

July 2, 2007

*I am often asked how Process Improvement (PI) compares to Organizational Development (OD). OD by definition is implementing positive organizational change to help a business achieve its desired future state. PI should act as a core concept or anchor for any OD effort. The following article outlines why.*

## **Why process improvement should be at the core of any business-based change strategy:**

Can you name something that you do every day – at work or at home – that is not a process? Likely you can't! Brushing your teeth in the morning, driving to work, holding a meeting, receiving a customer call, analyzing a report – these are all processes – a series of steps that, when followed, achieve a desired end result.

Think about it – your employees are in control of processes at your work. The success of those processes is dependent on the human resources of your company and how well they perform them.

So it stands to reason that a team-based, process improvement methodology is a highly effective way to drive any positive, business based change strategy. Why?

- Everything in business is a process that has room for improvement
- Every employee owns at least one process and has a vested interest in improving their process for their own benefit and the benefit of their employer.
- Every process has a customer–supplier relationship at its core. The customer can be internal to the company or external. A company can only satisfy its external customer when the chain of internal customer–supplier relationships is strong.
- A strong internal chain also eliminates internal barriers between departments and business units.
- Empowered employees with a common process improvement focus create powerful teams with solid ownership and commitment.
- When employees own the improvement solution, implementation success can be guaranteed.
- A team-based process improvement culture or way of doing business will generate competitive advantage for any business.

### ***New Food for Thought Feature***

This week, I am pleased to announce a new feature that will become standard part of Food for Thought – a “Free Advice Column”. Many of you have asked me some thought provoking questions in the past – “Scott, I have been thinking about getting different departments in my company to work together better, but I don't know where to start. What would you recommend?” “I have invested in Six Sigma, I have Master Black Belts and Black Belts trained but my employees hide when they walk

into the factory. How can I get all of my employees involved in our process improvement efforts?" "We seem to have meeting after meeting and never get any real improvement done. What are we doing wrong?"

Do any of these sound familiar to you? In the spirit of making life simpler, it occurred to me that, instead of answering these questions individually, I could answer questions like these through Food for Thought and possibly offer many of you assistance at once. So, send me the number one issue (in the areas of business process improvement, productivity, employee motivation, employee development, or goal achievement) that is keeping you from achieving your desired future state and I will provide my thoughts (free consulting) in upcoming issues.