

Streamlining Business Processes

SMB Quick Reference Series

10 Common Pitfalls to be Avoided

Market, competitive, and customer pressures are relentless. Each requires businesses to seek new areas of unique advantage and cost savings in order to remain competitive. Process improvement and re-engineering can provide great advantage. No longer the domain of large enterprises, such endeavors have shown to return new opportunity to SMBs.

Unfortunately process re-engineering and improvement generally suffer from a pervasive recognition that such activities haven't completely delivered on promised benefits. Additionally realized benefits seem fleeting, or not sustainable over the long haul. In general, this perception has contributed to cautiousness when adopting new technology or tackling new process improvement initiatives. Individual project studies over the past ten years, by organizations such as Forrester Research, the Gartner Group, and businesses, indicate that the process re-engineering/improvement initiatives weren't bad but that the problem lay more in the implementation. Unfortunately, many businesses succumb to these common pitfalls:

- **Disconnecting Process from Strategy:** Every process improvement/re-engineering effort (and their individual processes) must be aligned to the business strategy and objectives.
- **Process Fragmentation:** Processes that are incomplete or disconnected from complimentary processes, creating additional time, complexity, and cost to running the business; not to mention a lowering of customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- **Over-Processing:** The creation and formalization of overly-complex and time-consuming processes when a more simple approach would suffice.
- **Inappropriate Authorities:** Giving individuals or organizations too little or too much process-based authority, thereby creating redundancy, executional confusion, poor process execution or routing, and misplaced internal and external expectations.
- **Loose Controls/Accountability:** Even when the company or organization gets the process 'right,' often the process breaks down in the presence of non-existent or loose controls and accountability. This leads to confusion and lack of process adherence/stability.
- **Over-reaching:** When businesses embark on process improvement or re-engineering efforts there is a tendency to want to 'boil the ocean.' By trying such an approach, projects become 'bloated,' costs escalate, and people lose interest in the benefits they could receive.
- **Under-Training:** The process can only enforce what is taught and modeled. Businesses that assume that newly minted process re-engineering/improvement efforts will automatically reap benefits without training (and retraining) run the risk of project failure.
- **Picking the Wrong Tools:** Often businesses chose the tool based on cost, irrespective of its suitability in meeting the process re-engineering/improvement initiative(s). The end result is often poor adherence, process 'gaps,' increased time and cost, and lowered overall benefit to the company or organization.
- **Relying Upon the "Big Bang":** Process improvement/re-engineering is a constant within every organization. Unfortunately, most organizations treat such endeavors as large, 'one-time' projects – leaving the next set of improvements for the next 'big bang.' Re-engineering/improving processes need to be a part of everyday life in the business.
- **Staying 'In House':** Businesses often choose to use their own resources to undertake and manage such projects – pulling valuable resources away from the core business. Likewise, businesses tend to view their processes as being isolated from their demand or supply chain partners. Both perspectives hold back process re-engineering/improvement success and resulting business benefit.

What's an SMB to do? Eliminate each of the pitfalls and reduce re-engineering/improvement business risk in one easy step. The SMB Suite, by NextCorp, overcomes each of the above challenges through proven implementation processes and templates, state of the art technologies, scalable and integrated process platforms, 'always available' end-user support, customer-tested expertise, and all-inclusive low monthly subscription pricing – specifically designed for the SMB.

You can get out of trying to figure out how to improve your processes for greater advantage and benefit. You can get back to running your business and taking care of your customers. The SMB Suite is your answer to continued, cost effective, and beneficial process re-engineering/improvement.

You can streamline your processes, technology, and budgets in one decision. Visit: <http://www.getsmb.com> or call 1-800-525-6398. You'll be on your way to becoming a 'best practice' SMB.

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