

Searching for the Holy Grail of Performance Improvement?

Bourton Group has been helping to make businesses better for over five decades, and during this time, we've seen many trends come and go.

However, irrespective of the business sector and the general direction of change, the following three objectives have continuously remained high on most business agendas:

1. We want real, tangible business benefits.
2. We need to engage our people in delivering benefits.
3. We must be able to sustain the change long after the initial flush of activity has gone.

Often though, Business Leaders must settle for one or, at best, two of these objectives.

We believe that to be able to deem any improvement programme a success, all three must be carefully developed to achieve real business transformation.

But how can this be done in demanding times?

When global difficulties, like those recently experienced, challenge even the best Management Teams business improvement programmes require a committed, radical, and systematic organisation-wide change of thinking.

So how does an Operational Improvement Consultancy like us work with organisations to deliver business transformation and change management?

We listen intently to understand the specific situation and then fully engage and collaborate with leaders and teams. In our experience, this is what will drive measurable and sustainable improvement in business processes and people performance.

"Our expertise uses a unique combination of hands-on consulting support and knowledge transfer of best practice process improvement."



1. Delivering real tangible business benefits

Identifying, realising, and measuring benefits resulting from a transformation programme is key to ensuring its continuity. Some benefits can be difficult to measure and must impact what people actually 'care about' - if an organisation can't quantify the improvement outcome as a result of an improvement programme then why continue.

'Care abouts' are highly interdependent, examples of which can be:

- Customer-related, and some form of cost (price), quality, or time improvement as determined by the voice of the customer analysis.
- Business related, a need to eliminate waste and variation from internal processes to enable better delivery of core process performance by improved efficiency and effectiveness.
- Discrete to a specific project or issue.
- Early wins that gain credibility and fund the ongoing investment.
- Cultural change that underpins longer-term improvement.

Working closely with individuals, teams, leaders, and stakeholders throughout an improvement programme means that we never lose sight of objectives and the people in the business 'sign-off' to the hard and soft benefits delivered.

2. Engaging people in delivering benefits

We view success as building capability within organisations to embed performance improvements a way of life, continuing beyond the initial programme and long after our advisory work is completed.

We develop the capability of the people within an organisation; working with them to transfer process improvement know-how in Lean Sigma and Change Management.

This might be:

- Helping senior teams to design high performing organisations
- Coaching and mentoring business leaders to manage through change
- Developing project-based and intact work teams to implement Lean Sigma thinking as part of their DNA and turning improvement

Regardless, our consulting experts deliver the same user-friendly, flexible yet challenging support.

We strongly believe that engaging with people is not a 'nice to have' but a fundamental factor to the success of transformation programmes.

It builds capability, ensures sustainability, and motivates and mobilises an organisation's resources around what management deems important.

3. Sustaining the change long after the initial flush of activity has gone

Benefits and the drive for change can diminish, this can be expensive as well as damaging to the culture of an organisation; hardening it towards future change requirements.

“Failed change in the past is the biggest impediment to business transformation.”

Often, at the start of a transformation or change programme we must overcome negativity like, “We did [Lean] [Six Sigma] [Process Improvement] once before and it didn't work.”

In our experience, creating and using best-practice Lean Sigma approaches and tools is only part of the solution.

The approach we find most effective is the creation of an internal Improvement Engine.

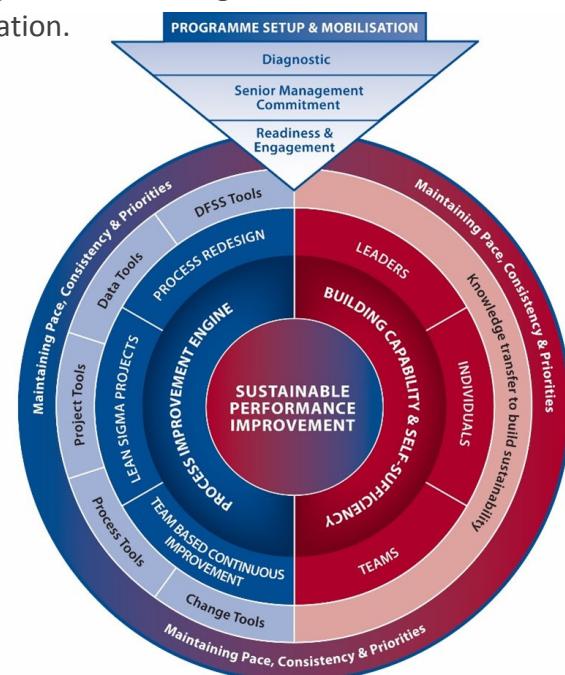
The Improvement Engine feeds on the constant striving for continuous improvement; fueled by highly capable and motivated people it uses the mechanics of proven Lean Sigma methodologies.

“Leaving change to chance is not an option. Having a well-developed deployment programme to direct and govern the change is essential to maintaining pace and priority.”

The Holy Grail

Ultimately, there are no silver bullets, no quick fixes, and no magic formulas to achieve the Holy Grail. But there are some basic building blocks that will enable your organisation to improve performance in a sustainable way.

Our approach is proven as an integrated way of addressing business and organisational transformation.



Are you planning to undertake a performance improvement activity?

We recommend the following steps:

- Understand the organisational 'care abouts'.
- Work with stakeholders to agree and capture the benefits.
- Build commitment and capability at all levels within the organisation.
- Create an improvement Engine to sustain the momentum.
- Use best-practice Lean Sigma methodologies and tools to deliver the improvement
- Have a managed deployment programme to maintain pace and priority.

if you'd like to know how we can make your business better, then call 01926 633333 or email info@bourton.co.uk.