

## Welcome

Long term success in operational excellence is what we are all aiming for. How we get there varies from organisation to organisation, but there are some elements which are consistently shown to contribute greatly to that success. The exchange of information, the identification of the right opportunity to make a difference, the understanding of your organisation's culture and how to work within this, are all part of your journey to success.

In this quarter's newsletter we report on the latest Processfix networking meeting that was hosted by the Operational Excellence Team at the University of Southampton. Also, we discuss with Tania Olsson, Learning Resources Manager at the London College of Communication, how all of the libraries across the University of the Arts London have worked together to improve their overdue book retrieval process. And our spotlight falls on Elaine Prosser, of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, who has been with the organisation since its launch in 2001; she shares with us her insight into the progress they've made toward operational excellence over the past 14 years.

If you would like to find out more from any of our contributors in this or previous newsletters, please contact Processfix for an introduction.

## NEWSFLASH!

**London, UK – March 2015**  
King's College London launch institutional Operational Excellence programme



## Making the most of the opportunity for change



Libraries, by nature, are usually organised places, but often a lot of what goes on within them stems from historical processes and is based upon what is feasible within an existing system. So when the opportunity to review processes arose prior to the implementation of a new Library Management System (LMS) across the University of the Arts London, the Senior Library Team identified their overdue book retrieval process as a key project.

We spoke to Tania Olsson, who took on the role of Improvement Champion. Tania is the Learning Resources Manager at the London College of Communication and part of the Senior Management Team for all of the libraries across the university including Camberwell College of Arts, Chelsea College of Arts, Central St Martins, London College of Fashion, Wimbledon College of Arts and London College of Communication.

"As part of a management training day, we drew up a number of possible projects to work on with Processfix. The overdue retrieval process was selected as it definitely needed review and involved a cross section of staff working in the libraries, in the systems office and in our credit control office.

To put things into context, this involved six libraries plus the

Library Services Resources and Systems Team (R&S) and the central Credit Control Team; altogether eight discrete teams on six sites. And because of this geographical separation, the teams don't often get the opportunity to come together, as we did at the workshop."

Tania went on to explain that the overdue retrieval process had typically been looking at

leavers and involved chasing them for the overdue item or fine. However, the preferred outcome was to retrieve items from current students, according to the new Office of Fair Trading guidelines. Communication with students had been via a combination of email and letters, which was causing problems with, for example, wrong postal addresses.

**"it was really useful for the team on the ground to see exactly what the current status was."**

"At the workshop, it was really useful for the team on the ground to see exactly what the current status was. Using run charts, it was possible to see a rising trend in lost items from 2011 to 2014, yet a falling trend in fines claimed over the same period. We needed to make a change and worked through several exercises with Processfix. Everybody had a voice, was engaged and there was heated discussion at various points. But we defined our objective: to implement a single library services overdue retrieval process to reduce 6 week overdue items by 33% by September 2015.

We developed our new process and implementation plan with clear responsibilities at the workshop and were ready to start the new process as planned in September 2014. As one participant commented: "everyone owns the process because they were part of it. We had the opportunity at the workshop to speak up, that was our responsibility".

We worked with our colleagues from R&S to make sure that we could achieve what we wanted

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# Operational Excellence Network

Networking is often defined as: the interaction with others to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts. The recent Processfix networking event, hosted by the Operational Excellence Team at the University of Southampton, achieved this and more.



Most of us accept networking as an increasingly important part of our professional development, but may have different approaches to it. Some find networking an intuitive or enjoyable activity, others think of it as an uncomfortable and unnatural situation best avoided!

The recent Processfix networking event demonstrated how any barriers to successful networking can gently be nudged aside, by creating a relaxed and informal environment that all were able to enjoy and engage with.

Jenny Hocking's skills as a facilitator came to the fore with an icebreaker activity that led us to discover individuals who had: swum the Thames, met the Queen, been an extra in the film 'Willi', competed in the British Sailing Team and one who regularly puts up horror movie stars in their own home! The group also had a global aspect, including people who had lived in New Zealand, Norway, the Netherlands and Zanzibar.

Following this, the group set any networking nerves aside and focused on the presentations and discussions around process improvements that are ongoing

in the Higher Education arena. Mary Hurst, Operational Excellence Programme Manager from Southampton University shared the experience of her team in their drive to "deliver excellent services that enable students and staff to excel and innovate". Initiated in 2012, approval and a budget for new staff and a full Operational Excellence (OE) in-house team have been in place since June 2014.

## "we all face similar process issues, albeit in different contexts"

Following questions from the group, Mary outlined the factors that she believes have been key to their success: advice from their Processfix Roadmap, flexibility of approach, a clear definition of roles and expectations, governance and good relationships with other professional service providers. Other questions addressed the

need to prioritise projects: how did the team know they were focused on the right areas? Mary explained that at Southampton, they had asked all their key stakeholders what their top three areas for resolution would be if they had a free choice. This has enabled the OE Team to prioritise and also to be clear with their customers on what they are able to contribute.

Next, Katherine Bock from Birkbeck, David Giles from UEA and Tammi Sinha from Winchester University, shared their recent experiences and thoughts on OE. What was reassuring for the group was the fact that we all face similar process issues, albeit in different contexts and during the lunch break, everyone was able to find someone who could contribute ideas or experience to their own situation and challenges.

The Guest Speaker at the event was Stuart Chambers, former Manufacturing Production Manager and Principal Teaching Fellow at Warwick Business School. After lunch, Stuart opened his interactive session asking: "Where are you on your journey to OE"? There was a wide range of responses and this generated discussion around how you might

define the endpoint. Things are always changing, perhaps there is never going to be an endpoint on the journey to Operational Excellence! Stuart then gave an entertaining presentation entitled: 'The Ions of Continuous Improvement'. We won't give away his presentation secrets here, suffice to say that he kept the group engaged with his imaginative use of English and the anecdotes he shared to emphasise his points.

The final session was a discussion led by Frank Wright, Southampton's Lead OE Facilitator. Issues around what makes a good or bad workshop were discussed, including the importance of creating the right space, both physically (venue and time) and emotionally (ice-breakers and willingness to participate).

Jenny then bought the meeting to a close. Thank you to Southampton University for hosting the event and to all those who were able to attend.

*If you would like to become part of the Processfix Operational Excellence Network, please email jenny.hocking@processfix.com.*



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## "We had the opportunity at the workshop to speak up, that was our responsibility"

to do technically with the current management system and then drew up training instructions so

that the local library teams knew what to do. After November, when we were able to see items start to come in, we made a few tweaks: adding in a couple of things in terms of circulation and to the weekly reports for librarians and for credit control. The transfer of the overdue item from the library to credit control is now automated and is standardised and straightforward."

It was also important to develop the communication with students so that they are absolutely clear on where things stand. "We've refined the text of our student communication and it is all done by email now. It is University policy

that students check their emails, so they really have no excuse! Our wording now informs the students very clearly what steps will be taken next if the overdue item is not returned and the last email from the library is very clear that the next stage will be to pass their case onto credit control." The team held a review meeting

## "recoveries by Credit Control have greatly increased"

at the beginning of March 2015, at which they were able to share with colleagues how things have been going. There had been a number of issues with making the new process work using the current aged LMS, with reports still needing to be generated manually. But recoveries by Credit Control have greatly increased: in February 2015 it amounted to £14,508 in the value of returned books, more or less the same amount that they collected in the whole 2013/14 year! With the new LMS due to be in place at the end of August 2015, our new retrieval process work is feeding directly into the ongoing development of the new system.

# In the spotlight: Elaine Prosser, Manager of Continuous Improvement and Process Architecture at the Financial Services Compensation Scheme

Elaine Prosser was present at the inception of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) in 2001 and over the past 14 years has seen its processes change and mature considerably, improving their capability to deliver a valued service to their clients.

In this quarter's spotlight, Elaine shares with us how the FSCS have made massive inroads not only into re-engineering their processes, but also developing their culture to appreciate how good processes can give people more control over their day-to-day work.

taken on board the proactive side of things, resulting in them feeling more in control. Perhaps best described as "people working off the front foot": using data to help them identify solutions to issues, rather than simply searching for reasons for those issues.

We've also recognised that not only do we have external clients, we also have internal customers. To support our internal customers we put together a process operating model and started to develop the concept of process ownership. This has involved speaking to all the departments, asking what they do, what

ownership was unheard of! We've made vast progress, with more than 200 lower level processes now owned end-to-end by 60 people. Currently we're getting into the detail of the core processes: managed claims. This is being driven by our change programme, which is developing an end-to-end claims process called Connect. When it came together, the FSCS took on a variety of legacy systems from different sources and this has been a handicap to consistency in the past. Now, the Connect programme is enabling us to deliver consistency across the claims process. It will also support us by showing whether a process is in control



## How did you reach your role today?

Prior to working at the FSCS, I'd been at the Independent Insurance Company; I moved to the FSCS to become a Senior Claims Officer in their insurance division, working on this company's failure. I then moved over to the deposits team, working on credit union and banking failures and following the 2010 banking crisis, headed up a team working on one of the failed banks.

Following this, I worked on a re-engineering team for a PPI default, which we re-engineered down from six months to 90 days. That led to the role of Business Process Architect and on to the role I'm in today: Manager of Continuous Improvement and Process Architecture.

## What are the most significant changes you've seen in your work since the FSCS came into being?

The thing that has had the most impact on enabling the role I have today has been a big cultural piece. Over the years, we have shown how process data can help and people have

their outputs are and who their external customers are. It has been a really valuable exercise, as it became clear that some processes simply weren't recognised as such.

Linking to other departments to solve issues was sometimes seen as a ludicrous idea and the concept of end-to-end

and what its true capabilities are; thereby giving us a better understanding about costs and how risks are being managed.

## What's next at the FSCS?

Going paperless! That's going to be a big challenge, but the benefits of an electronic system are huge. You can tag your oldest piece of work and tag your priority pieces of work; it's a great way of organising your time and helping you to be more efficient. I know how effective it can be having worked in a paperless office way back in 1999, so I'm really looking forward to helping the FSCS meet this new goal.

*If you would like to chat with Elaine about her experience of continuous improvement at the FSCS, please contact her on [Elaine.Prosser@fscs.org.uk](mailto:Elaine.Prosser@fscs.org.uk)*

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## About us

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.

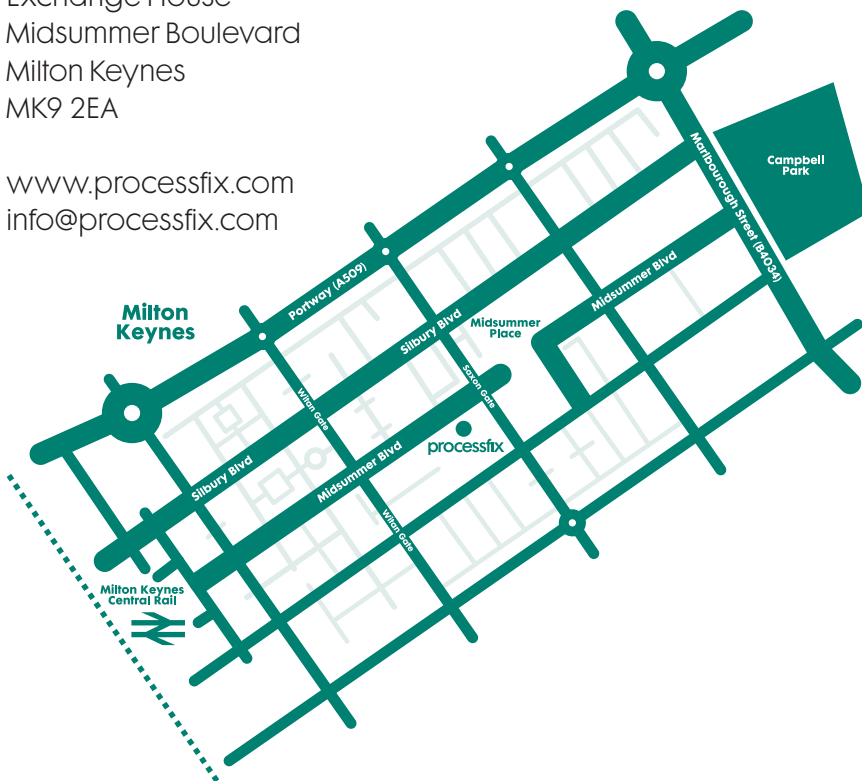
We focus on engaging your teams in their own improvement, empowering them to re-evaluate the way they do things and to develop new and improved ways of working that transform performance and deliver immediate results.

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.

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

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## And Finally...

This September Processfix Managing Director Jules Cross will be cycling 800 miles from Paris to Nice, helping to raise £100,000 for Willen Hospice. Please support this worthy cause at [www.rideforwillen.co.uk](http://www.rideforwillen.co.uk)



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