Too Many Cooks

In some organizations people are resistant to new processes, which is a common challenge that process professionals expect and are prepared to deal with. In other organizations, everybody and their dog is creating processes, which can be more of a problem. Large companies may have several change initiatives happening at once, with different purposes, and the people involved don't always realize that their colleagues are making new versions of the same or closely related processes.

The only way to deal with this is at enterprise level. There will already be a steering group whose function is to coordinate organizational change, even if it's simply the board of directors. Often this committee will see its function as strategic alignment, so what it needs is a working group whose members are willing to get their hands dirty with the details of processes. So, the first task of a process professional faced with this situation is to gain sponsorship from the steering group (or board of directors) for such a working group.

The next task is to convene the working group with members representing all the change initiatives currently underway, and agree to a means of governance for process development:

- **Identify areas into which processes can be grouped, with:**
    - Naming convention including acronyms
    - Process Owners - sponsors, with process authority
    - Business Leaders - doers, with process responsibility
    - Stakeholders – representing all functional areas affected by change
    - Steering groups
- **Introduce standard templates and mechanisms for capture/publication of:**
    - Policies
    - Processes and procedures
    - Forms
    - Training materials including desktop guides
    - Applicable standards and legislation
- **Implement enterprise level change control mechanisms for processes**
    - Generate inputs to training design
    - Manage interaction between process areas where there are touchpoints
    - Integrate processes with external interaction into the extranet and portals
    - Monitor usage of and compliance with processes across the organization

        o   Monitor relationship of processes to internal and external complaints

Once the approach has been agreed, the working group can meet as often as deemed necessary to implement and manage it. It is often useful also to hold larger meetings on an occasional basis that include all stakeholders, so that people from across the organizations can get to know each other, discuss areas of mutual interest, and surface issues with general impact.

Collaboration across even a large organization doesn't have to be difficult, but it does have to be structured – and the structure must recognize that processes don't get things done. People do.

Author

Keith Harrison-Broninski is a writer, researcher, consultant, and software designer. He wrote "Human Interactions: The Heart And Soul Of Business Process Management" (2005), described by reviewers as "the overarching framework for 21st century business technology" and "a must read for Process Professionals and Systems Analysts alike". Keith founded Role Modellers (www.rolemodellers.com), a Gartner BPM Cool Vendor that provided the UK National Health Service with NHS GATHER, a cloud service for large-scale collaborative innovation in healthcare. Backed by the Royal Society of Arts, Role Modellers now provides local government with a cloud service, Town Digital Hub (www.towndigitalhub.info), that helps people make lifelong personal wellness plans.