

## Making the Transition: From Heroics to Process Management

Author: Frank Nibley, Partner

*When you look at successful people and fast growing companies, they often share a common ethic – “Do whatever it takes to get the job done.” This attitude is often an early-stage catalyst for growth and can lead to a “culture of effort” and “heroics.” Despite great strength and ability, well intended people succumb to work-around measures that compensate for inefficient systems and processes. Sooner or later, it becomes evident that heroics are no longer sufficient to sustain the rate of growth. In the end, customers and the bottom line suffer and the hero’s journey, out of necessity, transcends to the process journey.*



**Hero:** definition: 1a): a mythological or legendary figure often of divine descent endowed with great strength or ability b): an illustrious warrior c): a person admired for his/her achievements and noble qualities d): one that shows great courage

## The Hero's Journey

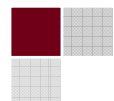
When you look at successful people and fast growing companies, they often share a common ethic – “Do whatever it takes to get the job done.” This attitude is often an early-stage catalyst for growth and can lead to a “culture of effort” and “heroics.” The heroes become those managers and employees who in spite of organizational gaps get things done (often just-in-time) as the company moves through rapid growth and change.

Over time, as people are stretched either beyond their abilities or time, heroic efforts begin to break down. Despite great strength and ability, well intended people succumb to work-around measures that compensate for inefficient systems and processes. Sooner or later, it becomes evident that heroics are no longer sufficient to sustain the rate of growth. In the end, customers and the bottom line suffer and the hero's journey, out of necessity, transcends to the process journey.

## The Focus on Process Management

The focus on process is nothing new. Total Quality Management (TQM) and later Business Process Reengineering (BPR) were hot trends in the early 1990s as organizations adopted improvement methodologies and streamlining efforts to achieve aggressive cost reduction targets. Now in 2005, with recurring economic uncertainty, business leaders and managers are once again faced with the challenge of reducing costs across the enterprise's value chain. At the same time, organizations are deploying key strategic improvement initiatives (e.g. six sigma) aimed at long-term competitiveness and efficiency across the company. The question becomes: how to manage costs while improving your company's mission-critical processes without creating yet another “flavor of the month”. The answer: *Process Management*.

More than a temporary “program”-- process management is a way of doing business. If done correctly, process management capitalizes on “lessons learned” from earlier quality movements of the 1970's, 80's and 90's (i.e. Quality Circles, TQM) and becomes the key strategic element in achieving the organization's goals and long term competitive advantage. Process-managed organizations have embedded within them a common language and roadmap that enables



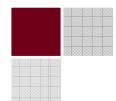
business leaders and managers to 1) understand one another's operations, 2) collaborate in the design of new processes and 3) manage business improvement initiatives across the value chain.

## How Well is Your Organization Running?

At your next meeting with your direct reports, discuss your organization's understanding of current business issues you are facing and conduct a preliminary assessment of your processes. Consider asking the following questions:

- What are your critical business issues? (barriers impacting your department's ability to support the strategy of the organization)?
- What measurable impact (cost, timeliness, efficiency, cycle time, other) are these critical business issues having at your company?
- Which processes are having the greatest impact on critical business issues you are faced with today?
- What departments/functions are involved in those processes?
- What are some of the issues and gaps that exist in the current process?
- Do measures exist to evaluate process performance?
- Do all individuals responsible for the process know about process performance goals?

Contact Waypoint Consulting Group, LLC today and to take your first steps in your journey of transformation to process management.



## Contact Information

For more information, please contact:

### **Frank Nibley, Partner**

Waypoint Consulting Group, LLC

Denver, CO

Tel: 303-330-0302

Email: [fnibley@waypointcg.com](mailto:fnibley@waypointcg.com)

### **Amy Sobey, Partner**

Waypoint Consulting Group, LLC

Denver, CO

Tel: 303-330-0412

Email: [asobey@waypointcg.com](mailto:asobey@waypointcg.com)

This publication contains general information only and Waypoint Consulting Group LLC is not, by means of this publication, rendering business, financial, investment, or other professional advice or services. This publication is not a substitute for such professional advice or services, nor should it be used as a basis for any decision or action that may affect your business. Before making any decision or taking any action that may affect your business, you should consult a qualified professional advisor. Waypoint Consulting Group LLC, shall not be responsible for any loss sustained by any person who relies on this publication.

