



Analysis, Redesign Boost Effectiveness

Make Business Processes Work for You

Imagine a company where operations flow smoothly 24 hours a day. Every task is performed efficiently and contributes to satisfied employees, manageable growth and a healthy bottom line.

Most of the glory and credit can be laid at the feet of efficient, clear, high-performance business processes. Business processes are the heart of an enterprise. They create value, determine performance and implement strategy. *They're the way things get done.*

"Business processes are critical to the healthy functioning of an organization," says Kaie Pahi Latterner, TEC founder and president. "There is a direct connection between a business unit's strategic objectives and the major business processes that will help achieve them. Unfortunately, unless an organization takes time to define its business processes, it will remain unaware of improvements that could be realized by this valuable exercise."

Where Do Your Processes Lead?

Some business processes follow clearly defined and logical paths. Others take the that's-the-way-we've-always-done-it route, the one filled with personnel pot-holes, multiple department lane changes, and far too many rest stops.



Kaie Pahi Latterner
President, TEC, Inc.

Today's customers will take the nearest detour if the latter type of road describes your organization. If things aren't going the way you think they should or if you want to avoid uncertainty in the future, it may be time to determine how well your business processes are working for you.

"Technology should support and enable a company's business processes and not dictate how business gets done," Kaie stresses. "Always know that

your company is only as good as the way in which your people, processes and technology work together."

TEC knows business processes are as varied and unique as each TEC

client. That's because our unparalleled system integration experience includes "marrying" hundreds of each client's

business process \n

▶ A collection of related, structured activities; a chain of events that produces a specific service or product for a customer

▶ Has a start, an end and a purpose, with clearly defined inputs and outputs

▶ Begins with either an internal or external customer need or expectation and is complete when the customer is satisfied

Continued on page 2

In the next issue:

- **Change Management: Why It Matters**
- **TEC at Retail Systems 2002 Conference & Expo**
- **More Consultants . . .**
- **More Clients . . .**
- **More TECHniques!**

TECHniques:

Training: Planning the Action

1. Know your audience! Assess their knowledge base and determine what they need to learn.
2. Determine the facilities, equipment, data, class size, materials and time needed *before* you schedule training.
3. Set learning goals and specify objectives.
4. Prepare, prepare, prepare!
5. Make it *fun!* Use a variety of training methods and design engaging activities to involve and teach every participant.

Make Business Processes Work for You, from page 1

different business processes with the features of the organization's new software (such as Oasis® retail system software from Purple Cactus Technologies or the myriad of Retek® retail management modules). TEC then produces customized documentation, User Guides and other education and training tools and materials.

We also know that high-performance business processes are efficient and eliminate wasteful steps. They emphasize minimal non-valued added work and optimize valued-added work. They are simple, performed at the best time by employees in the right roles, handled by as few people as possible to minimize hand-offs, unaffected by multiple locations, and subject to cost-benefit analysis.

In other words, *high-performance processes should be the goal of every organization, including yours.*

Call TEC When It's Time to Redesign

Instead of looking inside at their *modus operandi*, many struggling businesses turn to new and expensive technologies to fix their problems. However, their process flaws become painfully apparent when viewed through the magnifying glass of new technologies and management systems that encourage or even require "cleaner" processes.

Avoid Business Process Redesign Mistakes By:

- ▶ *Creating high-performance business processes before proceeding with technology.*
- ▶ *Defining an overall Business Model.*
- ▶ *Creating a single-level flowchart for each business process.*
- ▶ *Having the right people with the right knowledge involved in defining the processes.*
- ▶ *Calling TEC first!*

"Successful system integrations depend heavily upon understanding, clarifying, streamlining and, if necessary, changing a company's business processes before finalizing all technology decisions," Kaie explains. "We've seen new system integrations delayed until flawed processes are improved. And that costs lots of time and money."

TEC can help. Our experienced business process consultants carefully research and analyze the order, relationships, dependencies, functions, hand-offs, input, output and other steps of each business

activity. What can be done more efficiently? Does this step add value or accomplish something the customer cares about? Questions abound.

When answers are in hand, TEC creates high-performance processes and prepares supporting materials that provide a common frame of reference for improving communication and understanding at all levels.

"TEC's goal is more than just creating outstanding processes," Kaie says. "We want to set the stage for a client's success by helping the client accomplish its strategic and operational goals. We create outstanding processes and materials that work for the *people* in the company, because they're the real key to any success." •

Client Connection: Michaels Stores, Inc.

TEC highly values its long-lasting client relationships. Here's an example of one of them.

Michaels Stores, Inc., is the world's largest retailer of arts, crafts, framing, floral, decorative wall decor and seasonal merchandise. The Texas company owns and operates 702 Michaels stores in 48 states and Canada, 140 Aaron Brothers stores primarily on the West Coast, and a wholesale operation in Dallas.

In 1997, Michaels CIO Jim Tucker brought TEC on board to help his company build a training and communication program to support an implementation of a highly customized Retek merchandise management program. Jim knew that Kaie Pohl Latterner and her company would bring real value to Michaels' preparation efforts.

Over the next two years, TEC did exactly that and also delivered team building workshops and other training to the diverse project group.

"You'd better get your running shoes on if you want to keep up with TEC," says Jim. "This is a consultant relationship that you will really enjoy."

Regina Hunt was Michaels' director of systems training at that time. "TEC provided Michaels with a process to really help us get going and then be able to function on our own," recalls Regina, now a Project Lead with TEC. "We really became prepared to succeed, which is a goal TEC sets for every client."

Today, TEC continues to support Michaels with as-needed ISP documentation work.

"Customer relationships are very important to TEC," says Regina. "We know our clients and their needs, and our clients know they can continue to call on us for quality training, documentation and change management products and services." •



Introducing: Deanne Probst

Communication work is essentially the same in any industry, says TEC Communications Specialist Deanne Probst. Topics and content may differ, of course, but the responsibility to be honest, thorough and respectful never does.

Deanne helps communicate TEC's story by composing and producing *TEC Talk*[™], news releases, brochures, and many other information and promotion

materials. "TEC's people, products and services are easy to promote," she smiles. "They're top notch in every way."

Deanne has spent more than 20 years working in internal and external communications in a variety of fields. She began her career in employee communication with Target Stores. At International Multifoods Corp., she added national media and financial communication duties to her resume. Further experience at a hospital

and at marketing and advertising agencies exposed her to strategies and tools that provide people with information that can truly change and improve their lives.



Deanne Probst

TEC clients can take advantage of Deanne's experience when researching and planning communication programs to support system integrations, change management activities and other education efforts.

"Informed and motivated employees are *committed* employees," says Deanne. "Honest and timely communication is a powerful way for companies to demonstrate their respect for employees and engender their support. Using information to involve people and achieve results helps everyone succeed." •

WPS Resources Corp. Hires TEC

WPS Resources Corp., Green Bay, Wis., selected TEC last fall to provide training documentation and training skill enhancement services for WPS employees who will use the utility's new customer information system.

TEC consultants are developing and delivering training documentation for WPS's new Open-cIS[™] (customer information system) program, which will provide customer care and billing services to WPS utility customers.

TEC also has conducted our customized Train-the-Trainer: Training Delivery Skills and Techniques[™] workshop for WPS's Open-cIS training team members.

WPS Resources Corp. subsidiaries are: Wisconsin Public Service Corp., Upper Peninsula Power Co., WPS Energy Services, Inc., and WPS Power Development, Inc. •

"Honest and timely communication is a powerful way for companies to demonstrate respect for their employees and engender their support."

Featured TEC Program: Inventory Management 101[™]

Bad inventory management is bad business. Too much product can place burdensome costs on your company, while too little product can lead to unhappy customers and lost sales.

Gain control of your inventory issues with TEC's Inventory Management 101[™] workshop!

This interactive workshop covers a broad range of topics and definitions, and teaches essential skills that will improve the competency of retail associates involved in the inventory management of goods and services.

Attendees learn fundamentals and details through applied exercises and participation in small and large group discussions. They delve into the language, job descriptions and functions, and technologies that will help them improve their skills and enhance their performance without delay.

TEC's qualified consultants can customize Inventory Management 101[™] to fit any retailer's situation. By incorporating your company's business processes, technology, and roles and responsibilities, our experienced facilitators make each lesson personal and relevant. And the knowledge that participants acquire can be applied immediately in the workplace.

You *can* improve your bottom line! Call TEC to arrange for this valuable workshop to be held at your organization and help your associates improve their knowledge and performance.



The contributions of your newly skilled inventory managers will be realized in your stores and on your balance sheet, where it *really* counts. •



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Addressing the human side of your training and system integration needs.

TEC to Present, Exhibit at Retail Systems 2002

TEC consultants are busy this spring preparing for the Retail Systems 2002/VICS Collaborative Commerce conference (www.retailsystems.com), set for June 24-27 in Chicago, Ill. This influential forum combines two major retail shows that draw thousands of industry movers and shakers each year to exchange ideas and see what's new in retailing.

TEC will present a pre-show conference on June 24 entitled "The Human Side of Systems Integrations: The Essential But Often Forgotten Element."

Following this informative session about vital "people issues" associated with new technologies, several TEC retail clients will participate in a "been there, done that" discussion

and Q&A panel. They'll share their experiences and describe the benefits of focusing adequate attention and resources on the employees who made their system integrations successful.

TEC will occupy exhibit booth #1328. President Kaie Pahi Latterner and other TEC consultants will be present to discuss change management, training and other areas of TEC's expertise.

TEC's booth will adjoin that of Purple Cactus Technologies (see *TEC Talk*, Vol. 1, Issue 3), a retail software and system specialist serving mid-market retailers. TEC offers supporting training services to Purple Cactus customers across the country.

Visit www.TECconsultants.com or call us at 715-247-5054 for more info. We'll see you in Chicago! •



www.TECconsultants.com

WebEx Aids TEC Efficiency, Productivity

Real-time online meetings between TEC consultants and clients are now possible with the WebEx Meeting Center! TEC uses WebEx services to enhance communication while reducing travel expenses for our clients.

WebEx merges the entire range of digital media and voice capabilities in order to provide an online forum that matches the productivity of face-to-face meetings. Major features include application, document and presentation shar-

ing; file transfer; live chat; polling; desktop remote control; and record and playback, among others.

Using WebEx, TEC can now conduct multi-location meetings in real-time. We can edit and annotate on shared documents, show PowerPoint presentations, replay tutorials

and much more, all from the convenience of our desks.

Planned and spontaneous

meetings also can be held on-line with anyone, anywhere, to address immediate client and project needs. All you need is a browser and a phone!

For more information about how to take advantage of this tremendous time- and money-saving tool, visit www.TECconsultants.com or contact your TEC Project Lead.

WebEx is just one more way TEC is working to help you. •

