

Today GC Director of Process Improvement and Executive Coach Michele Hill takes a turn at Coach's Corner.



What's involved when an organization pursues process improvement?

The best organizations and employees always look for ways to be better, to improve customer satisfaction, reduce errors, increase sales or engage employees. The goal is to make continuous improvement the only way of doing business and not just the "flavor of the month."

Here are a few tips to get started down the path of continuous improvement:

See everything - the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Successes should certainly be recognized and celebrated, but don't stop there. It's critical to identify and address processes that aren't working so you know where to focus improvement efforts. Don't sweep problems under the rug.

Look to the experts. You won't have to look far. They're all around you.

The people who do the work daily know the problem areas and have solid ideas about how to fix them. Listen to their recommendations and encourage them to pilot solutions. Don't punish failed proposals; instead, suggest tweaking and trying again.

Measure success.

Customer surveys, operational dashboards or simple metrics for key processes are assets to showcase what's going well (celebrate wins) and identify problems (face challenges). It's nice to be able to say, "I'm pretty sure this process has improved" but it's more convincing to see definitive numbers and prove it with data.

Check out at least one process improvement tool this year.

There are numerous easy-to-use methods. Become familiar with one you haven't explored before. PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act), process mapping, SOPs (standard operating procedures), or Lean (which eliminates process waste) are all good starting points.

One of my favorite things about leading process improvement is seeing it provide new ways of understanding our work and an enhanced ability to solve future problems.

I'm happy to answer questions at Hill@GladieuxConsulting.com.

Are you dealing with a communication challenge?

If you've got a question, write to Michelle@GladieuxConsulting.com for consideration.

Questions remain confidential and anonymous.

COACH'S CORNER

