

PROCESS OWNERSHIP, A PRIMER

Background

In the course of working with its clients, RANA has been able to develop Business Models that demonstrate the interaction between the processes at play inside their organization. Flowing outward from the organization's Core Competency, to its Values, to its Core, Support and Foundational Processes, these Business Models, developed successfully for widely diverse organizations have demonstrated the value of integrating the financial, human and material capacities of the organization.

About Process Ownership

An issue arises when one poses the question: "Who owns this process"? In some cases, the answer seems easy: the Chief Financial Officer owns the process of financial management inside the organization. For other cases, the answer is much more difficult: "Who owns policy management inside the organization?" It's often a major challenge to attribute policy management to a single accountable person inside the organization. So what, in fact, does process ownership mean?

Process ownership means that someone in the organization is accountable for the management of the process, for example, that of Business Planning or of Marketing or of Project Management. It also implies cascading accountabilities, where the top-most executive is accountable for all processes, and delegates them according to organizational functions downwards throughout the structure. Once someone has been named a Process Owner that person should be given the accountability as well as the authority to manage the process from start to finish.

Processes and functions

So, why don't you simply make the person accountable for the function? It's that holders of functions often don't understand that they are not just accountable for the content of the job, but also for effective operation of the process of the function, including how well it deals with the content of the organization, how the process can be made better, and especially, how the process interacts with others. A normal question for a Chief Financial Officer should be "How well does our Financial Management fit with our Business Planning?"

Benefits for the organization

Let's keep in mind that a process is simply a series of steps leading to a result. What happens in many organizations is that processes breed like coat hangers: there are many more than are necessary or useful. By having Process Owners, the organization rapidly discovers which of its processes are worth keeping and which need to be scrapped. The results can be: decreased bureaucracy, lower expenditure of energy, less money spent on trying to coordinate activities.

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