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Business Transformation

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10 Perilous Misconceptions of Censuring Current State Mapping & Analysis

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This In-Depth 18-Page White Paper Includes:

- ✔ Current State Mapping and Analysis – The Foundation for Business Transformation
- ✔ The 5 Essential Business Analysis Questions
- ✔ The 10 Perilous Misconceptions of Censuring Current State Mapping and Analysis
- ✔ Key Best Practices and Perilous Traps to Avoid
- ✔ Successful Business Transformation and Modernization

Introduction

Censure

verb

To express severe disapproval of something.

Related verbs

Dis [slang] - to show disrespect for, disparage, belittle, insult or critisize;
Shun - to keep away from based on motives of dislike or to take pains to avoid.

Business Transformation and its many forms - Business Process Reengineering (BPR), business process improvement, Lean, digital transformation, modernization of enterprise systems, performance management, etc. are all main stream strategic initiatives driving organizational agility, enterprise effectiveness and operational efficiency.

I maintain that the soul of these initiatives begins with a solid current "as-is" state process map and sophisticated current state analysis. Actually, I'll go a step further and draw an unequivocal line in the sand that current state mapping and analysis is absolutely essential to successful business transformation initiatives.

My experience is that the vast majority of organizations and associated subject matter experts, stakeholders, analysts and technical professionals clearly and intuitively understand the value of current state mapping and analysis. However, from time to time I encounter small, but steadfast, pockets of management, staff and yes, even business and systems analysts that censure - dis the value of current state mapping and analysis and shun the inclusion of current state mapping and analysis in business transformation initiatives.

My experience is that the censure camp does, at a minimum, a disservice to their organization by creating uncertainty among management, SMEs, staff and other stakeholders regarding the value of current state mapping and analysis – which leads to lower levels of management and staff engagement in the transformation initiative, which results in less than optimal outcomes.

However, my experience is that far more frequently the censure camp, albeit unintentionally, inflicts significant harm to their organization by convincing the organization to censure current state mapping and analysis, often resulting in failed transformation initiatives – which the organization often never fully recovers.

This whitepaper is targeted to two audiences – the vast majority of people that are already on-board with current state mapping and analysis, and the smaller camp of people that censure current state mapping and analysis.

Common refrains from this camp include:

"We already know what we do, let's just skip to what we need to be doing going forward – so no need to map and analyze existing processes."

"Our current processes are dysfunctional – we are going to radically transform to new lean agile processes – so no need to map and analyze existing processes."

"We are implementing new enterprise systems and we are adopting best practices provided by the solutions vendor – so no need to map and analyze existing processes."

...and on it goes!

To the vast majority of people that are already on-board with current state mapping and analysis, this whitepaper provides you with a solid business case for current state mapping and analysis, as well as excellent content for socializing the concept among project participants should you encounter the censure camp.

However, if you are in the censure camp, my experience is that you are smart, insightful and dedicated for sure, but you had a bad experience with current state mapping and analysis (which we will see why later in this whitepaper) and that bad experience shades your view and creates baggage going forward.

My hope is that for those of you that are in the censure camp, this whitepaper provides new insights to enable you to jettison the baggage, soften your position and embrace the value of current state mapping and analysis.

The 5 Essential Business Analysis Questions

To provide context and perspective for processing the 10 Perilous Misconceptions, I need to first briefly present my 5 Essential Business Analysis Questions.

The 5 questions, summarized below, provide a conceptual framework for critical thinking and engaging organizational stakeholders in a sophisticated business and systems analysis conversations. Applied from this perspective, these five questions will radically change the way you and your team think about and conduct business and systems analysis.

The 5 questions are detailed in my whitepaper The 5 Essential Business Analysis Questions available for download at www.inteqgroup.com

1 "What are you currently doing?"

This question enables you to open the door to engaging in current state mapping and analysis - identifying the work activities that comprise the business processes, work activity sequence (workflows), where (functionally) work activities are performed, who performs the activities and how the activities (associated policies and procedures) are performed. "What are you currently doing?" is a great starting point for deeper analysis. It provides the lens to talk about business process and business systems requirements from many different perspectives.

2 "What are you currently doing that is not needed?"

And you would stop doing, if you could change business policies, procedures, processes and/or supporting information technology. There are numerous work activities (business policies, procedure steps/tasks, business rules, etc.) in most organizations that have low, questionable or no value from a business or customer perspective, but consume significant resource time and effort to perform.

These activities are often legacy in nature ("We have been doing it this way since 1982"), or procedures resulting from in-the-moment overreaction to one-off exceptions ("We'll ensure that this never happens again!") or business policies put in place to comply with an internal or regulatory mandate - the mandate, however, is no longer applicable but the business policies and supporting procedures

remain.

If the work activity is something that the organization does not need to do - if it doesn't add real value – don't waste time improving it – simply eliminate it!

3 "What are you currently doing that can be improved?"

And you would improve, if you could change business policies, procedures, processes and/or supporting information technology. This is where we challenge the stakeholders as well as ourselves, as business analysts, to identify opportunities to improve existing work activities.

Asking deeper questions - What can we do from a policy or procedural standpoint to improve the process? What can we do from an information technology perspective to improve the process? Does this thing rise to the level of a functional requirement that we can support through application software?

4 "What are you not doing that you know you should be doing?"

And you would start doing, if you could change business policies, procedures, processes and/or supporting information technology."

Most business stakeholders are aware of the things they should be doing that can drive value and improve efficiency, and most of them would like to implement these changes, but they can't. They do not have the right mechanisms (tools, equipment, etc.), or they are constrained by legacy policies, procedures and supporting technology.

Opportunities associated with Question #4 often have cross-functional impact and typically involve new functionality within existing systems and/or new systems and often include cross-enterprise impact analysis.

5 "What are you not doing that you don't know you should be doing?"

And if you knew that you should be doing it, you would start doing, if you could change business policies, procedures, processes and/or supporting information technology. Question #5 represents forward facing analysis. It's about identifying the things that an organization is not yet doing, but needs to be doing going forward, but is not yet even aware that they need to do these things now or in the near future.

The application of question #5 moves analysis well beyond the realm of "order-taking" and deeply into the realm of a professional analysis. A professional business analyst can draw out many potential forward facing requirements via facilitated discussions with internal and external business subject matter experts.

The 10 Perilous Misconceptions of Censuring Current State Mapping and Analysis

With the 5 Essential Business Analysis Questions above providing the context and perspective for understanding the role of current state mapping and analysis, let's turn our discussion to the 10 Perilous Misconceptions of Censuring Current State Mapping and Analysis.

1 "We already know what we do so let's just focus on what we need to do going forward."

Are you sure that "we" already know what the organization does and how the work is actually performed? Who is "we" – staff, management, analysts? Where is all of this deep business knowledge maintained and who are the curators?

The expression "We already know what we do so let's just focus on what we need to do going forward" is, based on my experience, highly suspect.

Hands-on staff typically have procedural knowledge (knowing what to do) and often, but not always, know why they are doing it. First level supervisors and middle management typically understand how the work fits into the overall end-to-end value stream of the process, but not necessarily how the work is actually performed.

It's my experience that the majority of procedural and deep business knowledge is stovepipe tacit tribal knowledge – knowledge that is primarily, and often disparately, maintained in the minds of the people doing and managing the work – and therefore not readily accessible nor in a useful format for analysis.

One of the key values of the current state mapping and analysis is to mine that deep tacit tribal knowledge and organize it into a coherent cohesive framework - the current state process map, so that this knowledge can be validated, extended, analyzed and communicated.

The expression

> *"We already know what we do so let's just focus on what we need to do going forward"*

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The current state process map is a store of business knowledge. But not just any store, it's a validated, intuitive, cross-functional, visual store of knowledge. It's the Rosetta Stone of business knowledge that provides SMEs, management, analysts, I.T. professionals and other stakeholders with a common understanding of business knowledge – across the enterprise.

Just to ensure that we have a common frame of reference regarding a process map, a process map typically captures and depicts the following key components – collectively representing current state (or future state – if it's a future state map) business rules:

Work Activities

The things that the organization (people and systems) do such as “Enter Order”, “Check Credit”, Create Invoice”, etc.

Work Activity Procedures

Tasks/steps performed to complete the work activities and polices governing the procedures.

Activity Performers

The people (roles) and/or systems performing and/or supporting the work activity.

Horizontal Workflows

The interdependent sequences of work activities performed in and across the business functions across the organization.

Vertical Reporting Relationships

The reporting relationships among the roles within business functions and across the organization.

Supporting Technologies

Application software, utility software and other information technology and mechanisms supporting the work activities.

Business Functions

The organizational units where work activities are performed such as Sales, Customer Service, Customer Billing, HR, etc.

A subtle and often overlooked and underappreciated outcome of current state mapping and analysis is gleaning insight into the reasons underlying the numerous decisions, good and bad, resulting in the current state – enabling the distillation of the congealed wisdom, the secret sauce, of the organization.

In other words, the process of mapping and analyzing the process creates a conversation that clarifies the “what” and “how” of the process and typically generates ideas for improving the process. And, it’s my experience that if the conversation cannot be distilled down to a business process map, then there is a lack of understating among SMEs and other participants regarding the underlying process. In other words, inconsistent understanding and application of tribal knowledge.

The current state process map answers Essential Business Analysis Questions #1 – What are we current doing? That said, for those in the camp that the knowledge and understanding of existing processes has no bearing on the future state, then Perilous Misconception #1 may be a moot point from your perspective. However, read on, perhaps Perilous Misconceptions #2 and #3 may resonate a bit more.

2 "Our existing systems and processes are so dysfunctional that they have no bearing on the future state."

With few exceptions (which I'll discuss shortly) the positon that "our existing systems and processes are so dysfunctional that they have no bearing on the future state" is subterfuge for not engaging current state mapping and analysis.

Virtually all organizations that are executing strategic transformational initiatives such as BPR and/or IT/digital transformation are successful ongoing enterprises and are competing – at various degrees of success, in their business space in their industry. In other words, these organizations are already doing a lot of things well – at least sufficiently well to compete in today's highly competitive business environment.

It's my experience that there is significant business value in mining the deep business knowledge embedded in current state processes of the vast majority of organizations engaging in transformational initiatives. I simply do not buy-in to the argument that "our existing systems and processes are so dysfunctional that they have no bearing on the future state."

That said, there is a valid business case to forgo current state mapping and analysis for organizations that are in deep decline and are being acquired by a successful competitor and their operations are being subsumed by and into the competitor's organization. In other words, the competitor is acquiring the organization that is in deep decline primarily to obtain the organization's client base and perhaps key resources such as customer facing staff in connection with marketing, sales, account management and other front office activities – not to obtain the organization's processes or supporting technologies.

To be clear, however, these types of acquisitions are rare. Most organizations that are acquired are very successful organizations with highly evolved and innovative people, processes and technologies.

It's my experience, and I have been involved in numerous transformational BPR initiatives in connection with mergers and acquisitions, that the organization being acquired brings a wealth of human resources, business knowledge and best practices to the table.

Accordingly, the mission for most mergers and acquisitions is to map and analyze the current state of both organizations to identify the best of the best practices to bring forward into the integrated future state operations.

With few exceptions the positon that

"Our existing systems and processes are so dysfunctional that they have no bearing on the future state"

is subterfuge for not engaging current state mapping and analysis.

3 "We are going to radically, disruptively transform to new lean agile process and modern technology, existing process and supporting systems have no bearing on the future state."

"We are going to radically, disruptively transform to new lean agile process and modern technology" – that's cool, I am a firm believer in radical disruptive transformation - "existing systems and process have no bearing on the future state" – patently absurd!

Review misconception #2 above. If you are engaging in radical, disruptive transformation, then by definition you are an ongoing enterprise creating significant value from current operations.

It's my experience that even when an organization engages in radical disruptive transformation, 60% - 80% of existing business concepts (not necessarily the execution of the concepts) continue to apply in the future state.

Remember Essential Business Analysis Question #2 – What are we currently doing that we do not need to be doing and need to stop doing? Now, under the green field approach, you might find but I have never seen it, that everything you currently do does not provide value and therefore you can scrap everything that you currently do, because going forward you are going to do completely new things.

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That's just simply absurd. It's my experience that when an organization analyzes its current state processes, 60% - 80% of the type of work performed in current state will continue to be performed in the radically, disruptively transformed future state – albeit in new and different ways incorporating new technologies, revised work workflows, new procedural techniques, redesigned business rules, etc., but the underlying soul of the business concepts remain. So, if that is the case, then how can you identify and define a future state without identifying and analyzing the current state? For example, perhaps you are a property and casualty insurance company and one of the work activities in the Claims Management process is entering/creating a claim from a policy holder resulting from an auto accident.

- **Current state:** In the current state, the policy holder calls the customer service center and the Customer Service Associate (CSA) enters the claim into the Claims Management System (CMS) via engaging in a conversation with the policy holder.
- **Future state:** The policy holder takes a few pictures of the accident scene via their mobile device and submits the pictures via the Claims App on their mobile device. The CMS automatically identifies the policy holder via the Claims App, identifies the location of the accident via the GPS coordinates associated with the pictures, identifies the policy holder's auto (including make and model) involved in the accident based on the license plate and infers the circumstances of the accident based on artificial intelligence algorithms.

The CMS automatically creates a claim

and notifies the policy holder, via text, email or voice mail, that the claim has be created. All of this happens automatically in a matter of seconds while the policy holder is still at the accident site – and without requiring an interaction between the policy holder and a CSA.

The remaining activities in the claims management process could also be radically transformed, such as the claim could be automatically adjudicated (settlement offer) using artificial intelligence and predictive analytics.

Automated claims capture and adjudication represents a fairly radical transformation between the current state and future state. The key take-away is that at its core, the current state and the future state of the claims management process both include work activities and workflows for capturing and adjudicating claims.

Perhaps you raise the argument that this solution is not sufficiently radical and disruptive to be classified as green field. Fair enough. So, perhaps you put forth the solution that the entire concept of property and casualty insurance is obsolete and that property and casualty insurance premiums should be embedded into taxes imposed at the pump and that all auto accident claims should be captured, adjudicated and paid via a central authority.

I'll leave the merits of such an "innovative" approach to the pundits of public policy. The take away for the purpose of this whitepaper is that even with such a radical green field approach, it still remains that a claim must be created, adjudicated and paid.

To be clear, the concept of green field solution-ing, rationally applied, means that the project team has the blessing of the powers that be to move forward in designing and solution-ing a future state without being constrained by legacy systems, dated policies and procedures, organizational reporting relationships, etc. However, application of the green field myth vis-a-vis not taking into account the current state concepts, rules, etc. that need to continue to be applied in the future state is a train wreck in progress for sure!

My best practice guidance is to understand that business process change and business process improvement is not the same thing. Changing a process, even radically, is not improvement unless the change creates value in terms of organizational effectiveness (increase in customer value) and/or increased efficiency (operating more economically). Accordingly, without knowing that starting set of conditions (the current state), it's difficult to determine if the changes have a positive or negative impact on effectiveness and efficiency. Is it business process improvement or business process impairment?

4 "We are an agile organization – we can't be constrained by our business processes."

Saying that an organization is agile, and actually being an agile organization is very different. An organization simply cannot be agile without highly effective, efficient business processes. The key is to understand the distinction between rules-based work vs. knowledge and judgment based work. Rules-based work is mechanical in nature. Knowledge and judgment work requires making decisions based on experience, skill and wisdom. Most work activities have elements of both. Value is created by distilling the rules out of work activities to enable the rules to be performed mechanically (by people or by software) to free people to focus on making good decisions based on knowledge and judgment.

Separating the rules-based portion of a work activity from the knowledge and judgement based portion of the work activity is what I have coined as "splitting the atom" of the work activity. Tremendous business value is released by splitting the rules-based work from the knowledge and judgment components of a work activity.

Ironically, one of the first things I hear from people performing knowledge and judgment work is that they don't want to change how the work is organized. They do not want to be constrained by working within a defined business process. However, when I sit down and talk to them about business process and the separation of knowledge and judgment versus rules-based work, I see the light go on as they make the connection. Splitting the atom of work activities is more liberating than confining.

People quickly understand that once the rules-based work is defined, it can be assigned to someone with less experience or automated. This frees up their time to focus on knowledge and judgment based work. It's the rules-based work that is confining, not the knowledge and judgment based work.

Rules-based work activities are good candidates for transactional application software. A significant portion of rules-based work can be fully automated. Knowledge and judgment based work activities are good candidates for business intelligence applications. Making decisions based on timely accurate data creates significant business value.

What constrains agility is not recognizing and scoping for change. If the business processes in your organization are highly evolved vis-à-vis separating rules-based work from knowledge and judgment based work, your constraint is not your business processes, but the ability to recognize the need to change and having the organization rapidly respond – by quickly operationalizing and socializing the necessary changes in business processes.

It's my experience that organizations often recognize and respond to change too slowly – certainly much slower than if they are proactively scoping for change. In other words, it's not the processes and systems (assuming modernization and transformation) that constrain agility, it's the organization's ability to recognize and respond to the need to change that constrains agility.

5 "We are applying industry standard best practice templates."

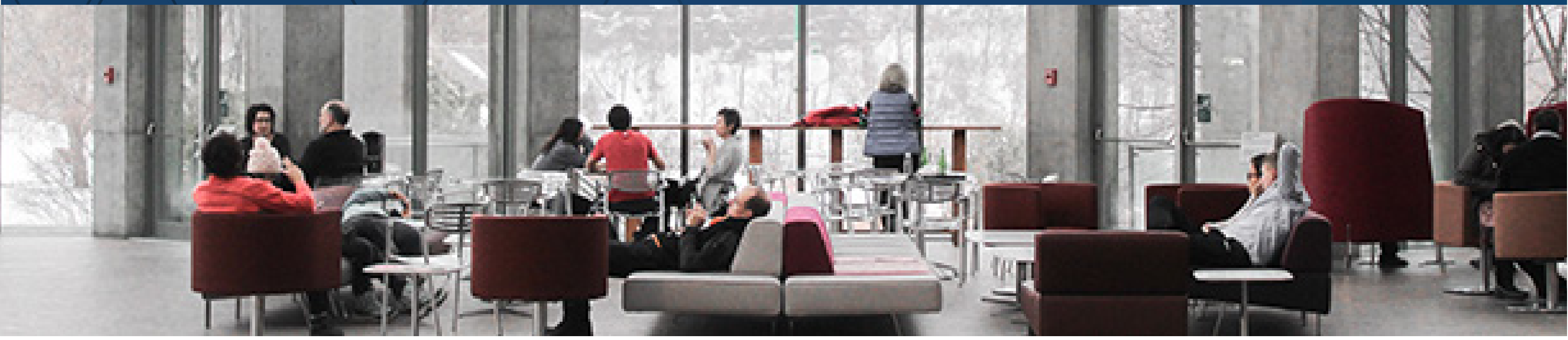
The censure camp might advocate bypassing current state mapping and analysis because industry standard business process best practice templates are available from various sources – consulting firms, enterprise software vendors, industry trade associations, etc.

True, excellent best practice templates are indeed available. And, my experience is that these best practice templates provide valuable information and insight. However, my position is that industry standard best practice templates are one of many excellent sources of potential best practices for your processes - not a single definitive source of guidance, ideas and insights in reengineering and transforming your processes.

Successful organizations, certainly organizations that can sustain their success, are innovative, agile and provide significant differentiation from their competition. In other words, their business processes are not generic templates, their business processes are an important source of differentiation in terms of customer service, product delivering, staff and stakeholder engagement, etc.

This clearly applies to front office and middle office processes, but I submit that there is significant room for differentiation with respect to back office processes as well. In other words, industry standard templates provide an excellent source of good ideas to inform and guide process design, but they do not contain your organization's special secret sauce for competitive differentiation.

My position is that industry standard best practice templates are one of many excellent sources of potential best practices for your processes - not a single definitive source of guidance, ideas and insights in reengineering and transforming your processes.



6 "Enterprise software is the Silver Bullet."

Just a little mythological background before we get started - a silver bullet is a metaphor for a panacea solution – a sure-fire, can't miss solution that produces immediate results.

The myth originated in the 1700's in connection with a blacksmith that, according to folklore, forged a silver bullet to kill a monstrous wolf, LaBete du Gevaudan (the beast of Gevaudan), that was purportedly terrorizing the French country side. I detail and debunk the myth of the silver bullet in my book Mastering Business Chaos.

For the purpose of our discussion here, let's just say that enterprise software as a business silver bullet is more of a myth than a sure-fire solution. To be clear, I am a strong advocate and proponent of vendor enterprise software as an important component of business and business process transformation.

Vendor enterprise software supports a wide variety of front, middle and back office processes. Vendor software functionality typically works in production (mitigates the risk of in-house development), has sufficient critical mass to enable sophisticated ongoing support, maintenance and the evolution of functionality, is architected for extensibility and agility, and enables vendors to glean and incorporate new functionally based on identification of new requirements across their customer base.

Current state mapping and analysis enables identification of shadow systems (departmental level solutions not supported by IT – spread sheets, Access databases, SharePoint portals, etc.) the functionality of which may not be supported by the vendor solution, but nonetheless, needs to be supported in the future state. Current state mapping and analysis also provides important insight into the impact of change and change management from current state to future state enabled by vendor enterprise solutions.

Let's look at it another way, if vendor enterprise software contained all of the secret sauce of success in a particular industry, then it follows that all that another organization needs to do to compete with you is to procure and implement the vendor's silver bullet solution configured based on the vendor's best practices identified for that industry. I think that it's safe to say that the success of your organization and the secret sauce that provides competitive differentiation transcends vendor enterprise software configured from best practice templates.

7 "Our people are simply too busy to engage in current state mapping and analysis."

Subject matter experts (SMEs) are slammed for time for sure, but they will find the time to engage in analysis if they see value from their time invested in analysis. The reason that SMEs often say they are too busy to engage in analysis is based on a history of bad experiences with analysts that engage in superficial note taking rather than true professional analysis.

I call it the "Oh-no, an analyst is heading our way, we need to hide before they find us" syndrome – "because when they find us they are going to ask a bunch of superficial questions (What do you want? What do you need? What needs to be fixed? - Etc.) and we will provide superficial answers to their superficial questions - and they will then go back and create some type of bullet list or indented outline of "requirements" that they do not understand and we do not see any connection to our business. And, those superficial "requirements" will serve as the basis for changes in our business processes and supporting systems - that when they go into production will not provide us with much of anything useful. So, let's just skip the time to engage in analysis because there is very little or no value from our time invested in analysis."

Unfortunately, much analysis is superficial and results in bad experiences for the SMEs.

In order to overcome the "Oh-no" syndrome," I encourage you to:

1. Utilize professional business analysts (as opposed to superficial note takers);
2. Engage in model based analysis (process maps, activity diagrams, entity-relationship diagrams, etc.) rather than voluminous text and/or indented outlines; and
3. Ensure that the analysts perform domain pre-analysis prior to engaging SMEs. Domain pre-analysis is discussed in more detail in Perilous Misconception #9, bullet item 5 - Not respecting the SMEs time.

8 "Current state mapping and analysis will cause anxiety among staff."

The misconception has two underlying components. First, there is the misconception that the staff (hands-on staff performing the work activities and supervisors managing the work) will resist current state mapping and analysis because they (staff) will perceive mapping and analysis as a threat to job security. In other words, by capturing their tacit tribal knowledge (the knowledge maintained informally in their head versus formally documented) in the form of a process map reduces the organization's dependency on their tightly held knowledge. Second, there is the misconception that the process of mapping and analysis will be viewed by staff as being critical of their work performance.

In my experience, both of these misconceptions are based on legacy assumptions regarding how staff views the nature of their work and their relationship to the organization. It's my experience that most staff is increasingly slammed for time – meaning that they are fully occupied all-day every-day just keeping up with the existing work load and the daily and ongoing firefights that occur on a regular basis. Additionally, most staff are fully aware that they are performing inefficient tasks and constrained by legacy business policies and systems that they inherited rather than created. Accordingly, they are typically thrilled that someone is working with them to map and analyze their work activities to improve end-to-end business processes.

And, in addition to all of that, it's my experience that most staff understand that their organization is operating in a highly competitive environment and that improving organizational effectiveness and operating efficiency is far more important to job security than holding onto legacy tacit tribal knowledge – which changes and becomes obsolete at an increasingly rapid pace.

Best practice tip: I try to put people at ease regarding current state mapping and analysis.

My position is that current state mapping and analysis creates less, rather than more, anxiety among staff. Current state mapping and analysis is an essential component of change management. Engaging in current state mapping and analysis provides staff with a direct voice in surfacing pain points in the current process and in recommending changes in business rules, policies, workflows, procedures, supporting system functionality, etc. to enable a more effective efficient future state.

This level of staff engagement also enables staff to visualize their journey from the current state to future states, builds a sense of team and purpose, increases the concept of becoming customer focused, and is essential to staff embracing changes and successfully transitioning to future states.

Best practice tip: I try to put people at ease regarding current state mapping and analysis. Some participants are initially a bit defensive regarding the work activities that they perform. So, I say, "look, the purpose is to capture the business knowledge not to judge or to ascribe blame regarding what we are doing." I then go on to say that "it's my experience that people do what they do for many reasons – most of which have nothing to do with them personally. For example, most people inherit the work activities and procedures, many are constrained by legacy systems that constrain innovation, or legacy policies and procedures that are hard to change, or simply that they were put into a situation with very little training and are doing the best they can with what they know and are learning as they go, etc." People "get-it" that you authentically understand their situation and, accordingly, they are then much more receptive and open to engaging in current state mapping and analysis.

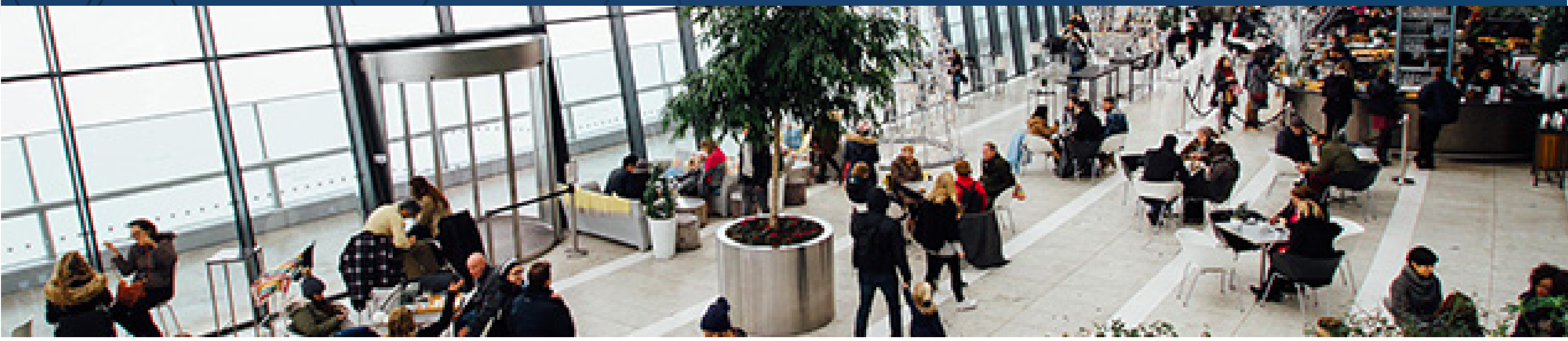
9 "We tried current state mapping and analysis in a prior project and it was not successful."

Why was it not successful? What were the metrics and/or objectives that defined success or failure? Generally, I consider current state mapping and analysis a success if the map that is created tells and intuitively presents an accurate story regarding the current state process (see Perilous Misconception #1 regarding the components of a process map). What I mean by intuitive is that the process stakeholders (SMEs, staff, management, analysts, I.T. professionals, etc.) look at the map and intuitively and instinctively understand the map without the need for an analyst to interpret the map for the stakeholders - and they agree that the map is a reasonably (not perfect) accurate representation of the current state process and underlying business rules.

If the stakeholders do not intuitively and instinctively "get" the process as depicted in the map and do not agree it's a reasonable representation, then the current state map has indeed failed to deliver the objectives. The result of a failed mapping initiative is reinforcement to the censure camp to continue to censure current state mapping and analysis going forward.

What are the primary reasons that current state mapping and analysis initiatives fail? It's my experience, based on coming-in to clean-up the mess of failed mapping and analysis work, is that mapping and analysis fails for a combination of five key reasons:

- **Insufficient experience of the analyst doing the mapping.** Mapping and analysis is a professional skill that requires mapping experience, critical thinking and people engagement skills. Far too often, current state mapping and analysis is delegated to the most junior member of the team. My experience is that it should be performed by a senior member of the team. Current state mapping and analysis is the foundation for all other activities in a business transformation initiative. Please go back and review the 5 Essential Questions at the beginning of this whitepaper.
- **Delegating mapping to the SMEs.** Delegating mapping and analysis to SMEs in the business space that needs to be mapped and analyzed has all of the risks of insufficient experience above, plus two additional risks: 1) It's not going to happen! SMEs are already slammed for time (see Perilous Misconception #8) and accordingly, mapping and analysis is just one more thing added to the long list of things the SME needs to do. It will continually be pushed to the end of the line because it does not address an important in-the-moment crises that needs to be resolved; 2) Staff/SMEs are simply too close to the current state to objectively map and



analyze the current state.

- **Using ad-hoc informal mapping methods.** I have seen it all in this regard. When I am asked to come in and fix a failed initiative, one of the first things I ask to see is the current state map. What I get is all over the board. And, typically, it's not based on standards, it's based on a whimsical ad-hoc approach by the person tasked with creating the map. The map has a wide range of symbols – squares, ovals, circles, rectangles, parallelograms, etc. – even lightning bolts, icons for trucks, stop-signs – you name it, it's been on a map. Then I ask, "What's that difference between a circle and an oval or between a square and a rectangle," and the response often comes back, "I'm not sure, seemed like a good idea in the moment." So, if the map maker does not understand their map, how do they expect the participants to understand the map? My best practice guidance is to use an industry standard for mapping such as Business Process Modeling Language (BPML).

- **Using mapping methods that are too superficial or too complex.** The key is to create a process map at the right level of detail that tells a story at the right level of detail and that participants intuitively grasp. My experience is that many maps are too superficial to tell the story at a sufficient level of detail to enable participants to challenge the map and to identify actionable gaps and pain points in the process. Maps are occasionally too detailed to enable participants to see the end-to-end concepts. This often is a result of an analyst falling in love with the current state map and the current state mapping processes - and losing track of the goal of process mapping and analysis. That said, my best practice guidance is to error towards too detailed than too superficial.

- **Not respecting the SMEs time.** This topic by itself warrants its own whitepaper. However, for the purpose of the topic in this whitepaper, the issue is that analysts engaging in current state mapping and analysis do not adequately prepare for meetinging with SMEs. In other words, the analyst meets with a group of SMEs for the first time and says something to the affect "Tell me a bit about the area that we are going to map and analyze." You can almost hear the exasperation among the participants! It their mind, the participants are thinking something to the affect "this is the fifth time in the last three years an analyst has asked me to bring them up to speed in this business area. Did they [the analyst] not review the prior work performed in this area prior to coming into this meeting?"

If the stakeholders do not intuitively and instinctively "get" the process as depicted in the map and do not agree it's a reasonable representation, then the current state map has indeed failed to deliver the objectives.

The SMEs have a legitimate position. There is a significant existing body of work (prior analysis, policy and procedure manuals, user documentation, training materials, etc.) in any organization for any business area under consideration that the analyst could have reviewed and brought themselves up-to-speed prior to engaging the SMEs. I call this domain pre-analysis. My best practice tip is to do your homework – conduct domain pre-analysis prior to engaging SMEs. The result is that rather than irritating the SMEs, they will respect you for doing domain pre-analysis and are much more receptive to actively engaging in the initial and the follow-up sessions.

The take away from Perilous Misconception #9 is that the failure of a current state mapping and analysis initiative is self-inflicted. The five leading causes described above are all controllable and manageable. Accordingly, a past failure is not a valid reason for not engaging in current state mapping and analysis going forward.

10 "Current state mapping and analysis drives the future state."

OK, finally one for the censure camp. Perilous Misconception #10 is that current state mapping and analysis drives the future state. Current state mapping and analysis **does not** drive the future state – it's one of many components, albeit an important component, which informs the critical thinking required to identify improvement opportunities (incremental to transformation) and design the future state.

The future state vision and resulting design results from consuming input from multiple channels, one of which is current state mapping and analysis, and applying critical thinking informed by knowledge, experience and judgment to identify opportunities and options for the future state.

The opportunities and options are then vetted across multiple stakeholders (SMEs, operational and senior management, technical professionals, enterprise software vendors, etc.) and a viable future state emerges based on a range of constraints – budget, risks, staff availability, availability of technical resources, change management considerations, etc.

Important note regarding the relationship between the current "as-is" state and the future "to-be" state - at any point in time there is only one current "as-is" state but there are many future states. The reason is that improvement opportunities are not implemented at the same time en-mass. Typically, low tech/no-tech incremental opportunities (changes in business polices, rules, procedures, roles - include skills, skill levels, turnover and retention, etc., reporting relationships, organization of the workflow, etc.) are implemented early while transformational opportunities that require revised or new application software functionality and new technology are implemented at later stages based on dependencies among the future state requirements and delivery of the supporting future state functionality.

The key take-away of Perilous Misconception #10, for the purpose of this whitepaper, is that current state mapping and analysis is an essential, but not the only component in informing and guiding the future state. However, without current state mapping and analysis, the other components lack context for analysis. A bit like navigating a ship without a compass or access to GPS – difficult to navigate to a destination, and navigating the obstacles along the way, without knowing your current location.

Successful Business Transformation and Modernization

I encourage you to review the 5 Essential Business Analysis Questions and the 10 Perilous Misconceptions presented in this whitepaper. Essential Question #1 is "What are you currently doing?" Essential Question #1 is all about current state mapping and analysis.

Essential Questions #2 - #5 are dependent on getting question #1 right. Successful transformation is about getting Essential Questions #1 - #5 right. The key take away from this whitepaper is that current state mapping and analysis is the foundation for successful business transformation initiatives!

It's a very complex, globally competitive, rapidly changing business environment. Ask yourself some critical questions. Are the business processes and supporting applications in your organization keeping pace with ever increasing demands for organizational effectiveness and operational efficiency and enterprise agility?

Does your team and your organization have the critical thinking skills and analysis techniques to rapidly identify, analyze and articulate essential business requirements? Are you able to rapidly define and specify your business requirements at the level of detail of business system functional requirements?

If you can, what are the benefits? If you can't, what are the risks? Successful transformation and modernization requires deep business knowledge, adept judgment and seasoned experience.

Other whitepapers by James Proctor that may be of interest to you are listed below. The whitepapers can be download the www.inteqgroup.com:

- Transforming a Hero Culture
- Lean: Getting Early Wins from BPR
- The Five Essential Business Analysis Questions
- Crossing the Chasm from Business Chaos to Business Agility
- The Agile/Framework™ - Breaking the Myth of the Iron Triangle
- Customer Self-Service vs. Shifting Work – The Distinction is Critical
- Top 10 Business Intelligence (BI) Requirements Analysis Questions
- The Business Case for Professional Business Analysts
- MoDA/Framework™ - The Tactical Blueprint for Business and Systems Analysis
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