



Rapid Improvement and Standardization of Proposal Process at Major Technology Manufacturer

Summary

A global aviation organization needed a structured approach to analyze, standardize, and improve their proposal preparation process across 5 regions. The process covers 5 phases: strategy, technical modeling, financial modeling, approval, and contract creation. They specifically wanted to improve the CPQ (configure, price, quote) sub-processes within the end-to-end process. Scheer Americas was able to quickly respond by enabling their journey using their Value-driven Business Process Management methodology.

The end-to-end process model for proposal preparation had already been designed and was used as a starting point for the CPQ process modeling. The To-Be processes were created by referencing the processes currently being executed in the APAC (Asia Pacific) region. The other regions then worked together to improve the reference model and create detailed SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) and standard work documentation. Since the company is a technology manufacturer with complex engineered, made to order products, the solution had to simplify the complexity of the process.

Organization Background

The organization stands as a prominent global leader in the aerospace industry, specializing in advanced aircraft engines for both commercial and military applications. With over 100 years of experience in this industry, they have a wealth of knowledge and experience in the aerospace industry. The organization has adopted Lean methodology to continuously improve their processes. They are enriching their Lean culture by embracing BPM and the use of a process repository. Based in the US, they have successfully cultivated partnerships with renowned manufacturers worldwide, expanding their business horizons and amplifying their offerings.

With a robust workforce exceeding 48,000 employees, they operate across 130 countries, solidifying their international presence and ensuring efficient operations on a global scale. Notably, our project involved collaboration with talented team members hailing from diverse regions, including the Americas, APAC, Europe, Middle East, and China. Through this multinational collaboration, we fostered a rich exchange of ideas, resulting in innovative solutions that align with their commitment to excellence and industry leadership.

Business Challenge

The organization has been undergoing BPM initiatives throughout many of their divisions. The challenge that was presented to us involved streamlining and harmonizing the proposal preparation process so that all regions were executing the same process and maintained consistency throughout the organization. Standardization of work was lacking as well as clearly defined roles. To create To-Be models, first we had to model the As-Is process so that we could analyze the improvement opportunities and collect pain points from the regions. The regions agreed that APAC had the most streamlined process, so we were able to use this region's process as the As-Is reference model. The metric that had the highest priority for improvement was cycle time, therefore, we had to collect data on task completion time as well.

The Solution

To kickstart the process improvement initiative, we conducted interviews with the lead subject matter expert from the APAC team, who had gathered valuable data from their internal team. This data encompassed task completion details, pain points, system information, inputs and outputs, tasks, roles, and comprehensive SIPOC (supplier, input, process, output, customer) data. Utilizing this information, we proceeded to model the existing process, commonly referred to as the As-Is process.

In order to drive collaborative innovation, a dedicated process improvement workshop was organized, where the team was divided into groups. These groups engaged in fruitful discussions on enhancing their respective portions of the CPQ (Configure, Price, Quote) process. The workshop facilitator was important in these discussions so that the groups were focused on process improvements and not system overhauls, which may not necessarily improve the process in a meaningful way.

To accomplish these goals, subject matter experts, with diverse process and business backgrounds from across the globe, met and conducted a process improvement workshop. Their expertise in Lean practices bolstered a collaborative spirit in the workshop which led to substantial progress to improve the process. Improvement opportunities were catalogued regarding impact and feasibility. Many improvement opportunities were able to be implemented immediately while more complex, long-term improvements were scheduled as future projects.

Following extensive deliberation, each group presented their proposed solutions to the entire team, fostering consensus and determining the most optimal implementation approach. The team was able to test some pieces of the new process in real time which helped determine if the suggested improvements would be successful and reduce cycle time. Adjustments in the final To-Be process were then introduced based on the testing.

Additionally, the team invested effort in developing detailed SOPs and standard work documentation. These crucial documents were then integrated into the To-Be models, which served as the blueprint for process enhancements. The finalized To-Be models and accompanying documentation were securely stored in the process repository, ensuring accessibility and reference for future endeavors.

Results

A successful project achieved the following results:

- Regional variants were eliminated – all 5 regions had harmonized the CPQ processes and compliance of the operations.
- Cycle time was reduced by 50% by eliminating unnecessary tasks, streamlining administrative tasks, and implementing workarounds for bottlenecks created by system requirements that were redundant throughout the process.
- Detailed SOPs and standard work documentation linked within the process repository allows for the team to have all relevant information in one place.
- Roles were redefined in order to clarify scope of work across the process.
- The ability to conduct a high-level benefit analysis is now possible by using the To-Be models as a guide to evaluate cycle time, bottlenecks, and cost savings.

Do you have questions on these subjects, or would you like to talk with us about specific projects?

Simply send us an e-mail or give us a call!

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