



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

SUCCESS FRAMEWORK

ESSENTIAL PRACTICES FOR LEADERSHIP: A checklist to assess leadership focus on, and commitment to, transforming your organization and getting big results.

Management time and attention is the most significant constraint within any organization. What leadership focuses on is what the entire organization will focus on. If management cultivates a disciplined focus on the strategies that will yield the biggest return on investment, it can steer the entire organization towards stellar performance. Likewise, as leadership engages staff actually doing the work for solutions, a culture of on-going improvement occurs.

Unfortunately, it is all too common to observe management teams that lack clarity, introduce too many initiatives, focus on everything at once, react to the squeaky wheel, lack feedback loops from the frontline, and don't understand the organization's goal. Not surprisingly, their organizations can run adrift and languish in endless change with minimal results. The culture is more about crisis management and playing "whack a mole" as compared to driving towards clear and better outcomes for their customers, employees, and taxpayers alike.

The following practices will help leadership stay focused on the goal and the highest-leverage strategies needed to achieve it. This focus will help to align resources while also empowering every level of the organization to find ways to improve their own work in a way that aligns with the ultimate goal. While on their face the practices seem common sense—common sense doesn't equate to common practice. If done consistently they will serve as the backbone for systemic improvement. Leadership teams contemplating movement towards a culture of on-going and focused improvement should consider if they are ready to commit to the following practices.

PREPARE

1. Gain sufficient knowledge of operational improvement tools and principles in order to lead by example and provide the right support to the organization.
 - a. Hold leadership workshop to understand key improvement concepts and methods
 - b. Select a system to apply key concepts (learn by doing)
2. Avoid jumping to more resources, employee training, automation or reorganization as improvement strategies. Focus on finding hidden capacity and using it to do more of the right work.

START

1. Understand how all the individual parts of the organization interact from a system perspective to ensure that changes and improvement activities increase overall system performance.
 - a. Identify major systems (not organizational hierarchy) within the organization
 - b. Complete a system map for selected system (includes system goal, high level work flow, critical activity and rules to improve performance)
 - c. Develop a FAST diagram to provide more detail on how the system operates including work time/elapsed time and value analyses
2. Pay attention to the right system and operational measures and ignore the white noise generated from too many measures or normal variation.
 - a. Develop system measures based on volume, quality and cost metrics (to be reviewed quarterly)

- b. Develop an operational dashboard of metrics that support system measures but also translate to day to day work (to be reviewed weekly)
 - c. Set operational targets to drive towards
- 3. Identify and create urgency for the tactical execution of key improvement strategies that occur in iterative and short-term time limits (preferably eight weeks).
 - a. Create a portfolio of 3-5 key strategies (limiting the number of strategies increases focus and clarifies what is impacting performance)
 - b. Develop project plans for each key strategy with the strategy owner, team members, deliverables/milestones, dates, etc.
- 4. Create governance structures and identify resources that will actively manage strategies and monitor the quality and volume of change being introduced into the organization.
 - a. Complete a project charter to reinforce accountability and structure – roles, responsibilities, meetings, status, reporting, etc.
 - b. Create IT governance structure and processes to ensure leadership focusing automation on critical activities that will improve system performance
- 5. Communicate regularly to all levels of the organization the goal, targets, strategies and key performance measures.
 - a. Develop and actively manage a communication plan (targeting different stakeholders)
 - b. Create and tell “your story” supported by measures, data and strategies
- 6. Engage staff by asking for their ideas through structured feedback loops that help uncover low-cost solutions.
 - a. Review strategy and process maps with staff
 - b. Brainstorm quick improvements “what can we do today”?
 - c. Develop business case to quickly review improvement ideas
 - d. Monitor team performance and replicate best practices
- 7. Engage business partners, stakeholders and clients by asking for their ideas through structured feedback loops.

SUSTAIN

- 1. Stay relentlessly focused on the goal and the few changes that will yield the biggest results—a practice that requires leadership to say no to the barrage of ideas that come across the desk of management daily.
 - a. Inventory current projects or initiatives and determine what can be eliminated, delayed or delegated
- 2. Meet weekly with the management team to review the status of strategies, tactics, and measures.
 - a. Develop a workflow tracking system with a dashboard to highlight strategies and tactics behind schedule and focus meeting discussion on those items
 - b. Review regularly the impact of actions taken on system and operational measures and progress to achieve targets
- 3. Remove obstacles that impede rapid execution of identified strategies and tactics.
- 4. Create a culture of on-going improvement through training all levels of the organization on basic improvement principles, terminology, and tools.
- 5. Develop in-house expertise in operational improvements, project management, and data analysis.

Creating high-performing organizations is not an endeavor to taken lightly. Without a full commitment from leadership to support and focus on the effort inertia will take over and mediocre performance will prevail. These practices will make or break the effort implementing all of them at once is impossible. Rather, leadership should create a deliberate strategy on how to attack each of these items in turn and continually evaluate how to improve them.

MANAGEMENT TIME AND ATTENTION

Leadership requires that we spend our time and attention on the right things. By default, this also requires that we stop spending our time and attention on the wrong things—something which is often much more difficult. Practices that needlessly consume time and attention include:

- Stop making changes until you can define the goal and related measures
- Stop chasing every improvement and focus on the leverage point that will improve the entire system
- Stop launching strategies until there is a complete solution and operational plan
- Stop managing primarily by policy and written narrative as compared to managing the flow of work
- Stop believing that more money, more reorganization, more training, or more automation will solve core problems
- Stop introducing multiple initiatives into your organization
- Stop blaming people and, instead, focus on managing flow and resolving core conflicts