

# processfix

Autumn newsletter 2019

## Welcome

In this Jaguar Land Rover edition of the Processfix newsletter, we first hear from Karen Stables, Head of Portfolio Management about how she has been working with her team to improve processes so that products can get to market quicker.

We then hear from two other contributors about how Processfix has enabled their process improvements, demonstrating the range of challenges that all kinds of organisations face today.

Dean Surtees, Academic Registrar at the UK's only conservatoire of music and contemporary dance, Trinity Laban, shares with us how, as a relatively small niche institution, one of the challenges in the admissions process remains helping many of those who make decisions to understand the whole, not only their part, of the process.

And finally we hear from John Phillips, Head of Recruitment at University College London (UCL), who gives us an insight into his recent review: to establish whether it was the processes that needed to improve, or the overall recruitment strategy, with the right processes to follow.

## NEWSFLASH!

**Paris, France – October 2019**  
Johnson & Johnson launch new clinical research study process



## Jaguar Land Rover empower their people to drive change

Karen Stables is Head of Portfolio Management Office at Jaguar Land Rover. After six weeks in her role, Karen was involved in a Processfix workshop to address Project Foundation – a process that had been perceived quite negatively as onerous and slow and was felt to involve a lot of waste.



“There are lots of people involved with gaining approval to start a project at Jaguar Land Rover. When I started, Project Foundation had already been chosen as a process that needed review because it was negatively affecting not just the Project Managers involved, but many other groups such as Product Managers, service delivery and procurement.”

Karen went on to explain how the wide spectrum of individuals involved in the Processfix workshop was essential: “When you have something that crosses so many different functions and groups it can be quite difficult; everyone thinks that they can only control their part. But when you get everyone together in a room, they start to think differently; seeing the whole process as ‘ours’ rather than part of it as ‘mine’.

Everyone who was participating, delivering or making decisions was represented; 16 people in total, with varying degrees of experience in the company ranging from 2 months to 30 years! At the outset there was

**“It was a process that had evolved with all the best intentions”**

a spread of feelings, from optimism through to cynicism; probably a normal distribution of attitudes. But all the people who were there wanted to try and make things better. It was a process that had evolved with all the best intentions. After day one, which involved

the simulation of an alternative process, it started to sink in with people that maybe we would find things in our own process that were just a rubber stamp, or perhaps a transport waste. The thought surfaced that just being very busy did not necessarily mean you were productive.

The key turning point for us was realising that the process framework was essentially iterative, repeating itself at each of the four gates that a new project needs to go through. We realised that we could simply represent one part of the process at one gate, then repeat, rather than redo, at the other gates.

When we base-lined the process, the lead-time between the beginning of the foundation stage to the end of the select phase was 211 days. After 6 months, this had been reduced to 176 days; after 12 months it was down to 141 days. So far we have seen a 35% improvement in turnaround time and it is still trending down.”

All this has been achieved within a challenging external environment that has seen other delays added to the process, such as GDPR compliance and increased financial scrutiny. And when Karen explained that there are more than 400 projects running at one time, with each Project Manager responsible for anything between three to five projects, the real value of this can be understood.

Karen went on to say that not only has there been a tangible improvement in metrics, she has

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## Developing processes at the UK's only conservatoire of music and contemporary dance

Dean Surtees is Academic Registrar at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, where exciting opportunities for collaboration between musicians, composers, dancers and choreographers are created. The specialties of this unique institution include: contemporary dance, music, dance science, research, professional development and musical theatre.



Dean explained that the conservatoire was formed when two long established institutions came together in 2005. His own background in higher education includes time as Academic Registrar at another well-established institution, St George's, University of London, and we asked him how different the process challenges are at Trinity Laban. "I think because we audition all of our students, the admissions process tends to fit around the art form more than in a traditional, larger university, where offers are often made without meeting a student. There are anomalies in certain areas; for example, for one instrument there is a specific test that isn't required for other instruments. But other than that,

the actual processes around our admissions are fairly standard. The auditions part of the process works pretty well; we are focusing on recruitment and admissions and that is why we ran the Processfix workshop.

The workshop was useful for getting twelve people into the room and demonstrating the end-to-end process. Our whole central admissions team took part, plus representation from our recruitment team and senior academics from both the music and the dance faculties. This was of great value as although we are quite a small niche institution, each application takes quite a lot of time. One person in the admissions team might see the whole application through from

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**"those making the decisions will only see a small part of the whole process"**

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start to finish, but those making the decisions will only see a small part of the whole process. As a result of the workshop we now all have a greater appreciation of what it looks like from recruitment to admission: what steps are involved and where bottlenecks become apparent. Subsequently there

is an increased willingness to engage with the process of making the process itself run more smoothly."

Dean went on to tell us that Trinity Laban are implementing a new student record system over the next year and one of the things they wanted to do is to make a lot of the existing processes electronic: "Our current system is not fit for purpose. There is a lot more that we can do electronically and we will be looking at progressing those elements. For example, capturing the audition panel results electronically rather than on paper. We are also looking at a new process to turnaround the overseas auditions more quickly; these are often recorded, then reviewed by staff in London. And overall, we want the people who are making decisions to do so more quickly; to focus on the deadlines."

One of the next areas Trinity Laban is keen to focus on is around another unique feature of this institution: the unusual staffing structure. "A lot of our staff are professional musicians and dancers who are paid on an hourly basis for their individual specialism. This leads to quite an intensive payroll workload."

Dean went on to comment that the Processfix workshop had been a good team building exercise. "I had been thinking for a number of months about looking at our whole registry processes. Whilst we could perhaps have done it ourselves, it most likely would have been put off again and again. By bringing in Processfix, we got everyone involved together. It was really useful to actually see people out of their normal work setting and to get the chance to discuss how things were really working, or not!"

*If you would like more information about any of the above, please contact Dean by email: [d.surtees@trinitylaban.ac.uk](mailto:d.surtees@trinitylaban.ac.uk).*

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also observed some intangible benefits: "People have told me that they can now see the value in project governance, rather than viewing it as something that is slowing them down. They can feel the difference in the framework and the underlying processes; people are finding it easy to navigate and use.

Where I saw a big mind-set shift was when those involved with the process felt empowered to change it. Because it was a framework across many

groups, it was hard for anyone to get hold of and improve it."

Jules Cross from Processfix commented at the follow up meeting that: "The most profound impact I noticed today was that voiced by your Product Managers. Rather than perceiving the

process as a demoralising sequence of form filling and review, they now feel that it adds value."

We asked Karen what is next for the Portfolio Management Office. "The culture and mind-set that we have taken from this is that so long as you

are not increasing risk to the business, change should help you to go as fast as possible. There are so many projects and products that require technology that it's difficult to say what will happen to the volume of work in the next few years. However, by improving our processes, more products should move faster to market. As long as we can do this without increasing risk, we're making a great contribution to saving money and delivering early."

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**"So far we have seen a 35% improvement in turnaround time"**

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# In the spotlight: John Phillips, Head of Recruitment, UCL



John joined UCL in October 2018 in a new role as Head of Recruitment. His focus is on the strategic element of recruitment, including the systems and resourcing approach, and how they are designed to meet the objective of attracting, recruiting and retaining world class talent in line with the overriding strategy of UCL 2034.

## Where had you been working prior to taking up your role at UCL?

I came to UCL with no higher education experience; instead bringing my experience of recruitment from the previous four years at the Royal Mail. That move from private sector to higher education does have a link with one of the core recruitment challenges at UCL. The higher education sector is, rightly or wrongly, perceived as a poor payer compared to the private sector. There is also the perception that in professional services we move more slowly, and the opportunities for growth are less apparent.

My experience at Royal Mail mirrors that perception albeit for different reasons: behind the red post boxes and the postmen out on the road, there is a huge company with massive professional service functions, yet we still had to go through the process of raising

awareness that those 10,000 strong professional service teams were at the cutting edge of finance, technology and human resources.

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**“we needed to ensure that if we were to invest in a new system we would not simply replicate poor process”**

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At UCL we will be investing significant efforts into our employer value proposition. From the academic point of view, we are in the top ten universities worldwide; but how do we make ourselves an employer of choice in professional services?

## What has been the first major project in your new role?

When I arrived at UCL, the move to a new IT system had already been agreed and was out to tender. As someone looking at the project through a fresh pair

of eyes we needed to ensure that if we were to invest in a new system we would not simply replicate poor process. Instead, we would

take this opportunity to look at and improve the end-to-end recruitment process. Shortly after starting, I attended a Processfix workshop led by Kate Faxen, our Head of Employee Experience, and decided that our challenge could also benefit from the opportunity the Processfix workshop gives of getting key stakeholders together, and to take the work we had done already, tighten it up and make it even better.

There are around one hundred different departments at UCL,

all with decentralised recruiting functions. It would be impossible to engage with them all, but we had representation from two or three, who came on the journey with us and have become advocates for the changes proposed. We identified that much of what was called the recruitment process was actually not really part of recruitment. For example, there was a financial process involved to approve a vacancy, which we are reviewing and seeking to remove; introducing elements of trust instead. We also saw many examples of best practice and identified some areas where we could standardise activities from the centre, which would reduce the administrators' burden.

## What do you predict will be the most significant challenges in staff recruitment over the next five years?

As well as the need to become an employer of choice, not only in academic but also in professional services, the challenges in the labour market overall will be greater in the next five years; this is not all down to Brexit, or the uncertainty we have been living with around that.

We are in a labour market that, from an employer's point of view, is the most difficult since the 1970's. With low levels of unemployment, we exist in a very candidate driven market and that is driving the need at UCL for a professionalised recruitment function with strategic oversight.

We are also aware that the automation of services will have a huge effect, although we are seeing a bit of a backlash against AI in, as a key example, the banking services sector. People do still want human interaction. But within the next two to four years, AI in recruitment has the potential to revolutionise the way we recruit, especially in terms of profiling, not just at UCL, but industry wide. That will be one of the most significant challenges: how we as recruiters and candidates will meet the future of AI.

*If you would like more information about any of the above, please contact John by email: [j.phillips@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:j.phillips@ucl.ac.uk).*

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## About us

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Organisations rely on processes to get things done. Often these simply evolve over time and become inefficient ways of working. Processfix bring powerful, proven and behaviour-changing techniques to bear in a professionally facilitated environment.

We focus on engaging your teams in their own improvement, empowering them to re-evaluate the way they do things and to develop new and improved ways of working that transform performance and deliver immediate results.

Whether you require Rapid Improvement Workshop facilitation, training, project leadership or an organisational wide process improvement programme. Processfix specialise in facilitating your team, delivering immediate benefits and instilling continuous improvement across your organisation.

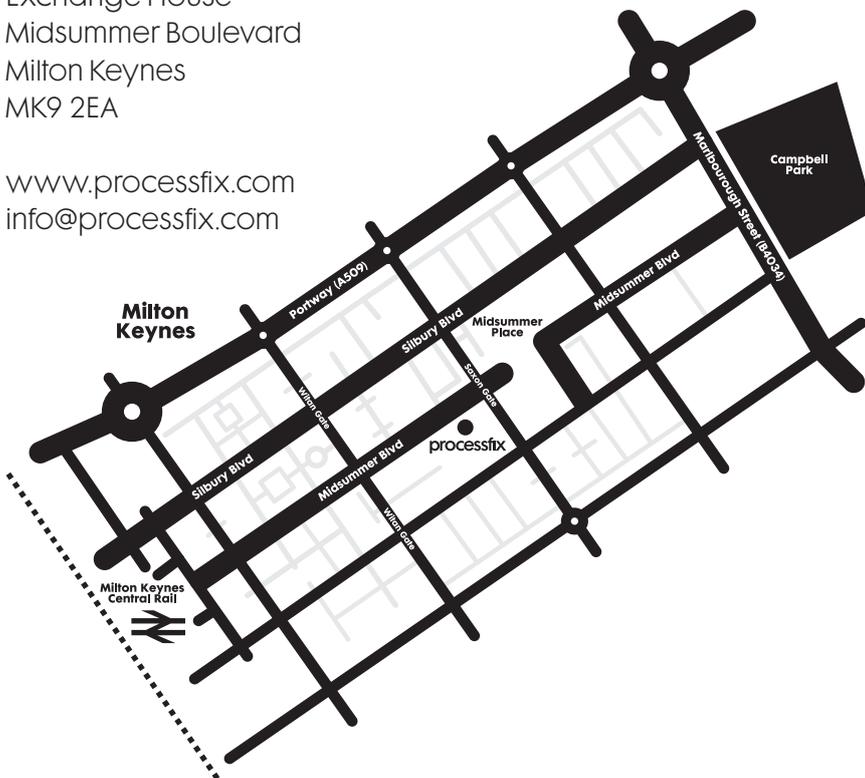
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## If you would like to find out how Processfix can benefit your organisation, please contact us at:

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Processfix Limited  
Exchange House  
Midsummer Boulevard  
Milton Keynes  
MK9 2EA

[www.processfix.com](http://www.processfix.com)  
[info@processfix.com](mailto:info@processfix.com)



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## And Finally...

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Processfix are working with the national charity Crisis to help more people leave homelessness behind



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Processfix masterclass at  
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**Next masterclass**  
**27th February 2020**  
**Price £495 per person**  
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**T +44 (0) 1908 255 993**  
**F +44 (0) 1908 255 700**

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