

What's in a Name? It's Just Window Dressing, isn't it?

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People talk a lot about branding in reference to products. Without a brand, products don't sell. Companies think about positioning, promotion, pricing. They think long and hard about what to put on the label before launch.

Yet companies looking at transforming their business through BPM or process mapping don't feel the need to sell it to their staff. Is it not the end users that need to buy into the system most? Without them won't the project be a complete waste of time?

Getting adoption of any initiative, e.g., business change, is the most critical aspect of any project. So why shouldn't we get staff to buy into a new way of working by using the time-proven marketing techniques that get us to buy "stuff."

I evangelize a simple formula: $Results = Initiative \times Adoption^2$, and I call it the *Fundamental Law of Business*. It was the basis of my first book – *Common Approach, Uncommon Results*.

What, for example, is your current process project called? Something boring – “Compliance Project”? Something irrelevant – “Project Dolphin”? Or something that spells out the benefit to the end user – “How2,” “Simple Life,” “Don't Panic.”

After 10 years helping clients drive successful process improvement projects, I've seen a range of client project approaches. Without doubt, the ones that worked best have had strong marketing and branding input. And by “worked best,” I mean they have been adopted and maintained by end users, therefore delivering the greatest ROI.

A great example is The Carphone Warehouse (CPW). With 800+ stores across the UK they needed JUST ONE operations manual that all 8,000 staff could understand and WOULD USE. It sets out every activity in a store; porting phones across networks, disconnections, upgrades, stock checks...and the list goes on. The results are staggering, and in direct proportion to the effort they put in marketing the new operations manual to all their staff.

Firstly, it was called How2 – a memorable name that spells out the benefit. The look and feel was consistent with the CPW style – simple, clean, and using cartoons as menu icons. The launch event for all store managers was a high profile, high energy event, and it was driven by very senior management. In fact, it was the same status as the launch event for the iPhone. The dedicated support desk is staffed by a dedicated How2 team.

So was it worth it? The store staff definitely think so.

“How2 is the one thing we use. It is fantastic for new starters because any questions they have about the procedure is there. It makes our life a lot easier, and it makes the shop run a lot smoother,” said one customer consultant from the Richmond branch, adding, “At the end of the day it is all about customer satisfaction, and this will help us deliver that 100% service that we've always given at Carphone Warehouse.”

What about the people who funded the project? Was there a ROI? Ashley Cook, Operations Director at CPW, certainly sees it. He estimates they will drive an additional £55m of revenue this year because store staff can spend more time with customers instead of fighting the systems to find out the correct form or screen. Here again the value lies in the staff USING the system. CPW invested in selling it to staff, and they are seeing huge return.

So what can you do to make your project a massive success? Change your focus.

- *Think differently*: Start thinking like a marketer not a process professional. What is your job title? Project Manager. Why not change it to be more results focused.
- *Change focus*: Who is the audience? End users? IT? Senior management? Spend less time worrying about the process notation and the "perfect process model," and work out what will get maximum adoption.
- *Engage marketing*: Get your marketing team to work on the project brand – the name, the look, and feel of the content, the messaging, and the promotion.

At the end of the day, the old adage applies: There is no substitute for a coherent plan entertainingly communicated to a dedicated workforce that is able and willing to execute at all levels of a company!

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