

Welcome

Technology is all around us now, so much so that psychologists the world over are studying its effects, both negative and positive, on today's children and also examining why modern mobile technology, from social networking apps to games and email, are so compelling to today's adults. Patterns of behaviour are being established which may be detrimental to our well-being in the future. But in the workplace, technology has a massive role; the challenge is to use it effectively.

In this edition of the Processfix newsletter, we hear first from David Anderson, Finance Director of Hakkasan Limited, about how his organisation has used simple technology to enhance their recruitment process. We also hear from Steve Clark, Director of Business Performance Improvement at the Open University, who shared with us that even when your student offer is technology based, the route to operational excellence does not start with an IT solution, rather it is with the people and processes.

Finally, in our spotlight this edition, Christina Edgar, Deputy Director of Student Services and Head of Student Recruitment and Admissions at the University of Sheffield, informs us of her experience as a trained Processfix facilitator.

NEWSFLASH!

Singapore — February 2017

Processfix fixit® simulation selected for PhD research into action-learning



Winning the talent war in the London restaurant business

David Anderson is Finance Director of Hakkasan Limited, operating in a sector where there is significant challenge in both the recruitment and retention of staff: "There is effectively full employment in our sector in London. That presents a challenge when recruiting."

The group recently undertook a Processfix workshop to kick-start their ambition to make the recruitment process more efficient.



"we have used simple technology"

David started by explaining that this key operational issue, not unique in the sector, derives from the fact that there is traditionally a high rate of staff turnover and quite a fluid workforce. This, combined with full employment, means that the war for talent is very active.

"My assumption was that perhaps we hadn't been doing our recruitment as efficiently as we could. I felt that processes had probably built up over time and become lax as they had had no real challenge. In addition, the fact that we have six restaurants across four brands had led to a focus on the needs of the individual restaurant, rather than thinking about resourcing for the whole group."

"The core skill of serving our guests runs across our brands, but we had tended to approach recruitment by restaurant, rather than as one company operating six restaurants in London. My question was: how can we streamline our recruitment processes and go to the external audience more effectively as one group?"

David's team came straight to Processfix to start the project. The workshop was pulled together with representatives from HR, in-house recruiters, restaurant managers and a chef. All in, around twelve people across the disciplines.

"What we discovered was quite a shock. We found that we had more than 100 steps between someone resigning and a new person passing their three-

month probation period. During the workshop we reduced the number of steps by half."

"To facilitate better practice, we have used simple technology. For example, we have increased the number of interviews through Skype, rather than inviting to interview in person. We have also instigated more sharing of best practice, moving managers around the different restaurants to appreciate the different operations and understand how the group works. In this way, they are more open to thinking about the other restaurants whilst recruiting. If someone is not the right fit for their brand, they may recommend them to one of the group's other brands instead."

We asked David if he would do anything different during their next Processfix workshop. He recognised that in the restaurant sector, unless there is a clear tangible action that will lead to better results, it is hard to prove that investing in softer skills will increase the bottom line. "I would perhaps focus more on the composition of the group and put more into the preparation, so that there was more understanding and buy-in as to why this was so important."

However, he also stressed that the group really enjoyed the three days, learning about the process and about the business. "One of the strong

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No-tech / Low-tech improvement at the Open University

Steve Clark was appointed Director of Business Performance Improvement at the Open University in 2012 to form a team of experienced Business Process Improvement (BPI) professionals with a remit to identify process improvement initiatives to enhance business efficiency and deliver value. The team now work across the university, with academics, faculties and professional services, from the back office through to student support.



Modern day solutions are heavily biased towards technology. That is particularly true at the Open University because of the unique nature of the student interaction and the sheer volume of students they interact with.

However, Steve explained that the team's route to operational excellence is not through technology, rather it is through the exploration of no-tech or low-tech opportunities: "We are clear about what we provide. If our colleagues are talking about a new system, we will be blunt and explain that we are not a quick route into IT. Sometimes, an outcome of our work may include a need for new technology, but by then it will have been refined into what the future operating process needs, rather than just automating what exists. It will be more focused and will support the business case needed for a technology solution."

"Predominantly, we focus on how we can change the way people work, rather than the technology that is used. There can be disappointment; sometimes people want a system to solve their problem. We encourage them to realise that focusing on the process can avoid the need for a lot of spend, or a potentially long lead-time in making it happen.

Steve went on to share their approach: "One of the first things we try to assess with the business is the scale and opportunity of that problem; to understand who is really impacted by current practice and how is that performing. We have to evaluate whether or not the process in question is a real priority, as we are a specialist resource. We need to be deployed and used to the maximum benefit of the organisation. Having metrics in place is of great use, as is having an idea of the root

cause. Sometimes in the initial stages we discover that the problem is actually elsewhere, which might lead to a very different solution; we might be the wrong people."

To facilitate the decision of when to get involved, Steve highlighted how important it is to deploy the right people from his team. Over the past four years the BPI team has grown to 12 people, but this has been done gradually as demand has increased. The team works well together and all the team members are strong performers. "We're an internal consultancy team. Credibility and individual performance is important; we're only as good as the last job we've done."

He went on to add that buy-in, support and engagement from the business and the people you are working with is crucial. "We constantly think that if a business area isn't in a position to engage with us we can't deliver to the best ability. To overcome this, we get people in the organisation to facilitate the answer, rather than telling them the answer ourselves."

Going forward, the intention is to start more rapid improvement activities. "To date, most of our work has tended to be large scale and strategic engagements which have delivered significant value and change. Now, the Open University has launched a major new strategy for growth: Student's First.

This includes some stretching and challenging targets on where they want to be and one strand of this is an 'Adaptive Organisation and Culture'. By working on rapid improvement projects we hope to provide people with an element of confidence and some of the skill sets needed so that staff can question their

"we focus on how we can change the way people work"

own processes and working practices and make change happen themselves with a focus on the student and the customer experience. We don't want to be in the situation where people say: "we can't do that because we can't get BPI's involvement". It's a much longer journey, but one which will embed continuous improvement into our culture."

Soon after writing this article Steve was appointed Director of Student Success, the senior Accountable Executive for the More Students Qualifying Strategic Priority at the Open University.

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characteristics of the sector is that the age of the workforce is quite young and an important part of our employment proposition is to provide our people with new challenges, to learn and develop. The inclusive approach Processfix use delivers a positive message about the benefits of working for Hakkasan Group."

Hakkasan Group is a worldwide hospitality company with establishments located across the United States, Europe, Middle East, and Asia. Its name is taken from the Michelin star restaurant that set the high-level standard for the group's collection of diverse brands. In London, Hakkasan Group has four brands across six sites: Hakkasan, Yauatcha, HKK and Sake no Hana. Four of the restaurants have Michelin stars.

In the spotlight: Dr. Christina Edgar, the longest standing user of the fixit® simulation outside Processfix!

Christina is the Deputy Director of Student Services and Head of Student Recruitment and Admissions at the University of Sheffield. She was introduced to, and trained by, Processfix, at the University of Warwick ten years ago when she was Assistant Registrar. Since then, she held a senior position at the University of Reading before taking up her current position at Sheffield in 2015. Throughout all this time, she has seen first-hand how Processfix empowers people and gets them excited and positive about the prospect of change to their own working practices.

What triggered your engagement with Processfix?

When I moved into my new role at Warwick, heading up the postgraduate admissions team, I was quite apprehensive when told I had been invited to a Rapid Improvement Workshop after I'd been in post for just a few days. But, as it turned out... the event was to be facilitated by Processfix, so I needn't have worried. I joined the workshop and absolutely loved it! I found it really energising and the whole team got so involved. Within 18 months we had won the Times Higher Education award for Outstanding Admissions Team of the Year!

Processfix engaged some of our most cynical people and everyone came out with a positive view of what the benefits of change could be; it was the starting point for a huge cultural change. I was so impressed that I asked to learn how to do this myself and was sent to Processfix for facilitator training. Subsequently I helped other teams at Warwick by facilitating internal workshops myself.

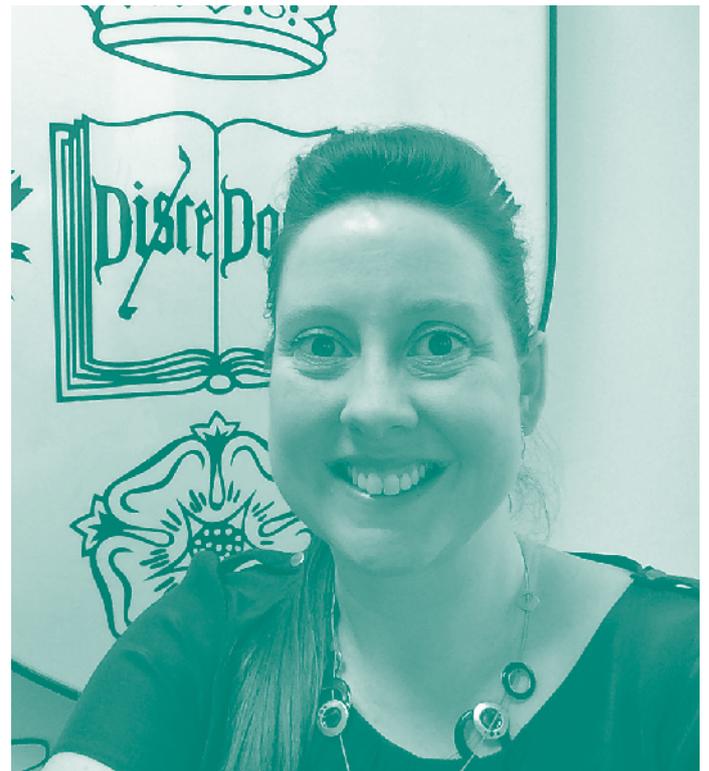
Between then and now, I went to Reading where I worked with teams on improving admissions and HR processes. Now, at Sheffield, I use the fixit® simulation to get teams energised and excited about change as we approach a large-scale transformation project, including a replacement of our student record systems. At Sheffield, we are really lucky to have our own Process Improvement Unit and I've introduced them to the fixit® simulation too, to see how it will help us going forward.

Can you pinpoint the most important factors in training others in process improvement?

Normally, I use the first day of a two or three-day workshop to run the simulation; it is so useful for empowering people as change agents and depersonalising things, as the 'game' is about the process and not the people. Participants can see that it's not that they are doing anything wrong, it's all about the process not supporting them properly. As a result, we are able to achieve a non-critical tone and this enables a positive focus when they come back for the rest of the workshop, looking at their own processes.

“Within 18 months we had won the Times Higher Education award !”

Some of the feedback that I've had has been about the variety of things that people learn from the simulation, including about their own and other people's behaviour: how stressed they get under pressure, for example. Other feedback has been more about the individual understanding that if you focus only on your part of the process (i.e. your job), you will only ever make incremental change. Tweaking is good, but if you get together with everyone involved you can



bring about far more significant and impactful change.

How would you rank the balance of technology vs people in terms of process improvement?

If you don't have a clear process before you turn to the technology, all you will do is replicate a bad process in a new system. So, I would say that IT should never be the driver. At Sheffield we are buying a complete technology system over the next three years and this will provide us with opportunities to work differently. The focus of our workshops will be in mapping the processes and identifying how we can use the technology to support what we need to do.

What are the key things to get right when undertaking process improvement workshops?

In people terms, you need to find a good sponsor; someone important enough to push things through and lend support. And your improvement champion needs to be on board and engaged with the workshop concept, as they will be the ones taking forward the action plan afterwards! You need to spend time a few weeks beforehand to confirm the aims of the workshop and to ensure that you 'lock down' a scope that is reasonable for the time you have been allocated. The more understanding you

have in advance about potential challenges, the better, including profiles of the people who might feel threatened by change and who might be cynical about improvement, for example.

And finally, try to keep everyone involved away from telling you the answer, because that can limit what you will achieve. Managers are often amazed by how creative the team's solutions can be! On the day, be visible, highlighting to participants "why you are here" and be prepared to re-energise them later on, but above all ensure that you support the champion and the sponsor to 'own' the project.

If you're interested in speaking to Christina about her experience, please contact her on: c.edgar@sheffield.ac.uk



Processfix fixit® simulation™

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.

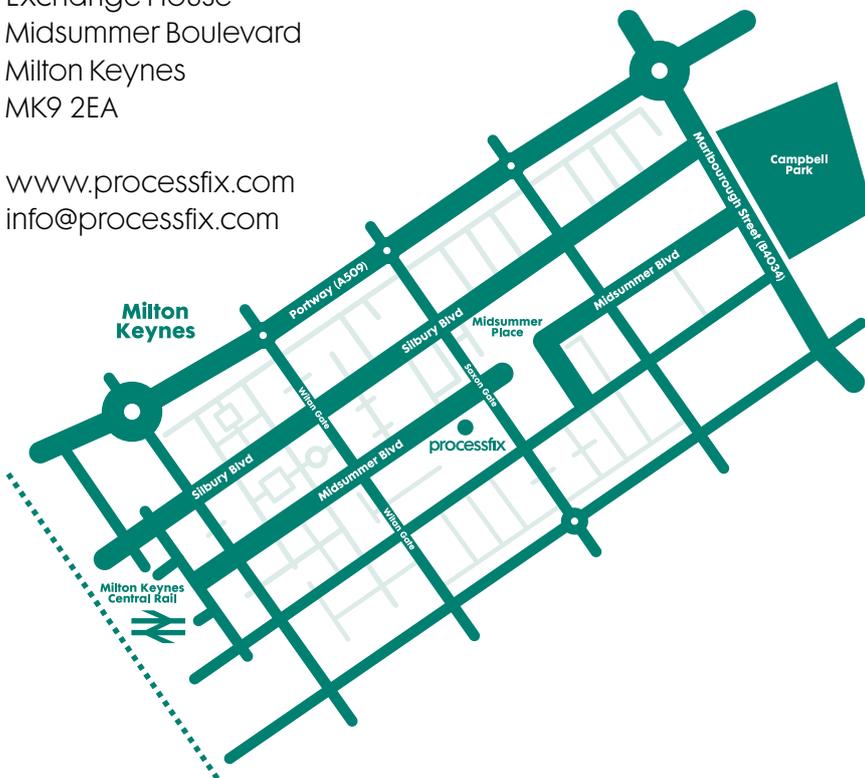
We focus on engaging your teams in their own improvement, empowering them to re-evaluate the way they do things and to develop new and improved ways of working that transform performance and deliver immediate results.

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:

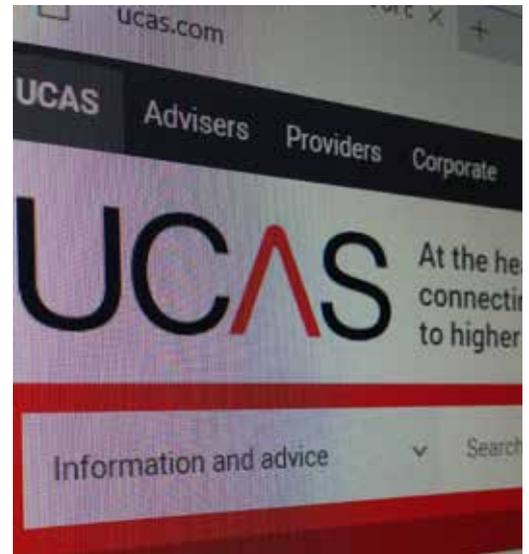
Processfix Limited
Exchange House
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www.processfix.com
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