

# **"MANAGING INNOVATIVE CHANGE: EFFECTIVELY EMPLOYING PROCESS CHANGE ENABLERS"**

**Edward G. Lewis  
Founder & President  
TED LEWIS & ASSOCIATES**

(303) 494-6537, Fax: (303) 494-0645; E-Mail: elewis303@aol.com

**September 1995**

In the 1990s, the world has become even more complex and fluid. Frequent, and oftentimes drastic, changes in organization, management and technology have become the norm, if not THE most important issue in both the private and public sectors. In many of today's organizations, including the Federal government, there is tremendous pressure to reduce budgets, downsize/eliminate organizational structure, and use information technology more effectively. To address these rapidly changing critical issues, business process reengineering has become the preeminent business performance technique used by today's visionary executives to achieve their strategic goals. Yet, evidence suggests that many reengineering efforts fail -- why?

Perhaps, management has only focused on downsizing, or automating, or seeking incremental improvements. But, this is not reengineering. Then, perhaps, is breakthrough thinking, as embodied in business process reengineering, something so overwhelmingly and intoxicatingly new? Not hardly, these ideas have existed for centuries. But, business process reengineering is NOT a miracle cure. It offers no quick, simple or painless fix to organizational, managerial or technological challenges. It does entail difficult and strenuous work; and it still raises many questions, including the effective use of information resources.

Yet, management must not only do things right, but also do the right things if they are going to succeed in today's fast changing environment. Not only must executives, managers and employees fully understand the dynamic changes, but they must also understand the basic concepts and methodology for reengineering and the role of process change enablers, including information and information technology. To reengineer successfully, they must know how to effectively employ these various process change enablers in harmony to achieve an information-based organization.

Using Michael Hammer's and James Champy's basic tenets for business process reengineering, which emphasize fundamental rethinking, radical redesign, strategic and value-added business processes, dramatic improvements, and critical performance measurements, organizations can strive for excellence in providing high-quality products and services at fair prices in order to fully meet their customer's needs and expectations. They can determine a better way to do work through their organizational structure, their work processes, and their people.

**EDWARD G. LEWIS  
TED LEWIS & ASSOCIATES**

In implementing business process reengineering, organizations must realize that, on one hand, tiptoeing through the reengineering maze one process at a time and in a "vacuum" will be most difficult at best. On the other hand, casting reengineering within the organization as the way of life -- a life-time journey to be travelled by all in the organization -- will ensure, although difficult, that all changes as a result of the reengineering effort, all process redesigns, will fit together.

To address this enterprise-wide approach, a simple and straightforward, yet structured and disciplined eight-phased methodology may be used to implement business process reengineering. This methodology -- planning, organizing, evaluating, identifying, visioning, designing, implementing, and managing -- will allow an organization to tie its reengineering efforts to its strategic direction and control; to address its current business practices; to develop a future, process-oriented infrastructure; to coordinate all reengineering activities; and, finally, to positively manage and continuously improve its new business processes.

The organization can successfully enable this methodology in developing and implementing new business processes through the use of positive and powerful process change enablers -- factors that can shape and drive technological, behavioral and organizational change. These enablers will provide the means to successfully undertake the process of reengineering and contribute significantly to the implementation of the new, reengineered business processes.

Yet, management must realize that each powerful process change enabler can both enhance and disable the organization's reengineering efforts. Therefore, management must ensure the judicious and careful use of process change enablers in exploiting new capabilities. To succeed at reengineering, all process change enablers used in the reengineering effort must be aligned and in balance. They must work hand in glove with each other. To neglect an enabler's importance or place more weight on the use of any given enabler will prove detrimental to the overall reengineering effort.

Several process change enablers that should be considered within any business process reengineering effort include: people, education, communications and marketing, organizational structure and culture, funding, information, information technologies, and other technologies. Other enablers may also be chosen depending upon the organization's situation. Each organization must determine for itself which process change enablers will successfully support their reengineering effort.

**PEOPLE.** By far and away, the most important process change enabler. Reengineering efforts will succeed or fail based upon the people, both employees and managers, in the organization -- their skills, experiences, and attitudes. Positive, dynamic leadership is a must for success. Proper education and training must be provided to ensure that all employees and managers are properly prepared to participate in the reengineering effort. Management must ensure a positive approach toward all human resource issues, including positive motivation, in order to use the full potential of all individuals in the organization.

**EDUCATION.** Everyone in the organization, including senior management, must be apprised of what reengineering is and what reengineering actions will be taken. Everyone must be made aware of the importance and focus of the reengineering efforts. In order to make positive contributions to the reengineering effort, individuals must be kept informed.

**COMMUNICATIONS and MARKETING.** Management must ensure that communication channels are kept open with everyone in the organization. Information on the reengineering efforts must be timely and accurate in order to create and maintain the necessary buy-in and commitment from the employees and managers. Management must gain their support, trust and confidence. Management must also communicate openly with the organization's external stakeholders, particularly the suppliers and customers, to gain support and ensure consistency of purpose.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE.** The management infrastructure will either support or significantly hinder reengineering efforts. Within reengineering, focus will be placed on managing process boundaries; thus clarity in roles and authority must be clearly established. Emphasis will be on self-managed teams; thus the relationships, composition and location of the reengineering teams will be key.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE.** The culture must be fluid with minimal resistance to change. Management must emphasize initiative, imagination and innovation within the reengineering efforts. They also must empower more individuals in the decision-making process.

**FUNDING.** Reengineering can not be done on the "cheap". Sufficient funding must be provided and maintained to see all reengineering efforts through to their completion.

**INFORMATION.** Although we have only scratched the surface in understanding the effective role of information within organizations, much work must be done in educating individuals on its importance within reengineering and the information-based organization. More focus must be placed on the meaning and value of information. A distinction must be made between information and data, and between information and information technology.

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES.** Rather than just automating old functions and processes with new information technologies, new capabilities must be determined in order to apply current and future information technologies more effectively in support of reengineering efforts. Information technologies must be put in its proper perspective within reengineering -- not as a sole "driver", but as a contributing enabler.

By understanding why and how organizations have succeeded in implementing business process reengineering through the effective use of process change enablers and by appreciating the common pitfalls and misconceptions in applying reengineering concepts, executives, managers and employees will be better prepared to undertake business process reengineering and effectively manage innovative change. As a "new" pioneering tool with many uncertainties, management must have the knowledge to understand, the courage to begin, and the will to succeed at business process reengineering if they are going to make a "positive and successful difference" in their organizations.

To do so, management must be able to move from having great thoughts about reengineering to making these ideas happen. Successfully managing innovative change within the reengineering framework will require a heavy dose of the 4 C's: commitment, coordination, communication, and cooperation. All levels of management must be fully committed to the reengineering effort. Internally, they must work very closely together, engaging in active dialogue, ensuring full and active participation, and actively and positively supporting the reengineering effort. Externally, management must actively communicate with the organization's stakeholders, including suppliers and customers, to gain their support and cooperation.

**EDWARD G. LEWIS  
TED LEWIS & ASSOCIATES  
September 1995**

Lastly, to be successful at business process reengineering through the use of a sound methodology and the effective employment of process change enablers, management at all levels must exercise positive and dynamic leadership. They must maintain a high degree of flexibility and bring a dose of common sense to the "reengineering" table. Above all, they must always focus on their people as the most important resource to address within their reengineering effort.

© 1995 Ted Lewis & Associates