

The Perfect Process Project or

“How to run a project that will make your
processes turn out perfectly”

By Gary Comerford

Chapter 1: The Typical Process Project

**“The typical
‘process’ project
looks like this:”**



Before we look at the ideal process project let's take some time to go back and see what it is that occurs at the moment in process projects. This will set our baseline for moving forward and help you understand why we need to do the things that I will mention.

From my experience the typical 'process' project looks something like this:

'OK, Guys. I'm Bob. I'm the executive sponsor of his little project. We're putting in this new piece of software. This has come right down from the board. We feel that there is a great deal of strategic value in putting this in. We know from our market research that AmalgamatedCompetitors, our main rivals in the industry, implemented this software two years ago and we all know how much more profitable they've become as a result, don't we! Anyway Eric here is going to be the Project Lead and he'll be working with PriceYoungCoopers & Centure, the management consultants, to implement this. We're looking at a project timeline of about 2.5 years and at the end of it we'll be running this software across all our divisions. Any questions?...Yes, you with the large glasses..... Yes, we will be changing the way we do things. This software comes with it's own set of standards which will mandate that we follow industry best practice regarding our manufacturing methods. This is excellent news for the company and everyone here. I'd like to hand you over to Eric for more information. Eric...?'

'Er.. thanks, Bob. Hello everyone. I'm Eric the project manager. I want to give you a quick overview of how the project is looking at the moment. We'll be doing some major planning for the next couple of weeks and then staffing the project with the key resources, analysts, programmers, testers and, of course, the system integrators. It looks like our first task is going to be prototyping some screens for the end users. That's you. Then we'll get sign off, the guys will get into modifying the screens to match our requirements, we'll be testing late next year and we can go through this on an iterative cycle until we go live at the end of the following year. Any questions?...Yes, you with the large glasses..... No. The processes are going to be mandated by software as Bob said earlier so we can take these processes and just drop them into our current business model..... Hmm? Yes, this will result in an organisational change. That's going to be one of the first things the business integrators look at. ... No. No-one will be let go. This is just a change to support the new processes.. ..!'

“How is that increasing profitability?”

- It isn't”



You get the idea. The guy with the glasses is asking all the right questions and getting all the wrong answers.

The business is focusing on the **software** as the reason they are doing the project.

What's more they've decided to do this not because it's what their company needs, but because a competitor has done this and that competitor has seen increased profitability! Has anyone checked to see if there is a correlation between the two? Maybe the competitor has decided to outsource a lot of its manufacturing processes to a different country, thereby reducing costs and increasing profitability. Maybe the company has finally managed to increase its sale price for goods to such an extent that it has become profitable at last.

The reasons why this could happen are many and not necessarily because of a piece of software.

I worked with a major multinational company who, some time back, decided to spend upwards of \$1b implementing a system that would homogenise their accounting worldwide. They transferred 40 affiliates onto this system, replaced many, many legacy systems and transferred years of historical data into the new ERP package. But at the end of the day they had spent \$1b on a new accounting package. As a shareholder my question was *'How is that increasing our profitability'*.

The answer is *'It isn't!*



Gary Comerford has over 20 years experience in the IT world.

His previous experiences range from working in the City of London gathering stock and bond prices for an investment firm, through being recognised as a renowned expert in financial package implementation with the JD Edwards software, to auditing, systems architecture and business process definition.

He has worked with city institutions, American multinationals, software consultancies, government agencies, soft drink manufacturers, film distribution companies and has travelled all over the world for his work.

He currently owns and runs GCP Consulting, a boutique consulting firm focused on helping companies document and manage their business processes and process projects.

He can be contacted through his web site at :

<http://gcp-consulting.com> or his blog at <http://process-cafe.blogspot.com>

Photo credits:

Oriental eating with zoom: Lucas Jans: <http://www.flickr.com/people/vsf/>:
Hand on the wall photo: TheAlieness GiselaGiardino:²³ <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gi/>
Head on steps in dark: Strict: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/strict/>:
Meet at the beach peasap <http://www.flickr.com/photos/peasap/>:
Questionnaire Ikhlasul Amal <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ikhlasulamal/>:
Clamping down on spending - Susannoblesmithphotos <http://www.flickr.com/photos/15527640@N04/>
Circles and arrow tanakawho: <http://www.flickr.com/people/28481088@N00/>
Look there by gerlos <http://www.flickr.com/people/gerlos/>
Golf Carts - KevinCole <http://www.flickr.com/people/kevcollection/>
Hitachi table: http://www.flickr.com/people/hitachi_data_systems/
Arguing statues: Victoria peckham : <http://www.flickr.com/people/victoriapeckham/>
Gavel: Fabliaux: <http://www.flickr.com/people/fabliaux/>
Measuring tape and Bakelite phone: Aussigall : <http://www.flickr.com/people/aussiegall/>
Acronyms: Andy Smith: <http://www.flickr.com/people/termie/>
Hammer : PPDIGITAL : <http://www.flickr.com/people/ppdigital/>

All photographs are copyright their respective owners and are released under a Creative Commons, attribution and sharealike licence.

All text is copyright G Comerford 2008.