

Developing Good Change Ideas from As-Is and To-Be Analysis

Simon Puryer, Managing Director



If you're looking to change your current operating model or processes, it can be easy to consider the As-Is process – documenting what you have today – as a waste of time.

In this next Expert Series article, we look at how going through your current processes before you dispose of them is the fastest way to identify what causes your current pain points. We also look at why what works today will save you so much time in your To Be design. Take the blindfold off and make sure you don't throw a great cake in the bin – just throw away the wrapper!

Most businesses have less processes than they think

As-Is analysis is used widely in business transformation programmes. It's great for identifying what processes really exist within your business. Most companies think they have 20 – 30 processes and a much larger range of tasks. In reality, they probably only have 10 processes, but they are broader end-to-end processes (e.g. onboarding a customer, receiving an order, forecasting and planning). When you start tweaking processes you are usually involving multiple areas, which means you can't just tighten up one area – you have to do it holistically.

People don't always know they're a "process owner"

Once you have identified your cross-functional processes, you need to get cross functional teams together. For quite a few people this is a real *Aha!* moment because they've never met each other. We regularly hear people say "you send me this stuff every week and I had no idea who you were!" You get the right people in a room who, unbeknown to them, currently own the As-Is process. Once you have them there, you need to introduce them to the scope and focus of your workshop. Sometimes it's about tightening what you already have, sometimes it's about understanding how to get to a completely new process – e.g. if a system is replacing several disparate systems you have the chance to do something very different.

Senior Managers should set the What, not the How

When you ask a business what they want to do they often find it difficult to answer. Most people will tell you "I just want it to work better." And if you ask them in what way, they will often tell you how they want it to work instead, rather than what they want to achieve.

We use Design Principles to help senior managers articulate what they are trying to achieve. When Elon Musk was developing the Tesla, his design principles would have been something like "I want to design an electric car. I don't want to turn a traditional engine-powered car into an electric car. I want a car that is super cool with four seats." He stated what he wanted and let the "geeks" figure out how that could be achieved. Using design principles in your conversations with senior stakeholders is really important. If they want a single system to do what 6 teams are currently doing differently, then you need to get to that. Then you can start to analyse what you have already and where you can pull from.

Don't lose sight of what you already have

You don't always have to reinvent the wheel or spend hours in R&D. Sometimes people lose sight of the fact that a lot of stuff you have already works well. Don't redesign for the sake of it. As-Is analysis will identify both the good and the bad. You're capturing what is important (the Design Principles for the future) and what doesn't work. You may feel happy with your day-to-day habits, but if you've hired someone like i-Realise to help you change, then those habits are not achieving what you need.

Root-causing could fix 50 little issues at once

Why? is a powerful question, especially if you ask it repeatedly; keep going with your "*why's*" until you get to a root cause. Niggles, pains and pinch points are noise. They're the issues that you need to break into root causes. Root causes tend to create multiple issues that might, at first, seem disconnected.

Once you have a root cause and decide how to fix it with a change idea, you suddenly fix 50 issues. Tiny little issues block up the blood stream, but don't create the need for change on their own. When grouped together issues are critical, but individually people don't want to fix them – so classifying them by root cause gives them both weight and credibility.

Change ideas must have features and benefits

The solution to a root cause issue is a change idea. It's important that those ideas are specific, so you can really evaluate if they will work, and prioritise the best ideas. To do that, you need to list the features and benefits of your idea. With your cross-functional team you need to take each idea, expand on it first with the features to draw out the detail. If you can, talk to clients and ask them what they would like to see.

You then need to make sure each feature is necessary by listing its benefit back to the business. Essentially, you're validating it with multiple stakeholders and giving your operators the opportunity to stake their claim on the future To-Be design. You also need to validate against your design principles – change ideas are the *how* to the design principle's *what*, so they need to align.

Change ideas, with their clear features and benefits, are also a useful tool for selling your solution back to the organisation, because they link more easily back to the real drivers for change.

Be assertive; **will**, not **hope**, makes change happen

It's so easy – especially in a cautious, regulated business world – to make statements about what you wish, prefer or hope your change will achieve. Using assertive statement such as "*we will*" or "*there will be*" allows you to build more concrete change ideas and new processes because there is less room for ambiguity. You can more easily validate whether a new feature or process will achieve your goal, and if it won't, change tack before it's too late.

As-Is and To-Be are interdependent

Your change ideas will build into your new *To-Be* processes. It's vital as you're doing this that you fix all the things people were complaining about at the start. Keep validating that the new design is fixing the root causes, meeting the design principles and not introducing new varieties of the same problem you started with. Conceptual Flow Diagrams will help you show what you are planning and how multiple change ideas will achieve the goals of your transformation, end-to-end.

Making change happen, together

Delivering change and transformation success through people, process and technology.

Call us now on **+44 (0)20 3008 6358** or email info@i-realise.co.uk to find out more about how we can support all elements of your transformation programme.

i-Realise

6-9 The Square, Stockley Park,
Uxbridge,
UB11 1FW

Tel +44 (0)20 3008 6358
Email info@i-realise.co.uk
Web www.i-realise.co.uk



© i-Realise Ltd. 2021 Ideas, solutions and procedures from this document are the intellectual property of i-Realise Ltd. and thus protected by copyright. They may not be reproduced, transmitted to third parties or used in any form for commercial purposes without the express permission of i-Realise. v.05/10/21