Digitisation and Performance

An Interactive Workshop

Session 2: Identifying Pain Points, and Root Cause Analysis

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BUSINESS GROWTH + PERFORMANCE

Session 2: Identifying Pain Points and Root Cause Analysis

How to Identify Pain Points?

Business process improvement involves identifying and improving an existing process to streamline its overall efficiency. In simple terms, you're taking a process and finding a better way to get it done.

You have completed the first step when you designed your internal business process map. This is the current state on your business process.

The next step involves identifying pain points, which include anything that:

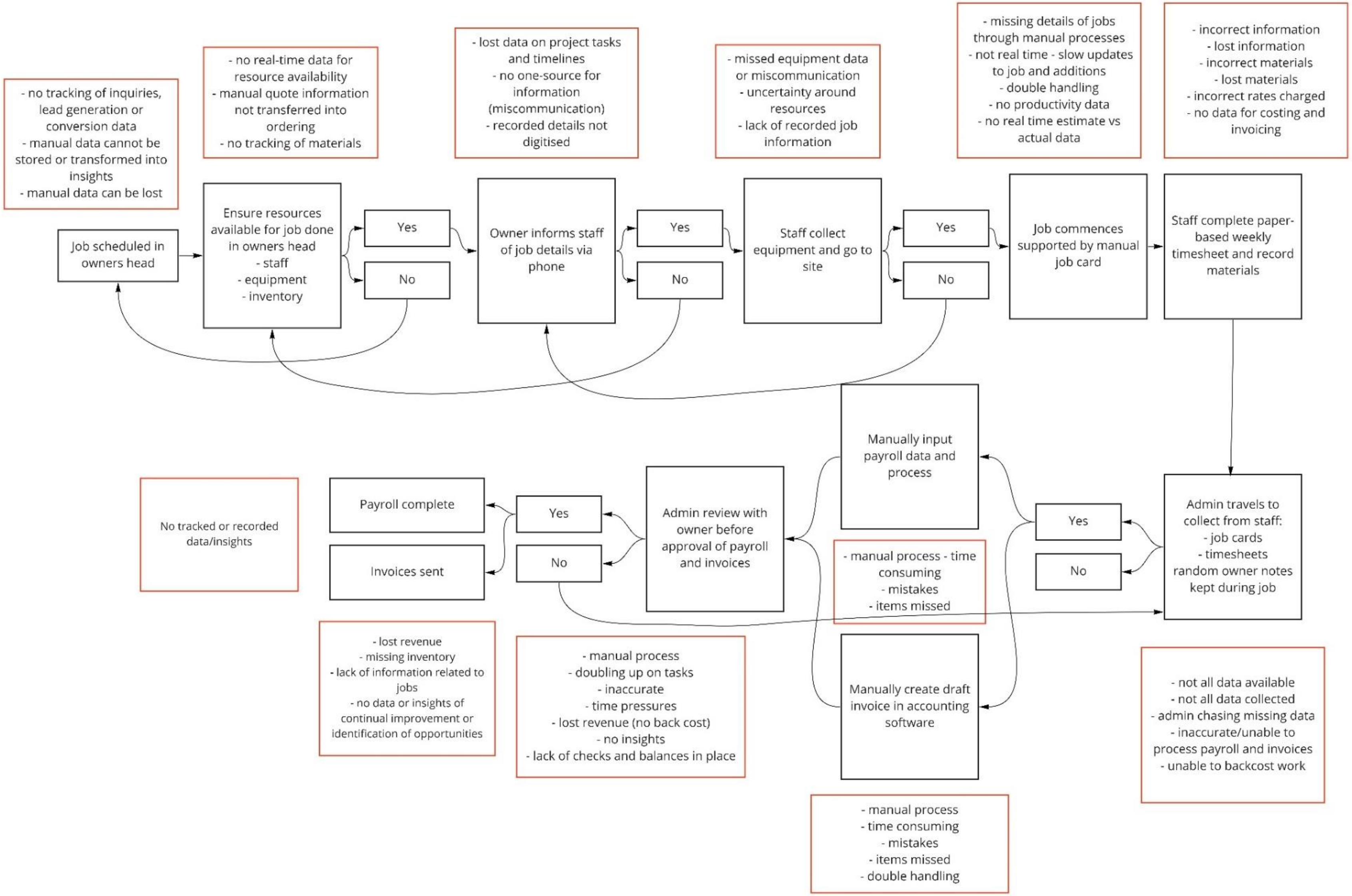
- Creates inefficiency in the process
- Creates wastage
- Creates workarounds or reworks
- Delays the process
- Reduces productivity
- Creates roadblocks
- Creates higher than expected financial costs
- Creates frustration for employees
- Creates frustration for customers.

Steps to Identifying Pain Points

Work through your current state process map, and under each step you have created, identify, and briefly explain all the possible pain points in the process.

It is very important to focus on identifying the pain points, without switching to a solutions mindset. We all want to find a solution, but this must be completed at the end of the analysis. Focusing on solutions now will take you down a certain path without understanding the real causes of the pain points, and the range of opportunities you must resolve and improve these.

Example Pain Point Identification

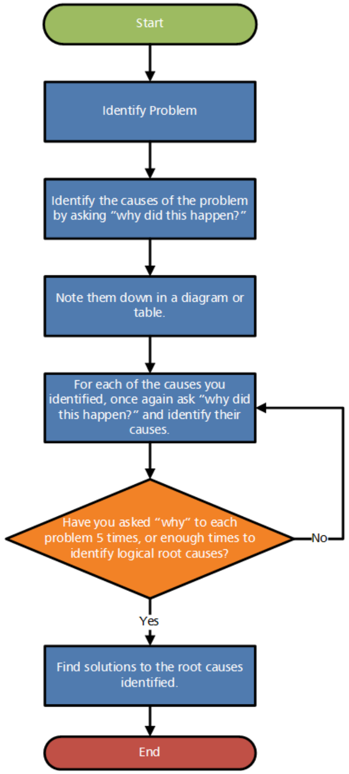


Now you have identified pain points in your process, some of the causes may be glaringly obvious, some not so. Problems are just symptoms of deeper issues. Fixing a problem quickly may be a convenient solution, however, it doesn't protect your work process from recurring mistakes. This is why your team needs to focus on finding the root cause and tackle it properly. A great method to dive deeper to the root cause of the pain points is a method termed The 5 Whys.

The 5 Whys technique is one of the most effective tools for root cause analysis in the Lean management arsenal. Using the 5 Whys will help you find the root cause of any problem and protect the process from recurring mistakes and failures.

When applying the 5 Whys technique, you want to get to the problem's essence and then fix it. The 5 Whys may show you that the source of the problem is quite unexpected.

5-why Process Flowchart



5 Whys Example

Problem: We didn't send the newsletter for the latest software updates on time.

1. Why didn't we send the newsletter on time? *Updates were not implemented until the deadline*.
2. Why were the updates not implemented on time? *Because the developers were still working on the new features.*
3. Why were the developers still working on the new features? *One of the new developers didn't know the procedures.*
4. Why was the new developer unfamiliar with all procedures? *He was not trained properly*.
5. Why was he not trained properly? *Because CTO believes that new employees don't need thorough training and they should learn while working.*

You can notice that the root cause of the initial problem turned out to be something completely different from most expectations.

Furthermore, it is obvious that it is not technological but a process problem. This is typical because we often focus on the product part of the problem as we neglect the human factor.

Root Cause Analysis Steps

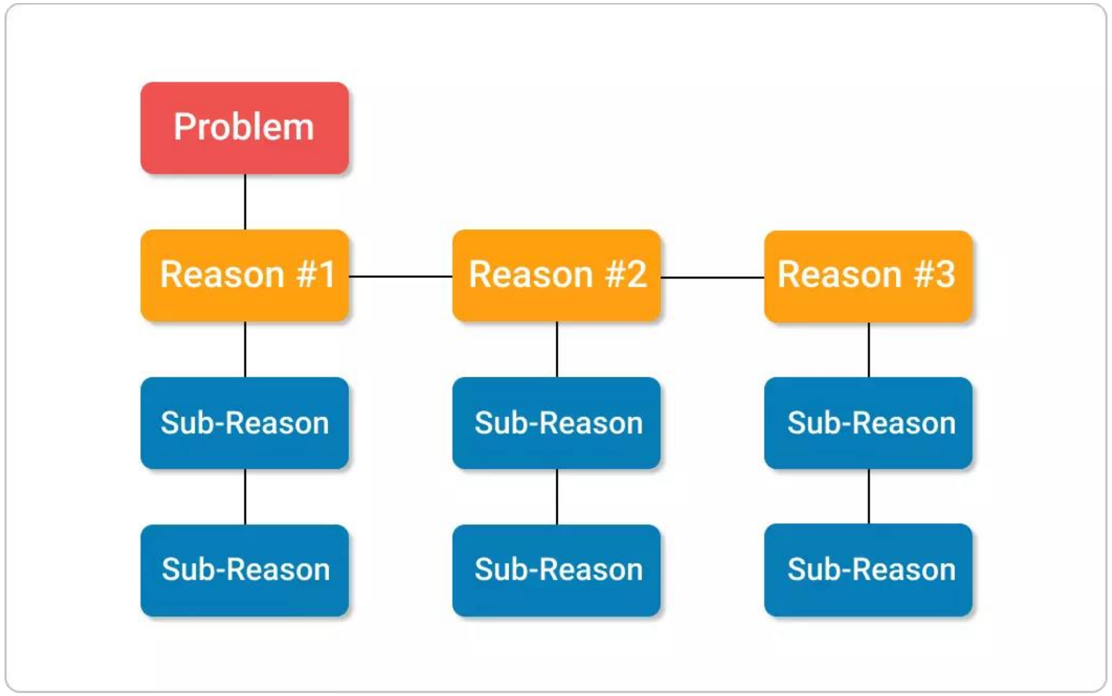
1. **Define the problem**

   Discuss the problem with the team and make a clear problem statement. It will help you define the scope of the issue you are going to investigate.

2. **Ask Why**

   Empower one person to facilitate the whole process. This person will ask the questions and keep the team focused. The answers should be based on facts and real data, rather than on emotional opinions.

Advice: Sometimes there could be more than one root cause. In these cases, the 5 Whys analysis will look more like a matrix with different branches. This may even help you detect and eliminate organisational issues that have permanent negative effects on the overall performance.



3. Take Action

After the team detects the root cause(s), it is time to take corrective actions. All members should be involved in a discussion to find and apply the best solution that will protect your process from recurring problems.

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The 5 Why's Worksheet

Define the Problem

Why?

Why?

Why?

Why?

Why?


How about a coffee on us?
Let's catch up for a chat
Contact Steve Wilson
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