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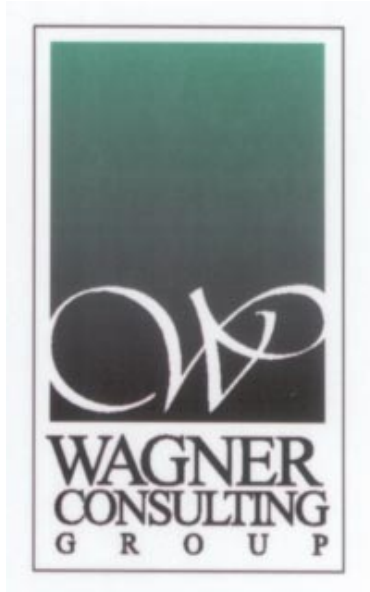
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Focus

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Improving Productivity

Improving business productivity is one of the easiest ways to boost profits. Productivity gains, as most of us use the term, do not require hiring more employees or increasing sales or raising prices. Instead, productivity enhancement programs seek to use existing resources more efficiently. Necessary precursors to better productivity include teamwork and "process improvement."

|----- Individuals -----| |----- Systems -----|

Respect > Trust > Mutual Support > Process Improvement > Productivity Gains

Also, excellent service to customers requires employees who respect and support each other.

Process Improvement Primer

Shift your perspective. Look sideways. Consider processes.

Expand your viewpoint from just a task-oriented, up and down vertical flow to include a horizontal perspective. This helps you to think globally and spot opportunities to improve your connection with your customers.

When you shift your focus from tasks to processes, your business perspective also shifts - often to a view similar to the customer's.

- A Vertical perspective mimics the traditional Chain of Command.
- A Horizontal perspective looks across processes and departments.
- Focus on process outcomes. Consider the customer impact.

Rethink company processes. Are they efficient? Outdated? Clunky?

- The best processes are simple and lean.
- Ensure current tasks actually add value.

The connections between processes are often a source of miscommunication or delay. These boundaries are hand-off zones. Just as in a track relay race, valuable time is lost if you drop the baton. Therefore, process connection points deserve careful attention to foster clear communication and to ensure the "product" delivered fits the needs of the next user.

Bill Gates wrote in his recent book: "A lousy process will consume ten times as many hours as the work itself requires. A good process will eliminate the wasted time." Amen.

Create a company culture that rewards teamwork

A horizontal perspective encompasses multiple functions and work groups, and helps build teamwork. Encourage cooperation in all phases of production.

1. Planning

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1. Planning

- Involve cross-functional teams to identify roadblocks and achieve buy-in.
- Keep goals aligned, and remember the ultimate goal is a happy customer.

2. Production

- Maintain integrity: Do what you say you will do.
- Expect and demand high performance from each other.

3. Managing

- Use frequent and meaningful performance measurements.
- Proactively manage the process, and address deficiencies immediately.

Tom Wagner

We help clarify options so our clients
identify the Right Questions
and solve the Right Problems.

Call us at 800 422-1374 to learn more.

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