No Boring Work Here – Really?

A busy office with highly motivated staff is an environment of which a manager could be proud.

"No boring work here" is what a manager claimed.

That was at the start of the conversation we had recently.

"Do the team perform any business Processes?" we asked.

"Yes", the manager responded. *"We have SLAs and track all of business processes. In fact, I am pleased to say that we regularly meet our compliance targets."*

"That is great to hear. How many times are the business processes performed each week?" we probed for more information.

"The main business process is completed 400 to 500 times by the team with about 200 associated compliance checks" the manager reported.

"The data changes but the Business Process is the same. How many times would the process need to be performed for it to become Routine, Repetitive and Boring?" we queried.

Performing Business Processes is a key activity in any job. It is called "Work" for reason.

Statistics have shown that people typically make errors at the rate of 4% when undertaking repetitive work. It is human nature. People cannot concentrate all of the time.

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Get More Done, Same Staff – Automate Boring Work

What might be Boring for staff might not appear Boring for a manager looking at the process.

Does Boring Work Matter?

Apart from the error rate in performing tasks that has been highlighted above, there are other reasons Boring work matters:

- Boring work makes it harder to retain staff
- Boring work makes it more difficult to recruit staff
- Boring work is probably not "valued" by clients as it is seen as admin
- Boring work does not provide any differentiation for the business

Businesses typically grow and become more profitable by having an increasing number of executions of existing processes. The benefits from the economy of scale start to apply but it does generate more "Boring Work" as the amount of repetition increases!

More "Boring Work" is a sign hat the business is growing.

Business Processes

Every business has business processes, they are essential for the consistency required for a business to function.

Some processes are more well defined than others.

Some processes are more predictable with less variation.

Compliance processes are particularly well defined, and exceptions are hopefully rare. This can make the task particularly tedious for staff to execute.

Some processes involve interaction with customers and suppliers, but many will be internal to the business. The nature of the business operations will determine the mix of processes required to perform the operation.

The core activities are likely to be supported by the use of general business applications such as CRM, ERP, Finance (e.g. AP, AR, Payroll), HR, etc.

Some processes are defined to achieve segregation of duties to prevent fraud rather than overall ease of operation. Although the separation is good for the business it can be frustrating for individuals.

Every business can benefit by having their processes documented, as it provides knowledge that can be shared with existing staff and referenced by any new staff.

The more frequently each member of staff executes the same process, the more Boring it becomes as it is repetitive with only the data changing.

Complex processes with lots of variations and many different outcomes are less Boring for staff to execute, they usually require more knowledge and concentration, which can lead to errors that do not become apparent until later in the interaction with customers

Automation of Processes

For processes that are completed using computer systems, the data is often available electronically.

A good question is *"Can staff perform the process when working from home?"*.

Automation using Software Robots enables the existing processes to be completed, using the same computer systems but without a person typing on the keyboard, clicking the mouse or reading from the screen.

Automate the Boring Work and Feel the Difference.

Work can be completed just as fast.

Software Robots do not make errors the way people do, so quality is improved.

Software Robots can work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week which is a lot of capacity and can enable work to be completed as it becomes available.

Cost of an automation is similar to a person working on Minimum Wage.

Not all processes are suitable for automation that can deliver a good ROI. For example a process that is only performed once per year probably does not have the level repletion necessary to justify the cost of building the automation.

Impact from Automation

Once automation is implemented, it frees up staff time to focus on exceptions, unique scenarios, and activities that enhance quality. Automation turns the office drudgery into opportunity.

By incorporating automation, businesses can significantly boost productivity, enabling staff to contribute more strategically and add greater value.

Automating tasks does not directly provide competitive advantage, but the impact from the amended timing of performing a task and the cost reduction of the task, can deliver significant advantages.