

Super Users in Action: Documentation

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Laila Māra Rizoto-Vidala-Pesoa

As we discussed in the previous article [1], the Super User role has different dimensions:

- Knowledge Management
- Internal documentation
- Training
- Channel and filter for improvements

In this Article we will discuss maintaining Internal Documentation, which usually is not the most fun task to do. But if basically anyone with the knowledge and patience can do it, why should it be done by the Super User?

There are two main reasons why the Super User should be the one responsible for updating the department's internal documentation:

1. As we defined before [2], the Super User is the department's process and knowledge specialist [3], with the mission of putting the processes in service of the team. To really have processes serving the people - and not people caught up in non-efficient processes - it is fundamental to assure that people both understand the process they are performing and develop a process-oriented thinking. The way the content is delivered, for example, on onboard training, highly influences the way people will look at their work and cooperate with other departments.
2. The Super User needs tools to deliver all the knowledge and information about the processes in a way that people will want to use it and will find it easy to use.

Things that the Super User should bear in mind when developing training documentation:

- Develop one main document that links to all the rest: even if you need to have multiple documents because of different types of information, having a main one that provides the structure makes it easier for you to maintain the information updated and for the newcomer to find what he/she needs. I usually call this document the "Survival Guide", since it helps the new employee to "survive" on the first weeks on the new job.
- Use the "Survival Guide" to develop "process thinking": provide an overview of the macro-process or processes where the person executing this work is inserted. This overview can be a simple diagram of the main steps with colors indicating the responsibilities. If the process is too complex, a view of the process in this employee's perspective can also be included, with more detail only in the tasks he/she executes.

- Use the process itself as a “table of contents”: if you use the process steps as the chapters of your document/training, the newcomer gets used immediately as to what the process looks like.
- Refer to any global standard procedure the company may have: Do not duplicate in the training materials content that is already described in the Global documents. Instead, make reference to them. Provide links to all Global procedures written and approved by the Business Process Office that are relevant to your team..
- Link to everyday work: provide links to any data base or document used in everyday work, and that contains records or operational information that should be maintained. By doing this, you don't need to maintain in the training documentation itself information that may change frequently - you refer to where this information is already kept.

Last, but not least, the Super User should use the “Survival Guide” from the first day a new employee starts in the company. Instead of printing a series of procedures and producing many presentations in PowerPoint, the trainer should use the “Survival Guide” as much as possible. With this, the new employee gets familiar with its structure and will make use of it whenever he/she needs information. This avoids a series of 4 potential problems:

- Avoids giving too much information at once and with little context: frequently the Global procedures, especially if they describe a macro-process, are too complex for a neophyte, and need to be put in context. The “Survival Guide” gives a clear reference to which procedures are related to each specific activity, as well as a short explanation of what should be taken into account and in which situation to consider this or that document.
- Avoids limiting the training to only a few procedures: especially in the departments with many procedures, there is the tendency of choosing only some of them for “mandatory reading”, risking that people will ignore all the others. By providing reference to all these procedures, the “Survival Guide” helps people to at least know they are available when needed.
- Avoids duplicating information: when training is given with a lot of support material, people's tendency is to print them and make their own notes, and then refer to them instead of the standard. This limits the person's in depth knowledge as well as certainty that the information is updated--personal notes are not as complete as the original procedures, and are not kept up to date. Only the Official documents have the most updated information. If, however, the person is trained with a “Survival Guide” which is constantly updated by the Super User and in which everything is written, there will be less duplicated and obsolete information around.

Bibliography

[1] <https://www.bptrends.com/super-users-in-action-knowledge-management/>

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[3] Rizoto-Vidala-Pesoa, L. M., Kuzņecova, O. *The Role of the Super User in Achieving Business Process Management Maturity*. Information Technology and Management Science. December 2017, vol. 20, pp. 74–78. <https://content.sciendo.com/view/journals/itms/20/1/article-p74.xml> ©2017.

[4] 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>

Author

Laila Māra Rizoto-Vidala-Pesoa (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?

Contact Laila at lailamrvp@gmail.com

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/laila-m%C4%81ra-pesoa-pess%C3%B4a-13570625/>