Paramonos Research & Consulting

a Lean Six Sigma Consulting Firm focus on Cost Savings & Process Improvement

6S METHODOLOGY

# Classifying Business Process Types – Part 3

Author: Gabriel Daniels PE,.   ☐ **1 Comment**

This article is the third and final part on how to classify processes so you can choose the right approach to improving them.In parts one and two, I introduced the idea of the parameters of predictability and frequency of process. And so far, I have discussed what kind of processes fit into three of the four quadrants of this plot. Now we will look at the remaining quadrant, low frequency and low predictability. What are the processes we find here and what are the approaches open to us to improve them?
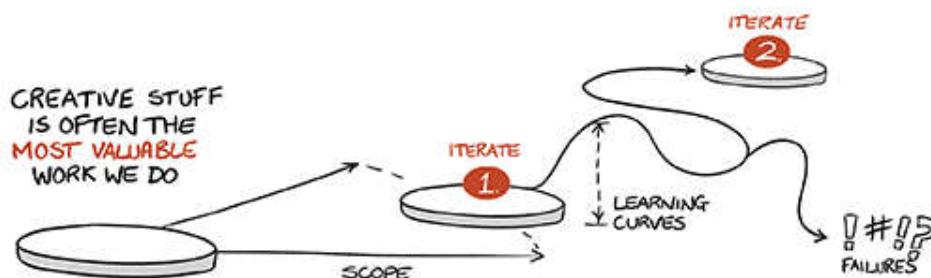
Low Frequency
Low Predictability
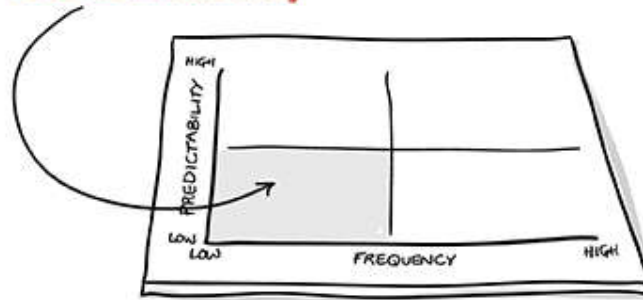
You might think that you don't have many processes that fit this category. But take a peek into your email inbox, and look at the requests for action that you see there. Some requests will merely be asking for your participation in a well-established process. Say, authorizing a vacation request or coming to a meeting. But unless you are
unusually lucky there also are lots of requests with no precedent. And consequently, there is no preordained sequence to follow.

When we do novel and creative stuff collaboratively, there is very rarely a precedent. We can't create a project plan if the outcome is truly creative because we mostly iterate to something new through trial and error. As we go along we learn something that changes our intended course of action. So we take the next step and so on. Now, it is this creative stuff that is often the most valuable work that we do.

Interestingly, the more senior people are in an organization, the less and less likely they are to be employed doing routine process work. And the more likely they are to find that their work consists of processes that are of low frequency and low predictability.Here is an

example: if you are hiring a new CFO, I am going to bet that you will not use the standard hiring process. There might be some similarities, but there will be even more differences. And, if you are the CEO, getting the right person for that job is pretty important. So this is a process that is both valuable and un-plannable.

Unstructured Processes

Process consultants like me, if they talk about this stuff at all, call these unstructured processes, or sometimes, dynamic processes. Each instance is unique and we can't know the path to completion or plan it in anything but the most general way.

But if these unstructured processes are so valuable, we can't afford to ignore them either. So what can we do?

Improving on Unstructured Processes

This is an area largely ignored by the business process community. It's difficult and messy. And whatever you do, by definition, it has to vary from situation to situation. You won't be surprised to know that there is no silver bullet for this one. It's a mistake, however, to think there's nothing you can do to make improvements. The key is not to try to focus on the individual processes.

The greatest opportunities for making improvements lie in efficiencies we can make in:

- better prioritization,
- better visibility,
- better hand-offs and,
- better communication.

In other words, we can make improvements by focusing on managing the throughput of the system as a whole, rather than the individual processes. We can make a start by identifying and extracting this class of tasks from email and handling them in some of the new applications that are appearing, like Trello and Tallyfy.

Getting unstructured processes into an app gives them visibility. Now we can start to prioritize them. We can also balance individual workloads, and generally manage them more efficiently.

Sometimes it's not the process that messes us up, it's the fact we have too many competing processes to manage.
This is a pretty big subject in its own right. Find more on the topic of unstructured processes.

So that brings us to the end of the Classifying Different Process Types series. Hopefully, I have made a good case for considering processes as not all being alike. That, in fact, they have different characteristics. If you can accept that, then it becomes a matter of sorting them into categories that make sense and choosing the best approach to deal with them.

Classifying Process Types Series: Part One, Part Two, Part Three

Paramonos Research Labs, a Lean Six Sigma Consulting Firm focus on Cost Savings & Process Improvement

- *On average we reduce our clients operating cost by 12%*
- *On average we increase our client's process efficiency cost by 60%*
- *98% of our clients invite us back for a 2nd project & refer us!*

Authors:

Gabriel Daniels PE

Certification

Lean Six Sigma Master Black Belt

University of Alabama

Bachelors in Industrial Engineer

University of Alabama

Masters in Business Administration

Linkedin | Google+ | Yelp | Instagram

Published by Gabriel Daniels PE,.

Gabe is an Operations, Engineering, and Business Process Improvement professional with over 9 years domestic and international experience. He is a practitioner of Lean and change management strategies, a licensed industrial engineer, and Master Six Sigma Black Belt. Gabe experience includes managing key segments of medium size and larger, industry

leading consumer products manufacturers, automotive component suppliers, and smaller technology and engineering based organizations. His manufacturing knowledge spans from raw material conversion, through component fabrication, coating, assembly, and packaging. He also has extensive experience off the manufacturing floor implementing ERP systems, and leading improvements in transactional processes. He has a drive for "improving every day" through the use of effective change management techniques, a strong technical skill set, and the application of process analysis/improvement tools. Gabe holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Engineering from the University of Alabama "In the global and competitive environment of today and tomorrow, organizations must rethink and reshape their approach to execution in order to stay competitive. Operational Excellence is the strategic initiative under which this process can take shape." View all posts by Gabriel Daniels PE,.

One thought on "Classifying Business Process Types – Part 3"

Add Comment

1. Pingback: Classifying Different Process Types – Part One – Paramonos Research & Consulting

Ⓦ