

1 1 Stage 4 - IMPROVE Introduction - IMPROVE Stage

The IMPROVE stage of Process Management is dedicated to enhancing process performance for continuous customer satisfaction.

Processes don't stay the same. They are either improved or they get worse due to changing customer expectations.

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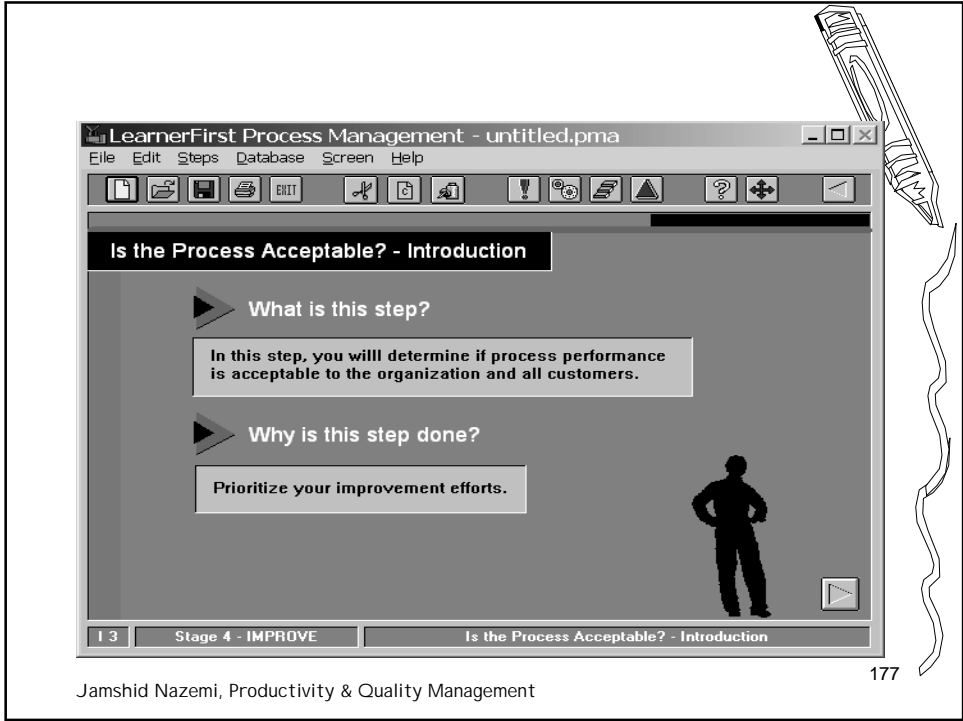
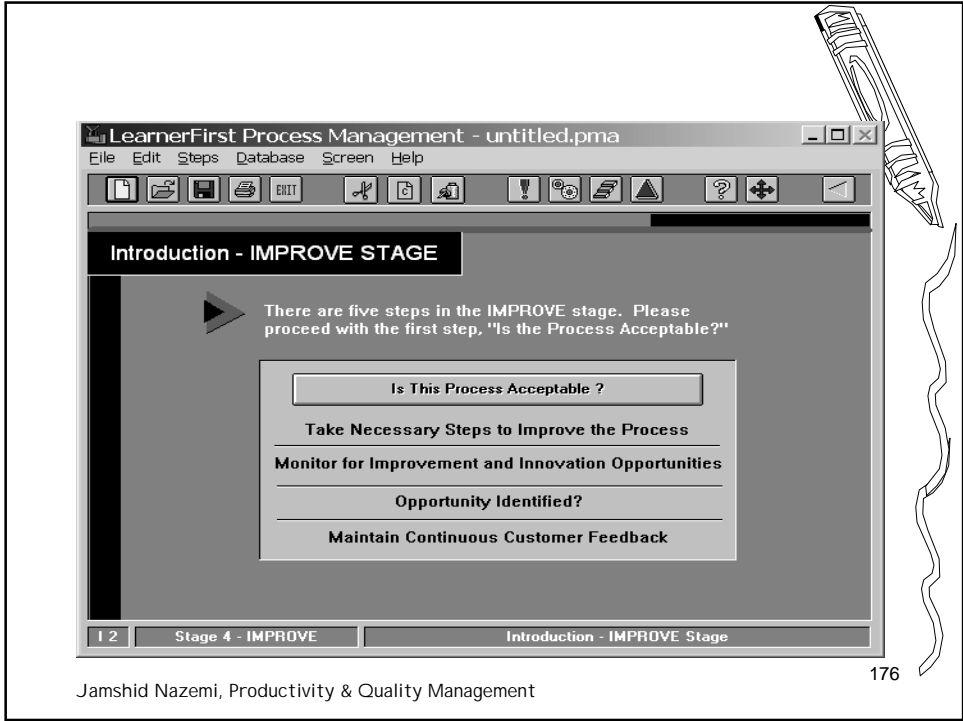
improve

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graph TD
    Analyze([ANALYZE]) --> Acceptable{Is the Process Acceptable?}
    Acceptable -- No --> Analyze
    Acceptable -- Yes --> Monitor[Monitor For Improvement & Innovation Opportunities]
    Monitor --> Identified{Opportunity Identified?}
    Identified -- No --> Feedback[Maintain Continuous Customer Feedback]
    Identified -- Yes --> Steps[Take Necessary Steps to Improve the Process]
    Steps --> Analyze
  
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M 5 Map Flowchart - IMPROVE Stage

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Process Acceptability
Process:

Q. What is the cost to improve the process? (Cost to your organization and to all your customers).
A.

Q. What are the costs of continuing without improving the process?
A.

Q. What are the benefits of improving the process?
A.

Q. What are other activities currently underway? Often, a change to a process is made in isolation without seeking others' opinions. Consider any modifications that need to occur as a result of the change to be made. Without an aggressive communications effort, isolated changes could result in a future failure.
A.

Q. Do the internal and external customers agree that the process is acceptable?
A.

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Is the Process Acceptable?

Statistically, the data shows if the process is consistent or inconsistent. However, the customer will ultimately determine if the process is acceptable or not.

Is this process acceptable at this point in time?

Yes **No**

"Yes" will proceed to the next step to monitor for future opportunities. (The process is consistent and acceptable.)

"No" will take you to a step to improve the process.

1 5 Stage 4 - IMPROVE Is the Process Acceptable? - Conclusion

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Monitor for Improvement and Innovation Opportunities

- What is this step?**
 The purpose of this step is to track the current behavior of the process and to actively assess the environment for opportunities.
- Why is this step done?**
 Determine changing customer wants and needs. Improve processes for the customer's benefit. Track the process against the standards to be sure the process does not deteriorate over time.

1 9 Stage 4 - IMPROVE Monitor for Improvement and Innovation Opportunities

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Improvement and Innovation Opportunities

Process:

Q. How is the process performing relative to the standards? Continue collecting and charting data about the current process behavior.

A.

Q. Are there any changing customer requirements? How can you improve the quality of your products and/or services? Try and think about customer requirements beyond the present. Consider using customer surveys, focus groups, site visits, and market research.

A.

Q. What are the process improvement opportunities? Are there improvements to costs and/or productivity measures? Consider using benchmarking, suggestion systems, and research and development.

A.

Q. Have you convened a reengineering group of new and experienced experts to assess new possibilities such as: technology, environment, government regulations, literature, safety, standards, internal/external communications, resources, risk/impact, information services, acquisitions, suppliers, market shares, financial performance, customer performance, security, competitive offerings?

A.

Q. Can this process be fundamentally changed? How?

A.

Q. What are you really trying to achieve? How can you have a breakthrough

A.

Q. Are past practices or assumptions inhibiting you? Are you open to new possibilities?

A.

Q. Temporarily disregard your organization's past - what is your ideal possibility for a new innovation?

A.

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Opportunity Identified? - Introduction

- ▶ **What is this step?**
 In this step, you will decide if an opportunity exists for improving the process or reengineering a new process.
- ▶ **Why is this step done?**
 Direct and prioritize improvement efforts on a continuous basis.

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Opportunity Identified?

Is there an opportunity at this point in time?

Yes	No
"Yes" (an opportunity is identified) - Proceed to take necessary steps to	"No" (no opportunity exists) - Proceed to maintain continuous customer feedback.

Note: If you continue to identify new opportunities, you will loop back to the step each time.

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Take Necessary Steps to Improve the Process

▶ **What is this step?**

In this step, you will implement plans (resources, restrictions, expected results, etc.) for addressing improvements.

▶ **Why is this step done?**

Address the identified opportunity with respect to one or more of the standards.

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Take Necessary Steps to Improve the Process

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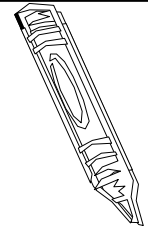
What resources are required? Consider skills, personnel, money, equipment, and time.

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Process Improvement Steps

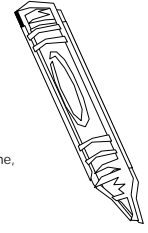
Process:

- Q. What resources are required? Consider skills, personnel, money, equipment, and time.
- A.
- Q. Who will reengineer the process? Consider a team, outside experts, or an individual.
- A.
- Q. What is the gap between the current process and the desired process performance?
- A.
- Q. What might be the cause(s) of the gap between the current process and the desired process performance?
- A.
- Q. What technology is being considered to reengineer the process? (R and D input, supplier/customer reviews, trade shows, associations, university research, government research, etc.)
- A.
- Q. What are environmental needs? (Internal/external, materials, transfers, ecological, space, etc.)
- A.
- Q. What government regulations need to be reviewed? (Federal, state/province, local, interstate/interprovince, special board approvals, first/last copy approval, etc.)
- A.
- Q. What literature/advertising introduction plan is in place? (Drafts, proofs, error proofing, approvals, printer qualifications, pre-final print approvals, first/last copy approval, etc.)
- A.
- Q. What is the plan to meet safety implications? (Internal/external, potential loss of life, loss of limb, transportation, laws, agreements, etc.)
- A.
- Q. What internal/external communications need to be redesigned? (External mail, voice processing, voice mail, internal security, literature, advertising, all media, meetings, bulletin boards, house newsletters, radio, t.v., etc.)
- A.
- Q. What risks of business impacts need to be reconsidered? Consider reviewing the FOCUS stage of this application.
- A.
- Q. What information services require redesigning? (Hardware capability, software capability, interfaces, networks, fiber optics, microwave, radio satellite, reports, etc.)
- A.
- Q. What plans are reengineered to introduce new supplier or new company products/services to the market? (Announcements, press releases, broadcasts, etc.)
- A.
- Q. What plans are reengineered to track market shares? (Old/new, margins, segments, pricing, customers, competition, new offers, etc.)
- A.
- Q. What are reengineered financial performance criteria and measurements? (Profit, ROI, ROA, inventory turns,



cycle time, process time, etc.)

- A.
- Q. What plans are reengineered to address employee performance for this process? (Throughput, errors, cycle time, customer feedback, morale surveys, etc.)
- A.
- Q. What has been reengineered to monitor and measure customer performance? (Quality, price, delivery, quantity, surveys, complaints, delights, retention, etc.)
- A.
- Q. What systems, procedures, procurements, and monitors have been reengineered to evaluate competitive offerings? (Act as a customer, purchase offers, ask customers, media monitors, etc.)
- A.
- Q. What must be implemented to maintain security of the change(s)? (Who needs to know, possible entries, electronic access, paper waste access, recordings, monitors, threats, etc.)
- A.
- Q. What is the appropriate corrective action to improve the process? When you choose the best corrective action, consider its impact on the customer, effectiveness, impact on people, cost, etc. Also, consider any risks associated with the corrective action. Very often, solutions create new problems.
- A.
- Q. What is your plan to take the corrective action steps? Try and anticipate trouble in each step and take preventive measures. Consider a small, pilot implementation before a full implementation.
- A.
- Q. How will you verify the expected improvement? Document all modifications and improvements.
- A.
- Q. How can you communicate your learnings to the rest of your organization?
- A.



The screenshot shows a software window titled "LearnerFirst Process Management - untitled.pma". The menu bar includes "File", "Edit", "Steps", "Database", "Screen", and "Help". The toolbar contains various icons for file operations and navigation. The main content area is titled "Maintain Continuous Customer Feedback - Introduction" and contains two bullet points:

- ▶ **What is this step?**
This step helps you maintain continuous communication with your customers.
- ▶ **Why is this step done?**
Stay abreast of continually changing customer expectations. Maintain a customer-driven perspective for process management.

At the bottom of the window, there is a status bar with "114", "Stage 4 - IMPROVE", and "Maintain Continuous Customer Feedback - Introduction". A pencil icon is visible in the top right corner of the slide area.

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The screenshot shows the same software window as above, but the slide content has changed. The title bar now says "Maintain Continuous Customer Feedback". The main content area features a navigation bar at the top with "1 of 4" and navigation arrows. Below this is a text box containing the question:

How can you gather direct feedback? Please refer to FOCUS/Secure Customer Input for ideas. Do you have a plan to routinely collect data from internal and external customers.

Below the text box is a large empty rectangular area for user input, with a pencil icon on the left side. The status bar at the bottom shows "115", "Stage 4 - IMPROVE", and "Maintain Continuous Customer Feedback". A pencil icon is also visible in the top right corner of the slide area.

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Maintain Continuous Customer Feedback - Conclusion

Actively pursue your customer's opinions because this will help you to quickly change to new customer requirements. Every customer has initiators, technical buyers, deciders, and users. You should have a formal plan to contact each of these customers on a routine basis.

Continuous Customer Feedback

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Continuous Customer Feedback
Process:

Q. How can you gather direct feedback? Please refer to FOCUS/Secure Customer Input for ideas. Do you have a plan to routinely collect data from internal and external customers.

A.

Q. What access do you have to other sources of information for continuous customer feedback?

A.

Q. Have you personally gone to your customers and asked them their requirements? Are they delighted? What new standards should be created in order to delight the customer?

A.

Q. Which of the tools can you use to maintain continuous customer feedback? - customer surveys, complaint analysis, voice of customer analysis, marketing/salesfeedback, quality function deployment, design, specifications, features, etc. These tools are described in FOCUS/Secure Customer Feedback.

A.


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Conclusion - IMPROVE Stage

▶ Congratulations! You have almost completed the fourth and final stage of the Process Management application for this process.




You should update the information for each of the activities in the process. The update will reflect the changes to the process that occurred in the ANALYZE and IMPROVE stages


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Conclusion - Update Process Information

At this point, please update pertinent information for each of the activities in your process. In order to describe each activity please click the "Activity" button in the Toolbar. 

As you complete this project, consider other issues (concerns, opportunities, and customer inputs) in your database for further action. When you start a new project, use the File New function. If you wish to review the issues in your database, then click this button. 

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LearnerFirst Process Management - Activity Database

Process Name:

Activity name (description of activity/step):

Type: Action Decision

Purpose:

Function/Area:

Processing Time:

Cycle Time:

Cost:

Value? Value added Non-value added/Essential Non-value added/Non-essential

Notes about this Activity:

OK
Add
Delete
Help

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LearnerFirst Process Management - Issue Database

Issue Name (description):

Area (Type of Issue): Internal and External Customers Concerns and Opportunities

Risk: High Low

Impact: High Low

Notes about this Issue:

Issues from previous projects:

OK
Add
Delete
Help

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