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Case Study

- Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI)
- Cisco IT

Recommended Readings

References

Upcoming Programmes

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Non-capital Investment: Resource Optimisation

1. Introduction

In today's economic uncertainties, organisations are competing by maximising their capabilities. Such organisational capabilities are created using combination of limited resources dispersed within the organisation. Optimised organisations "would ensure that the resources are leveraged to their best potential to create the unique capabilities. Ideal state optimisation results with the concurrent maximisation of resource efficiency, effectiveness and utilisation".

2. What is resource optimisation?

Optimisation looks at ensuring an effective and efficient deployment of existing resources for capability maximisation. Some of the key avenues of internal resource optimisation include: process re-design for efficiency; technology upgrade; workforce planning; role clarification; goals cascading; skill alignment; cross-functional/departmental communication; organisation de-layering; and team based governance. Thus, it is imperative that dimensions of organisational framework-structure, workforce, processes and technology be aligned to the overall objective of optimisation. "Culture weaves all the said elements into a uniform thread", hence, strengthens the alignment. While it is important to explore individual dimensions of the organisational framework to identify avenues of optimisation, it may be observed that the real opportunity for optimisation is locked in the way these dimensions interact with each other.

3. Why should organisations optimise their resources?

Many organisations are moving to pursue optimisation. This is triggered by the recent changes in the global business landscape such as: globalisation, pace of change, profitability through cost and growth, focus on capabilities, complex regulatory environment, mergers and acquisitions, rapid technological evolution and higher

customer expectations. These changes are expected to set the direction and pace for optimisation, although the nature and scale of optimisation may differ.

Globalisation

Globalisation seems to dominate the competitive horizon. While this concept is not new, the intensity of the challenge to get on with it is. "Globalisation entails new markets, new products, new mindsets, new competencies, and new ways of thinking about business". In times to come, many organisations may have to evolve new models for attaining global agility, effectiveness and competitiveness. Additionally, "organisations may also have to devise means to consolidate their dispersed capabilities to provide unparalleled value to the customers at reasonable cost".

Pace of change

Today's pace of change is probably one of the most challenging eras of the business history, where the speed of change is unprecedented. Organisations seldom have time to adapt themselves to the rapidly changing business landscape. Ways of working are becoming obsolete with each passing day. Innovation and self discovery have become new catalysts for growth. Changing employee demographics is posing yet another challenge for many organisations. Increasing number of baby boomers and increasing number of millennial is causing unique organisational challenges across the world. Employees and consumers are also increasingly becoming aware of the organisation's responsibilities towards communities and environment. All these, along with changing customer preferences and expectations, are making business even more challenging in current times.

Profitability through cost and growth

Profitability is important for any organisation. Organisations that are not competitive as measured by profit, in the absence of the sustained monopolistic position, may fail. Profitability may continue to be a business issue in the future, but the accepted path to profitability may likely change. Increasingly "profitability may come from some combination of increased revenue and decreased cost". Hence, many organisations are working simultaneously on their revenue and cost strategies. In current times, the focus however seems to be more on cost strategies.

Focus on capabilities

Organisations are increasingly focussing on identifying and strengthening their existing capabilities. Organisational capabilities are the “DNA of competitiveness”. They are the things the organisation always does better than their competitors. Organisational capabilities may be hard (such as technology) or soft (such as innovation). Soft capabilities are more difficult to create and replicate. They are often the source of sustainable competitive advantage to the organisations.

Complex regulatory environment

Organisations are expected to comply with the statutory and regulatory provisions of the countries they operate in. Compliance with the complex and evolving regulatory and legislative requirements is a top-of-mind objective for organisations of all sizes. Changes in the regulatory framework have acted as a catalyst leading the organisations to roll back and work in a constrained environment with little scope to deliver on its strategic objectives. Organisations have to re-visit their programmes, policies and processes in order to be compliant with the laws.

Mergers and acquisitions

Mergers and acquisitions, divestitures and outsourcing continue to be some of the key drivers in organisation’s plan to drive revenue growth, reduce costs and grow profits. Historically, many of these major business changes have not generated the expected business value. The upheaval caused by integrating with another organisation significantly challenges the way both organisations conduct business. Moving ahead in an indecisive environment is demanding, but a business commotion is an excellent time to look at ways to optimise across the organisation.

Technology

One of the defining features of the current decade is the rapid evolution and adaptation of technology. At present, technological innovations are occurring faster than we can keep up. Technology has made the world smaller, closer and faster. Additionally, in an environment of burgeoning computer literacy, ideas and images spread quickly worldwide. Technology also overcomes geographical distances as well as language and cultural differences.

4. Key avenues of optimisation

Creating an optimised organisation ensures maximum utilisation, efficiency and effectiveness of all the dispersed resources at multiple levels within the organisation. However, the challenge is to identify key avenues of optimisation and to act upon them to realise the desired benefits.

Key avenues of optimisation may be explored around the four dimensions of organisational framework, namely, structure, workforce, processes and technology.

Key Optimization Avenues	Dimensions of Organisation		
	Structure	Workforce	Process and Technology
	Role Clarification	Workforce Planning	Process Redesign
	Role Duplication	Workforce Contracting	Technology Application
	Goals Cascading		
	Skills Alignment		
	Team Based Governance		
	Communication Flow		
Organisation De-Layering		Organisation Culture	
		Leadership	

Source: Creating an optimised organisation: Key opportunities and challenges. (2012). KPMG. Retrieved July 29, 2013, from <http://www.kpmg.com/IN/en/IssuesAndInsights/ThoughtLeadership/optimized-organization-Key-Opportunities-Challenges.pdf>

4.1. Exploring structural optimisation

The organisational structure reflects how the resources in the enterprise are organised. It provides “a blueprint of the overall value chain of the organisation or the way work gets done in the organisation”. The structure, which should respond to the growth strategy of the organisation, encompasses grouping of individuals into departments and departments into organisation with appropriate hierarchy and span of control. The structure also involves ensuring “optimum

communication, co-ordination, and integration across departments".

While there may be numerous avenues of optimisation around the structure, some of the key and most impactful ones are as follows.

Role clarification

Role clarification comprises a systematic process of collecting information that identifies similarities and differences in the profile of a particular role with that of others. Typical outcome of the role clarification process is a validated document with following heads:

- Role identification: Title and department in which the role is located.
- Role content: Tasks, activities, constraints on actions, performance criterion, critical incidents, conflicting demands and working conditions.
- Employee characteristics: Technical knowledge, manual skills, verbal skills, written skills, quantitative skills, mechanical skills, etc.
- Internal relationships: Boss and other superiors, peers and subordinates.
- External relationships: Suppliers, customers, regulatory, professional industry, community and union/employee group.

The role clarification process helps employees "understand the finer differences between roles and help to remove the ambiguity in role expectation as well as prevent overlap of efforts among team members". Hence, the organisation may avoid losing significant number of man-hours.

The process is recommended to be carried out within a group or team, rather than individually. Conducting role clarification in a group will enhance understanding of role from an individual perspective. Additionally, it also enables the understanding, clarification and development of role profile from the teams' perspective. This "helps enhance working relationships and co-

ordination, and provides an opportunity to develop synergies to deliver optimum results as a team".

Role duplication

Organisations with multiple subsidiaries or divisions may have a separate set of support functions for each subsidiary or division. Each set of support functions service the unique requirements of the respective subsidiary or the division through a mix of multiple roles. The arrangement is best suited to meet the specific and differentiated requirements of each subsidiary or division. However, the situation in which the requirement is not much differentiated, having a separate set of support functions proves to be much expensive on account of role duplication across subsidiaries or divisions. Thus, it is advisable to create a centralised pool of such support functions and to lend their services as and when required to each subsidiary or division. This may help eliminate unnecessary role duplication within the organisation.

Role duplication may also be the result of inadequate role clarification. Multiple roles within the organisation may be performing same set of activities with little or no value-add for the organisation.

Goals cascading

Goals cascading is a process in which the organisation level goals are cascaded down to the division levels goals, next to the function level goals and lastly to the individual level goals. This process ensures strong alignment of the individual goals to the overall organisational goals. The process also aims to avoid the misdirected effort of employees within the organisational framework.

Below is an example of goals cascading:

Organization Goal:

Improve net profit by 15% by 31st December 2012

Departmental Goals:

- Manufacturing - Reduce cost by 5% by 31st December 2012
- Marketing - Increase sales by 10% by 31st December 2012
- Increase Marketing expenditure by 10% by 31st October 2012

Team Goals:

- Marketing - B2C sales team to achieve 20% increase in sales
- B2B sales team to achieve 10% increase in sales

Individual Goals:

- B2C Team - Employee A to achieve sales target of xx million
- Employee B to achieve sales target of xx million

Source: Creating an optimised organisation: Key opportunities and challenges. (2012). KPMG. Retrieved July 29, 2013, from <http://www.kpmg.com/LN/en/IssuesAndInsights/ThoughtLeadership/optimized-organization-Key-Opportunities-Challenges.pdf>

Skill alignment

The fast changing business landscape is also driving the ways of working to rapidly change, where employee skills and know-how are fast becoming obsolete. Employees are expected to continuously up-skill themselves so as to keep pace with the rapid change.

Skill alignment is a process “used to ensure that the skills of the employees are always current and tightly aligned with the overall business alignment”. Organisations have the option to buy the related skill set from the market so as to ensure that its skill inventory is always updated and ready to execute the business strategy. In another perspective, leaders of the organisation may ensure that the execution of the strategy formulated should be well within the stretched skill levels of the employees. Misaligned skill-set causes much loss of efficiency and effectiveness of the overall organisation. Skills specialisation may be another way by which organisations may attempt to bring about the necessary efficiency and effectiveness in the overall system.

Team based governance

Team based governance is one of the emerging avenues of creating optimisation within the organisation. Under the team based governance

model key decisions at the cross-functional or enterprise level are taken by a group of individuals instead of dispersed individuals. Such a group decides on issues which typically do not get addressed at the division or functional level. Team based governance helps realise the objectives of the organisation as illustrated below:

TeamBased Governance	Individual Based Governance
Adequate cascading of enterprise level strategy/agenda	Inadequate cascading of enterprise level strategy/agenda
Team members to decide on behalf of the organisation on collective issues	Decisions on collective issues rests with dispersed individuals
Active knowledge sharing or intelligence sharing	Inadequate knowledge sharing or intelligence sharing
Active opportunity to develop enterprise level leaders	No such creation of an opportunity
Common support infrastructure	Distributed support infrastructure
Unified ownership of decision making and implementation	Separate ownership of decision making and implementation

Source: Creating an optimised organisation: Key opportunities and challenges. (2012). KPMG. Retrieved July 29, 2013, from <http://www.kpmg.com/IN/en/IssuesAndInsights/ThoughtLeadership/optimized-organization-Key-Opportunities-Challenges.pdf>

Communication flow

Communication flow within the organisation may happen through vertical or horizontal means, or even a combination of both. Many organisations have mastered the art of vertical communication (as may be inferred through the lines in the organisation structure), however, few actually leverage the strength of horizontal communication.

Following are some of the key benefits of engaging in active horizontal communication:

- Improved co-ordination
- Better productivity
- Better implementation of decisions
- High cordiality among employees
- Better teamwork
- Active knowledge-sharing

Organisational de-layering

De-layering involves “pruning the administrative structure of a large organisation” through the reduction of the number of tiers in its hierarchy. Many businesses are moving towards flatter organisational structures through de-layering. Cost savings through reduction in overheads is one of the main reasons for majority of organisation to contemplate de-layering. While for some organisations the realisation of such a saving is the primary objective, for others, a flatter structure may result in freedom from bureaucracy, faster communication, higher motivation and better decision making.

4.2. Exploring workforce optimisation

The workforce cost is a significant proportion of the total operating cost for many organisations. Workforce cost optimisation is an indispensable element in creating an overall optimised organisation. It supports the business with key insights into how its workforce is performing, and looks at getting the right set of employees, at the right time, at the right cost and at the right place.

As it seems like organisations have to get a lot of things “right” in order to reap its benefits, most do not attempt it. However, in the changing economic scenario, organisations can no longer take the liberty of continuing with the misaligned workforce. Appropriate workforce planning and negotiating the right workforce contract are the two key facets of workforce optimisation. Thus, organisations are increasingly exploring diverse internal/external partnerships to realise the objective of workforce optimisation.

Organisations conduct workforce planning for variety of reasons such as cost pressures; ageing workforce and approaching retirement wave; current and projected labour shortage; and to meet growth targets. Most of the workforce planning exercises may be triggered on account of following two problem statements.

- Problem statement 1: Organisations may want to adjust their workforce planning norms due to the change in their working ways. Working ways of organisations may change on account of adoption of new

technology, process re-design, role re-design and other miscellaneous changes in the environmental conditions. Many organisations conduct workload analysis or time-motion study to re-define their workload norms.

- Problem statement 2: Organisations may need clarity on the total number of people it may want to hire/drop over short, medium and long term. This may facilitate the organisations to plan for the recruitment or separation activities. Organisations may deploy expert forecasting, scenario planning, Delphi technique or simple extrapolation (based on a business metric) to determine the numbers required over multiple time horizons. The numbers may further be adjusted taking into account the environmental variable and internal turnover patterns.

The biggest challenge to workforce planning is for the leadership to believe that it is an organisational initiative and not an HR initiated. The leadership needs to be fully committed to invest time, money and effort to realise the benefits of most appropriate workforce planning techniques.

Organisations today aim to maintain a flexible workforce in order to closely monitor costs. All over the world there is an increasing trend to hire third party contract workers for required peak periods rather than have full time employees round the year. More and more organisations are inclined towards negotiating temporary contracts rather than have full time employment contracts. Unfortunately, the cost and flexibility benefits from utilising contract labour are often sub optimised, as the 'right number' of contractors with the 'right skills' is not necessarily the 'right match' for the work at the 'right price.' Applying the following four techniques while determining the contracts may help maximise benefits:

- Manage the total (right number)
- Know what expertise is needed (right skills)
- Pay best market rates (right price)

- Align resources to the work (right match)

By achieving the right mix of workforce utilisation along with the mix of contracts handed out an organisation can work into the future with the most optimised workforce and may reap maximum benefits for the organisation.

4.3. Exploring process and technology optimisation

A process is a sequential listing of activity targeted at the creation of a product or a service. Each activity of the process may be mapped to its respective owner. Organisations may attempt to create optimisation through process re-design. It is an initiative targeted to increase the overall effectiveness, efficiency and utilisation of the resources required to produce the targeted output in a given activity.

Process re-design ranges from re-definition and streamlining of the existing process to the complete re-invention of the process by re-defining its very basic foundation. Process re-design may be a one-time intervention rather than a set of incremental changes. Process re-design thus has been popularly defined as "the fundamental re-thinking and radical re-design of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical, contemporary measures of performance such as cost, quality, service and speed".

Business process re-design, contrary to popular belief, is not a mere automation of tasks to reduce cycle time or human effort. It transcends to the identification of non-value adding activities in a process that can be obliterated to produce an equally or more competitive end product. Technology may then be used to the advantage of the re-defined process steps.

Often, organisations cited the following reasons for opting business process re-design:

- the re-invention of products and services in order to satisfy changing customer needs;
- the achievement of costs savings;

- the determination in solving low-efficiency and non-productive methods of doing work;
- the harmonisation of work methods across multiple entities

However, the end goal is always being optimisation.

The aim of process re-design can be viewed as the reduction or complete removal of process inefficiencies by doing away with the eight key 'process wastes':

- (i) Overproduction, i.e. production without consumer demand.
- (ii) Excessive periods of waiting between consecutive process steps leading to under-utilisation of resources.
- (iii) Unnecessary movement and handling of resources causing damage and reduction in resource-life without value-addition to the product/service.
- (iv) Over-processing of the intermediate or final product/service through redundant activities to achieve the same result.
- (v) Stocking of excess inventory – raw material, work-in-progress or finished products-awaiting further processing or consumption without the existence of demand for the same.
- (vi) Defects in intermediate or the final product/service causing multiple levels of re-work or scrapping of the same.
- (vii) Additional process steps due to ineffective layout leading to delayed processes and ergonomic concerns for workforce.
- (viii) Under-utilisation of workforce knowledge and skills.

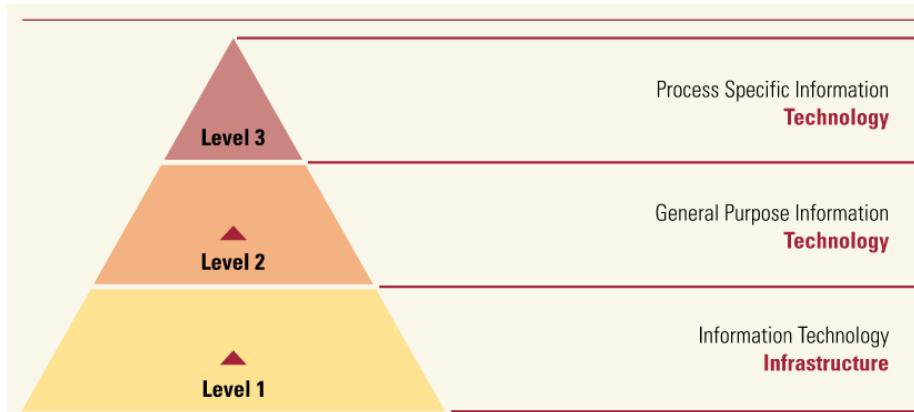
An organisation's strategy and business plan act as the main drivers for a process re-design initiative. A re-designed process is accompanied by re-defined results that in turn are envisioned to contribute to the achievement of the organisation's goals.

A five-lens approach can be used by organisations' to prioritise the order in which business processes may be re-designed:

- Performance – processes which are performing the worst in cost or cycle-time
- Importance – processes which are most critical to the achievement of business results
- Feasibility – processes that are expected to be most successful post-redesign
- Cross-functionality – processes that have least cross-functional impact, demanding minimum re-design of other related processes in order to be successful
- People-impact – processes that do not directly impact controversial areas such as employee compensation, promotion etc.

Processes broadly define the norms of the work flow and the information flow. Much of the workflow and the information flow may be made more efficient and effective by deploying appropriate technologies. Given the information intensive aspects of most businesses these days, information technologies are receiving disproportionate attention. Also, with the rapid evolution of the information technologies and their proactive adoption by the industry, organisations may no longer be able to ignore the interplay of the information technologies with the business processes.

There may be three key categories of information technologies that may be relevant to the implementation and the operation of the optimised organisation: information technology infrastructure (including the wired or wireless network), general purpose information technologies (such as spreadsheet or e-mail), and process specific information technologies (such as payroll applications).



Source: Creating an optimised organisation: Key opportunities and challenges. (2012). KPMG. Retrieved July 29, 2013, from <http://www.kpmg.com/IN/en/IssuesAndInsights/ThoughtLeadership/optimized-organization-Key-Opportunities-Challenges.pdf>

4.4. Interplay of structure, workforce, process and technology: The real source of optimisation

While it is important to explore individual dimensions of the organisational framework to identify avenues of optimisation, it may be observed that the real opportunity for optimisation is locked in the way different dimensions of organisational framework (structure, workforce, processes and technology) interact with each other.

Organisations create value for stakeholders through synergic interactions among structure, workforce, processes and technology. Thus, it is imperative that each dimension is aligned to the overall objective of value creation. Any potential misalignment in any of the dimension, even though individually it may be optimised, may result in huge loss of optimisation for the overall organisation.

5. Leadership

Extraordinary leadership and commitment are some of the critical factors in creating and sustaining an optimised organisation. Key avenues of optimisation may be explored and leveraged "only with the right leadership intent". Leaders may not be able to sustain the optimisation effort without investing to change the fundamental of mindset of people. Hence, leaders need to create the culture of optimisation.

Often, leaders may also need to manage a parallel cultural transformation, with a focus on optimisation, as they lead efforts to create an optimised organisation. Dimensions of culture, such as knowledge sharing, resource consciousness, collaboration, inspirational challenges, openness to change and team working, may need to be strengthened.

Additionally, creating an optimised organisation “may require much deviation from the normal ways of working within the organisation”. Such deviations may impact the work profile of individuals, teams, functions and organisations at large. Hence, leaders may be expected to create the fundamental traction for change in their pursuit to truly realise the benefits of optimisation.

The following are some of the key leadership imperatives of an optimised organisation:

- Leaders are expected to identify/encourage others to identify key opportunities of optimisation within the organisation.
- Leaders are expected to assess the potential benefits of the optimisation opportunities against the associated risks (such as the loss in the value creation).
- Leaders are expected to effectively manage complex stakeholder relationships while executing the plan to leverage optimisation opportunities.
- Leaders are expected to skilfully manage the change process so as to institutionalise the changes required to create an optimised organisation.
- Leaders are expected to create a culture of optimisation within the organisation.

Therefore, leaders in the organisation need to re-define or adjust the existing leadership competency framework.

Leadership competency framework provides the “to-be” state of the leadership behaviours and acts as a guiding light for leaders. In order for leaders to provide the necessary traction for optimisation, it is advisable that the leadership competency framework is derived from the above leadership imperatives of the optimised organisation.

One or more of the following leadership competencies may be the part of the overall competency framework for the leaders of the optimised organisation.

- Change leadership: The leader creates a compelling business case for organisational change and identifies critical success factors and potential obstacles to change. He/she gains buy-in from key stakeholders and builds commitments from change agents.
- Relationship leadership: The leader influences and gains buy-in and commitment to the desired agenda from multiple quarters. He/she establishes, maintains and utilises a broad network of relationships with internal and external stakeholders. He/she also identifies the best ways to suit situations to win support, gain co-operation, and overcome barriers; and builds and executes complex, tailored influencing strategies.
- Execution leadership: The leader demonstrates the ability to convert strategies into effective and systematic implementation plans; anticipates roadblocks in advance and plans solutions accordingly. He/she prioritises and optimises utilisation of resources to ensure timely accomplishment of specified objectives. He/she also delivers high quality work and ensures flawless execution focussing on reducing costs and time; and increasing quality and benchmarking against the best.
- Business results leadership: The leader exhibits drive and energy towards achieving goals and results; maintains and adheres to high performance standards. It is demonstrated by a desire for doing one's own work well or for competing against a standard of excellence. The leaders display 'entrepreneurial effort' – taking ownership and ensuring that the opportunity is capitalised upon.

6. Optimisation culture

Leaders may not be able to sustain the optimisation effort without investing to change the fundamental mindset of people. In other words, leaders in the organisation may need to create the culture of optimisation. Often, leaders may need to manage a parallel cultural transformation, with focus on optimisation, as they lead efforts to create an optimised organisation.

Culture is defined as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems”. Such shared assumptions are the most fundamental and non-malleable aspect of creating an optimised organisation. Leaders may need to focus disproportionately to evolve a culture conducive to creating an optimised organisation.

Following dimensions of culture may be strengthened so as to create an optimisation mindset:

- Knowledge sharing: optimisation is nurtured when information, from both within and outside the organisation or system, is widely gathered, easily accessible, rapidly transmitted, and honestly communicated.
- Resource consciousness: Employees at all levels may need to be conscious of the efficiency, effectiveness and utilisation of the resources being deployed to create the necessary value in the organisation. This fundamental mindset of resource consciousness may help identify various optimisation opportunities and may ultimately help create an optimised organisation.
- Collaboration: People collaborating with each other to achieve common business objectives is a fundamental pre-requisite to create optimisation. It is the willingness to work co-operatively with others within the matrix of the organisation and to be part of a team. It is also about pro-actively confronting issues and taking the required action to enhance team effectiveness.
- Inspirational challenges: leaders in the organisation may indicate the importance and necessity of optimisation, set inspirational goals and challenge teams to realise them.
- Openness to change: This is one of the most fundamental cultural attributes which organisations try and strengthen in their overall cultural framework. With change becoming the new status quo, people have no option but to embrace change and pro-actively contribute in change institutionalisation. Openness to change is typically dependent on factors such as change history of the organisation, existing culture,

change leadership and effective change management.

- Team working: Optimisation is likely to break many silos previously existing in the organisation. Employees may be expected to pool their respective efforts to jointly create value for the stakeholders. Assumptions around team working may need to be clarified so as to create team accountabilities, rather than individual accountabilities.

Leadership plays a critical role in building the culture of optimisation. Leaders need to lead by example through demonstrating what they preach. They also have to create practices/frameworks within the organisation that may encourage employees to whole heartedly embrace the above mentioned cultural attributes.

7. Delivery models of optimisation

There are various combinations of different delivery models deployed by organisations to realise the benefits of optimisation. The delivery models define the nature of interactions among the structure, workforce, processes and technology.

One of the ways organisations optimise their overall value chain is “by strategically outsourcing select work portfolios”. In addition to enabling organisations to maximise capabilities and ensures high resource utilisation, strategic outsourcing also involves a fair degree of risk. In another approach, organisations create a separate shared services organisation within the larger organisation. Creating a shared services organisation provides a unique opportunity to leverage both the economies of scale and the depth of expertise. Many organisations opt to bundle the standard transactional work of functions such as finance, human resources, information technology, procurement, etc. into a separate service organisation called ‘service centre’. In addition, many organisations also bundle special expertise (required only on need basis) into a separate organisation called ‘centre of expertise’. Both ‘service centre’ and ‘centre of expertise’ may together constitute the shared service organisation.

Driven by the pressures of reduced cost and timely service delivery, many organisations also deploy self service delivery model, in addition to the above delivery models. Interactive technology and seamless processes

integration underpin the effectiveness of the delivery models.

Here are four of the key delivery models currently used by the organisations:

(i) Shared service model

Shared services is a collaborative model in which a subset of existing business functions are concentrated into a new, semi-autonomous business unit that has a management structure designed to promote efficiency, value generation, cost savings, and improved services for the internal customers of the parent corporation, like a business competing in the open market.

Creating a shared services organisation provides a unique opportunity for corporations to leverage both, the economies of scale and the depth of expertise. Many organisations choose to bundle the standard transactional work of functions such as finance, human resources, information technology, procurement etc. into a separate service organisation called 'service centre'. Additionally, many firms also bundle special expertise (required only on need basis) into a separate organisation called 'centre of expertise'. Both 'service centre' and 'centre of expertise' together may constitute the shared service organisation. Driven by the pressures of reduced cost and better service, many firms are rapidly adopting the shared services structure. However, the transition from the existing structure to the shared services structure is also accompanied with multiple challenges. Managing such a large scale change requires much foresight and dexterity.

A shared services organisation may evolve from an organisation only servicing the internal need of the parent corporation to an autonomous for-profit organisation which may compete in the open market.

From the parent corporation's perspective, a shared services organisation may hold following promises:

- Reduced cost
There is a constant pressure from internal corporate clients to provide cost effective products and services.

- Improved service
The shared business unit's customer-oriented focus should result in better service to internal customers, than typical in-house services
- Fewer distractions from core competency activities
With back office and other non-critical activities handled by shared services, the management of the parent company is free to focus the company on its core competencies.
- A potential of creating an externally focused profit centre
At one end of the evolutionary spectrum, a business unit following the shared services model can be operated as a near autonomous entity competing for business in the open market.
- Increased efficiencies
Standardisation of processes and associated technologies (wherever appropriate) can provide improved quality of services at comparable or lower prices. There is constant pressure on the business unit to increase efficiency and internal customer satisfaction.
- Decreased personnel requirement
With the ability to concentrate and focus resources for particular purposes in a shared business unit, fewer employees are generally needed to provide the same results. In addition to rightsizing, the shared services model often allows downscaling, in which new methodologies and efficiency improvements allow junior staff to take over tasks once controlled by more expensive senior staff.
- Improved economies of scale
Like a traditional centralized approach, shared services concentrates purchasing and other formerly dispersed business activities, resulting in greater buying power and greater concentration of specialised resources, such as specialists in certain aspects of accounting. This concentration allows

for increased economies of scale, compared to the original corporate structure.

One of the key promises of the shared services model is that it may help cut the overall operational cost of the organisation. As a rule of thumb, the cost saving from rightsizing or downscaling should be more than the cost incurred in supporting additional management structure of the shared services organisation.

Secondly, with the shared services organisation, the management of the parent company is free to focus the company on its core competencies. Following are some of the opportunities for shared services. In other words, the organisation may consider housing the following support activities in a shared services organisation.

(ii) Self service model

Driven by the pressures of reduced cost and timely service delivery, many firms also deploy self service delivery model, in addition with the shared services or outsourcing delivery model. Interactive technology and seamless processes integration underpin the effectiveness of self service model.

Self service, as the name suggests, enables employees to complete much of their own transactional work, such as attendance and leave management, compensation structuring, and change in contact details, etc., on their own. This essentially unlocks the bandwidth of some of the supporting functions, such as the human resources or the finance, to focus on more their strategic aspects. On the other hand, for employees this means more control and flexibility over their own affairs.

The key here is to strategically identify those specific activities which may be carried out by employees themselves. Majority of such activities may previously lie in the domain of the human resources or the finance function. Standardised processes and user friendly technology interface are the two key prerequisites for an effective self service model. Standardised processes help capture large

volumes of data from large number of employees from across the organisation. The data may be analysed to draw meaningful inferences and may also be used to do standardise reporting. User friendly technology interface is essential to provide consistent employee experience and helps build the overall system credibility.

(iii) Outsourcing model

The outsourcing model is a step extension of the shared services model. Under the outsourcing model the support activities identified to be carried out by a separate shared services organisation, may actually be carried out by a third party outside of the overall organisation.

Organisations of all sizes are partnering with outsourcing firms to streamline operations, enhance capabilities, and greatly improve efficiencies. Outsourcing can work for any size company in any industry; there is no co-relation between the success of an outsourcing programme and the size or type of the company.

Following are some of the key triggers for outsourcing.

- Achieve reduction in cost, improvement in quality, service and momentum.
- Gain access to superior capabilities of the service provider.
- Earn cash back in case of sale of assets from the customer to the vendor.
- Release resources for other purposes.
- Revaluating problematic functions.
- Focus on core capabilities.
- Lower operating cost.
- Minimise risks.

It may be important for organisations to identify their core processes or their key avenues of

value creation. This is what the organisations may excel at doing. Additionally, such core processes may also act as a source of competitive advantage for organisations. In the next step, organisations may evaluate their non-core activities for outsourcing. In this step, organisations may compare the outsourcing model option with other delivery options such as creating a shared service organisation within the larger organisation to maintain overall control and oversight on such non-core activities or processes. Organisations may need to evaluate the risks and benefits associated with each delivery model.

(iv) Hybrid model

In hybrid models, organisations may choose to deploy combinations of the above mentioned delivery models to bring about the necessary optimisation.

Case Study

Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI)

A multi-channel outdoor specialty retailer, Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) is one of America's largest consumer cooperative, comprising almost 2.5 million active members. REI sells its products via a variety of channels: retail stores, online through REI.com and REIOUTLET.com and through its catalogues. Additionally, the retailer has also been ranked amongst the "100 Best Companies to Work for in America" by Fortune magazine every year since 1998.

REI's 82 stores spread across 25 states, and it wanted to create "a more consistent retail experience for its store managers, employees and customers". However, some of the challenges faced by retailer include: inconsistent store practices; lack of decision-support tools for managers; and limited store manager visibility into payroll from conception to spend.

REI began piloting workforce optimisation in January 2004. An initiative named "Right Team, Right Time" was created to address these challenges. Its goal was to enhance labour management and improve customer service through optimisation of staff scheduling in each of its 83 stores. The retailer also required a solution to help standardising the forecasting method across its various store formats. This would allow it to gain a "consolidated view of the business and manage resources more effectively".

A broad team of stakeholders which include the IT and HR staff, and a retail advisory team, made up of store managers representing each retail district, was assembled. The retailer then implemented a centralised, web-based workforce management solution. The suite is specifically designed "to meet the complex challenges facing large retailers" and "provides a single-solution for workforce optimisation".

The system uses historical data to forecast sales volumes, enabling REI to predict the staffing needed to support those volumes. Upon completing its two-stage "proof of concept" pilot project across nine stores in 2004, REI deployed the solution to a new district, comprising 9 to 13 stores, every two weeks. As part of this process, the project team conducted post-go-live surveys to capture and address any issues before they impacted the implementation schedule.

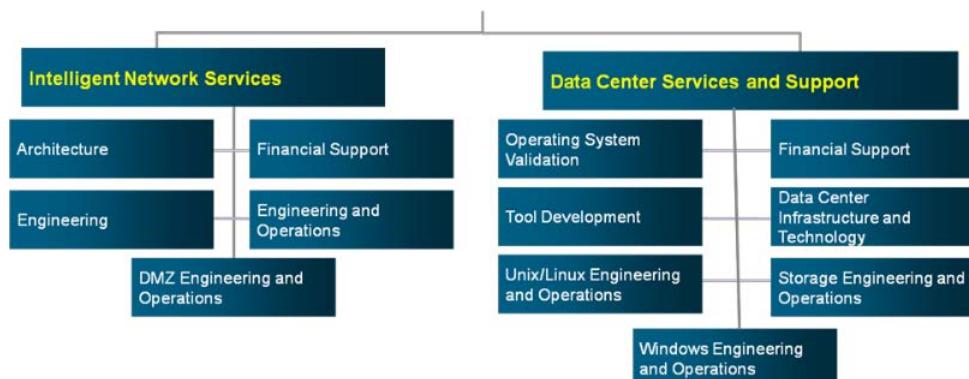
The benefits of implementing the system exceeded REI's original goals. The retailer estimated an increase in sales of at least one percent, a 60 percent reduction in time spent by store managers on administrative tasks, consistent service through labour optimisation and a more positive overall

experience for store managers, employees and customers. The automation of rules ensures accurate accounting and efficient payroll while streamlined and consistent staff scheduling is leading to greater equity among employees.

Cisco IT

Cisco is an enterprise that spreads across 300 locations in 90 countries. It has 46 data centres and server rooms that support more than 65,000 employees. While 14 of rooms are production or customer-facing, 32 are used for product development.

Similar to most IT organisations of large organisations, Cisco IT has adopted a “traditional siloed organisational structure”. Their staffs do both implementation and operational work, often having to drop operational projects in order to complete deployments. With the traditional organisational arrangement, there was much duplication of effort and lack of focus across the organisation. In many cases, employees were unaware of the duplication that existed across the organisation. The original organisational model included regional network teams and regional voice teams that were responsible for all aspects of implementing and operating their environments and services, as shown in the figure below.



Source: How Cisco IT implemented organizational change and advanced services for operational success. (2009). Cisco. Retrieved July 31, 2013, from http://www.cisco.com/web/about/ciscoitatwork/downloads/ciscoitatwork/pdf/NDCS_Restructuring_Adv_Svcs_Case_study.pdf

Responding to today's “pressing need” to optimise IT services and resources, at the same time reducing costs and improving organisation-wide productivity, Cisco introduces a framework that is needed to make operations “more efficient and responsive”. Cisco IT Network and Data Center Services (NDCS) switched from using a traditional organisational model

to Cisco's own lifecycle model, with substantial operations improvements across five different metrics.

NDCS needed focus, and thus engaged Cisco Advanced Services' Network Availability Improvement Services (NAIS) to identify the areas that needed to be changed and recommend how to proceed. The charter of Cisco Advanced Services NAIS is to leverage Cisco and industry network leading practices to achieve a highly available, reliable operations infrastructure. NAIS assesses and remediates the people, process, and tools needed to mitigate operational risk and network complexity by running an Operational Risk Management Analysis (ORMA). The ORMA is a Cisco support deliverable that outlines a roadmap for operational excellence and availability via a best-practice approach to network design, tools, process, and expertise. Cisco Advanced Services NAIS bases the identification and ongoing improvement of best practices upon its ongoing support experience, industry guidance, and the accepted Cisco network design principles for all networks demanding high availability.

NAIS begins the process by interviewing business and IT leaders and senior engineers, and then gathers technical, process, tools, and organisational documents and templates. After an assessment of the current state, NAIS outlines a detailed remediation plan to achieve business and availability goals, and prepares an achievable vision and roadmap.

After the ORMA report was performed in 2006, it was apparent to Cisco Vice President of IT NDCS John Manville that organisational changes were needed to drive the team to provide the additional scalability and agility that Cisco's business required. He said NDC "could not accommodate the kind of growth and technology evolution that Cisco and Cisco IT were expecting. The existing resources were not structured to support this, and there was significant duplication of work and processes. These would likely be strained, possibly to the breaking point, with even a minimal amount of growth."

It was time to think outside of the traditional IT "box," and restructure the organisation to accommodate the rapidly changing IT needs. The processes had to be consolidated and simplified, and communication/collaboration vehicles were needed. However, a change of this nature was not inconsequential; it would have a ripple effect throughout Cisco IT's data centres and global-wide.

An organisational restructure to Cisco's IT NDCS group solved the business problem. In Cisco's second quarter of fiscal year 2008 (CY08 fourth quarter), Manville restructured NDCS to map to its own lifecycle business model, typically used by Cisco Services for customer network implementation.

With more than 400 employees in NDCS, this was a substantial restructuring.

The Cisco lifecycle methodology (figure below) comprised six phases, all closely related: prepare, plan, design, implement, operate, and optimise.



Source: How Cisco IT implemented organizational change and advanced services for operational success. (2009). Cisco. Retrieved July 31, 2013, from http://www.cisco.com/web/about/ciscoitatwork/downloads/ciscoitatwork/pdf/NDSCS_Restructuring_AdvSvcs_Case_study.pdf

Prepare phase

Business agility starts with preparation: anticipating the broad vision, requirements, and technologies needed to build and sustain a competitive advantage. In the prepare phase, the organisation determines a business case and financial rationale to support the adoption of new technology. By carefully anticipating future needs and developing both a technology strategy and a high-level architecture to meet those needs, a business is better equipped to contain costs during deployment and operations.

Plan phase

Successful technology deployment depends upon an accurate assessment of the organisation's current network, security state, and overall readiness to support the proposed solution. In the plan phase, the organisation ascertains whether it has adequate resources to manage a technology deployment project to completion. To evaluate and improve network security, the IT department tests its network for vulnerability to

intruders and outside networks. They then develops a detailed project plan to identify resources, potential difficulties, individual responsibilities, and the critical tasks necessary to deliver the final project on time and on budget.

Design phase

Developing a detailed design is essential to reducing risk, delays, and the total cost of network deployments. A design aligned with business goals and technical requirements can improve network performance while supporting high availability, reliability, security, and scalability. Day-to-day operations and network management processes need to be anticipated, and, when necessary, custom applications need to be created to integrate new systems into existing infrastructure. The design phase can also guide and accelerate successful implementation with a plan to stage, configure, test, and validate network operations.

Implement phase

A network is essential to any successful organisation, and it must deliver vital services without disruption. In the implement phase, the organisation works to integrate devices and new capabilities in accordance with the design, without compromising network availability or performance. After identifying and resolving potential problems, the organisation attempts to speed return on investment with an efficient migration and successful implementation, including installing, configuring, integrating, testing, and commissioning all systems. After the network operation is validated, the organisation can begin expanding and improving IT staff skills to further increase productivity and reduce system downtime.

Operate phase

Network operations represent a significant portion of IT budgets, so it is important to be able to reduce operating expenses while continually enhancing performance. Throughout the operate phase, the IT department pro-actively monitors the health and vital signs of the network to improve service quality, reduce disruptions, mitigate outages, and maintain high availability, reliability, and security. By providing an efficient framework and operational tools to respond to problems, a company can avoid costly downtime and business interruption. Expert operations also enable an organisation to accommodate upgrades, moves, additions, and changes, while effectively reducing operating costs.

Optimise phase

A good business never stops looking for a competitive advantage. That is why continuous improvement is a mainstay of the lifecycle. Optimisation is the continuous process of planning, designing, and implementing incremental improvements to existing processes. Have business goals or technical requirements changed? Is a new capability or enhanced performance recommended? As the organisation looks to optimise its network and prepares to adapt to changing needs, the lifecycle begins anew, continually evolving the network and improving results.

Cisco's new NDCS organisation includes administration on both the front end (via the Program Office) and the back end (via the Business Office), and incorporates Cisco's Lifecycle Model, as shown below.



Note: Data center strategy, execution, and services is a separate area.

Source: How Cisco IT implemented organizational change and advanced services for operational success. (2009). Cisco. Retrieved July 31, 2013, from http://www.cisco.com/web/about/ciscoitwork/downloads/ciscoitwork/pdf/NDCS_Restructuring_AdvS_vcs_Case_study.pdf

Organisationaly, the change involved moving some resources from the former engineering and operations teams to the new implementations team. This was a key component of the restructuring and presented the opportunity for the new operations team to focus on operations without the distraction of deployments.

As well, other NDCS team members were able to concentrate on their specific areas of expertise. For example, in the former organisation, there was a single storage engineering and operations team, which handled the implementation, operation, and design of storage. In the new organisation, this storage team has been dispersed into the implementation, operations, and design teams.

The new organisational structure enables Cisco NDCS to proactively look for additional ways to improve efficiency in managing service support. To this end, experienced engineers are called onto the incident bridge to train newer staff members to handle incidents more quickly, which in turn reduces the impact time. Tools are being created to identify problems before they cause client impact. Additionally, the

restructure has enabled NDCS to track service-level agreements (SLAs) for client support, freeing up more time to talk to clients and educate them on Cisco's processes. Overall, this change increases awareness, communication, and improves overall customer satisfaction.

The Cisco lifecycle methodology now provides a focus on operational excellence with these results:

- Incidents have decreased to approximately 70 per quarter
- The total impacting outage duration has been reduced to 300 impact hours per quarter
- The defective root cause percentage is now consistently below 10 percent

Enabling the teams to focus also had a tremendous impact on productivity and effectiveness. The new organisational structure gave them the opportunity to focus on their core operational work. Through this greater focus, they have developed best practices and special purposed workflows to address opportunity areas. Their critical metrics quickly displayed the positive results from these changes. Consequently, the outstanding results started consistently being delivered quarter after quarter.

The restructuring led to a number of positive results:

- The team can now spend more time training and mentoring.
- The creation of "focus areas" within the team has enabled sub-teams to tackle specific service areas that require attention.
- The team developed a strategy around proactive operations, executed with matching team processes.
- The team has nurtured relationships with its peers within the new NDCS organisational structure to enable "horizontal" processes. This ensures that each team receives from its peers what it needs as a "client," and also enables a "service provider-client" feedback process.

In addition, reinforcement and consistent messaging within the team has enabled the team to fully use staff meetings to review metrics and directly connect them in to recognition and rewards for the team members.



Recommended Readings

Articles can be retrieved from NLB's e-Resources –
<http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>

Books are available at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library.

Killingsworth, W. R. (2011). *Design, analysis, and optimization of supply chains: A system dynamics approach*. New York: Business Expert Press.
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We, X., & Zhao, J. (2009). The organizational structure optimization study of SME in start-up stage. Retrieved July 29, 2013, from <http://www.seiofbluemountain.com/upload/product/200911/2009zxqhy10a6.pdf>

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SINGAPORE PRODUCTIVITY ASSOCIATION

The Singapore Productivity Association (SPA) was set up in 1973 as an affiliated body of the then National Productivity Board, now SPRING Singapore. Its objective is to promote the active involvement of organisations and individuals in the Productivity.

CPP Course Syllabus	
CPP	CPP (Retail)
Module 1: Understanding Productivity (Duration: 1 day) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Productivity and Quality Concepts • Factors Affecting Enterprise Productivity • Productivity Movement in Singapore • Productivity Promotion in Businesses • Productivity Challenges 	
Module 2: Productivity Tools, Techniques & Management Systems (Duration: 3 days) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Excellence • Productivity Measurement & Analysis • Process management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost of Quality ▪ Lean Six Sigma ▪ Process Mapping & Analysis • Integrated Management Systems 	
Module 3: Innovation & Service Excellence (Duration: 3 days) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Economy & Innovation • Service Excellence • Team Excellence 	
Module 4: Critical Success Factors (Duration: 1 day) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Commitment • Managing & Sustaining Change • Overcoming Resistance to Change • Training and Education • Planning for Implementation and Control of Productivity Improvement Programme • Briefing on project assignment & Role of Productivity Practitioner 	

As part of the CPP curriculum, participants are required to start a productivity improvement project upon completion of the in-class component. Project guidance will be provided by a professional consultant assigned for this purpose and is for a total of 2 man-days.

Funding & Payment

The course is supported by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA). Funding is available at 70% and 50% of the course fees respectively for SMEs and MNCs/LLEs/Statutory Boards. Please find the prices payable in the net fee table below:

For SMEs:	Net Fee	Nett Fee with GST
SPA Member (S\$3,700)	S\$1,110	S\$1,187.70
Non-Member (S\$3,950)	S\$1,185	S\$1,267.95
For MNCs/LLEs/Statutory Boards	Net Fee	Nett Fee with GST
SPA Member (S\$3,700)	S\$1850	S\$1979.50
Non-Member (S\$3,950)	S\$1975	S\$2113.25

Here are the schedules for CPP:

Retail & Food:

September 2013		
Date	Module	Time
Monday, 2 September 2013	Module 1	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 4 September 2013	Module 1 & 2	9-5 pm
Monday, 9 September 2013	Module 2	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 11 September 2013		9-5 pm
Monday, 16 September 2013	Module 3	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 18 September 2013		9-5 pm
Monday, 23 September 2013		9-5 pm
Wednesday, 25 September 2013	Module 4	9-5 pm

November 2013		
Date	Module	Time
Tuesday, 5 November 2013	Module 1	9-5 pm
Thursday, 7 November 2013	Module 1 & 2	9-5 pm
Tuesday, 12 November 2013	Module 2	9-5 pm
Thursday, 14 November 2013		9-5 pm
Tuesday, 19 November 2013	Module 3	9-5 pm
Thursday, 21 November 2013		9-5 pm
Tuesday, 26 November 2013		9-5 pm
Thursday, 28 November 2013	Module 4	9-5 pm

Generic:

October 2013		
Date	Module	Time
Tuesday, 1 October 2013	Module 1	9-5 pm
Thursday, 3 October 2013	Module 1 & 2	9-5 pm
Tuesday, 8 October 2013	Module 2	9-5 pm
Thursday, 10 October 2013		9-5 pm
Wednesday, 16 October 2013	Module 2 & 3	9-5 pm
Friday, 18 October 2013	Module 3	9-5 pm
Monday, 21 October 2013		9-5 pm
Wednesday, 23 October 2013	Module 4	9-5 pm

Core Faculty Members

MR. LAM CHUN SEE

**B. ENG IN INDUSTRIAL & SYSTEMS
ENGINEERING (UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE)**

Chun see manages his own consultancy practice, Hoshin Consulting and is also an associate consultant/trainer to the PSB Corporation and Singapore Productivity Association. Prior to running his own practice, he has had years of experience as an industrial engineer with Philips, and trainer and consultant with the then National Productivity Board, APG Consulting and Teian Consulting. He was conferred the Triple-A Award in 1989 for helping to transfer Japanese know-how, particularly in the area of 5S, into local programmes and packages. Throughout his years of consultancy experience, Chun See has assisted many businesses in analyzing their productivity and quality objectives and performance; primarily through the application of the PDCA technique and basic QC tools.

MR. LEE KOK SEONG

M.SC. IN CHEMICAL ENGINEERING (IMPERIAL COLLEGE, LONDON UNIVERSITY), B.SC. IN CHEMICAL ENGINEERING (NATIONAL TAIWAN UNIVERSITY)

Kok Seong has accumulated vast experience in the areas of productivity training and management consultancy throughout his 30 years of experience with the Standards, Productivity and Innovation Board (SPRING). He has provided consultancy assistance and training for numerous organisations both within and outside of Singapore in the areas of Productivity Management, Operation and Production Management, total Quality Management, Total Productive Maintenance, Shopfloor Management, Occupational Safety Management, Industrial Engineering Applications and Supervisory Management. He has also been greatly involved in the pinnacle Singapore Quality Award (SQA) initiative since its inception in 1993. his track records include the assessments and site visits of award recipients like Micron Semiconductor (formerly Texas Instruments), Motorola, Baxter Healthcare, Philips Tuner Factory and Teck Wah Industrial Corporation Ltd. Mr. Lee is currently a certified All rights reserved. National Library Board Singapore, 2013.

SQA Senior Assessor, as well as a resource person for Basic and Advanced Training Courses for Productivity Practitioners, a position he has taken on since 2007.

MR. LOW CHOO TUCK

M.SC. IN INDUSTRIAL ADMINISTRATION (UNIVERSITY OF ASTON, UK); B.SC. IN PHYSICS (NUS); DIP IN QUALITY CONTROL INSTRUCTORS (INTERNATIONAL QUALITY CENTRE, NETHERLANDS); CERTIFICATE IN PRODUCTIVITY DEVELOPMENT (JAPAN PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE); CERTIFICATE IN ADVANCED MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT (INSEASD)

Choo Tuck currently provides training and advisory services in productivity and quality management to businesses and government in the Asean region and Middle East. He was previously the Executive Director of the Restaurant Association of Singapore as well as the Singapore Productivity Association, and was also the Director for Strategic Planning in SPRING Singapore. During his many years of service with SPRING Singapore, he gained wide experience in productivity training, management consultancy and productivity promotion, and has helped more than a 100 businesses in improving productivity, quality control and business excellence, including organisations such as Cycle & Carriage, Motorola, PUB and DBS. On top of that, he has also served as an Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) expert on Productivity for several APO member countries, and was part of a team of experts engaged by the Singapore cooperation Enterprise to provide productivity expertise to the Government of Bahrain in 2007 and 2008.

MR. QUEK AIK TENG

B.ENG (HON.) IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING (UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD); DIP. IN BUSINESS EFFICIENCY (INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING_ (PSB-ACADEMY); CERTIFIED MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT (CMC); PRACTISING MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT (PMC); MEMBER, INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS (IMC) SINGAPORE



Aik Teng currently manages his own consultancy, AT Consulting Services. One of his most recent projects includes being the LEAD Project Manager for the Singapore Logistics Association. Prior to running his own consultancy, he has been with SPRING Singapore for 20 years, and was the Head of the Organisation Excellence Department from 2004-05. He was also SQA Lead Assessor and Team Leader up till 2008 and has been involved in the SQA initiative since its inception in 1993. tasked to start up the consultancy unit within the then Productivity & Standards Board (PSB) to provide training and consultancy services to organisations, his consulting team assisted close to 30 organisations during that period. He was also involved in a project coordinated by the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE) to assist the Bahrain Labour Fund in their Labour Reform strategy, which included helping the Bahrain government to initiate a Productivity Movement as well as develop the productivity of the local enterprises. In addition, he was appointed as Project Manager to assist the Government of

Botswana to implement a national Productivity Movement, from 1994 to 2003. Botswana is currently held as a model of Productivity in the Pan-Africa region.

MR. WONG KAI HONG

MBA IN STRATEGIC MARKETING (HULL), BSC (NUS)

Kai Hong is a business consultant, management trainer and company director. He has spent almost 2 decades in the consumer products industry, having worked with retailers like Isetan, Metro, Royal Sporting House, The Athlete's Foot and Sunglass Hut; brands like Reebok and Doc Martens; and technology group Wearnes Technology. He has been involved with various functions including operations, business development, project management, human resource, training, marketing, logistics, budgeting and general management. He has developed businesses in Singapore and many Asian cities such as Seoul and Beijing.

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Alternatively, you could also contact our secretariat:

Ms. Angela Poh

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