

COMPARISON OF WORK PROCESS IMPROVEMENT (WPI) TO OTHER METHODS

We designed the Work Process Improvement (WPI) tool to close what we saw as a gap in the available process improvement tools for businesses. The problem was that the main stream approaches are costly, time consuming, delayed in producing results, unreliable in converting training into actions and lacked a sustainable approach. Having used these methodologies ourselves we set out to create a different approach. We went back and studied over 200 improvement projects that had delivered £80m of savings and asked "Of all the tools we have studied, which tools have the greatest impact?" The results of that study form the basis for WPI.

WPI offers a company a continuous improvement methodology that is lean, affordable, behaviourally sound and produces money saving results quickly. This approach allows leaders to get traction to organically grow the continuous improvement culture within their business without having to force it upon the troops.

| Methodology | WPI | Six Sigma | Lean | Theory of Constraints |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Theory | <i>Tackle Business Problems</i> | Reduce Variation | Remove Waste | Manage Constraints |
| Application | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Key Processes 2. Business Case 3. Work Process 4. Customer Analysis 5. Data Collection 6. Data Analysis 7. Process Improvement | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define 2. Measure 3. Analyse 4. Improve 5. Control | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define Value 2. Identify Value Stream 3. Create Flow 4. Develop Pull 5. Perfection | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify Constraint 2. Exploit Constraint 3. Subordinate Processes 4. Elevate Constraint 5. Repeat the Cycle |
| Training Delivery | <i>7 Half day workshops</i> | 5 weeks training | Kaizen events - 1 week hands on and training | 1 week training |
| Focus | <i>Business Focus</i> | Problem Focused | Flow Focused | System Constraints |
| Assumptions | <i>Business willing to change. Leadership is engaged. Candidates will maintain their full time jobs. Tool set required to fix business problems should be limited to maintain focus and deliver a return.</i> | A Problem Exists. Figures and numbers are valued. System output improves if variation in all processes is reduced. | Waste removal will improve business performance. Many small improvements are better than systems analysis. | Emphasis on speed and volume. Uses existing systems. Process interdependence. |
| Primary Effect | <i>Reduced Business Issues</i> | Uniform Process Output | Reduced Flow Time | Fast Throughput |
| Secondary Effects | <i>Less waste. Increased throughput. Improved compliance. Improved quality. Increase in candidate confidence. Increase in business acumen. Increase in understanding how behaviour influences processes.</i> | Less Waste. Fast Throughput. Less inventory. Fluctuation - performance measures for managers. Improved quality. | Less Variation. Uniform output. Less Inventory. New accounting system. Flow - performance measures for managers. Improved quality. | Less inventory/waste. Throughput cost accounting. Throughput - performance measurement system. Improved quality. |
| Criticisms | <i>To eliminate the criticisms we have used those tools that produce results with the least amount of disruption to the daily business.</i> | System interaction not considered. Process improved independently. Training takes major investment (time/money). | Statistical or system analysis not valued. Kaizen events - time and resources | Minimal worker input. Data analysis not valued. |

Was written using "How to compare Six Sigma, Lean and Theory of Constraints", by Dave Nave, Quality Progress, March 2002 as a source.