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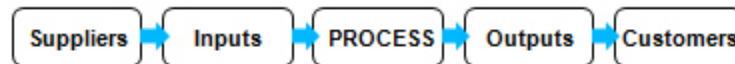
by Lynn Hunsaker

You've heard of garbage-in, garbage out, right? It's amazing how often work teams put up with substandard inputs "thrown over the fence" from groups they rely on for information or materials to do their work. Faulty inputs lead to imperfect outputs and inconsistent customer experience.



Everything that external customers receive is the result of business processes. Any business process is typically deployed by several departments. Otherwise, it's likely a sub-process of a bigger process that delivers value to external customers.

In other words, a business process involves a value chain of internal suppliers and internal customers. Help your internal suppliers help you deliver better customer experiences — analyze your business processes and proactively communicate with your internal suppliers.



Timeliness and quality of handoffs throughout this internal value chain snowball exponentially toward revenue-generating customers — for better or worse. The key is to work backwards from the customers' viewpoint, like peeling an onion with successive layers of handoffs deeper and deeper into your organization. Here are 7 steps for improving your process:

1. For your business process, determine its inputs and outputs.
2. Identify its internal and/or external customers.
3. Collect data from customers regarding their expectations and challenges.
4. Modify the business process to enable it to deliver what its customers want.
5. Identify its internal and/or external suppliers of inputs.
6. Specify requirements of inputs, evaluate current inputs, and communicate requirements and performance to the suppliers.



7. Establish an ongoing schedule for repeating the preceding six steps, as many forces over time cause change in customer expectations and challenges.

Prevent customer hassles by managing more effective handoffs — upstream and downstream from your point in the organization. You'll find yourself enjoying your job, being more productive, dealing with less waste, and improving profits!

Find out how to customize these tips to your situation; contact the author lynn.hunsaker@clearaction.biz.