

PROCESS CULTIVATION – THE OVERLOOKED INGREDIENT OF BUSINESS GROWTH

The Transformational Step Essential for Effective Policies and Procedures

Most business leaders are well versed in the concept of “process improvement”: The act of identifying and enhancing existing business processes to boost performance, save costs, increase efficiencies, and elevate the quality of outputs (products or services). It is crucial to have a core business strategy and activity to stay competitive. However, leaders often limit their focus to evaluating key business metrics and testing changes to infrastructure and activities. They overlook the broader context of business process improvement: process cultivation, which can bring about transformative benefits.



The missing link in process improvement is **process cultivation**: Ensuring that each employee fully understands how their tasks and responsibilities fit into the success of the overall process.



Process, Policy, and Procedure Confusion

The three terms often confusing and misused in any organization, not just manufacturing settings, are processes, policies, and procedures. While these terms are frequently used interchangeably, they shouldn't be. Each term means something different and represents a distinct step in the process improvement activity.

Misusing these terms can lead to confusion in how work is done and can cause inefficiencies or disruptions in the production line for a product or service. It's crucial to understand these terms correctly to ensure smooth operations and maximize productivity.

- **Process** – An ever-present, high-level view and understanding of interrelated tasks or operations collectively producing a product or service.
- **Policy** – A particular set of mandates or business rules that align with the company's goals, objectives, and management philosophies.
- **Procedure** – Specific, detailed, written instruction on performing or completing a task or action necessary to produce a product or service.



Process

Process is not only a single task; it is a high-level view of interrelated tasks done to produce a product or a service.

What To Do



Policy

A particular set of work instructions or business rules that align with the agency's objectives, goals, and management philosophies.

Why Do It



Procedure

On the flip side of policy, procedures refer to detailed instructions on how to do tasks or perform a sub-process action.

How To Do It

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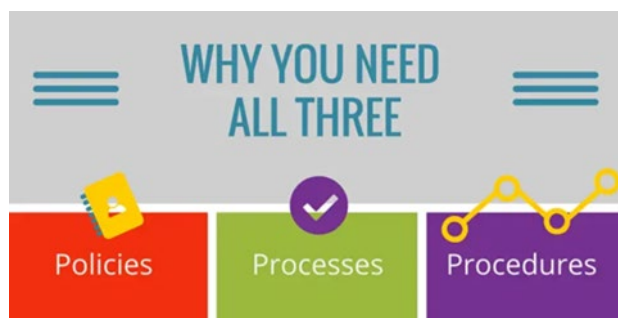
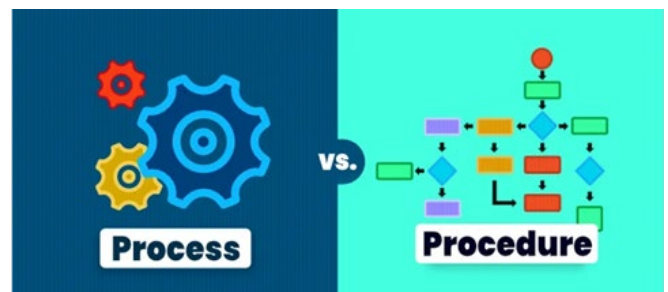
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Understanding and Implementing the Three P's

Business leaders face critical challenges in implementing "the three P's," struggling to get people and activities to increasingly align with the ever-growing demands to improve performance, grow revenue, and increase competitive productivity. The underlying cause affecting performance is poor communication.

In the early stages of a business, managers often believe that identifying how things currently get done is commonly understood. However, as a company grows in size and complexity, how much goes unsaid and undocumented can be surprising. This dynamic is familiar with long-standing team members who know how to take care of certain things, whether they've been instructed to or not. But they don't always know why things are done a certain way, nor the importance of that "why."

Unfortunately, this dynamic is familiar with long-standing team members who know how to get certain things taken care of, whether they've been instructed to or not, while not having a fundamental understanding of how their tasks and actions uniquely fit into the "production" process.



The resulting confusion, inefficiencies, and lower productivity that only increase as an organization grows are apparent symptoms of poor communication and poor workforce understanding. For any team, assuming they know the "how" and understand the "why" equates to poorer performance and loss of revenue.

The Bridge Between Process and Procedure

Work instructions help employees understand exactly how to complete a process or procedure. They are used to break complex procedures into their most straightforward, repeatable form and detail how to complete each step correctly, efficiently, and safely.

All too frequently, leaders and managers stop by simply documenting work instructions or procedures, focusing on how and when to perform tasks, without ever documenting, nor training employees on, the broader context of why!

The absence of communication of the 'why' is a crucial missing piece in the development process of cultivation. Merely documenting processes is important, but it's when the entire workforce comprehends the overall process, the high-level view of how everything done relates to everything accomplished, that process cultivation truly takes hold.