

BUSINESS PROCESS RE-ENGINEERING

A PRESENTATION FOR THE HONG KONG POLICE FORCE

MARCH 1995

Introduction

This text provides a summary of the major points in an invited presentation made by the author to senior members of the Royal Hong Kong at Police Headquarters, Hong Kong on 27th February 1995. The invitation was issued by Superintendent R.A. Kent, MBA (Hull) and the original intention was to introduce the Chairmen of User Groups for FICS (Force Information Communal System) to:

- The concepts of BPR (Business Process Re-engineering)
- The necessity for it
- To indicate how BPR can be achieved
- Demonstrate what it could do for RHKPF
- To consider the individual contributions which can be made
- Discuss some of the difficulties which might be encountered

What is Business Process Re-engineering?

The acknowledged founders of BPR, Michael Hammer & James Champy, (1993) regard it as:

“The fundamental rethinking and redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical contemporary measures of performance such as cost, quality, service and speed”

Peter Drucker, seen by many as the father (or grandfather!) of modern management considers that:

“Re-engineering is new, and it has to be done.”

It is important to understand what is meant when the expression BPR is used. What it is not about is marginal or incremental improvement in an established method, it is about radical transformation of an organisation across all its key processes in order to achieve significant change. It is widely considered that savings of the order of 70% - 80% in the cost of processes can be achieved. For example:

Ford achieved a 75% reduction in personnel in the Accounts Payable department – with no loss of service.

Bank of America and Italy reduced cashier closing time by 91% and established 50 new branches – without any increase in staff.

Kodak cut development time of new products by around 50% and reduced tool and manufacturing costs by 25%.

A telecommunications company achieved US\$200 million of operating cost savings, US\$300 million revenue enhancement and US\$400 million of capital cost reduction.

A review of the key words in the definition may enhance understanding:

FUNDAMENTAL, RADICAL: a demand to challenge the set of principles which underpin the way in which RHKPF is organised and managed – perhaps as John might say it's "back to basics!"

RETHINKING: a demand for a complete reframing or re-examination of the way work is done and why it is done.

REDESIGN: don't automate, obliterate!

PROCESSES: sets of inter-related activities which contribute to the same end product or service. This calls for a "holistic" or "systems" (Ackoff, 1981) view of the organisation as opposed to the reductionist, fragmented or partial view which has driven organisations since the days of Adam Smith and his pin factory.

DRAMATIC: the effects of changes must be shocking, surprising, stunning, unexpected, not prosaic, boring, and incremental.

IMPROVEMENT: changes must enable the delivery of service to be measurably enhanced – there is no point in the exercise if all that is achieved is that the same mistakes are made more quickly using more expensive technology, the aim must be to eradicate purposeless activity.

CRITICAL CONTEMPORARY MEASURES: what is important now and for the future, not what was important yesterday or fifty years ago.

COST: the taxpayers' money you spend.

QUALITY: meeting customers' (agreed) requirements, formal and informal, at lowest cost, first time every time (Flood, 1993).

SERVICE: the product of the RHKPF.

We encounter a few difficulties in these words. For example:- who are the customers of the RHKPF, what are their quality expectations, what do those customers (either external or internal) perceive as the service offered? These questions must be answered at the outset.

Re-engineering does not mean doing less with less, it is not an alternative approach to downsizing, outplacing, delayering or flattening the hierarchy, it does mean achieving more using less resources. To do this, any BPR project must address the

organisation structure, technology, culture, management approach, systems and procedures, the entire framework of thinking and practice which surrounds the organisation.

BPR though is, in many ways, not new, it is perhaps a repackaging of tools and approaches that have been around for some time. Flow charting, process redesign, communication analysis, systems analysis (in the IT sense) are not new ideas, and holistic or systems thinking (which underpins the entire package) first emerged in the middle part of this century. Perhaps what has changed is the need, on a global scale to make full use of the management tools and techniques that are available to us.

Very simply, BPR is about:-

- the potential for abandonment of everything that we currently do;
- radical redesign;
- embracing catastrophic change;
- perpetual reinvention of the organisation;
- constant innovation in every area

and it is driven through the organisation by leadership and commitment, without which it is guaranteed to fail!

Why is Business Process Re-engineering necessary?

Most large organisations today have not been deliberately or consciously designed; they have developed and grown from relatively small beginnings. Despite numerous reorganisations, perhaps vast consultancy fees paid for expert advice on restructuring and frequent tinkering with career structures, job grades and appraisal/promotion systems, the fundamental premises upon which they operate have never been challenged.

Such organisations are “frozen out of their history,” continuing to do what they have always done, and continuing to be ruled by the same COWDUNG – the conventional wisdom of the dominant group! All managers grow up in their organisations and develop a more or less conventional internal model of “the way things are done around here.” As they reach management positions they resolve to make the changes which they perceive as necessary based upon their personal experiences in the organisation. However, such changes are usually focused at the level of “epiphenomena” (Beer, 1985) – the paper pushing and record keeping which for many constitutes their work and that of the organisation. Such managers rarely, if ever, address serious fundamental questions concerning the nature of the organisation itself, its purposes or objectives. (Why does Hong Kong have a police force?)

They rarely consider whether the purposes are achievable, or perhaps desirable, they simply concern themselves with doing the same things differently, never thinking to do different things. Most manage as if the future were inevitable, something that they must learn to cope with, BPR suggests that we can be proactive rather than reactive, with Peter Drucker, we must “plan, or be planned for.”

If we stop to look at the contemporary world and in particular the developments seen in the present century, it should be apparent that the time has come for a radical re-appraisal of activities. The rate of change has increased exponentially, technologies of all types used to last a lifetime, the way a craftsman or tradesman carried out his task would be unchanged throughout a career. Today, technology becomes obsolete almost before it is brought to market, the skills and techniques of all people and organisations have to be constantly updated, upgraded and in many cases relearnt. The “rules of the game” are constantly changing and in many areas are increasingly irrelevant!

The evidence of change is all around us, as Ackoff (1981, page 3) suggests,

“the speed with which we can travel has increased more and more in our lifetimes than it has over all the time before our births.”

This makes it possible for me to visit Hong Kong with almost as little fuss as I would experience in driving to Manchester – jet travel is routine! Technology now exists which, perhaps, makes much of this travel redundant; given a video-conferencing facility, we could enjoy almost the same interaction as we do by being in the same room, if we took advantage of the tools of virtual reality we could believe that we were in the same room!

Looking more widely, we should consider the other phenomenal changes which have occurred, in only the last five to ten years. In addition to technology, there have been enormous economic, political and social developments.

Economically, Hong Kong has grown, on a per capita income basis, to be one of the world’s richest nations – although there does remain a question for all countries about how wealth should be shared and distributed. We seem to have the capacity, on a global scale, to produce enough of everything to satisfy all present or known demands. Even with the development of the new consumer markets, particularly the PRC and India, there exist limits to potential economic growth. For Hong Kong to remain a competitive and thriving community, the issue of cost must be addressed. A part of that cost is its Government and Administration, and a significant element of the total relates to RHKPF.

You have a duty to minimise the cost!

Politically, there have been immense developments, an end to the Cold War, the collapse of the USSR and an effective end to ideologically driven political debate in the developed world. Locally, the PRC has started to open up to the West, Japan

has seen its first change of Government in over thirty years and, of course, Hong Kong faces a new future in the post June 1997 era.

Socially there have been further developments. Again looking at a local level, the average Hong Kong citizen is better paid, better housed and better fed than at any time before. Significantly, he or she is also much better educated, having in many cases gathered ideas and experience from well beyond the boundaries of Hong Kong itself.

Better educated people, with higher expectations, different abilities, skills and talents offer opportunities to an organisation which did not previously exist. To continue to use them in the traditional way is perhaps socially unjust. Regardless, if you do not employ people's talents to the full and provide work through which they can explore and develop themselves, they will seek other employment.

If all the best people leave – and they will go first – you will be left with an overpaid and underperforming force. That is a sure recipe for high costs and failure in the pursuit of organisational objectives.

It has been established that at a high level there is a driving need for change, but what about the needs of the organisation at a more specific level? One of the buzzwords or pieces of jargon of BPR is the "COWPATH"; this is the process by which procedures and systems become embedded in an organisation. COWPATHS are so named because the paperwork meanders, often purposelessly through the organisation.

Sometimes COWPATHS arise as a product of the design of the organisation, for example, an order from a customer may be received at the Sales department where it is priced and agreed. It then passes, perhaps via the credit controller or plant accountant to the Production department for processing. Thereafter the order is passed to the Progress Chaser or Production Controller, upon dispatch the delivery note is passed to the accounts receivable department and so on. The functional design of the organisation has determined that the order will go through many different areas before completion. Each step constitutes a 'hand-off' where responsibility for and control of the order moves. Imagine how difficult it will be for the customer to establish the status of his or her order – nobody, least of all the salesman who handled the original transaction will know where to find it!

The same scenario occurs for any exceptional item – it becomes lost in the depths of the organisation. Exceptional items fall outside the routine paper handling procedures; in these cases the item will not have an established route. As such the first person to receive it will pass it to someone who he or she believes will be able to deal with it. Frequently they cannot either, but they know someone else who they believe can, and so the paper moves on. It may never be traced again!

What is perhaps most frightening is that, because it was treated as an exceptional item nobody is responsible for it. As such, the next time the same or a similar exception occurs, it will be dealt with in the same way. The procedure thus becomes established in the organisation with no deliberate or conscious effort – the item has established a “COWPATH.”

A good illustration of this is the experimental radar engineer tasked with developing a scanner which rotated at a particular frequency. Naturally, there was no budget for this device, so it was assembled from spare parts: - a redundant electric motor and scrap materials which were lying around his workshop. After a significant period he was able to report success to his superiors. The exact rotation speed had been achieved by gearing down the motor, which was far too powerful for the job. No time had been put into the design it was thus highly effective but hopelessly inefficient. Upon receipt of the success report, his superiors despatched a draughtsman tasked with recording the mechanism. This “Heath Robinson” device complete with all its flaws and design inadequacies, including the immense drive motor, became a standard design and was replicated many times. The COWPATH became the established way!

The need for BPR should by now be quite clear; the world has changed dramatically in a single generation, that rate of change looks set to continue. The random or haphazard development of our institutions is inefficient and often ineffective; we can simply no longer afford this. Organisations, whether in the private or public sector, must not simply react to the changes, they must capitalise on them by revolutionising themselves. As Ackoff suggests, it is time for “creating the corporate future.”

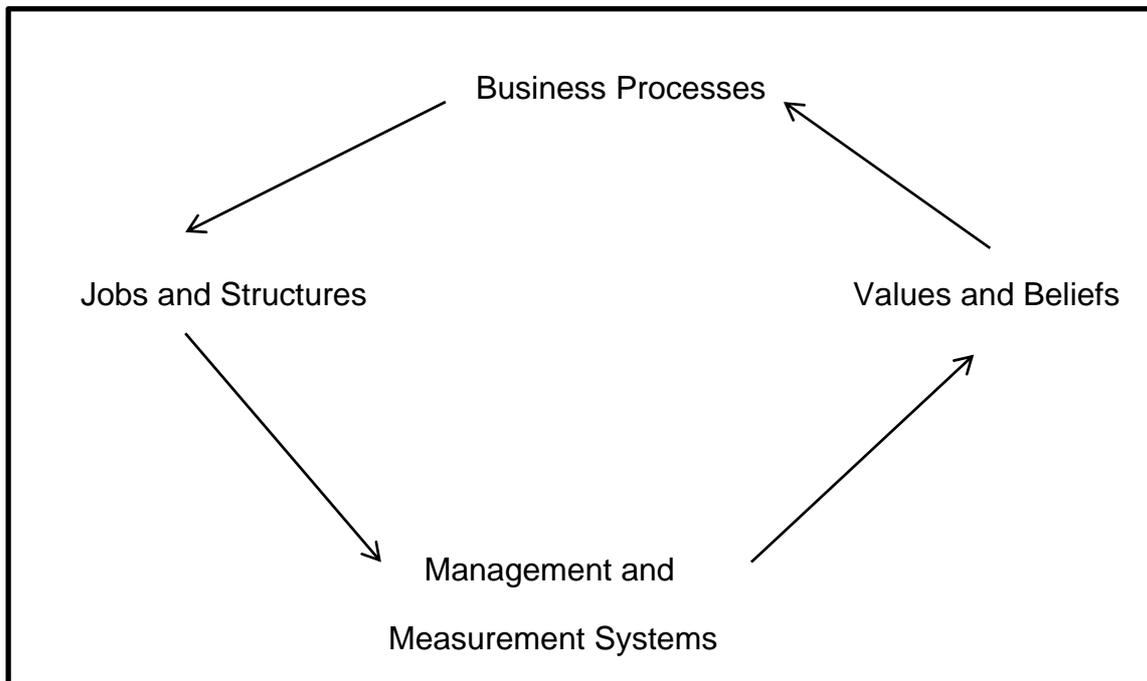
How is BPR done?

Achieving Business Process Re-engineering is about embracing the art of the possible. It first of all requires acceptance by those in charge – you? – that it is necessary and desirable, it then requires an absolute commitment to finding the best possible way for today and recognising that today’s approach may itself be inadequate tomorrow! Without such acceptance, and the determination to create and sustain this perpetual revolution, you might as well not bother. Nothing will happen and the whole exercise will be a further waste of limited money – better then to wait for the whole operation to collapse and start again from scratch!

In real terms, that is perhaps the first question that should be asked! If you were designing a Police Force from scratch, within the limits of what is technologically possible, and legally permissible today, what sort of organisation would it be?

My guess is that it would not be anything like the current set-up! Ackoff calls this process “idealised redesign.” Having decided on the ideal future, it can be considered how to move from today’s situation to that alternative future. This sort of unconstrained thinking needs to drive the BPR process.

Hammer & Champy (1993 page 80) propose the “Business System Diamond” as a guide to the re-engineering process.



The Business System Diamond

First, the key business process of the organisation must be identified, and then redesigned. This redesign will then drive the redefinition of the structure of the organisation and the jobs, including those of management, which are done. The changes in structure and jobs must be reinforced by changes in management systems and performance measurement; these will lead towards changes in the values and beliefs of the people within the organisation - a change of culture. This in turn leads back to reconsidering the business processes themselves. It may of course be argues that a change of culture is necessary for the first step to be taken!

The process is iterative, and should lead to self-questioning as well as potentially increased self-regulation. The cycle reaffirms that the process of BPR never stops, although a practical, achievement oriented project management style is necessary. After all, abandonment of a substantial change programme before its completion must be as fully justified as was its inception. Perhaps abandonment before completion suggests that the original programme was undertaken inadequately!

BPR, of course, may have a number of other consequences. It may lead directly, or indirectly to redundancy amongst the staff of the organisation, and as it can be seen, if 80% improvements are available, the numbers affected may be high. An alternative to this, particularly for a service organisation, may be to significantly enhance the level and quality of service offered to customers. For the RHKPF this

could mean significantly more officers “on the beat” or engaged in activity directly related to the prevention and detection of crime.

A second significant outcome may be a need to substantially increase the focus on training and development activity. This arises from the gap between the current skills of the workforce and those needed for the completion of their duties in the revitalised organisation.

Third, may be the consequences for control and autonomy within the organisation. It is likely to be the case that, as with a TQM initiative, the individual at every level needs to be allowed more freedom of decision, greater discretion, than has hitherto been the case. This in itself would reduce the direct workload of their seniors, although there may be a related, but not commensurate, increase in both audit and co-ordinating activities.

The fourth change is likely to be a step increase in, albeit maybe short term, and a significant refocusing of IT expenditure. To properly capitalise on the power of contemporary technology, the organisation needs to realise more fully what can be achieved. Many IT systems, like many paper based systems, are rooted in technology which is, in 90s terms, archaic, the essential framework of many information systems being captured in 1960s mainframe based approaches. The power of desktop PCs and even portable systems is now such that the idea of a highly centralised Management System is considered redundant by some. The function of Information Technology should be to enable the operation of the rest of the organisation, not to inhibit it, and certainly not to control it. In what could be called the information age, he who controls the information perhaps largely controls the organisation. The organisation must decide, at a corporate level, who is to have power.

There are a variety of outline approaches to the process of BPR. The first is shown below:

- 1) Achieve clarity about the objectives.
- 2) Gain commitment to the project(s).
- 3) Determine the scope.
- 4) Nominate (or appoint) Process Owners and establish ownership.
- 5) Identify the key initiatives.
- 6) Monitor progress

Where did RHKPF start?

A second approach is:

- 1) Set aggressive BPR targets.
- 2) Chief Executive to devote 20%-50% of time to the project.

- 3) Review customer needs and identify the points of maximum leverage (i.e. where maximum benefit can be obtained for minimum effort).
- 4) Assign senior executives to be responsible for implementation of projects.
- 5) Conduct comprehensive pilot studies.

Where did RHKPF start?

There are also guaranteed ways to fail in BPR:

- 1) Appoint average performers (or those who simply don't fit in their current roles) i.e. perhaps somebody who is overdue for promotion or "needs a change."
- 2) Measure the plan rather than the result!
- 3) Settle for no change, today's status quo is always far easier to deal with than fundamental change.
- 4) Don't communicate – keep the whole thing a secret – particularly from those affected!
- 5) Use the buzzwords and the jargon, not the concepts and principles.
- 6) Appoint people as Process Owners and as Project Staff who preferably don't have any of the necessary skills and knowledge.
- 7) Fudge difficult, sensitive or political issues.

How many of these "sins" has RHKPF committed?

The point at this stage is that if you are to undertake BPR it will only work if it is done properly and professionally.

The first task is to identify the key "Business Processes" of the organisation. For a bank these may be the ways which they gather deposits, make advances and transmit money. These are the fundamental things which they do, and in turn they are "process drivers" for whole sets of connected and inter-related activity e.g. taking security, charging and paying interest, issuing statements and so on.

What are the equivalent processes for RHKPF?

An uninformed outsider such as myself might, however inappropriately, suggest "crime prevention" and "crime detection" as two key activities. These would have entailed in them the creation and maintenance of records - the "arrest/interview/charge/bail process"? In order to identify these things, it is vital that the organisation understand what it exists for i.e. what its customers (whoever they may be) expect.

A useful way of starting to identify these things is to examine what activities are undertaken and to consider which of three categories they fall into. The categories are core, support and discretionary:

Core activities are the things the organisation exists to do.

Support activities are those things the organisation does which enable it to do what it does.

Discretionary activities are the things the organisation does to avoid having to do the things that it does!

Many organisations have recently found that it is both more effective and more efficient to abolish much discretionary activity and to outsource some or all of the rest. Similarly, much support activity can be undertaken on a contract basis by outsiders. When considering such an option the organisation has to appreciate that what it is designed to manage – presence not productivity. When it contracts out, or outsources, an activity it is paying for products, or services and what it must manage is the productivity of the contractor not his or her time! This produces a new focus on the delivery of tangible outcomes and enables a “return on expenditure” to be measured in a way which is rarely achievable for internal providers.

When the core activities have been isolated from the rest it becomes more feasible to identify the key processes to which they relate and to identify the process chains.

Here we can turn for guidance to the words of Rudyard Kipling (Just So Stories):

“I had six loyal serving men
They taught me all I knew,
Their names were What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who.”

This verse provides the six questions which should enable the whole process to be revealed and form the basis for its critical examination.

- 1) What is being done? – This stage must be accompanied by mapping of the process through flow charting and must follow entire processes from their entry points to their exit or death points. This mapping will reveal decision points, delay points and throw up irrelevant or purposeless activity.
- 2) Why is it being done? What makes it necessary? Need it be done at all?
- 3) When is it done? Is there a better, cheaper, quicker time?
- 4) How is it done? Need it be done that way? Is there a better, cheaper more effective/efficient method?
- 5) Where is it done? Need it be done there? Could it be done somewhere else with greater benefit/lower cost?
- 6) Who does it? Need they do it? Could it be done by someone else or be driven by some other more fundamental process or technology enhancement?

The flow or process chart can be used as a basis for a redesign which achieves the objective of the organisation in the most effective and efficient manner. It must be

remembered at this stage that absolute effectiveness and absolute efficiency may not necessarily be compatible objectives. When appropriate a trade off or compromise will have to be considered which seeks to maximise both.

While effective use of IT is at the heart of many a BPR project, the redesign of a manual method should provide the base point for evaluating the benefits of employing information technology to “automate” the process. Any cost justification of an IT project should be undertaken against the expected cost of operating a redesigned manual process, not the cost of the original “COWPATH” process! Similarly, all staffing recommendations arising should be placed in the context of a properly constituted staffing model of the organisation under consideration such that realisable savings are separated from those which are purely notional – i.e. those that represent a saving in time spent on the job but which cannot be converted into reductions in staff numbers.

Looking specifically at the “tools” of BPR, it is possible to draw on the full spectrum of approaches from right across the management sciences and from systems thinking.

Statistical analysis, for example the “Pareto Curve” (80/20 rule) approach may be used to help separate the “vital few projects from the useful many.” This may show for example that 80% of the benefit can be achieved from undertaking only 20% of the projects. At the very least this provides a possible mechanism for prioritising or ranking projects.

Analytical techniques may be borrowed from the disciplines of work study and organisation and methods. Examples of these include; critical analysis, heuristic (goal seeking) methods, brainstorming (the “random” generation of ideas prior to critical evaluation), divergent and convergent thinking (widening and narrowing the scope of the enquiry).

These approaches can be supported by participative decision making methods such as the “ringgi” technique employed extensively by the Japanese, and additional expert help obtained by using internal and external experts in variations on the “Delphi” technique. Good use should certainly be made of trade and technical magazines and journals which give indications of emerging ideas and technology.

Many, if not all, of these techniques are probably familiar to you; they have been in general use for a considerable time. It must be remembered however that they are essentially reductionist in their outlook that is to say that they tend to fragment and breakdown the process into its constituent parts for analysis – perhaps the very reason why BPR is necessary!

The paradigm of BPR is systemic, that is it calls for a holistic approach to problem solving, or as some would prefer “mess management.” Systemic methods which recognise the inter-relatedness and interdependence of all aspects of the organisation are rooted in addressing the purpose(s) of the organisation. Every

decision is made in the context of the purpose – as defined by the participants in the study.

Systems thinking, which has emerged since the Second World War, offers a range of highly structured methodologies, but is relatively little known. Effective BPR demands that systems approaches become more widely used; otherwise the initiatives will be less likely to succeed since the context of the process in the organisation may be lost. A selection of methodologies will be briefly introduced, but the list is not exhaustive. I have assumed in making this selection that the RHKPF falls into either of two broad categories selected from Flood & Jackson (1991). These are a complex – unitary situation. That is one where:

- 1) The participants share in decision making and enjoy shared values and beliefs;
- 2) They agree about their joint interests, objectives and means;
- 3) They will act in accordance with their decisions;
- 4) Where there are a large number of highly interacting elements whose attributes are not predetermined;
- 5) They are more or less loosely organised;
- 6) Demonstrate probabilistic behaviour;
- 7) The system may evolve over time.

Alternatively RHKPF may be considered a complex pluralist situation, points 4-7 continue to apply, but while there is basic compatibility of interest, values and beliefs may diverge, compromise is possible upon ends and means but participative decision making and joint action still occur.

Complex unitary methodologies suggested as suitable to support BPR include:

Contingency theory: an approach which recognises that the structure of an organisation should be a product of its key elements e.g. goals, technology, size, people etc. as modified by managerial perceptions and decisions. The major limitation to this model is that while it is descriptive, it is not prescriptive.

Viable Systems Diagnosis (Beer, 1985): an approach which proposes that organisations should be based on designs which enable learning, adaptation and maximum operational autonomy and local, as opposed to central, control. The model suggests that control should be exercised as close to the source of an error or query as is possible. It is an approach which is:

Descriptive – it tells us how an organisation works,

Diagnostic – it guides us in recognition of faults,

Prescriptive – the diagnostic process leads directly to the identification of “cures”.

Usefully, it also offers a basis for the design of systems for information management. In complex pluralist situations it is necessary to use models which enable disagreements to be resolved leading towards consensual decision making. Again two are considered as supportive of BPR initiatives:

Interactive Planning (Ackoff, 1981): offers a method for participative decision making which enables all of the staff of the organisation to be involved in its redesign. The approach achieves this through a system of “planning boards” and structured enquiry and decision making activity. The planning boards are vertically integrated through the hierarchy of the organisation enhancing communication. The outcomes of this approach can be crystallised through its use in conjunction with the more structured VSD method outlined above.

Soft Systems Methodology (Checkland, 1981): this approach leads to change in three dimensions of the organisation, attitudes, structure and procedures. It involves a seven stage process of enquiry which starts with an unstructured problem, works through participative debate towards a problem structure, defines systems (perhaps for BPR these could be the key processes), develops models which can be compared with the expressed understanding of the present situation, encourages discussion and agreement of culturally and systemically desirable changes and ends in taking action.

Selection and use of the models requires a deeper knowledge and understanding than can be given in the context of the present talk, but the power of the approaches, and their clear utility in a BPR context should be apparent.

To complete this section it is perhaps appropriate to issue a warning. All of the methods, tools, techniques and methodologies discussed, whether reductionist or systemic are simply models, none should be treated as offering a universal BPR panacea which will resolve all difficulties. They must be used selectively and intelligently if they are to be of benefit. Models, by their very nature are abstractions from the full reality of the organisation and as such offer only a partial view of its full richness. They are all inadequate to some extent – the only complete model of an organisation is the organisation. It is important that those involved in the projects do not allow the models to become, for them, the reality. The outcomes must be regarded as providing guides to the possible effects, not as providing absolutely certain results.

What can BPR do for the RHKPF?

Put quite simply, a full BPR initiative would enable the RHKPF to revolutionise the way in which it operates. It would enable the re-examination of the purposes of the organisation and a refocusing of all its activities on the fulfilment of those purposes.

I could guess that at present, probably like many another police force in the world, it is overly hierarchical, riddled with bureaucracy, perhaps a boring or unexciting place to work for some, maybe hidebound with tradition, and locked into purposeless and increasingly irrelevant activities. It is much easier to start a new activity than it is to stop an established one.

A key question ought perhaps to be:

How many RHKPF officers (employees) actually do any policing?

The answer cannot be guessed by an outsider, but if we look at the Bank of America & Italy example quoted at the outset (remember 91% reduction in down time, 50 new branches, no extra staff) being, like the RHKPF a service oriented organisation, the potential can be seen. What would be the effect on policing of reducing by 91% the amount of time a constable spends at the police station following an arrest, or other station based incident? How many more policemen could be on the streets if paperwork and support/discretionary activity could be reduced – even by 50% or 25%. The benefits could of course be used in two ways – increased policing, or a reduced overall force budget, either way the people and administration of Hong Kong may be considered to benefit. Ideally some compromise between the two possibilities could be worked out.

It must also be remembered that the Bank of America and Italy is a commercial organisation, co-existing with competitors with consequent impact on its cost and pricing structure. It is reasonable to assume therefore that it already had a relatively high degree of efficiency and effectiveness. The RHKPF has faced no such competition, although the budget has no doubt been limited, and could be reasonably expected to achieve at least a similar level of savings in some processes to those revealed by a bank, insurance company, or other service based organisation.

The opportunity exists for work and careers to be reinvented, for costs to be significantly reduced, and for processes to be redesigned such that they achieve the objectives of the organisation at minimum cost. Only those inside the organisation know how much can be achieved.

What is your contribution?

The User Group Chairmen, from the author's perspective, have both the right and the responsibility to ensure that RHKPF obtains maximum benefit from the FICS process. This can only be achieved through whole hearted co-operation with colleagues from Management Services and IT, and with the total support of the most Senior Members of the Force. A whole range of skills will need to be employed in this process, the easy ones are perhaps tact and diplomacy – understood by many

to be key attributes of a policeman – employ them to the full. These attributes will need to be supported by determination, by selling skills – aiming to persuade others to “buy into” the dream, and by an element of calculated risk taking – not every action can have a certain outcome. You will also need to employ both technical and consulting skills to ensure that full understanding of what is being done and that every aspect of the process has been revealed and examined. Half a job will not be adequate. If you need support in any of these areas you should not be afraid to ask for it – there is nothing worse in this situation than attempting to “muddle through”.

What difficulties will be faced?

“When you are up to your armpits in alligators, it’s easy to forget that the original objective was to drain the swamp!” (Anon)

Distraction and not answering the question are the classic tools of the politician, whether at the national or organisational level. Accidentally, or deliberately, it is easy to be driven away from the key topics and issues by the constant barrage of objections, possibilities and counter-proposals which will probably emerge from the exercise in hand. A major difficulty then is to retain a clear focus on what is to be achieved and not become lost in abstract or irrelevant debate.

The second difficulty most to be expected in any change management project, whether BPR or not is active or passive resistance, the latter being cited as “the most powerful force known to man!” As Machiavelli put it nearly 500 years ago:

“It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would profit by the new order, this lukewarmness arising partly from their fear of their adversaries who have the laws in their favour; and partly from the incredulity of mankind, who do not truly believe in anything new until they have had actual experience of it. Thus it arises that on every opportunity for attacking the reformer, his opponents do so with the zeal of partisans, the others only defend him half-heartedly, so that between them he runs in great danger.”

The particular task which you have been given will almost certainly demand the highest possible levels of determination to achieve the best result for the organisation. You must expect at times to be disagreeing with almost everybody and you must be prepared to disagree if you are not convinced that the proposal before you is the best one. Once you have given your support that too must be whole hearted. Fudging, half-truths and balanced opinions do not count – the exercise of professional judgement followed by commitment does!

Ownership must be accepted for the process allocated to you and you should aim on completion to be proud of what was achieved, not embarrassed to admit your connection. Finally, do not expect credit for what is achieved, if the job is done well everybody else will claim the brownie points, if it is done badly, that's down to you!

Remember: there is still a Flat Earth Society!

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