

Introduction

The organization's future lies in its processes.

Tomorrow's results will be determined largely by today's approach. By the way we tackle our work.

Sure, our strategy must be solid. Our people must be capable of performing. But that won't make us competitive if our processes are clumsy.

To succeed in this demanding and chaotically changing marketplace, we have to accelerate our output. Slash costs. Bring higher quality and better value to our customers. But how do we achieve this competitive triple play of "faster-better-cheaper"? How can we build the corporate energy level and aim it toward performance breakthroughs?

The most promise will be found in process improvement.

If we scan the competitive landscape, we'll see old competitors who relentlessly keep improving. We'll be shocked at the new competition springing up from innovative outsiders who come from other fields. And we'll note that customers keep upping the ante by always expecting more.

So let's take a hard look at how we do things around here. Shall we stick with the same old habits and techniques? Or do we decide it's time to start doing things differently?

Processes are the windows into the way an organization operates. If we look there, we'll find many hidden opportunities, new passages that promise far more powerful performance. If we dig deeply into our existing methods, we'll discover the routes to dramatic breakthroughs.

The secret is to start managing sideways. The sooner the better. Because to a very large degree, our processes determine our destiny.