and to develop all recommendations. The month-long testing phase ensures that all recommendations are tested and validated. Project recommendations can thus be implemented safely, knowing there will be few surprises, down the line.

" The new process is giving error free performance and nearly 48% more throughput with the same team."



Results

The ServiceChain BlitzSM delivers what it promises - significant improvements in cost, sales and service, quickly, safely and inexpensively. Results that organisations have achieved *in the first month* include:

- Error rates reduced from 30% to 17%.
- People handling rework reduced from three FTE to zero.
- Backlog of unprocessed applications reduced from 563 to zero.
- Average turnaround time for new product applications down from 37 days to 14.
- Average turnaround time for an insurance product down from 13 days to 1.



Joe Liddane has over 20 years of consulting experience within the financial services sector. His reputation within the market and his knowledge of industry issues have allowed him to build long-term relationships with key industry figures



Jim Van Patten, is a senior associate and consultant who has helped a wide range of major organisations to implement new ways of improving processes.

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