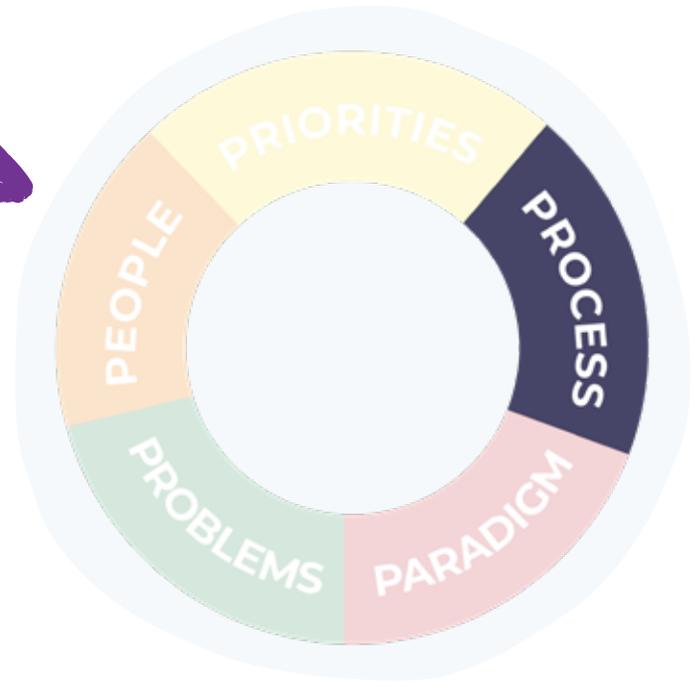# PROCESS

THE KING'S SOUP AND THE QUEEN'S CAKE

There once was a kingdom where the king and the queen were very fussy eaters. There was only one chef who was able to prepare a soup for the king and a cake for the queen that they would eat. His name was Chef Zuppa and his reputation was known throughout the land. Many others had tried, but when they served the king, he would wave his hand to take other soups away after the very first sip. He showed his displeasure by screwing his face up like a prune. The queen did likewise, but she was more vocal. She would take a bite of another chef's cake and would remark loudly, "This cake is way too dry. Where is the delicious cake that Chef Zuppa bakes? Bring it to me immediately! You should know better than to serve me anything less than the best."

Of course, when there was a huge event in the kingdom, poor Chef Zuppa tried to do everything at once. He was never able to take a day off and his duties seemed to increase as the days wore on. The sous chefs in his kitchen wanted to help him, but when he cooked and baked he did everything by eye and they couldn't replicate his methods no matter how hard they tried.

Then, one day it became clear that something had to change. The king and queen had invited noble families across the entire country to dine with them. When he heard the amount of soup and the number of cakes he was expected to prepare, Chef Zuppa threw his hands up in despair. "What will I do?" he asked no one in particular. "I can't possibly satisfy them."

His head sous chef, Chef Torta, said to him, "Why don't we work together the next couple of weeks? You can show me step by step what is in your head and I will write down the recipes for both the soup that the king likes and the cake that the queen prefers. Then on the day before the event, I can help you and so can the other trained chefs."
At first, Chef Zuppa was hesitant, but then he decided it would work. "Very well," he said, "but so I don't give you all my secrets I shall withhold telling you the ingredients for some special spice blends for both the soup and the cake. I will tell you how much to put into each."

And so they proceeded. Chef Torta watched everything diligently and he asked a million questions to ensure that Chef Zuppa was providing precise measurements. But when it came to the seasonings for each item, Chef Zuppa would only allow the other chefs to put in 3 teaspoons of secret spice blend for the soup and 4 teaspoons of a second spice blend for the cake. He would not tell them what was in the blends.

After much testing, Chef Torta was finally able to replicate Chef Zuppa's recipes. He taught the other chefs to do likewise and they were finally ready to prepare the food for the majestic event. There was much chaos in the kitchen as they began to get ready, and you may have already guessed what happened. The spice blends were somehow set up in the wrong places. In their hurry, the more novice chefs had used the soup spices for the cake and the cake spices for the soup! Of course, when Chef Zuppa tasted their first round of food preparation he laughed out loud because he realized what had happened. Luckily, they had time to recover. They threw those batches out and started over.

He made a checklist and placed it at each chef's station.

1. Follow the recipe precisely, step by step.
2. Check the label and taste the spice blend to make sure it is the correct one before including it.
3. Taste the finished product for quality.

They served the food, the banquet was a great success, the king and queen thankfully had no idea what had happened, and when it was all over Chef Zuppa took a long vacation. When he went back to his kitchen, he vowed to let his staff do more of the work. He even gave a chosen few the secrets to his spice blends.

Since he had more free time he was able to create new exciting recipes for the fussy king and queen.

WHY PROCESS IS PARAMOUNT

On January 15, 2009, minutes after Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger, the pilot of US Airways Flight 1549, took off from LaGuardia Airport in New York, a flock of geese hit the Airbus A320 he was flying. Almost immediately both engines lost power. The 155 people on board were at an altitude of 2800 feet when this occurred. After considering the available options, Sully realized there was no possible way he could maneuver the jet back to LaGuardia or to another airport. With his crew, his experience, and the processes they had in place, he made an unprecedented water landing on the Hudson River off Midtown Manhattan.

As the passengers climbed out onto the wings of the plane, they marveled that they were still alive. Grateful for the crew that had helped them emerge from the interior, they huddled in the cold January wind. Everyone on board survived. The event was later called the "Miracle on the Hudson." This miracle would never have taken place if Sully's team hadn't worked their process together seamlessly and without hesitation. The air traffic controllers did their part as well, first in attempting to coordinate a runway strip and then by cautioning vessels in the river. Emergency responders and volunteers also showed up at the site in record time to ensure that the passengers didn't freeze in the icy waters as the plane began to submerge.

In stark contrast, on March 27, 1977, the passengers on KLM Flight 4805 in Spain's Tenerife Airport never had a chance. Miscommunication between their pilot and air traffic control meant that they took off with another plane, Pan Am Flight 1736, in front of them on a foggy runway. A total of 583 fatalities was the result. Only 61 passengers on the Pan Am jet survived. This crash, the worst in aviation history, forever changed some of the processes involved during takeoff.

Clearly, an effective process, and the fact that crews followed or ignored crucial steps that affected their decisions and the final outcomes, meant life or death in these cases.

Taking the right steps at the right time can be a lifesaver for your business. Having the correct processes in place will benefit your business whether you're manufacturing computers, selling flowers, serving food, or saving lives. By strengthening your company's Process Root, you'll free your employees from confusion and allow them to do their jobs at the maximum level of effectiveness.

Creating a process and putting it into place is the first step. Getting everyone to follow it religiously is a crucial next step.

At Johns Hopkins Hospital, gaps in a simple five-step process cost eight patients their lives. When administering medicine to vulnerable patients via a central line, a tube in the neck or chest, staff had been given the following process to avoid spreading infection.

Since patients were still getting infected and some were dying, the hospital conducted a review. They found that more than 30% of the time, the steps had not been followed, which had led to 43 infections over a 15-month span of time. In addition to the lives lost, these infections had resulted in huge liabilities and costs.

In 2001, in an effort to close this gap, the staff conducted an experiment. They posted a checklist to enable the staff to meticulously follow all five steps in the process every single time. By creating this checklist and thereby enforcing the process, the hospital dropped its infection and death rates to zero. These results also saved the hospital millions of dollars.*

This case demonstrates that you can have the right people and well-chosen priorities, but without discipline and diligence in following critical processes, problems will still emerge.

Wash your hands thoroughly.

Clean the patient's skin.

Place a sterile cover over the patient.

Wear a gown, gloves, mask, and hat.

Put sterile dressing over the insertion site.

TECHNICIAN VERSUS ENTREPRENEUR

There is a huge difference between working in a business and working on a business. Many founders start as technicians. Auto mechanics, dentists, and architects who begin businesses have often become masters at what they do. The skills they've honed and the services they'll provide are the launching pads for creating their businesses. However, those technical skills don't automatically qualify them to create businesses that have repeatable processes. They may or may not know how to scale their businesses, so they may have done nothing more than just create jobs for themselves.

The typical start-up business owner is so busy fulfilling customers' needs that they have little time to study how to build a business. The truth is that building a business requires an entire set of skills and a mindset that is vastly different than the technical skills of a master craftsperson.

Although the typical founder is great at getting things done, they might not be so good at translating skills into easy-to-understand processes. The business might be profitable in its day-to-day execution, but it never grows into a standalone machine. In other words, the founder can't walk away and let others take over for a day or a week. They find themselves in an endless cycle of putting in 80-hour workweeks because the business hasn't been built in a way that makes delegation possible.

Some of the largest companies in existence today were started by founders who fully understood the value of process. Tom Watson, the founder of IBM, got it right.
"From the very outset, IBM was fashioned after the template of my vision," he said. "And each and every day we attempted to model the company after that template."

"WE DON'T GET PAID FOR WORKING WITH OUR FEET. WE GET PAID FOR WORKING WITH OUR HEADS."

He came to lead the company in 1914 and the following year he put up THINK signs in the manufacturing plant. He had developed that slogan at an uninspiring sales meeting years before when he admonished the audience by saying, "We don't get paid for working with our feet. We get paid for working with our heads." He felt the sign was self-explanatory. It was a challenge for each and every employee to come up with creative solutions for processes that could strengthen the business. Over the next several decades, IBM led the way in business innovation. That culture and the constant drive toward innovation made the company a giant in the computer industry. The core of Watson's outlook drove much of that success.

"At the end of each day, we asked ourselves how well we did," he said. "We discovered the disparity between where we were and where we had committed ourselves to be, and at the start of the following day, set out to make up for the difference."

"We didn't do business at IBM. We built one."

--Tom Watson, Founder of IBM

Clearly, not all entrepreneurs have this mindset, but just imagine what could change in the business world if they did.

Many founders fall into the trap of putting their heads down and working hard. Consider the plight of the owner of a car repair shop. He's so focused on doing his day-to-day job that he's forgotten he's also an entrepreneur. Every day, he comes in at 6 a.m. and works on his customers' cars until long after 6 p.m. By 8 p.m., even if he's at home, he's still mentally at the shop as he plans what he needs to complete the next day. At this point do you think his tired brain and body can focus on business strategy? He's at his shop more than hours a week, but all he's done is make a very demanding job for himself.

If he divides his take-home pay by those crazy hours, he'll realize that he's working for less than minimum wage. If he has employees, they're likely earning a better hourly wage than he is. How did this happen? His mechanics are punching in at 8 a.m. and leaving at 5 p.m. They go home and have a beer in front of the television without giving a second thought to work until the next morning.

This owner still has the mindset of a mechanic. He is working hard to do his job in the business, but he's not working on the business. He needs to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset.

LEVERAGING PROCESSES TO BUILD YOUR BUSINESS

To reap the rewards of being a successful entrepreneur, you'll need to leverage your processes. The goal is personal freedom. Ultimately, when your business machine is truly built, there will be times when you can do whatever you want, whenever you want. You'll be able to enjoy time with your family. You'll be able to golf, fish, have brunch with friends, and go on extended vacations. Building a business isn't easy, and there's no doubt you'll eventually want the freedom to relax without it impacting your bottom line. In order to get that freedom, just like Chef Zuppa, you'll need to train others to take over the responsibilities of the business. They will need to understand the processes you follow and own them.

Tasks such as customer service, answering phones, marketing, recommending solutions, and selling to customers are all vital to the growth of the business. They are also easy to delegate once you have repeatable, documented processes in place.

If you cling to what you already do more than you hunger to build something new, the frontier of possibilities will close up. However, if you're hungry for a better, more balanced way of life and a different future, you and your team members will need to create systems for your entire operation.

The Key Discipline of 3-D will help you do this effectively:

The Key Discipline to strengthen Process is 3-D

Key Discipline: 3-D

✽ **Documenting**

✽ **Driving**

✽ **Developing**

DOCUMENTING PROCESSESS

A lot of vital information to run a start-up resides only in the founder's head. Unfortunately, that makes the successful running of the company completely dependent upon the founder's presence. The founder is there to ignite new relationships, discover big opportunities and evangelize the brand. He or she is not there to do payroll, clean toilets, and micromanage employees as they perform their assigned tasks.

If you want to build a scalable organization, you have to start by getting the information out of the founder's head and into company documentation as soon as possible. One very important piece in that undertaking is to identify the processes vital to the smooth running of the organization and make sure those are documented first. Client interaction is a key area, but internal processes, such as hiring, accounting, and the communication path from taking sales orders to delivery are all vital as well.

Being able to refer back to these documented processes helps with the everyday operations and makes the running of the company smoother and more efficient. However, the value of any process is most evident during emergency situations. These events demonstrate the massive difference it makes to have processes in place.

Let's revisit the story of Chesley Sullenberger, the heroic pilot of what has been called the Miracle on the Hudson. "Sully," a leader throughout his career, is best known as the pilot who landed an Airbus 320 safely on the surface of the Hudson River in January 15 of 2009. That fateful day, he and his co-pilot, Jeffrey Skiles, met with the crew before the flight to run

through a checklist and discuss the flight plan. Skiles had never worked with Sulley before, but that meeting turned the group into a team.

Minutes after takeoff, after a flock of geese destroyed both engines, the crew prepared to crash land as air traffic control tried to find them a runway that was close enough for them to maneuver to. But there wasn't enough time. As Sully maneuvered as best he could, Skiles ran through the plane's manual and tried every option listed to re-start the engines. Atul Gawande, author of The Checklist Manifesto, asserts in his book, "the adherence to strict protocols contained in the checklist allowed them to function in a complex and dire situation." The flight attendants took care of the distraught passengers and prepared them for a crash landing on the Hudson. Everyone followed the processes that had been documented for emergencies--and every person aboard survived.

In subsequent weeks, the media focused on Sully's heroic achievement and highlighted his flying skills. And indeed he was due that praise. No pilot had ever landed a jet of that size at that altitude on water before. A National Transportation Safety Board official later described it as "the most successful ditching in aviation history." However, he continually pointed out that the team saved the day by following the processes they were trained to use so that he could concentrate on his main role, that of safely landing the plane.

BY STRENGTHENING PROCESS, YOU FREE YOURSELF FROM CHAOS.

Because the entire crew was well aware of emergency procedures and able to execute their roles independently, everyone on board got out alive.

Luckily most business processes don't have life or death consequences. But, like Sully, you and your organization can create life-affirming benefits by establishing checklists and building self-reliance in your teams. When people own their roles and are accountable for their actions, their leaders don't have to micromanage them. Remember, even though it may be tempting to you to continue to wear all the hats, you cannot grow your business or even plan for growth if you keep tying yourself up in details that can easily be handled by trained and committed team members.

If you create a business that is systems-dependent rather than people-dependent, you will give yourself and your teams more freedom. Make sure that your teams know the exact steps and mindset they need in order to deliver great customer service. Then, leave it to them. Give them the tools they need, get out of their way, and find the highest use for your time.

DRIVING ADHERENCE TO PROCESSES

Once a process has been documented, it needs to be implemented consistently. For this to happen, employees must be properly trained to ensure that they are executing the process correctly. In other words, someone needs to drive the process. Once all employees have been trained, triggers need to be placed strategically to remind everyone of the processes they are responsible for.

Here are some methods to ensure that the training you have provided has been effective.

Key Discipline: 3-D

✱ **Documenting**

✱ **Driving**

✱ **Developing**

→ Encourage questions from your employees and ask questions yourself to confirm that trainees have understood the process from beginning to end. If employees have questions, there's a good chance they haven't fully understood the process yet. Assessments and certifications may help with this process.

→ Share a scenario and invite the trainees to show how they would approach it. Their responses can reveal their level of understanding.

→ Shadow them the first few times they implement the process to ensure all parties that the work is up to your standards. In other words, trust but verify.

SOME COMMON APPROACHES TO QUALITY ASSURANCE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS.

→ Create a privately held inspection schedule or spontaneous check in.

→ Measure key elements in the process and provide the data for review.

→ Assign individual responsibility to each element and track the outcomes.

In contrast to the Sully example, the runway crash in Tenerife killed 583 people. It was the worst crash in aviation history and could have easily been prevented. The pilot in charge of KLM Flight 4805 misunderstood the instructions provided by air traffic control and took off when he had not received clearance.

There were a variety of factors that caused the crash. There was a dense fog that day. Both planes had been re-routed from their original destination to a location with no ground radar. The pilot was well respected in the industry, therefore his co-pilot didn't express concerns a second time based on what air traffic had indicated to do. In fact, the pilot was so well respected that after the crash he was to be called in for consultation before others realized he had been piloting the plane that had crashed. Even with all these factors, the crash could still have been averted. The major failure was in the words used during communication. These words have since been standardized to ensure that pilots don't misunderstand what air traffic control is communicating. As a result of this lack of a cohesive process, the plane plowed into the other plane on the runway. Everyone on board KLM Flight 4805 perished as did most of the passengers in the jet on the runway.

No matter who you are in an organization, you should never be afraid to speak up to those in charge. Leaders aren't infallible. Most great leaders value those individuals who work for them, and they encourage them to not only follow the appropriate processes, but to speak up when something can be improved. Remember Tom Watson's adage—THINK.

Perhaps if the process in place encouraged the co-pilot to speak more forcefully to stop the plane's take-off, hundreds of lives could have been saved. The tower's instructions were unclear and the co-pilot initially voiced concern, but was ignored by the pilot.

Experience is important, but just because an individual has a wealth of experience doesn't mean that he or she should ignore important processes. Using an effective system, such as PIM—Personal Information Management--enables you to export information from your head into a system that can be trusted and that others can replicate. It is more reliable than depending on memory. This type of documentation will create a fundamental shift in your business.

There's a huge difference between using your mind to think of things and using your mind to think about things. The first method is anxiety provoking and never ending. The second method frees up space in your mind. Your system should give you the confidence to have all the information you need at your fingertips. Having this reference frees up your mind space for more important matters, such as problem solving.

Another way to free up mental space is to post a reminder in the area where the process needs to be followed. If you want your staff to remember to wear hard hats when they work in a certain building, it makes sense to post that reminder at the entrance to that building. If you need your HR manager to follow a specific process when interviewing candidates, then you should make sure there's a checklist in the same file as the interview questions.

DEVELOPING PROCESSES

When most people think of innovation, they think of inventing new products, yet the continuous innovation of your processes or methods may propel your company further forward than product innovations would. Processes may also be trademarked in some cases, and implementing processes frees up everyone in your company to think about ways to innovate. There are more than 25,000 florists in the United States and they're ranked by volume. The company 1-800-FLOWERS went from rank 24,000 to rank 1. Their founder Jim McCann firmly believed this was possible. He encourages all his employees to constantly think about how they can improve what they do. This is what innovation is all about—finding a better way to do something that's already being done.

Using Watson's strategy, McCann created signs to inspire a culture of innovation in every office. The signs simply read: Sell More Flowers. That's why we're here, he reasoned. Every single employee truly understood their mission statement. It didn't matter what part of the company he visited, they got it, all the way from customer service to the delivery truck drivers.

SELL MORE FLOWERS

My good friend, Jeff, was at the 1-800-FLOWERS truck garage and decided that he would put McCann's philosophy to the test. He wondered whether an auto mechanic could innovate a new process. He asked one of the mechanics under a delivery truck if he had a minute. The mechanic in his greasy jumpsuit rolled out on a board from under the truck and said, "Sure. What's up?"

Key Discipline: 3-D

✸ **Documenting**

✸ **Driving**

➔ ✸ **Developing**

Jeff asked him whether he had considered how he could do his job better. The mechanic responded, "Well, not too long ago, I was sitting in the garage looking at the sign on the wall and wondering what I could do to help sell more flowers. I thought what if I could save money on every tank of gas the company uses. So I did some research and I found these fuel filters. They save $8 for every tank of gas. Instead of $13, the only cost $5 each, and they only cost $5 apiece. So I bought the fuel filters and I'm putting them on every delivery vehicle. When I told the CFO we can save $8 on every tank of gas, we decided that our group will keep $4, which will go straight to our bottom line. Then with the other $4 of savings, we'll give customers $4 off coupons for any floral delivery. I'm pretty sure those coupons will help us sell more flowers." Simple, yet genius. Innovation doesn't need to be complex, it just needs to make a process more effective, easier to implement, and maybe even save the company some time and money. Every individual in every part of your company should be free to suggest process innovations.

By having a hand in developing processes, everyone participates in their own growth as well as the company's growth. This is personally validating. When people respect and improve a process, they feel a sense of ownership and motivation around that process. Healthy competition can be encouraged among teams that work to improve the company in every nook and cranny.

KEY DISCIPLINE 3-DS

Documenting, Driving, and Developing are the disciplines we call the 3-Ds.

1. Document: Write each process down in a place where it's easily accessible.

2. Drive: Ensure understanding and quality. Place reminders in the appropriate locations in order to trigger the process.

3. Develop: Improve processes on a continuous basis.

To start methodically getting your company involved in creating viable processes, begin with your leadership team.

* **Identify a high-priority process, preferably one that is a source of frustration or confusion.**

* **Choose who will be accountable for that process and set a due date for documentation.**

* **Document who will drive the process and how they will drive it.**

When you apply this discipline to the Key Tool, it will unlock inestimable value. The Key Tool is what we call the Process Map, and it is a list of your most important processes from each department.

"THE KEY TOOL TO STRENGTHEN PROCESS IS THE PROCESS MAP."

PEOPLE ROOT: LEADERSHIP QUESTION

Are people developing and following processes?

PEOPLE ROOT: MANAGEMENT QUESTION:

Am I providing the right amount of involvement in the creation of processes?

THE PROCESS MAP

FINANCE

Data collection	Mar 15	Sue
Budgeting	May 1	Pete
Capital Planning	May 10	Jim
Cash Flow Forecasting	Mar 15	Sal
Modeling	May 20	Jen
Financial close	Apr 11	Pete
Consolidation	May 1	Jim
Management Reporting	Mar 15	Sue

HUMAN RESOURCES

Recruiting	Apr 10	Piet
Hiring	Mar 15	Brenda
Employment Agreement Draft	Apr 11	Johann
Employee Onboarding	May 1	Pietr
Structuring Salary	Mar 15	Brenda

OPERATIONS

Client Onboarding	May 1	Connor
Customer Support	May 1	Gordon
Production and capacity planning	Apr 20	Gordon
Procurement	Mar 15	Connor
Supplier Evaluation	Apr 11	Lex
Contract Negotiation	Mar 20	Rainer
Order Fulfillment	Mar 15	Lex

MARKETING

Content Promotion	July 1	Jesse
Social Media	May 1	Cory
Website review	Mar 15	Jesse
Collateral Creation	Aug 1	Cory
Retargeting	May 1	Wendy
SEO	Apr 11	Jesse
Copywriting	June 15	Wendy
Public Relations	Mar 15	Lacey
Analytics	June 1	Jesse

SALES

Selling		Fred
List Building & Management	May 1	Collin
Sales Training	Apr 11	Doug
Collateral Building	May 31	Shannon
Email Newsletter	Mar 31	Cindy
Presentations	Apr 11	Doug
Sales Forecasting	June 30	Joe
Upselling	Apr 8	Caitlyn
Order Processing	Apr 11	Yaro

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Source: Atul Gawande in The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right