Change Management – The E³ Framework for Improving the Service Delivery Levels in MPPP.
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Introduction

The citizen in the state of Penang demanded and succeeded in initiating change in the government in 2008, however this is only indeed the initiation. The new government of the day had much ahead of them in terms of tasks to do and the changes to be made. One key area of Change that had to be effectively managed is improving the delivery of government services to the people of Penang.

The new government of the day realised that the people of Penang have high expectations on the services that are provided by the government, its agencies and the local councils. Penangites are today experienced with the customer service levels and standards provided by the private sector and expect the new government to make similar efforts to improve the services delivered to the citizens.

In today's time of modern technology and capacity, citizens can become quickly frustrated with essential services that are provided in a cumbersome and tedious manner. Anyone these days can quickly become unsatisfied and discouraged when having to deal with government services for amenities, provisions and approvals that is built around systems catering to individual progams and services. The delays involved in getting services, whether by going to an office or calling on the telephone is critisized. Furthermore, getting information directly or via online service portals or websites can be too complicated.

Simply said, the people expect services to be delivered quickly and accurately.

One of the programs that have been initiated to achieve the improvement is the service deliveries is the Change Management program. The objective is essentially to effectively transform the Penang government service delivery system by building delivery standards around citizens' needs and enable more effective services.

This article aims to provide an overview of the Change Management program embarked, highlighing the outlines of the framework adopted and the approach as well as the methodology undertaken in the efforts to improve the delivery of services and to inculcate change within the government service delivery system.

Envision, Execute and Experience – E³ Framework

In order to carefully and successfully embark on the Change Management program, a pilot initiative was undertaken at the Penang Island Town Council (MPPP – Majlis Perbandaran Pulau Pinang).

The Change Management program in MPPP was driven by the recognition that the current model for government service delivery has not kept pace with community expectations around convenient access and quality of services and advances in technology. The legacy of the system that existed resulted in services that are often fragmented, inhibiting delivery standards from meeting the needs of the community and individuals, particularly those facing multiple disadvantages. Additionally a number of macro-challenges including developments in technology and a growing and ageing population also posed some challenges.

The Change Management is also driven by government's recongnition of modern service deliveries that trends towards greater integration and shared services infrastructure, to provide more efficient and less costly services.

The initiation of this program was through the establishment of a service delivery improvement framework called **Envision, Execute and Experience.** This framework was necessary to establish and anchor the midset of *change* being the only constant within the department that is seeking to improve the service delivery standards. It also drove the department to work with customers, stakeholders and external government agencies to develop a change that supports more efficient and effective service delivery for Penangites. The change management was to be guided by methodologies based best practices with a focus on how world class services can be adapted to the service delivery environment. It is imperative that the old culture has to be changed to ensure that people, that depend on government services being delivered, to be served properly, that all staff work to their full capacity and treat state resources with care and respect.

Envision, Execute and Experience – is a three-stage framework which will help a client company attain world-class operational excellence. E^3 framework is basically a process improvement project, whereby end objectives are set at the – the Envision stage; implement a plan to achieve them – the Execute stage; and ensure that the changes made within the organization as a result, stick and become part of the organizational DNA – the Experience stage.

Figure 1 - E^3 Framework

Therefore It is not just a once-only program. Changing a government department into a performance oriented organisation is a challenge and the transition for change requires perseverance. As management envisions its goals for public service, it will realise that a unified strategy and execution are vital prerequisites. The organisation then begins to experience its ability to meet objectives and critical client needs. Hence the E3 framework, as shown in Figure 1. above.

Deploying the E³ Framework

The E³ Framework was developed as a three stage approach, for public servants that manage and operate government departments committed to serving people and to find ways to improve the delivery of services. This approach essentially demands the public servants to be accountable for the quality of service provided. However, a public servant often unfortunately inherits service delivery tasks that are usually based on rules-bound approach which hinders the delivery of services to an approach that encourages innovation and is results driven.

In other words instead of looking for reasons why government cannot do something, they have to find better ways to deliver what people need. A key role has to be played by the managers in public service in creating an environment effective for the staff, in the way they interact with customers. To enable this they not only need to focus on motivating their staff, but equip themselves with the right tools to improve the way they work and implement the changes that improves the service deliveries. Herein lies the need to have a simple yet effective framework to drive and inculcate Change.

In deploying the E³ Framework, a methodology was adopted that as there was a need to phase out the implementation and deployment of Change Management. The methodology was divided into four stages and a project management office was established with the right levels of sponsorship to ensure that there is intergration and alignment within the department that is embracing Change. The overview of the deployment is shown in Figure 2 below.
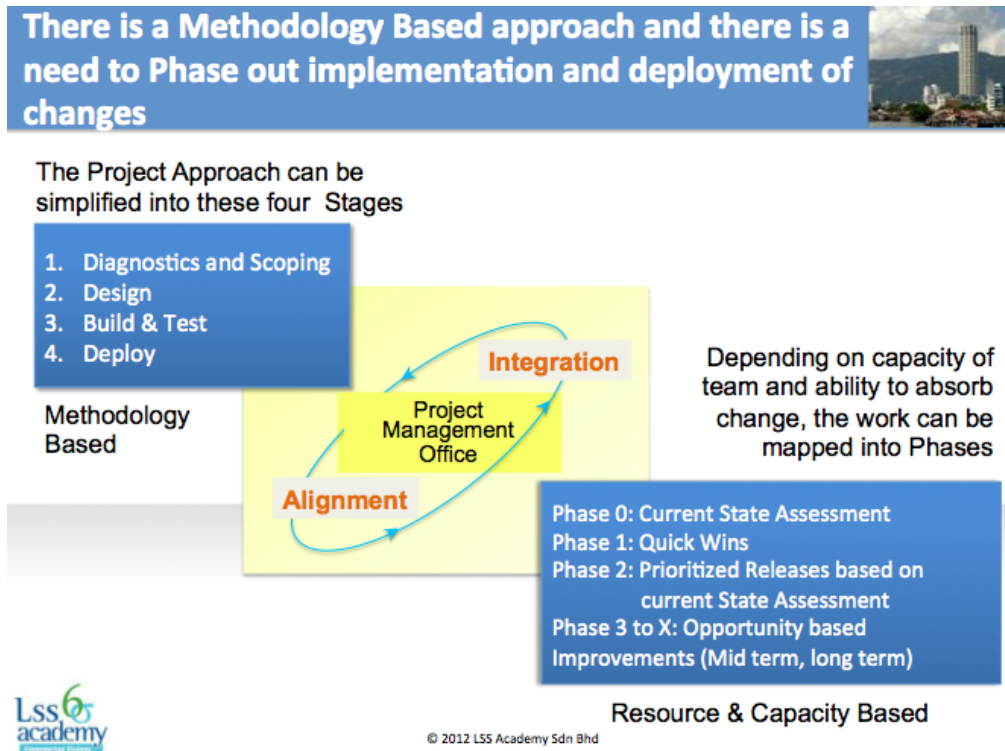

Figure 2 – Deploying The E3 Framework

Every phase of the deployment had a set of unique objectives and deliverables. The project management office and steering committee was the first to be established for the governance and implementation management. The steering committee was tasked to provide the strategic direction and coordination. The objective and deliverables for each phase were able to be tailored to suite the needs of the the department undergoing the Change Management program and their respective services that are being delivered to the public.

The Diagnostics and Scoping phase, the phase aligned to **"Envision"** stage within the E^3 Framework, comprised as series of activites that will establish a clear assessment of the current state. There are many potential barriers that could exist in the service providing department including inconsistent leadership motivation, Public Service Department rules and regulations, job security concerns, and a prevalence of undocumented processes. Additionally there are some scenarios unique to the public sector that pose an additional challenge, including skepticism about government, legislative controls, competing special interests, the election cycle, and term limits.

This phase focused on gathering operational set backs that affected the quality of the services delivered and the barries that creates a burning platform. To start off, a vigorous collection of key perfomance indicators (KPI) data supported by the gathering of Voice of the Business, Voice of the Employee and Voice of the Customer data was embarked on. This was then followed by a series of Change Management workshops that comprised of hands-on transformation simulation of a customer driven services, tools and methodology for improving the service delivery and an interactive brainstorming session to identify the burning platform that was hampering the quality and delivery levels of the the current services. The output of the brainstorming session and the KPI data were then further analysed to categorize the improvement opportunities and performance gaps. These were then classified into several improvement projects and then prioritized into implementation phases using a benefit and effort matrix tool. The implementation phases were identified based on quick wins, priorities based on current assessment and opportunities based on mid term and long term needs.
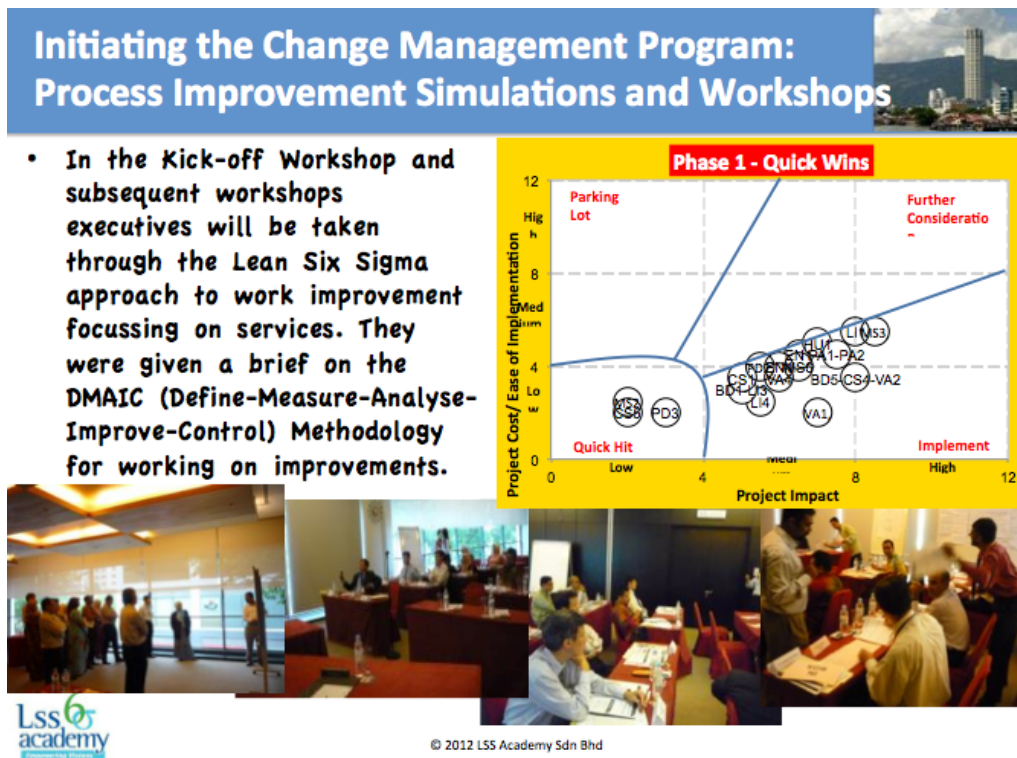

Figure 3 – Diagnostics and Scoping Phase

The subsequent phases of Change Management are Design, Build and Test and Deploy. The phases Design and Build and Test are phases aligned to the **"Execute"** stage and the Deploy phase is aligned to the **"Experience"** stage of the E^3 Framework.

The aim of the **"Execute"** stage is to address improvements and changes to the People, Process and Technology aspect of a government department. The focus is on the Transformation from "As-is" service levels to a "Future state" based on both Efficiency and Effectiveness (or in other words Productivity and Performance).

The activities within the **"Execute"** stage, divided into the Design and Build and Test phases, incorporates the best practices of continuous improvement tools, methodologies and management systems such as Lean Six Sigma and Toyota Production System, Lean Enterprise and Kaizen. Such approaches strives to enhance customer service leading to sustained organizational success and culture. A common factor of these tools and methodologies, popularly known the DMAIC process, was assimilated into the E^3 Framework.

The DMAIC (Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve and Control) methodology provides the means to improve the delivery of services using a disciplined and vigorous project-based approach. DMAIC is a proven methodology that brings numerous advantages when implemented properly and the main best practices that can be adopted within the government services sector includes embracing a constancy of purpose for continuous improvement based on a consistent underlying robust methodology.
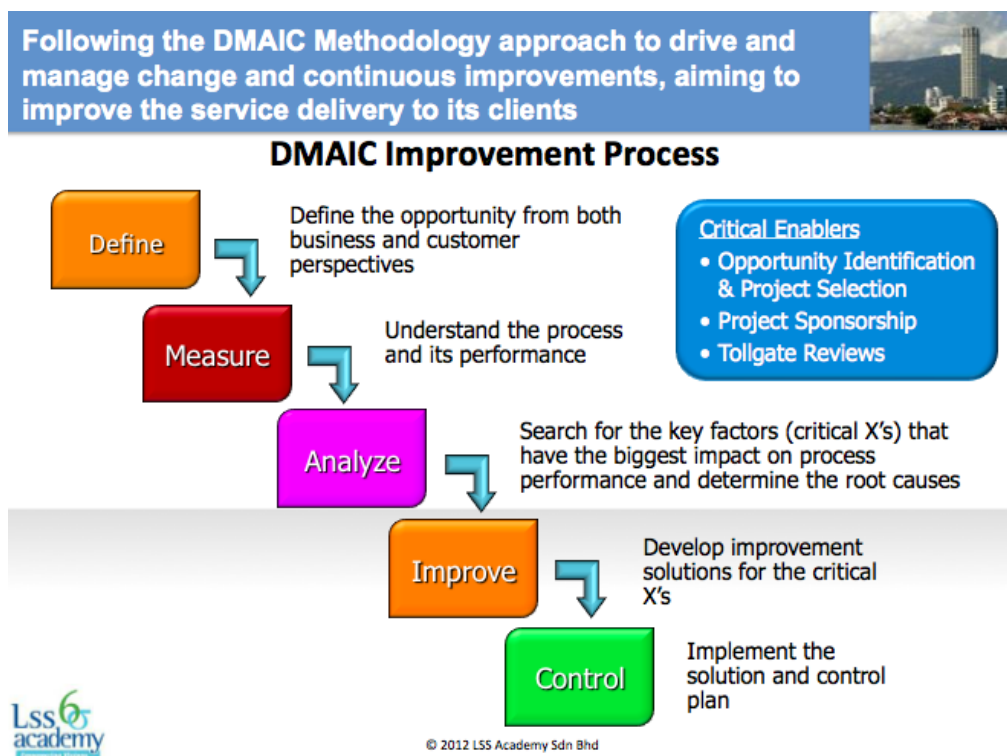

Figure 4 – The DMAIC Process

The success of the improvement project requires not only a focal point of expertise that is empowered to establish the DMAIC methodology as an executable program via training and practice but an active working level involvement and participation of departmental members (whose services are affected) with the skilled facilitators who are usually engaged externally. The DMAIC methodology can be described as a five step continuous improvement process as shown in Figure 4 above.

Some of the key challenges of the **"Execute"** stage includes the fear of change and job security. The way to address these challenges includes:-

(1) Building trust to remove fear - Employees will not lose their jobs as a consequence of an improvement project
(2) Communicate the vision to all stakeholders - The key leadership positions have been in place for lengthy periods of time
(3) Initiate long-term cultural change - Measuring the time to success in years rather than weeks or months

The final stage within the E^3 Framework is the **"Experience"** stage. The **"Experience"** stage focuses on Achieving Step-change in service delivery and creating as well as inculcating a Culture of Continuous Improvement, where the improvement of service deliveries are driven, lead and executed by the people that manage and operate the government department itself.

The key activity for the success in this **"Experience"** is the working relationship between the program's external facilitator and each department or operating unit. This working relationship is managed and monitored by an organization champion, and in the case for MPPP, the council secretary. The champion will serve as a useful communication link so that information from the project team is presented to employees, management and the public representatives such as the city councillors via a managed forum.

The knowledge developed by the project team will also serve as real experience in improving the service delivery levels, which includes the knowledge of using basic tools for improving the processes and quality of the services delivered. The practical knowledge of using these simple tools will enhance its acceptance among both managers and staff, creating a sense of mutual understanding and transparency. Subsequently a training program would be developed and deployed over a longer time period to function as a knowledge base of improving the quality levels of services delivered by the government. This knowledge base will enable public service employees experience firsthand the effect the tools can have on improving their work processes and therefore motivate them to take an active part in future projects. Other employees viewing project results will further understand how the tools are being applied and become less intimidated and often resulting in active participation for membership on subsequent project teams. Examples of the toolset that will be developed into the knowledgebase are shown in Figure 5 below.
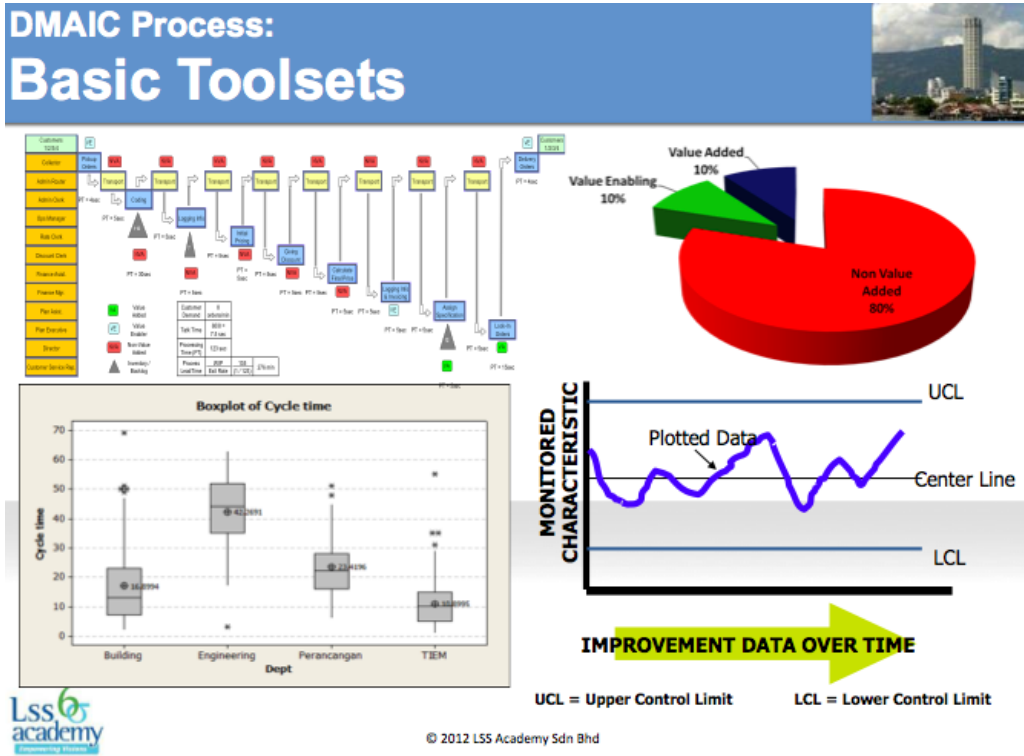
Figure 5 – DMAIC Process: Basic Toolset

E³ Framework in MPPP and the Lessons Learnt

The pilot Change Management deployment in MPPP successfully adopted the E³ Framework, however this was only achieved after overcoming several barriers as highlighted in this article. For MPPP, the opportunities for Change Management are great, but only if the obstacles to implementation are well understood. The Leadership and employees at all levels must participate, and importantly the leaders need to appreciate that each employee needs to personally benefit from the Change Management program.

What was clear in the effort to improve the quality and delivery levels of services in MPPP was the need for a clear and simple framework and implemention methodology. The E³ Framework essentially addressing the strategy and direction from the leadership in terms of "what needs to be done" and the DMAIC methodology addressing the implementation in terms of "how will it be done".

Improving of the quality and standards of the service delivery levels in MPPP requires tremendous management flexibility within all departments and functions. The E³ Framework and DMAIC methodology enables this flexibility and adaptibility with its simple and vigorous structure and process. However, the foundation for success is support and the support needs to originate and be fostered at the highest levels. That is, the organization as a whole must be committed to the infrastructural and cultural transformations that are needed for the Change Management.

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