

Layout of the Book

This book is based on my hands-on practitioner experience gained over 20 years on the forefront of business transformation. The techniques described in the book are built on actual successful case studies. They could be called lessons learned from the front line at a variety of both very large and small transformation projects.

The core subject of this book is process management and problem solving to achieve continuous innovation. Continuous innovation can only be achieved if an organization's people have the right attitude of mind, competencies, and capabilities. A culture of learning and agility must be a way of life in order to achieve continuous innovation. A culture of innovation must be shared from the top to the bottom of the organization. The problem solving tools discussed in this book will not work if the core culture has not been transformed to use them on a continuous basis.

This book is divided into three parts and an appendix of tools. **Part I (Chapters 1–3)** presents the approach to business transformation (BT) to achieve readiness for a culture of innovation and continuous problem solving. Chapter 1 introduces BT methodology and philosophy. I could dedicate a whole book to BT, but that is not the focus of this book. I cover BT sufficiently to put process management and problem solving in context. Next, Chapter 2 discusses the actual phases of transformation, from developing a business direction and future state vision through continuous problem solving. Chapter 3 then presents the organizational approach to BT. This chapter includes a description of the roles and responsibilities of executives, team leaders, and team members. It also deals with the politics of change.

The core of the book—Parts II and III—focuses on the methodology of continuous innovation through problem solving. The methodology has 17 tasks and includes a closed loop system feedback which ensures that innovation is continuous.

Part II (Chapter 4) presents the approach to constantly analyzing the “As Is” enterprise processes. Chapter 4 covers the first eight steps of the methodology (see Figure I-1). It includes researching customer needs, defining the “as is” process, and developing measures. It concludes by determining the improvement objectives and schedule, thus allowing the team to proceed to the creative phase: solution development.

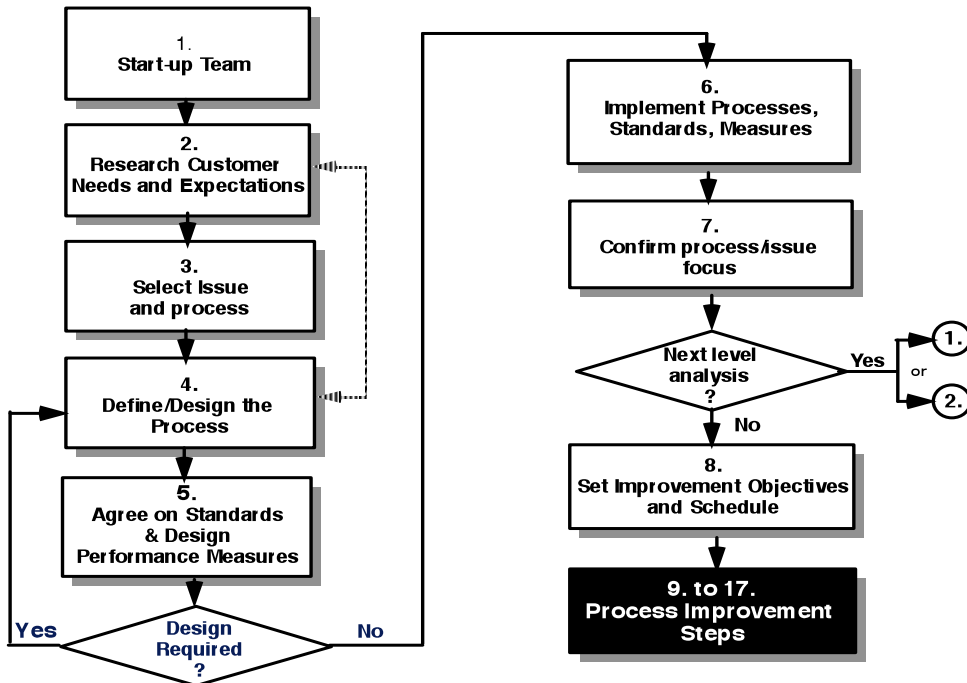


Figure I-1 Process Analysis

Part III (Chapter 5) discusses how to develop and implement solutions using cross-functional teams. Chapter 5 presents the nine steps of problem solving, solution development, and implementation (see Figure I-2).

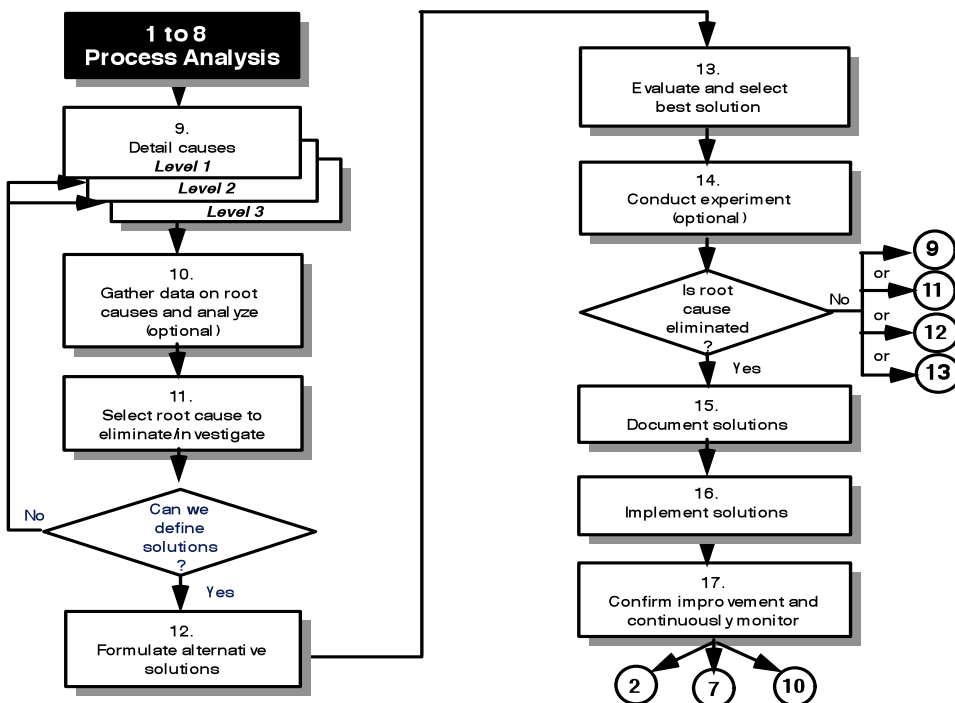


Figure I-2 Process Improvement Steps

Part IV (Chapters 6 and 7) discusses best practice for effective process improvement teamwork. It has been said thousands of times that people make things happen. I make no apologies for emphasizing the importance of cross-functional teamwork and treating the enterprise as a living system. Teams must be established following the well-known change management body of knowledge (forming, storming, norming, performing). I do not discuss the mechanics of team dynamics in depth. There are hundreds of texts on this subject. I lay out the key criteria that must be in place to allow teams to run without too much intervention.

By following a set of rules, procedures, and tools, I have successfully facilitated up to 25 teams simultaneously, attending each team 1–2 times per month. I have used this methodology on hundreds of process improvement teams over the years. The key success factor is a team that has been culturally prepared and trained. This includes members who are trained in the methodology and who are motivated to be on the team. Teams require an effective team leader and, above all, a CEO or other senior executives who provides day-to-day sponsorship. The senior executive must at minimum be a COO. A functional VP is not sufficient and can not achieve enterprise wide change. Other VPs will resist and ego issues will arise.

The Appendix presents a set of 27 process management tools borrowed from various bodies of knowledge including quality management, strategic planning, integrated product development, market research, systems engineering, and performance measurement. Many more tools exist; these cover a broad spectrum of the most important tools.

The book describes from a practical viewpoint the application of tools and techniques that constantly develop new solutions for improving performance.