

## ... DEFINE A PROCESS-BASED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

### SYSTEM DEFINITION

#### - PREPARATION

Decide on the eventual scope of the system.

Decide on a presentation format and structure.

Decide whether to use specialised software. (Do not be constrained by artificial limitations such as single page only, size of text fields available)

Ensure that you can make a change once (for example, changing a Role name or document file path) to affect all relevant records.

Be aware of the potential benefits - the initial definition of the system can highlight weaknesses in the current structure and performance, and the published system can serve as a useful induction and training tool for new staff.

#### - PLAN THE STRUCTURE

Start at the top level and work down. ("Running the organisation" is a process)

Group processes logically (eg Planning and Organising / Getting and Doing Work / Managing Resources / Managing People / Reviewing and Improving)

Use a simple indexing system for processes and groups.

#### - DEFINE THE SYSTEM

Ensure that the system will be clearly understood by all who might use it. (This requires a logical structure and a clear description)

Make relevant documents and sources of information easily accessible.

Control the updating of referenced documents.

Design the system to make it easy for a newcomer to find required information, and for the system manager to make changes without undue effort.

Ensure that job titles are consistent and refer to them within process descriptions.

Make links to document templates, detailed procedures and even external websites an intrinsic part of the process definitions.

If relevant, highlight risks, performance standards and competencies required for specific tasks.

Be consistent.

#### - MAKE THE SYSTEM DEFINITION AVAILABLE

Publish a suitable description of the system (in electronic format if relevant)

This does not mean simply publishing a series of unrelated "pictures" of flowcharts. (A good system needs a dynamic (hyperlinked) presentation with a simple, logical structure, which integrates all the relevant components)

Ideally, provide more than one method of navigating to any required data.

Make it easy for a "reader" to find the information they need, whether by accessing an outline "system picture", an index of processes or an index of documents, or even by selecting his or her job title and "filtering" the relevant tasks to give a "job description".

#### - IMPLEMENT THE SYSTEM DEFINITION

Inform and train all those who will be affected.

Review usage and performance.

Revise the system / provide further training if necessary.

**PROCESS DEFINITION****- PREPARATION**

Be clear why you are defining the process. (Who will use the definition, and for what?)

Get the level of detail right. (A reader should be able to scan and understand a process definition in, say, 30 seconds. This means no more than 2-3 pages of A4)

Assume competence in the user. (If they are not competent, train them)

Be consistent.

Apply a few basic standards and simple conventions, and stick to them.

Remember that a process definition is not (just) a flowchart. (Also consider reference documents and records / resource requirements / other influencing factors for how (well) the process will perform)

Identify key stages in a process (if relevant).

Identify the influences and constraints which may affect how it can work.

Identify the skills and knowledge required.

Identify the other resources required.

Identify one or more individuals who know the detail of the process. (Drafting a process description can be done either in a group or by drafting a description with an individual who knows the process and then asking others to comment on the draft)

**- DEFINITION**

Involve and communicate with all those who will be affected.

Decide on a "process owner" (who will be "accountable" for the success of the process).

Clarify the objectives of the process.

Identify the (intended) outcomes.

Define the "scope" (where it starts and ends, and the boundaries).

Decide how success will be measured.

Define the "normal" sequence of events first.

Then cater for the "what ifs" and exceptional conditions.

**DEFINE A TASK**

Be concise.

Use active verb / noun format to describe a task ("what is done").

Add extra description for "how it is done" if necessary.

Refer to supporting "documents" (eg forms, Work Instructions, spreadsheets, web pages) or to a sub-process if more detail is required.

Identify who is involved (job functions, not individuals) - only one Responsible role, other roles may Assist, be Consulted and be Informed.

Concentrate on the normal flow. (Start by defining the process as it normally happens (or should happen))

If possible, avoid decisions (ie branches and loops). (You can often build an alternative action/route into the description of a task ("how it is done"), or even define a task as "If xxx do yyy" - if it is not "xxx", any "normal" reader should ignore the task)

Avoid repetition. (Say as little as is required to get the message across)