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Measure Up!
Yardsticks for Continuous
Improvement (2Ed.)

Richard L. Lynch and
Kelvin F. Cross

Basil Blackwell, 1995
\$40.95 213 pages

Undiscovered Treasure

by Tom Bellinson

Once a fight starts at a football game, its often hard to determine exactly who threw the first punch. To my mind, *Measure Up!* by Richard Lynch and Kelvin Cross is a class business process book that got lost among the myriad of books on process and performance management. Many accolades have been given to Rummler and Brache for *Improving Performance*. *Measure Up! Yardstick for Continuous Improvement* covers similar ground, and, in my experience, provides a much more practical approach for those working with operational employees.

The key to implementation of any performance management system is designing a system that has built-in motivational systems for operational employees. *Measure Up!* explores all the components to build just such a system. The premise is that there are two main components to designing a working system:

1. Process management
2. Performance management

If you're like me, you've read numerous books on process management that pay little more than lip service to performance management, and, conversely, books on performance management that pay lip service to process management. In the chapter "Eyes of the Customer," the importance of delivering customer value is connected to process performance. This concise description sets the stage for the remainder of the book, which is built on a representative model known as the performance pyramid.

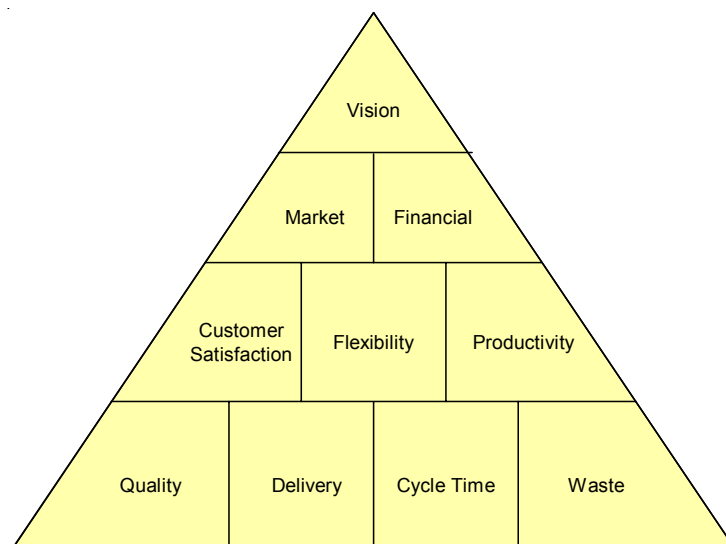


Figure 1. Lynch and Cross's Performance Pyramid.

The performance pyramid is an ingenious device that I have used for many years to help others understand how to link all aspects of organizational performance.

The bulk of the book unfolds the many interesting relationships between the components of the pyramid, which I will attempt to briefly summarize here. There are two strategic elements, “market” and “financial,” that drive the organizational “vision.” In order to achieve these *strategic* objectives, the *tactical* goals of “customer satisfaction,” process and organizational “flexibility,” and “productivity” must first be achieved. Finally, in order to achieve the tactical goals, the *operational* goals for “quality,” on time & accurate “delivery,” minimal “cycle-time,” and “waste” must be achieved.

In my practices as a process optimization consultant, I prefer to begin each process mapping session by establishing process goals. It always amazes me how frequently people have no grasp of the reason for performing their activities. In an attempt to avoid what is known in the legal profession as “leading the witness,” I use the performance pyramid to help them understand the relationship between the vision/mission of the organization objectives of their process. I have found that this visual model is easy for operational employees to understand. With that understanding comes a clarity of purpose because they are able to translate the four operational process objectives into specific goals for their specific process. Having achieved this understanding, they become active participants in finding non-value added and error-prone activities. Ownership is a beautiful thing!

The title of the book is derived from the notion that the system is designed from the top down, but performance is measured from the bottom up. These operational measures of performance tie very neatly into the needs and desires of the customer (be they internal or external) for any process. Herein lies the convergence between goals that service the customer and, as expressed above, process goals that can be easily communicated to employees, so that they can take ownership of performance metrics. On this last point, Lynch and Cross added an entire new chapter in the second edition.

As I indicated in my brief review of this book on Amazon.com, if you only have enough money for one book on process and performance management, make it Measure Up! Seven years after I found it, I’m still looking for a better approach.

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