



Implementing Process Re-engineering

Stage 1: (Optional) Facilitate Management to Identify Issues

Prior to undertaking any process re-engineering it is critical that the owner of the process to be changed has identified the specific issue that needs to be addressed. Occasionally the symptom may be known, e.g. poor profitability / poor staff morale / loss of market share, but the specific cause has not been identified.

This can be resolved by undertaking an organisation appraisal to understand where the problem, or range of problems, rests. This review can also help to understand the organisational culture and anticipate areas, and reasons, for any possible resistance to the change under consideration.

This stage involves:

- 1.1. Reviewing existing documentation e.g. management accounts / absence records / sales trends
- 1.2. Interviewing senior managers to identify perceived issues
- 1.3. Undertaking an organisational survey that includes staff, customers, and other stakeholders
- 1.4. Producing a report that summarises the results of the investigation
- 1.4. Facilitating workshop with Senior Management Team to discuss issues from the report and to identify / prioritise specific processes to be addressed
- 1.5. Holding seminars with process areas to be re-engineered to explain the issues and to create an appetite for change

Stage 2: Prepare Documentation of Current Process & Issues

Undertaking process re-engineering can involve 'blue sky / green field' thinking applied to a new or existing process or by identifying issues and improving the current process. In many cases incremental improvement of an existing process carries less risk but the initial investigation is still needed to ensure that the perception of the process matches reality; it is also necessary to ensure that all interactions with associated processes are fully understood.

Re-engineering a process can be managed through a project framework where the people involved are trained in project skills. Once the project is established and people have the appropriate skills, then the next stage is concerned with mapping, documenting, and understanding what happens at present.

This stage involves:

- 2.1. Documenting existing process
- 2.2. Validating documented process with process staff
- 2.3. Holding workshops with process staff to identify issues and possible resolutions through a root cause analysis
- 2.4. Identifying those issues that can be resolved and prioritise targets for greatest benefit
- 2.5. Discussing review results with senior management and obtaining agreement / approval for change





Stage 3: Prepare Business Case for Change

Understanding the current process and issues will identify actions that could be undertaken to improve the process. If these actions involve any significant effort it is necessary to understand the objectives of any change before it is made and the associated costs / benefits that can be expected.

The preparation of a full business case allows process re-engineering objectives to be agreed and to demonstrate the costs and benefits that are to be realised. The business case includes estimating the resource - people, facilities, and finance - that will be required to achieve the objectives, and a full project plan that includes milestones to allow progress to be monitored.

This stage involves:

- 3.1. Examining a range of possible solutions arising from the investigation into the current processes and issues
- 3.2. Obtaining estimates of any external and internal resources
- 3.3. Producing a Cost / Benefit analysis and the full business case
- 3.4. Producing a full project plan with review milestones
- 3.4. Discussing the business ease with relevant senior managers to obtaining their approval to proceed with the re-engineering and commitment of resources for the project.

Stage 4: Prepare Design Overviews

The business case may identify one or more possible solutions that could deliver the required benefits and which need a more detailed investigation prior to agreeing on the optimum choice.

An investigation into the alternative solutions included in the business case allows the production of a high level design for each of the alternatives and a recommendation as to the solution that should be adopted. A more detailed cost / benefit analysis of the various alternatives can be produced at this stage together with a risk analysis that includes any statutory / regulatory considerations.

This stage involves:

- 4.1. Producing design ideas with high level overviews
- 4.2. Holding workshops with process staff to validate preferred and alternative approaches
- 4.3. Evaluating the costs and benefits of the alternatives
- 4.4. Discussing the high level designs with senior managers and obtaining agreement / approval for a detailed design for a desired approach



Stage 5: Prepare Process Design Details

Once the required solution is identified some additional planning effort is required before a new solution can be implemented.

The production of a detailed process design includes a full decomposition of the high level process into all its subsidiary processes, including definition of stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and the creation of a detailed implementation plan.

This stage involves:

- 5.1. Producing detailed design with full process documentation (this will include the preparation of a full functional specification if a changed or new IT system is required)
- 5.2. Holding workshop with process staff to validate detailed design
- 5.2. Producing an implementation plan including training needs and testing requirements
- 5.4. Discussing the detail design with senior managers and obtaining agreement of the design and approval to continue with its implementation

In the case of a major change to a large process, one which involves many complexities, or where there are significant cost / risk implications, there may be advantages in conducting full process modelling of the proposed solution. This can potentially be an expensive activity and need only be undertaken if the cost is justified.

Stage 6: Implement Process Change

For all types of process change the transition from design to practice requires certain, situation-specific, critical activities that will allow enable people to manage the transition from the old to the new process smoothly and then to perform the final re-engineered process efficiently.

However, the specific activities that are required for the implementation of the re-engineered process will vary according to the type of solution e.g. a change to an existing, or a new, Information Technology (IT) computer system will require some different activities from an instance where the new process involves only a change to manual procedures.

This stage involves:

- 6.1. Acquiring / developing technologies / IT systems (including the preparation of the 'Invitations To Tender' and management of the tendering process)
- 6.2. Testing new technologies / systems (unit testing / system testing / user acceptance testing)
- 6.3. Acquiring / developing process skills
- 6.4. Conducting process / technology / system training
- 6.5. Migrating data from existing systems
- 6.6. Preparing all user and systems documentation
- 6.7. Obtaining user and senior management sign off as 'Ready to Go Live'
- 6.8. Providing support to overcome 'teething' problems and assisting process users up the learning curve after 'Go Live'



Stage 7: Post Implementation Review

All projects, by definition, have a finite end when the process has been re-engineered and become part of 'Business as Usual'. Re-engineering itself should be an ongoing process that seeks to continuously improve on the changed process that has been implemented; this requires that the lessons learned from the project be shared.

A formal project closure meeting provides a means of reviewing the experience of the re-engineering activity and disseminating the lessons learned. It is also important that successes are celebrated; this provides an incentive for people to get involved in future projects and also be more receptive to future change because it provides recognition of their efforts.

Additional periodic post implementation reviews can provide further confirmation that continuous improvement is happening and that lessons have been truly absorbed.

This stage involves:

- 7.1. Assessing of how well the project objectives set out in the business case have been achieved.
- 7.2. Reviewing the project issues and resolutions
- 7.3. Identifying and disseminating the lessons learned
- 7.4. Confirming ongoing responsibilities and continuous improvement initiatives
- 7.5. Celebrating success
- 7.6. Conducting 3 / 6 / 12 / 24 months review as appropriate

Additional Help

To discuss how MEC Services can help you email us at info@mecservices.co.uk and we will contact you to arrange a, no obligation, preliminary discussion.

