Frameworks Holly-Lyke- Ho-Gland

Driving Value: Why Do Organizations Use Frameworks?

A process framework is a tool organizations use to support their process and organizational improvement efforts. The most common reason that people use process frameworks is to help them understand and group processes into a classification structure to understand how work gets accomplished and the relationship between processes.

APQC recently conducted its bi-annual survey to understand how organizations leverage frameworks to provide insights on the common applications, guidance around implementation tactics, and addressing the common barriers of framework implementation.

Framework Applications

What we found is that the uses for frameworks hasn't drastically changed a lot in the last couple of years (Figure 1).

Top Applications for Process Frameworks

90.9%
Process Discovery and Standardization

50.9%
Performance Improvement

41.8%
Technology Implementation

36.4%
Content Management

28.2%
Benchmarking

Figure 1

What's the Same?

Process frameworks help organizations foster consistency, streamline the discovery of new processes, and play a crucial role in organizing data and content. So, it's no surprise that the clear majority of organizations continue to use them to support their process discovery, standardization, and performance improvement efforts.

Process Discovery and Standardization

Frameworks are immensely useful for the fundamental components of process discovery, such as identifying the "as is" state and documenting processes in maps. In other words, most organizations use frameworks for their primary purpose: as a reference model that they can use to understand their processes and create a model or structure that ensures work is being accomplished efficiently and monitored consistently.

For example, Corporación Multi Inversiones (CMI) had an imperative to shift their organization and culture to one that manages through end-to-end processes. So, after it prioritized the end-to-end processes for development and outlined its governance structure it engaged its process owners, business process leaders, and superusers begin process development with a day-long mapping workshop. During the workshop the team mapped it's as-is version of the end-to-end process and compares it to a framework to see how it matches the actual taxonomy. After mapping the process, the team then looked at best practices and benchmarking resources—because it had alignment with the external framework—to determine the best fit KPIs for the entire process.

Performance Improvement

Organizations use frameworks as the structure for managing their improvement efforts—including the development of measurement dashboards and the structure for collating information for their internal and external audits.

For example Sword Group, uses a process framework as the foundation for conducting gap analysis to identify and prioritize improvement opportunities. The team uses level-1 process categories to determine which processes are included in the assessment and used a framework as external point of reference—focusing on— for the gathering information in five measurement categories (each with their own maturity scale) to evaluate performance.

1. **Process Maturity:** measures the overall design and effectiveness of execution.
2. **Business Alignment:** measures the gap between the importance of the process to meet its objectives and its effective maturity.
3. **Accountability:** quantifies the governance of the process in the organization with identified roles and individuals held Responsible, Accountable or Contributing and Informed (RACI).
4. **Risk Management**: evaluates the ability of the organization to structurally identify, value, and respond to external unforeseen events.
5. **Performance Measurement:** captures the evaluation of the process outcome and its resource consumption to gauge the effectiveness of the process.

This information is then collated into a maturity scorecard. The scorecard in combination with the detailed information gathered during interviews helps the team develop their full assessment of the organization's capabilities and prioritize improvement opportunities.

What's different?
The biggest shift in framework applications is the ever-increasing role frameworks play in technology implementations. Organizations use frameworks to optimize their process for technologies like automation and ERP implementations. Or as the foundation of their capabilities mapping to chart systems to processes.

As we discussed in a previous article frameworks can help organizations speed up the time of automation projects without sacrificing sustainability of the bots. Automation is best fit for processes that are high-volume, transactional with numerous repetitive tasks. By their very nature these processes are not typically unique, lack high-levels of variations or exceptions, and only need to perform at industry standard, like those found in frameworks.

Additionally, Cargill used a process framework as a component of its process team's work for a ERP transformation. The process team uses an end-to-end process framework to standardize process language and identify process owners. They also use the framework to educate leaders in the ERP engagements on what it means to look at the business from a process point of view and that while they are functional owners most of the processes are cross-functional.

An automotive organization used a framework to align the business and IT in transformation efforts. The transformation team used a process framework e foundation for mapping the organization's capabilities. The framework provided a process-focused foundation that allowed the transformation council to draw connections between the organization's capabilities—including its processes, organizational structures, systems, tools, knowledge, and people—and its strategic investments. For the Agile coach, the goal was to prioritize the capabilities and processes that drive KPI improvements. Additionally, mapping applications into business capabilities provide a better way to focus on key investments and reduce the number of fragmented projects.

Conclusion
Overall, the uses of process frameworks remain relatively constant. Even the growing use of applying frameworks to technology implementation is not anything new, just a more pressing need for the business. As business needs and the role of process practitioners continue to evolve, they continue to find ways to apply frameworks to help execute their work. Because ultimately, frameworks help organizations save time and improve the efficiency of their projects by serving as:
1. A list of all the common process elements found in most companies that organizations can use as building blocks.
2. A standardized taxonomy or language that the organization can use when referring to its processes which helps cut through the dissonance when organizations use varying terms and naming conventions among groups internally.

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