

What is Process Streamlining?

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Why do Process Streamlining?

Process streamlining (PS) is defined as:

- Improvement of an overall process by improving the individual steps of the process.

The overall goals of process streamlining are to change a process in to:

- Reduce time
- Reduce complexity
- Reduce bureaucracy
- Increase adaptability
- Meet client expectations

Why do Process Streamlining?

One of the primary goals of process streamlining is to fix an inefficient or broken process, making it more effective and efficient for both the client and those owning the process.

- Client needs and expectations change
- The approaches and tools available to complete a process change
- Processes are "in motion" and are not usually "revisited" and improved
- The focus on the "goals of the process" get lost

How does Process Streamlining work?

A project sponsor identifies a process that is broken or has room for a lot of improvement. The sponsor then crafts an End Result, or vision of what the process should "look like" and/or enable (especially from a client's perspective), if it was working well.

A carefully chosen team is then trained in Process Streamlining methodology and charged by the sponsor with streamlining and improving the identified process so it meets the goals of the End Result (while staying within constraints also identified by the sponsor). The team spends two solid weeks following the methodology to improve the process.

One big difference when using this approach is that the team is not told "how" to achieve the End Results. Rather, the End Results paint a picture of the experience the client and process participants should have, and what the

process should achieve, and the team works to change the process in order to meet this vision.

Additional Goals & Benefits

Given that the process streamlining methodology approaches the understanding, analyzing, and improving a process in a unique and different way, there are additional goals and benefits. Many of the principles and techniques learned by team members can be applied, directly and indirectly, to day-to-day situations when team members return to their regular jobs.

Some of these principles and techniques include:

- **Change management concepts.** Change is a planned outcome of process streamlining. But devising, then gaining acceptance for, new and changed processes can be difficult. The PS methodology recognizes this, and helps team members understand how they can actively participate in effecting, accepting, and integrating change. It also addresses the challenges of helping others to change, and provides approaches for building support for, and acceptance of, change. Given that change is increasingly part of everyday work life, and each day brings new and different challenges, these change management techniques are valuable tools for team members to learn, as they can be applied to many everyday situations.
- **Focus on service and the client.** Often, those responsible for a process become so focused on performing the individual tasks involved, they lose sight of the end result --- the goal of providing a valuable service to a client. The PS methodology concentrates on this concept, asking team members to take a look from “the opposite side of the counter.” Many team members say they now use this “opposite side” approach in their regular jobs, thinking differently about their goals and about those to whom they provide service.
- **Focus on the process.** The process streamlining approach focuses on improving the end result of a process by examining and fixing the individual tasks comprising it. The client is expecting the delivery a particular outcome, regardless of the organizational structure and individuals responsible. These elements, in effect, should be transparent to the client. Thus, the process streamlining team is trained to think from an overall process viewpoint. This perspective is valuable when taken back to the office and applied to every day issues.