

The Holy Grail of Performance Improvement

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When CEOs talk to us about their objectives from improvement programmes we find that three over-riding themes always come up. With over 40 years experience of helping businesses improve we have seen the trends come and go but these themes are now as high on the agenda as ever. Irrespective of business sector the requirement comes over loud and clear:

- We want real, tangible business benefits.
- We need to engage our people in delivering them.
- We must be able to sustain the change long after the initial flush of activity has gone.

CEOs often have to settle for one or, at best, two of these objectives but we believe that to count any improvement programme a success all three must be carefully developed to ensure that real business transformation is achieved. How to do this in these troubled times when global pressures are challenging even the best Management Teams requires a committed, radical and systematic change of thinking throughout the organisation.

So how can a consultancy such as Bourton Group work with organisations to deliver the benefits, engender people-driven change and build sustainability? In our experience, it's a unique combination of **hands-on consulting support** and **knowledge transfer of best practice process improvement**.

Delivering benefits

Identifying, realising and measuring benefits resulting from a transformation programme is prime to ensuring its continuity. If the organisation can't quantify the improvement in outcome as a result of the programme then why continue. Benefits are often difficult to measure but they must impact on what people 'care about'. These 'care abouts' are highly interdependent and can be:

- **Customer related** – some form of cost (price), quality or time improvement as determined by voice of the customer analysis.
- **Business related** – eliminating waste and variation from internal processes to enable better delivery of core process performance by improved efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Discrete** to a specific project or issue.
- **Early wins** that gain credibility and fund the ongoing investment.
- **Cultural change** that underpins longer term improvement.

Working closely with individuals, teams and leadership stakeholders throughout the programme means that we never lose sight of the overall objective and the people in the business 'sign-off' to the hard and soft benefits delivered.

Engaging with people

We view success as building capability within organisations to continue process improvement as a way of life, long after the initial programme has started. Working with and transferring process improvement know-how in Lean Sigma and Change Management to an organisation we help develop people's capability. Whether this is **helping top teams** to design high performing organisations, **coaching and mentoring** individuals to manage through change or **developing project based and intact work teams to implement Lean Sigma** thinking as part of their DNA we deliver the same user friendly, flexible support from our experienced consulting team.

Engaging with people is not a 'nice to have' it is fundamental to the success of transformation programmes. It builds capability, ensures sustainability and motivates and mobilises an organisation's resources around what management deems important.

Sustaining the change

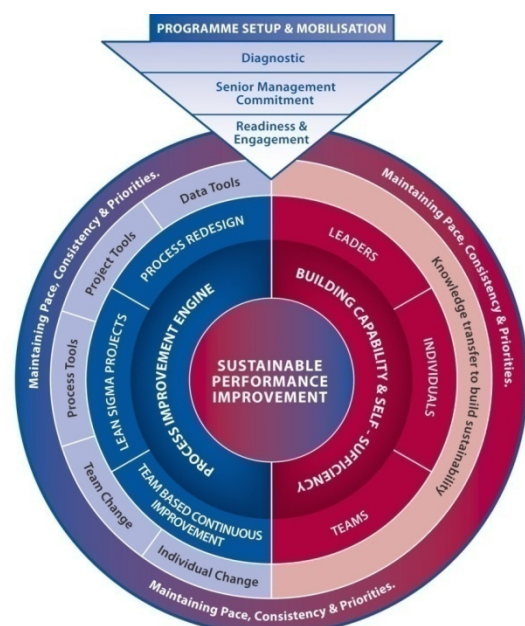
Benefits and change that evaporates is not only expensive it damages the culture of an organisation and hardens it to future change requirements. **'Failed change' in the past is the biggest impediment to business transformation.** How often do we have to overcome negativity at the start of a programme because *'we did [Lean] [Six Sigma] [Process Improvement] once before and it didn't work'*. Creating and using best practice Lean Sigma methodologies and tools in an organisation is only part of the solution. **What is really needed is the creation of an internal Improvement Engine within the organisation.** The *Improvement Engine* feeds on the constant striving for continuous improvement, is fuelled by highly capable and motivated people and uses the mechanics of proven Lean Sigma methodologies. But leaving change to chance is not an option – having a well developed deployment programme to direct and govern the change is essential to maintaining pace and priority.

The Holy Grail

There are no silver bullets, no quick fixes, and no magic formulas to achieve the Holy Grail. But there are some basic building blocks that will enable your organisation to improve performance in a sustainable way. Our approach below provides a proven, integrated way of addressing business and organisational transformation.

However you plan to undertake a performance improvement activity, make sure you:

- Understand the organisational 'care abouts'.
- Work with stakeholders to agree and capture the benefits.
- Build commitment and capability at all levels within the organisation.
- Create a process *Improvement Engine* to sustain the momentum.
- Use best practice Lean Sigma methodologies and tools to deliver the improvement.
- Have a managed deployment programme to maintain pace and priority.



Bourton Group Approach