When a bone is broken, we know it because there is pain. When a glass is broken, there is necessary clean up. When a car is broken, we have to send it to the body shop. Sometimes brokenness can be fixed, and sometimes we need to discard and start over. What about a business process. How do we know if the routines we follow are solid and not just brokenness that we have learned to live with? All process improvement must start with the same first step: admitting that something is broken. Asking a few questions might help identify brokenness:

1. Are internal or external customers unhappy?
2. Do some processes take a painful amount of time?
3. Has anyone ever suspected or confessed that the process wasn’t done right the first time?
4. Does Management throw money and/or people at the problem, with no change in the outcome?
5. Is there an increased frustration factor?
6. Does the process span several departments?
7. Is there finger painting and blaming?
8. Do the processes lack measurement or control?
9. Is there data redundancy?
10. Are there too many reviews and signoffs?
11. Are exceptions and special cases a common occurrence?
12. Are established procedures circumvented to expedite work?
13. Is there no single person that manages the complete process?
14. Does inventory sit idle?
15. Are procedures passed on by word of mouth?
16. Is there noticeable time spent firefighting?

Identifying a broken process is not an indication of an unhealthy company... keeping a broken process is!

Take these questions to your next department staff meeting. Document the discussion and the ideas around the broken processes in your organization. Then follow our series on process improvement every quarter for practical improvement applications, ideas, and next steps.

We cannot manage what we cannot measure! There are hundreds of online systems/software downloads that can offer measurement solutions. But what happens when we are measuring something very specific, or the funds and time are simply not available for a purchased scorecard solution. Consider building your scorecard tool in Excel. The formatting and formula capability present in the standard desktop Excel application are robust and can adequately measure systems and processes to insure they are headed in the right direction. It doesn’t have to be forever. The scorecard you build in Excel can be temporary, yet valuable in defining what you need or don’t need when you get ready to make the purchase of a permanent, long-term technological solution.

Ask to see examples of scorecard solutions developed and/or managed by Administrative Architects.
TRAVEL SPENDING
FINDING THE BEST DEAL!

Whether by plane, train or automobile, billions of dollars are still being spent every year in travel related expenses. One might even think that business and personal travel is “recession-proof!” Americans are traveling just as much, if not more, but needing to find the best deal available. Travelocity and Expedia are household names and the risky traveler might even go with Priceline.

Keen and consistent television, radio and internet marketing are the reason these names are so familiar. Familiarity makes the buyer comfortable. Additionally, when a buyer is in a “do it yourself” environment, like a Travelocity or Expedia, the assumption is that the best price will be granted, because after all, the buyer is the agent. With no agent to pay, the buyer gets the savings… right?

Make no mistake, that marketing costs these vendors dearly, and when it’s all said and done, the buyer is paying the price and doing the work...

It is important not to get complacent about price. Keep shopping and that means looking to new and innovative vendors.

Administrative Architects offers a travel portal hosted by ROVIA. The next time travel is on the schedule, take a moment to double-check the travel page on our site. There is nothing to lose and everything to gain.

www.administrativearchtiects.com

“Rovia introduced to the marketplace an opportunity and concept that combines the positives of traditional travel agencies service, online booking technology and host agency opportunity while eliminating the negatives that have caused many travel agents to consider where the future of travel industry is going and how the travel agent will survive.”

GO BEYOND GOAL SETTING!
LEARN TO LEAP FROM MILESTONE TO MILESTONE INSTEAD

It’s that time of year again! It’s not only time to make personal New Year’s resolutions, but also time to gather colleagues into a conference room and develop team goals and set new standards of achievements.

Goals are common, and so are missing them. Don’t get me wrong, it is important to know where we want to end up. But if all we ever do is define the end point, the odds of arriving there are slim.

The secret to achieving goals has everything to do with the milestones that we define. In other words, if our goal is to run to “mile marker 10,” we must first make it to “mile marker 01.” If we don’t ever make it to “mile marker 01,” we can assume we won’t make it to our goal of “mile marker 10.”

Spend more time identifying and achieving the milestones, and the result will be arriving at the goal.

Administrative Architects
building strong administrative foundations

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