

Super Users in Action: Top-down Channel

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In the previous Article, we discussed Super Users as a filter and channel for ideas and issues identified among peers to correctly direct them up the Organization. However, not only the Super Users filter what goes from the organization to the Business Process Office, but also the other way around.

Improvement and change requests can come from different levels of the Organization-- from strategic projects, or from careful analysis of complaints. All the changes ultimately reach the team performing the related task, and the way it gets there has a definite impact on its acceptance.

The Super User is the one that participates in the improvement projects and helps to test the system. He/She is the one informed about the changes, the one who evaluates their impact on the team and decides, together with the manager, how to disseminate the information to the team. When the team is presented with a change, it should be presented in the most suitable format and have been "already tested" as much as possible. These factors when carried out will facilitate people's acceptance of the change. [1]

For that to happen there should be trust between the Manager, the Super User, and the team, because trust is a fundamental component of change management. When a change is proposed, the reaction of the people who are invited to accept and participate in it depends a great deal on the trust they have in the person proposing it.

To create and share knowledge, trust and openness are fundamental, and even though the Process Owners make an effort to be open, communicative, and emphatic, they are frequently not well received in other departments. This occurs because often they are perceived as someone imposed on the department who will interfere rather than assist. Many people instinctively go on the defensive. There are a variety of potential reactions, such as "Why do they want to interfere in our work?", or "Surely this is less effective than what we were doing.". The

Process Office may be seen as a department in a parallel world that sometimes comes up with seemingly “very good ideas”, but which, in fact, disturbs people’s work. [1]

It is more likely that people will be open with colleagues with whom they work day-to-day than with someone who is appointed to a project. People are more accepting if the one proposing corrections and changes is someone living the same process – more likely they will trust that this person knows what he/she is talking about, and know “he/she would not propose extra work since he/she will also have to do it”. If the changes are proposed by an external party it naturally generates more resistance.

Finally, I would like to reiterate of the qualities [2] that should be considered when choosing a Super User in the first place, to make sure the person who assumes this role has all the necessary qualities to make things happen. The Super User should be open to sharing knowledge and possess strong interpersonal skills, including well-honed communication skills. Being a top-down channel is actually another element of the Super User’s coaching role—being responsible to imbue a process mindset in each person on the team and adapting the message to each individual.

Author

Laila Māra Pesoa is a process and knowledge management expert with a focus on organizational learning and continuous improvement. Having started as CAPM certified by PMI (Project Management Institute) and graduated in Business Administration in Imbec Business School, Laila developed for her final Bachelor’s project the Model BPM 6x5 (BPM 6 by 5: a self-assessment model to measure and develop action plans for the company to grow in Maturity in Business Process Management (BPM)). However, her focus has gone beyond structuring the company’s processes. By combining concepts of BPM, Knowledge Management, and Project Management, she works to enable the company’s growth in Maturity in Business Process Management by developing on people a knowledge-sharing and process-oriented mindset to enable and strengthen a Continuous Improvement culture. This approach has led to the creation of the consulting firm Process-U (Process-u.com). Her Master’s studies at the University of Latvia in Strategic management & Leadership concluded with a Master’s thesis proposing the use of the Super User role (both process and knowledge specialist) to enable the company’s growth in maturity in Business

Process Management. Now Laila is an ambassador of the Super User concept, and part of the Leader Board of SunSource (<https://www.sunsource.io/>), a community dedicated to Super Users and their leaders. This goes hand-in-hand with her experience in systems development. In Cabot Corporation, Laila had a key role in the upgrade of the company's ERP system by supporting testing, progress follow-up, quality control of testing evidence, and improvement of testing scripts master for all company's process areas. Laila has led projects both in non-governmental associations and companies, in Brazil and Latvia, on National, European (Erasmus+ projects), and Global levels. She is fluent in Portuguese, English, Spanish, and Latvian.

References

[1] Rizoto-Vidala-Pesoa, L. M. The Super User role as a tool to progress in maturity in Business Process Management – a study case of Cabot Latvia. Master thesis, University of Latvia, 2017. <https://dspace.lu.lv/dspace/handle/7/36320>

[2] Rizoto-Vidala-Pesoa, L. M. The Super User Role: An Extended Concept, 2018, BPTrends, <https://www.bptrends.com/the-super-user-role-an-extended-concept/>