

## **Super Users in Action: Training (II) – Changes driven by learning**

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Continuing to talk about the training role the Super User has in its team, it is interesting to question: what type of changes does the Super User enable?

One of the big assets of the Super Users is their capacity to learn and to help people learn. Someone who is not curious and willing to learn should not become a Super User. Although in some companies, Super Users have formal training, most of the learning comes from his curiosity, cooperation with others and willingness to learn and share this knowledge. The Super User is always learning something new and sharing it with his peers.

The changes made with the Super User's support are based on the learning capacity of the people. When Super Users discuss, they are learning and becoming more capable of solving a variety of problems. Issues raised by colleagues also generate constructive discussions. People develop an attitude of "certainly someone knows enough of this to help us solve the problem", and people look for this knowledge. When the problem is solved, the natural question is "how did you discover this information?" This knowledge stimulates the team to want to learn, so that they are also able to solve the problems themselves. We should not underestimate the fact that the Super User is a peer – someone on my own team. So if he, who is one of us", can find a solution for problems, so can the rest of us.

"Change driven by authority is more efficient to organize, often more effective in the short run, and more immediately comfortable for people in many organizations. If all goes well, great results may occur; productivity and profitability may soar. So may morale, as employees recognize that 'things are getting better'. But even in this 'best of all possible authoritarian initiatives', the change effort is powerful only so long as it is

pushed. (...) A few failures or setbacks, and the energy for change might dissipate altogether.” (SENG & all., 1999)

A continuous improvement culture cannot be built based on top-down changes. Sometimes this can occur, but the implementation is complicated and requires a great deal of articulation, because the changes are not a part of the everyday experience of the individuals required to implement the changes.

It's a different scenario when the changes come from within. This situation does not necessarily make adapting to change easier, but it does provide a different motivation and perspective. A change that originates on the inside is more adapted to the person who is changing, and to the process it is improving. The change is more tailored to the occasion, and therefore generates the idea that it makes more sense than a change mandated by an authority.

On the other hand, people are only motivated to try to implement these changes if they are confident that it is possible: that they are capable of making the change, and that the environment won't reject it. A person that learns something and is able to apply it is motivated to learn something else.

“But what if the initiative is driven by learning?

To succeed, it would need to involve repeated opportunities for small actions that individuals could design, initiate, and implement themselves. First on a small scale, and then with increasingly larger numbers of people and activities, participants would articulate the goals they would like to achieve, experiment with new projects and initiatives, learn from their successes and mistakes, and talk with each other, candidly and openly, about the results. This would build commitment through participation and action. It would also naturally draw in new people who share similar values and aspirations. This type of change

process can become self-perpetuating. (...) A learning-oriented strategy aims to produce self-sustaining change in a way that continually accelerates its own growth and development. In systems terms, it operates as a 'virtuous reinforcing cycle'.” (SENG & all., 1999)

With the help of the Super User, people can discuss issues and can really try to solve them, be creative, and implement solutions. They do not always need to wait for the approval or support from an external party, such as a Process Excellence Office, because some things are

within the scope of their team. At the same time, they count on the support of someone who is well versed in the process and the system, and who can assure them that “yes, we can try this solution”. David Jirik, Senior Manager – Group Continuous Improvement (Lean) Bendigo & Adelaide Bank, said that: “Sustaining a culture of continuous improvement is about having a problem-solving culture. A deliberate sense of belief in the business that closing gaps, removing waste and solving customer issues will genuinely take the business to a better place.” (PEX, 2014)

I personally have as my professional motto “Enable people through learning”. If you want to unveil a person’s true power, you have to teach her how to know herself and her job better and better and learn how to learn. If you possess that quality, nothing will stop her from growing, and possibly aspire to be a Super User.

A future article will focus on how the Super User (especially when working on a network) channels these changes throughout the organization.

## Author

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**Laila Māra Rizoto-Vidala-Pessoa (Rizzotto Vidal Pessôa)** is a Process and Knowledge Management expert. At present, she is working in the Business Process Excellence Global Team at Cabot Corporation, where she is participating in the upgrade of the company’s ERP system and coordinating the review and migration of Global Standard Process documentation to a new platform. Laila has worked previously in a fast consumer goods company as Supply Chain Process owner, and has participated in the implementation of the SCOR model in Supply Chain processes for all Baltic Countries.

Laila has developed the BPM 6x5 (BPM 6 by 5) model, a self-assessment model that aims to Measurement of the Maturity of an Enterprise in BPM and to guide the development of action plans to move the organization forward in maturity. Maturity in BPM became then Laila’s main topic, especially from the People’s perspective: how to create in people a process thinking mindset that enables continuous improvement?

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