

1. Module Title: IMPROVING BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

Date of Approval: December 2011

Module Code 6LO500

No. of Credits: 20

Credit Level: 6

Pre-requisite: None

Co-requisite: None

Key Words Operations, Quality, Transformations, Outputs, Performance, Design, Planning, Control, Improvement, Project, Systems

Module Deliver

Mode: Blended / Face to Face

Module Description

Operations Strategy lies at the heart of how organisations manage their strategic intent in practice, and is the context within which managers make strategic decisions. Operations strategy is central, ubiquitous and vital to any organisations sustained success.

Improvements are core to the operations strategy of organisations, no matter how well they are managed. They drive initiatives to breach the gap between current and required performance of organisations to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage in the long-term.

The key components of the improvement cycle of an organisation will include:

- understanding how an organisation currently performs and what its overall strategy;
- identification and prioritisation areas of improvement;
- selection of the most appropriate improvement path, its planning and implementation;
- selection of the appropriate tools and techniques to facilitate improvement;
- reviewing the outcomes of improvement and evaluation of the progress made;
- formalisation of improvement initiatives in organisational practices, processes and systems.

Business improvement methodologies require development and understanding of the ways in which resources and business processes can be measured, before planning improvement projects through continuous improvement or radical change.

This module will allow students to develop an appreciation for continuous improvements efforts required by managers to ensure the success of operational and organisational strategies. Students will be introduced to a number of theoretical, methodological and practical approaches and techniques to improvement facilitation and implementation. Students will be introduced to the "cutting edge" improvement philosophy - Systems

Thinking - which often addresses problems of transformation, change and redesign in organisations. It provides important connections between systems thinking, the subject (organisation) and study of organisational change.

Module Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this module students will be able to:

To appreciate the contribution of the operations function within the formulation of business strategy

To analyse various business situations and recommend improvements using relevant approaches that meet the business needs

To apply business improvement concepts and theory to scenario's and plan an improvement project

Module Content

- What is strategy?
- The strategic role and objectives of operations
- The role of systems thinking
- Understanding business needs
- Identifying the need for change
- Continuous improvement v Radical change
- Quality Initiatives, ISO9001
- The prioritisation of improvements
- Review and application of improvement methods
- Project management and Risk

Module Learning and Teaching Methods

The module will be delivered through a combination of lectures, practical classes and computer laboratory based tutorials. The lectures will be used to explore the key themes shown in the indicative content, while the practical classes will be used to enable the students to apply the models and concepts in practice. The lab based tutorials are designed to enable students to explore and apply current technology to an improvement project.

The practical classes and lab work will provide the students with the opportunity to analyse a case study or a live business, suggest an improvement strategy as group or individual, and then go on to plan the implementation of the improvement. The development of the improvement strategy will form part of the formative assessment, which can be undertaken in the practical classes.

Guided independent study between the sessions will enable students to apply business improvement methodologies to the live or case study organisation in more depth, together with developing group working.

Lectures	12	1
Seminars	24 hours (12 X 2 hours)	1
Guided/Directed Study:	164 hours (nominal)	2
Total Hours	200	

Total Learning Hours in each category:

- a. Category 1: $12 + 24 = 36$ (18%)
- b. Category 2: 164 hours (82%)

Module Assessment

Mode:

Coursework 100%

Formative assessment will be provided within seminar sessions when opportunities for both knowledge and skills development will be provided, with tutor and peer feedback to support further learning and development

This will be a group presentation to give an overview and rationale for an improvement project. This will be assessed formatively and will not count towards the final grade.

CW1: 100%

A 2250 – 2750 word individual report and project plan incorporating the formative feedback from the above presentation, giving detail to the project and further application of methods and theory..

Reading List

Capon, C., (2009) *Understanding the Business Environment*, 3rd Edition, Financial Times, Harlow, Prentice Hall;

Barton, J., Emery, M., Flood, R. L., Selsky, J. W. and Wolstenholme, E. (2004) 'A Maturing Systems Thinking? Evidence From Three Perspectives' *Systemic Practice and Action Research* Vol.17, 1,3-36

Jackson, M.C. (2003) *Systems Thinking: Creative Holism for Managers*. Chichester. Wiley

Seddon, J. and Caulkin S. (2007) 'Systems thinking, lean production and action learning'. *Action Learning: Research and Practice*. Vol.4, No.1. April 2007, 9-24

Seddon, J. (2008) *Systems Thinking in the Public Sector: the Failure of the Reform Regime and a Manifesto for a Better Way*. Axminster: Triarchy Press

Slack, N., Chambers, S., Johnson, R., (2007), *Operations Management*, Fifth Edition, Harlow, Prentice Hall;

Slack, N., Chambers, S., Johnson, R., Betts, A., (2006) *Operations and Process Management: principles and practice for strategic impact*, Harlow, Prentice Hall;

Slack, N., Lewis M., (2008) *Operations Strategy*, Second Edition, Harlow, Prentice Hall.

JOURNALS

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