Project Remedies Inc.

Improving Performance:
Basic Concepts and Foundational Beliefs

Using Game-Changing Capabilities from Project Remedies Inc.

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Introduction: Improving Processes Improves Performance

Focusing on processes improves an organization's performance.

When you ask a worker "Are you working efficiently?" the worker looks at you as if you are nuts. "Of course," he/she says. But that's the wrong question. The question isn't whether the worker is working efficiently; the question is whether the team or organization is working efficiently. How would you know? By capturing and looking at the metrics. Measure what you manage.

Your organization has been doing what it does for a long time. When a new order comes in, they know what to do to fill the order. When a new employee is hired, it does all the things it is supposed to do to on-board the new employee. When a government person wants to fill a need, the acquisition organization goes through their process. The people know the steps in each process. At one company we know, when we first met them, they said they "know their processes . . . . . but they haven't written them down." There are lots of benefits of writing them down, using them within the organization and capturing the performance metrics.

One company, I think Florida Power and Light, brought in a major accounting firm to document their processes. They copied them, put them in 3-ring binders, and brought everyone in for training. As the people were leaving the training, they all said: "Yes sir" and "Yes ma'am." As the management watched them walk out, they realized that they had no idea what they people were actually going to do, let alone remember the following Monday. Training alone doesn't do it. You need to use a system like our ActionProgram Manager Plus to put the processes into production and track the work.

Operational efficiency and speeding up tempo are obviously benefits. Another is "building confidence." If your workers are doing what they do the most efficient way, they have confidence that they are doing it the right way. This makes for happier workers and reduces turnover. And if your customers know that your people are fulfilling their requests in a standard, consistent manner which has been optimized, if the people the customers interface with are all giving the same answers, your customers have confidence that your organization is performing consistently and hopefully optimally. They think you have your act together and that there is a good chance that their request will be completed on-time and on-budget. Of course, if your people are not fulfilling requests in an organized, standardized manner, if each is doing their own thing, the opposite is true. Your customers are telling each other your organization is out of control and they do not have confidence.

One of the things we realized is that nothing an IT organization does is managed uniquely. For each type of attack, there should be a cyber remediation process. Software development has their Software Development Life-Cycle. "DevOps" is a process, the goal being to get new code into production faster. On-boarding a new employee is a series of 20 – 30 tasks. Facility moves at Ford involves over 120 tasks performed by different people in different organizations. And there are many other examples.

On the following pages, we outline how we think about these topics. The first page talks about "Basic Concepts and Foundational Beliefs." The second page talk more about how these concepts and beliefs are realized in ActionProgram Manager Plus.

Basic Concepts and Foundational Beliefs

A process is a clear plan detailing the steps that must be taken and the sequence in which they are performed to achieve the desired outcome.
A process is a measurable, outcome-based model, focused on performance.
The process is management's statement of the right way something should be done.

Your people know how to do what is needed. They have been doing what they do for a long time.
When someone leaves, that institutional knowledge is lost. When a new person joins the team, their learning curve is steep because they do not have this knowledge.

If every project is unique, there is no right way to do it.
If every project is unique, there is no way to compare performance by different organizations.
If each request is being done differently, the customer thinks your organization doesn't know what they are doing and it is hit or miss as to whether their project will finish on time and on budget.
Managing projects uniquely does nothing to help the organization improve performance.

Everyone in the enterprise needs to be involved in the success of the enterprise.
Everyone needs to be involved for the enterprise to be successful.
Each person needs to understand the role they play for the enterprise to be successful.
Each person needs to do what they are supposed to do and when they are supposed to do it for the enterprise to be successful.
If everyone is involved and know what they are supposed to do and when, they hold themselves accountable.
Focusing workers on what you want them working on, i.e. resource management, is a key to success.

If you don't manage projects, they won't finish.
Project management is not something done by a few people in an office over there.
Understanding resource utilization is key to finishing projects on time and on budget.

Measure what you manage. Leadership wants access to the detail, when they need it. How long did each project take? How much did it cost?
A goal is "metrics-based decision making" vs. "opinion-based decision making."
Leadership needs to be notified immediately when something relevant happens, in time to take action.

The system has to be really easy to use in order to be successful enterprise wide.
Most projects are managed by team leaders, not trained project managers. The system has to be easy enough for team leaders to use.
Storing processes in a system and using the processes to generate project plans eliminates the need to train people on the processes. All the worker needs to know is how to status the task assigned.

An integrated solution is better than standalone solutions.
The application should connect processes, projects, resources and cost (labor, expenses, and asset cost), and then interface with other applications such as the change management and asset management.
Automate as much as possible.

About ActionProgram Manager Plus

Supports page 1, Basic Concepts and Foundational Beliefs.
APM Plus connects processes, project plans, resources and cost.
In order to project resource requirements, need to know what projects / tasks people are working on.
APM Plus forms a central repository of all processes and all projects.
APM Plus automates as much as possible, making it easier for everyone to use.

Transparency. Improves situational understanding. No need to wait for PowerPoint slides.
Leadership can view the status of any project at any time.
Everyone is looking at the same data. The data is current up to the last entry.
Makes the processes visible to management . . . . . and everyone else.
Based on classic earned value management concepts, made easy for smaller projects.

Automate with workflow: The process is used to generate the project plan.
- Gives you consistency. Standardization. Performance is measurable.
- People hold themselves accountable. Communicates what each person has to do, when they have to do it, and how much time they have to do it in, and then track, did they do it when they were supposed to do it, in the time allowable?
- Gives the customer confidence that you have your organization has its act together.
- Metrics captured automatically as workers status their tasks.
- Integration with the Remedy IT Service Management suite saves time and reduces errors.

Automate Exception Notifications in time to take action.
- Robust "Escalation and Notification" Capability.
- During Implementation, a "Hierarchy of Notifications" is defined.

To make it easy, do not have to search from form to form:
- Everything about the project plan is in the Project record.
- Everything about each task in the project plan is in the Task record.
- Everything about a Proposed Project is in the Proposed Project record.

The key team meeting is the weekly meeting. The team Lead uses the Project Inventory to drill down and review all of the projects and the current state of each task.
The key report is the Project Details Report. It gives you the metrics needed to improve each process, and pinpoints obstacles. Used to hold people accountable. Should be reviewed monthly.
Monthly, process owners should review the Project Details Reports to see if the process makes sense, and to see where the issues are.

Runs on a Remedy environment, standalone or integrated with the ITSM Suite. No new hardware or software.
BMC Remedy AWS Cloud, already FedRAMP Certified. Already has an ATO to run on a .mil network.