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An introduction to Process Optimisation

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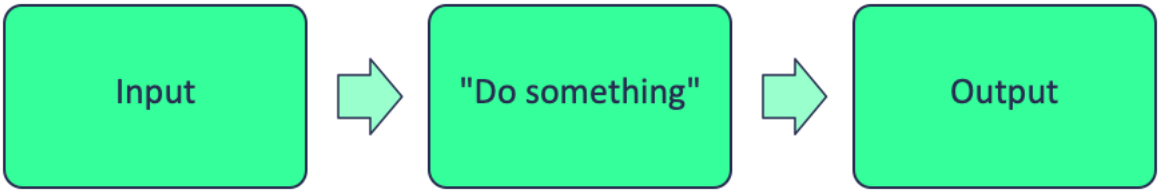
Introduction

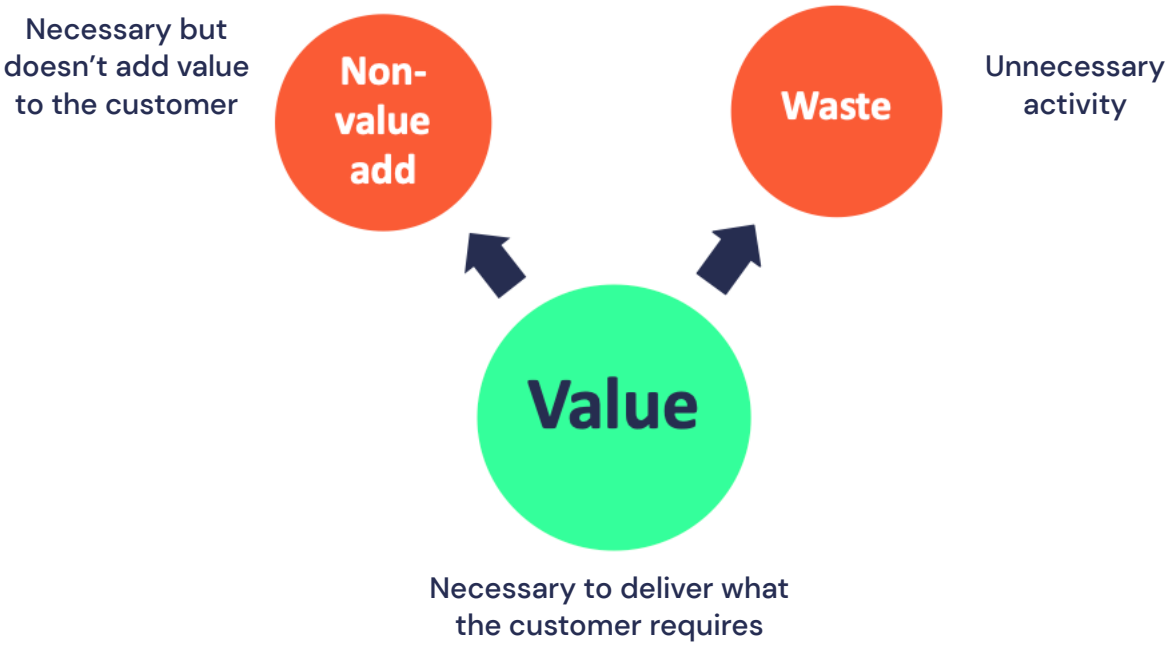
What is Process Optimisation?

A process is a set of interrelated tasks of activities that turn inputs into outputs. Optimising a process is about finding ways to make it better.



That could be by streamlining the activities within the process or by improving the overall outcome(s).

Streamlining is described in Lean Six Sigma as designing out waste: the unnecessary activities.



Why should we optimise?

Optimising is really about finding opportunities:

— By mapping out a process it's easier to see what actually happens, not just what we think happens.

— It helps to discover whether everyone is doing it in the same way.

— Visually it's easier to see the steps that happen.

— It helps to identify what the outcomes or outputs are.

— It enables us to spot risks or challenges.

— It's a great way to try out new ideas ("to-be" mapping, i.e., what could happen).

Why isn't everyone doing it?

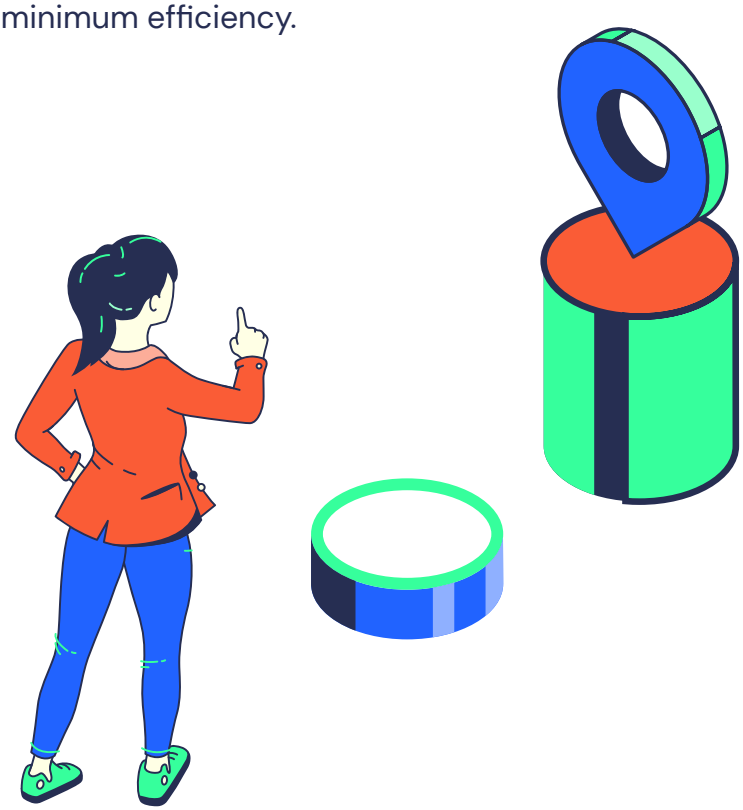
" Process optimisation is the discipline of adjusting a process… to… make the best or most effective use of… specified… parameters. The most common goals are minimizing cost and maximizing… efficiency."

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Process_optimization

It's interesting that the Wikipedia definition uses the phrase "discipline of adjusting". Whilst the idea of continuous improvement sounds great, most teams aren't constantly analysing and changing, they are simply doing the job.

Others, who might know the risks and challenges, feel powerless to change or improve ("we can't because the system won't do it like that…" or "we have to do this because…" or "our data must be in this format otherwise…").

Then there are those who will literally do anything in their power to provide a great customer experience, even if it means taking on a significant admin burden themselves: great experience = minimum efficiency.



Benefits

Optimising your processes ensures that your business is working efficiently. The benefits of process optimisation include:

✓ **Unified ways of working**

- Remove variations in delivery and customer experience

✓ **Happier staff**

- Listen to the problems
- Make the process easier and more enjoyable
- Get rid of outdated practices and realise potential
- Increase staff satisfaction by freeing up their time for value-add activities

✓ **Happier customers**

- Improved quality increases satisfaction and revenue

✓ **Get rid of boring**

- Take away the boring parts and use Intelligent Automation

✓ **Re-deploy**

- Cost and time savings can be utilised elsewhere

✓ **Proactive risk management**

- Spot risks before they occur
- Reduce errors
- Improve quality

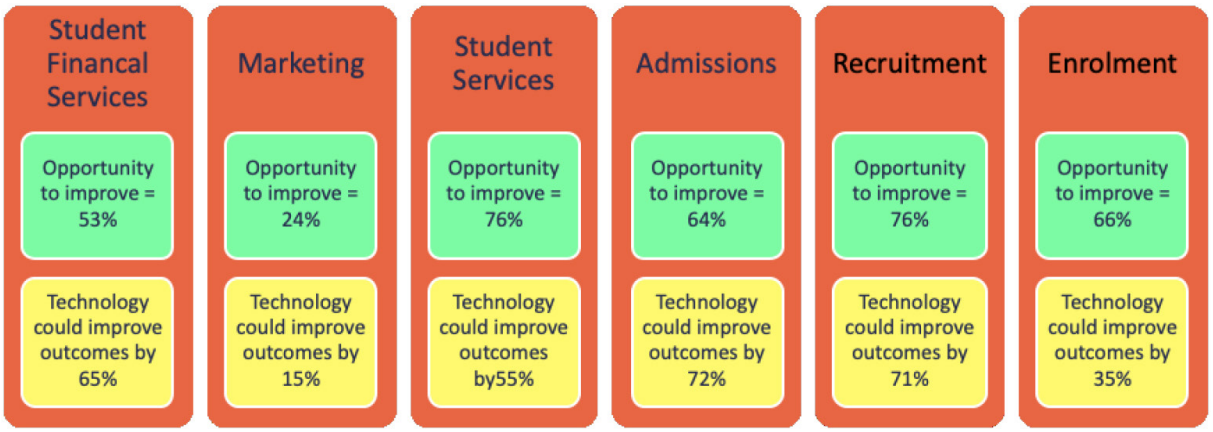
Approaches

Process optimisation works best with small groups of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs); the staff who know the processes have valuable insights and will buy-in to changes more effectively if they're part of the optimisation process.

There are some good, simple frameworks to get you started:

1 . Process Discovery

This quick approach helps to get an overview of all the processes within a business function or capability. This is great for prioritising where to optimise.

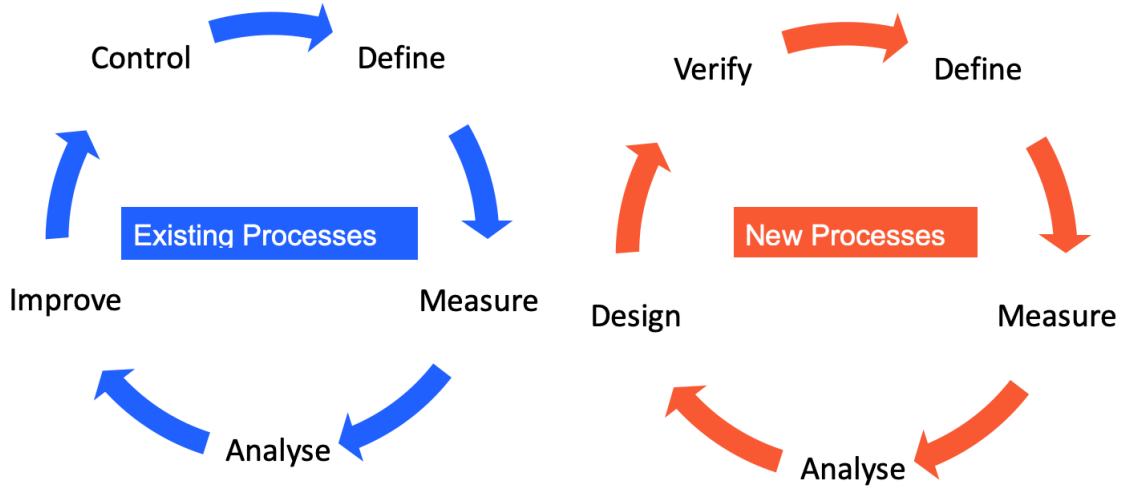


2 . Plan, Do, Check, Act

A continuous cycle to identify a risk or issue, change it, test it and action the successful parts. It's a very effective framework for small, iterative changes and often enables quick-win results.

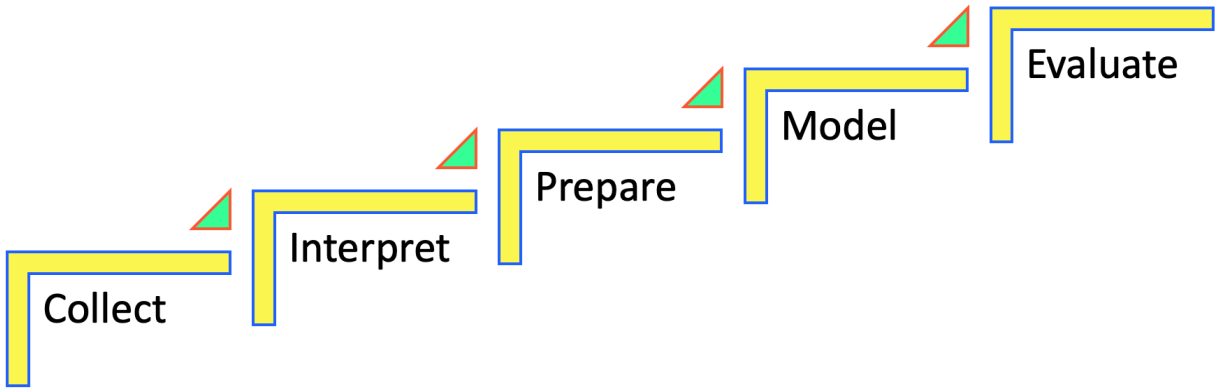
3 . Six Sigma

This Project Management methodology uses seven principles for optimisation, slightly adapted for existing and new processes:



4 . Process Mining

Process Mining is a process of extracting and discovering patterns in sets of data. Used for process optimisation, data is taken from event logs and analysed to find out what steps staff take to complete a task. This data can then be turned into insights to spot any blockers and identify ways to improve.



And so there you have it, your quick introduction to process optimisation.

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What next?

Equantiis hopes you have found this quick introduction to process optimisation useful. If you would like our help or would like to learn more about the how we can support you to deliver operational efficiencies within your organisation drop us a line!

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