EngageProcess

Seven Steps for a Successful **Process Workshop**

Whitepaper

Introduction

Process workshops are a common method for involving and empowering people in change programmes and process improvement. In workshops, the teams participate in exploring the current way of working, or the AS-IS and mapping and designing an alternative way of working that better fits the goals of the organization and the services to customers, often called the TO-BE.

This whitepaper gives seven key steps for running effective process workshops. They can be applied in traditional workshops without the use of Engage Process. However, the Engage Process Modeler, which is part of the Engage Process Platform, was designed specifically for doing real-time process workshops with the operational team where they participate and can reach people-driven change without the need for specific training.

The seven steps for a successful process workshop are:

1. Set up of first workshop and communication of goals
2. Map the current situation
3. Check the As-Is while back at work and gather improvement suggestions
4. A second session: Further exploration
5. Discuss general improvement ideas
6. Create the To-Be situation
7. Celebrate and implement

1. Set up the first workshop and communication of goals

Select a process that matters

Select a process that is customer facing, and where, in line with the organization's goals, improvements are needed.

Set up a brainstorming space

If the brainstorm is conducted in a meeting room, then make it informal. Make sure that the team can get close to the board or screen that will be used for the discussion.

Provide a large board or screen when using a digital tool

A projector or "very big" screen can be used to display a large process map.

Have two people lead the workshop

Often four fields of expertise come together during a session: workshop facilitation, process management, domain knowledge and the operation of any tools. Tasks are often divided to one moderator and modeller.

NOTE: The workshop advisors do not need extensive domain knowledge. The content of the discussion will be provided by the participants.

Set a maximum of 8 to 12 participants

Ensure that all roles within the process (i.e. the operating staff), from beginning to end, participate or are directly represented. Pay attention that there are not too many managers and indirect staff members, not even from IT or Quality . Otherwise, employees can feel that they are being watched.

Organize the first session for a time period of 3 to 4 hours

This provides sufficient time for an initial inventory of the process. Any longer than this can make it difficult for groups to focus.

Let the owner of the process do the kickoff

The manager or owner of the process does two important things:
1. Ask the team for help to improve the process in line with company and customer goals. Be specific if possible. Service time, first time right, costs etc. are important examples.

2. Empower the team!
Commit that you will follow up on their suggestions. In addition: if possible it is important to share with the teams that no jobs will lost because of improvements!

Ask a participating manager, if present, to limit him or herself to the main steps

Show respect for the knowledge that the team has about the detail steps.

Always start from the current situation: the AS IS

Do this especially when you want to map a new situation. Explore the current situation first, so the team can better understand the existing situation, bottlenecks, etc.

2. Map the AS IS situation

The team is present. The projector is on or the brown paper is hanging on the wall. What's next? Start with the most obvious. Map the process with each other, step by step.

Describe WHAT happens

Use simple language and active form and make it immediately visible as a process step. Use a verb and a noun. So: 'customer call' or 'call the customer'. Keep the initial description concise. So, don't describe HOW the task will be done.

Directly add a role to the activity

Make sure the role most relevant to the step is telling the story.

- How long does it take? Make note of the processing time.
- How often does this occur? Note the frequency.
- At which moment? Note whether the action occurs immediately after the previous step, or the same day, a day later, or X times per week

The discussion of processing time, frequency and delays are important for **two reasons:**

It makes participants think about what happens in this process step and whether there are relevant exceptions to take into consideration.

These values can be used to run calculations and explore the process and improve awareness. Later on it can be used to see the impact of proposed changes. Note: input data does not have to be scientifically correct!

Do not use existing process descriptions

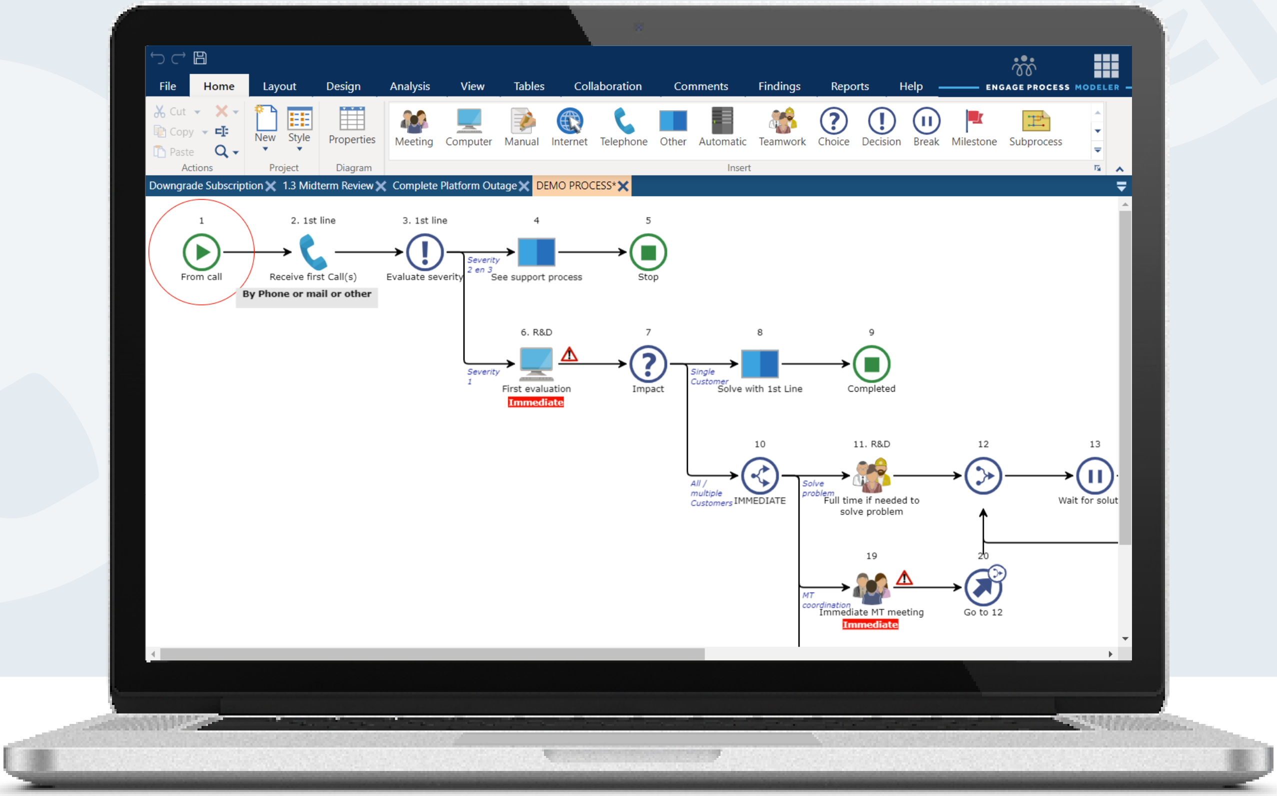
These process descriptions are often made by department staff, are outdated and lack the detail level of the work floor.

Focus on role changes

A lot of hidden work can take place when there are role changes. Be aware of how often this happens.

Make waiting times separately visible

If a participant indicates that his/her task begins the following day, then show a waiting time of 1 day. The lead time for many processes is namely determined for a large part by waiting for the transfer from one person to the next. By making it visible, you give the team a handle on shortening the lead times without anyone having to work harder.



Map all relevant exceptions

Does the described situation always happen? Discussion of the exceptions is an important element. That's because the sum of the exceptions is often greater than the 'clean case'. The exceptions typically require more time and effort, create longer lead times, need different tools and systems, have different usage of data etc. For improving a process the exceptions are crucial.

Add checkpoints and split into 'good' and 'not good'

Many processes have one or more checks or approvals. Don't forget to visualize those by a Choice in the process and indicate the fall-out percentage. Discuss and map what happens with these cases! They are critical in understanding and improving the process.

Don’t write down too many details

Especially with the focus in recent years on IT systems, we have the tendency to note input, output, names of the IT systems, documents, etc. This level of detail is not needed initially and can always be added later.

Note whether a step adds value for the customer

If the step is not value-adding, then this can be a good starting point for an improvement. Why do we do this? Many process steps have crept in over time and once had a good reason. Is that reason still good and valid?

Do not draw a swimlane but rather a value stream

Many of us learned to draw processes mainly in swimlanes. This indicates how the process runs from department to department. But these swimlanes actually emphasize the sense of department and often make the discussion too complex for a workshop. Keep it simple and focused on the customer. Go through the process as the customer experiences it, independent of the departments that are involved. You can always look at swimlanes later, per department, per location, per IT system and so on.

Note suggestions

Keep track of any comments, complaints and suggestions made by the team, preferably in a separate field and per process step. These are important to demonstrate that you are listening to them and they often reflect real good ‘Quick Wins’. The motivation of the team to work on their own suggestions is often high.

3. Check the AS-IS while back at work and gather improvement suggestions

In the first process workshop, all information is collected and the AS-IS is created in about 3 to 4 hours. If team members are discussing a process for the first time, then organize a follow-up session after 3 or 4 days.

In the meantime, the team members will do a reality check. They will pay attention to frequencies and processing time, look for any more exceptions, and look for any ommitted steps. It provides great new insights for the follow-up session.

4. A second session: Further exploration

In the second session, the team works on further exploring the process and improving their insights. This is based on the information obtained in the first session and new ideas thereafter.

This can be confrontational. Processes definitely don't always have to be performed immediately, but by shortening the lead time, there are great advantages to be had.

Look at the statistics

How many activities, how many role changes, how many splits, how many roles are there in the process?

Study the process from different angles

Is it possible to tilt the process? Look now in swimlanes: swimlanes per location, per IT system, per input and output, etc. Do we get new insights, more bottlenecks, more Quick Wins?

Calculate

What is the lead time for the customer and how much processing time do we need?

Summarize Quick Wins

Look at the list of Quick Wins and see what their impact is. Which Quick Win does the team embrace the most?

Publish all the work

Don't let anyone go home empty-handed. There is nothing worse than a workshop where, a few weeks later, the participants wonder what was achieved. Work preferably with a tool that allows the team to use it for modeling as well as taking away the results in the same format. The transfer from brown paper to, for example, a Visio or PowerPoint slide will unmistakably lead to a lower sense of ownership for the participants.

5. Discuss general improvement ideas

After mapping the AS-IS situation, you now brainstorm with the same group about improvement methods. Concepts such as shortening lead times, performing actions in parallel, auditing the source, removing steps that don't add value, combining or eliminating tasks, standardizing, reducing batch sizes, etc. A simulation can be very helpful here. Perhaps some members of the team, often internal staff members, have already had experience with improvement concepts and trainings but the ideas and their advantages are not easily recognized by all team members. The discussion of these concepts is important to increase the acceptance and involvement of the team.It is handy to focus on methods that fit the overall goals of the organizaton, like improving service, automation, reducing costs etc. As mentioned before, it can be important to confirm that no-one will loose their job, if this is possible.

Improvements from within or from an advisor?

The best suggestions come from within, from the subject matter experts, the people actually executing the process . Any internal or external consultant may see lots of improvement possibilities. But these should not be mentioned! The acceptance and practical fit of ideas by the team are often better. And after all, it's not about how many ideas you can collect in the first step; it's about continuous improvement in the long term. So, try to explain improvement concepts to the team members and see which ones they believe are easily achievable.

6. Create the TO-BE situation

Improve the AS-IS situation or start from scratch?

There is much to say for both methods. The great advantage in the improvement of the AS-IS situation is that it helps the team to make a step towards continuous improvement. Look critically together at what you were doing and try to find small improvement steps. This is often achievable and leads to immediate results. By contrast, the design of a completely new process often requires much more preparatory work.

Look at Quick Wins and other improvement concepts discussed

Look at the suggestions from the first workshops and see what their impact can be. Also, discuss the general improvement concepts.

Introduce improvements step by step and calculate their impact

See what the impact of a specific improvement is on the process model. Try to focus on the objectives that were mentioned at the kickoff by the process owner, but make sure you consider additional points forwarded by the team as well!

7. Celebrate and implement

It is important for teams to know and feel that they have not done their work for no reason. The goal of a process workshop must not be limited to the documentation of a process. It is mainly about what we can do with it in practice, and the motivation of teams to put their own suggestions into place is often significant!

Select a number of improvements and implement them

Don't spend too much time on finding improvements. It is recommended to identify any quick wins. Discuss how they can be implemented.

Publish all the work, again

In each phase of the improvement cycle it is important to not send people home empty handed. Keep people involved and ensure that they take all information with them to the workplace.

Finally, celebrate success

Communicate the achievements to the whole organization to empower the team and to potentially trigger ideas in other processes and other teams.

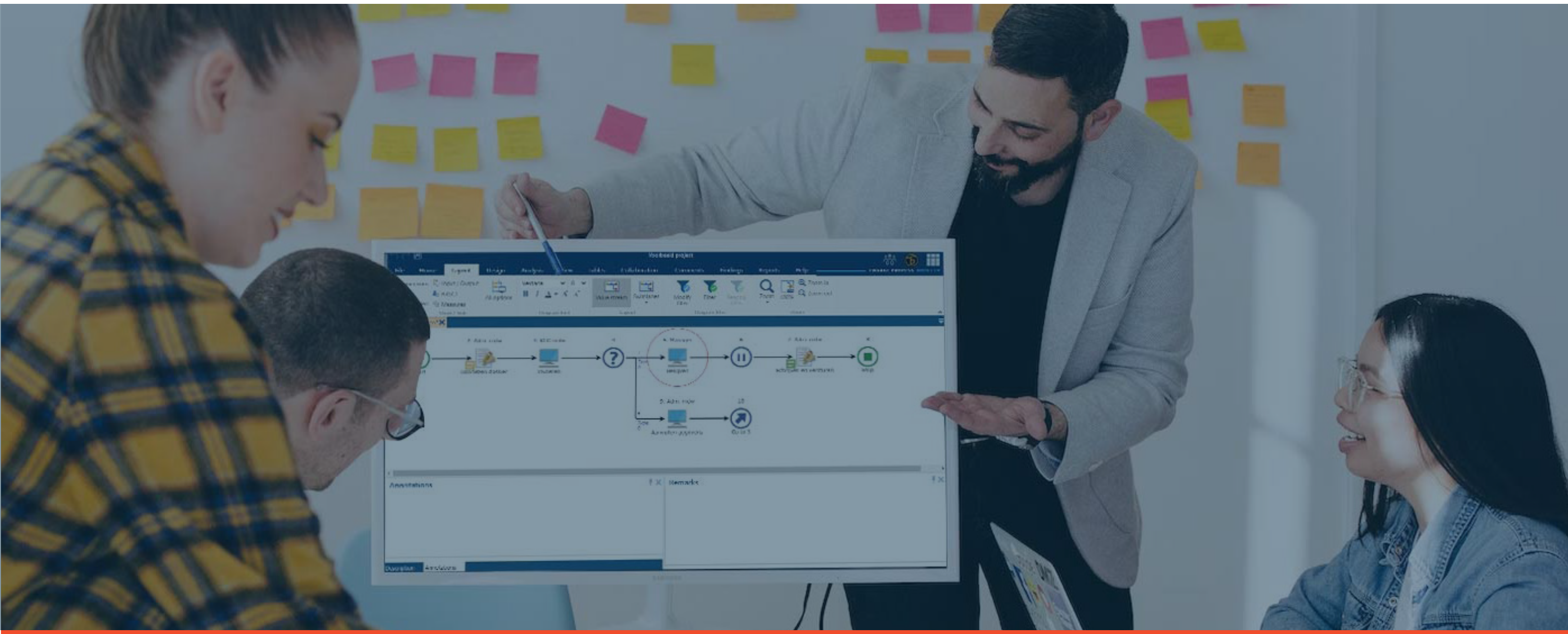
Successful process workshops are those where teams can easily view the work they've done and understand tangible improvements they have devised.

Extra: Tips for a succesful remote Process workshop

The Engage Process Modeler is well suited for remote process workshops where participants are not all gathered in one room. You need to use a video conference application like Zoom or Microsoft Teams in addition to the Modeler.

Layout of the Modeler workspace

To get the participants optimally involved in the workshop you have to use a scaled back screen. You only show the panels that are essential: Process steps, Process window, Description field and Remarks field. Also use the 'Full Screen' mode (F11) to hide the browser that you are using.
Next, you use the field 'Description' to highlight, only if needed, in a few sentences what is done in this specific process step. The use of the 'Remarks' field is very important! Even more so than during a boardroom- workshop. Here you take note of any suggestion, comment and/or critical issue made by participants. Start the comment with listing the name of the participant. You show their participation and make it personal.



Preparation of the remote workshop

Organize the remote meeting and invite a maximum of 1 participant for each role in the process. You can use the brainstorm module and Engage Brainstorm App of the Modeler to gather information beforehand. For example, you can ask for which process steps the process has or which roles are involved in executing the process. This helps to build involvement. You can also do a brainstorm between the workshop in which you've mapped the "As Is" and the workshop in which you're going to map the "To Be" situation of the process. Between these workshops you can collect current bottlenecks, but also improvement suggestions.

The workshop itself

- The remote process workshop should also be done by 2 people. One person to use the Modeler and one as chairman/host of the meeting. The host needs to monitor the chat function of Zoom/Teams and decide who is talking.

- Start the session with all cameras active. Participants can see who is there!

- Let the participants do the talking. They can indicate via the chat if they want to contribute.

- Use the cameras at the end of the meeting again to share team conclusions and waving good-bye.

The next step

After the meeting you share the process to the Engage Process Viewer. Participants can study the process and use the Feedback function to give input. Always organize a 2nd session to finalize the model and to determine what needs to be done to get the new process/service going.

About Engage Process

Engage Process offers an easy, highly effective way of mapping and analysing processes to drive improvements across your organisation. Designed to get your team involved in exploring, documenting and improving your processes. Engage Process is 100% SaaS, so you can be up and running in just one day.

It empowers staff to discuss, evaluate and improve processes together. Putting the employee first makes Engage Process a true “human centric” solution. This means proactively exploring and reimagining processes in real time, by the people who are actively working with these processes day-to-day. Processes create the foundation for management programmes such as cost savings, compliance, service (re)design, and digital transformation.

Over 300 organisations in the UK, Europe and North America use Engage Process on a daily basis. These include City of Edinburgh Council, Sedgemoor District Council and Cheltenham Borough Council

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