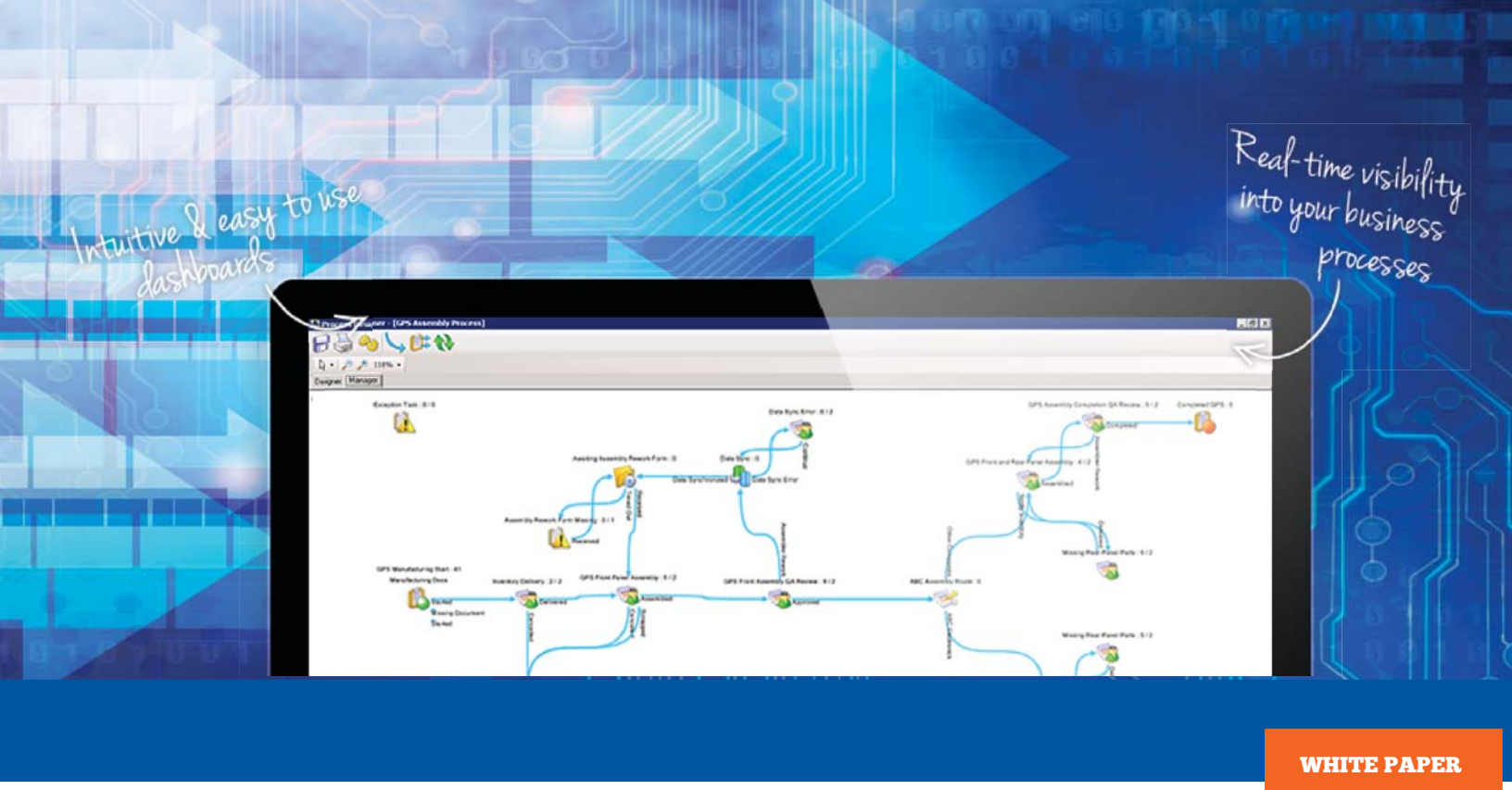

WHITE PAPER

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

6 WAYS TO PROCESS IMPROVEMENT SUCCESS

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PROCESS IMPROVEMENT
6 WAYS TO PROCESS IMPROVEMENT SUCCESS

So you've been given the go-ahead on your shiny new business process improvement initiative. The champagne corks have been popped, you've given yourself a big pat on the back then suddenly the eyes of the business are on you – asking how you are going to make it a success.

Here are six ways to improve your chances of Process Improvement Success:

1. Get The Project Team Right

Getting the interpersonal dynamics and skills of the project team right is absolutely critical.

- Hire doers, not delegators.
- Hire people who have the same attitude to work. Don't hire bureaucrats or people who think having meetings equates to getting things done.
- Hire people who are passionate.
- Hire great communicators.
- Hire people who are sociable.
- Hire great writers (who are great thinkers).
- Hire people with flexible attitudes.
- Hire people who are down to earth.
- Hire experts.

2. Pick The Right Technology

Just because it's in the Gartner Magic Quadrant doesn't mean it's the right solution to your business problem.

It's also likely to also be the most costly solution to your business problem. There is an almost overwhelming range of software on the market to suit every business need so selecting a vendor should be more about fit with needs rather than who is winning the most deals and who is less risky.

Big software companies often have the same painful process issues you are trying to fix, so why should you try to fix your problems with the same kind of thinking that created them?

3. Start with The Customer

Too many organisations have a myopic view which focuses firstly on internal processes prior to looking at the customer.

Focusing on what the customer needs and looking at end-to-end process from a customer experience perspective stops wasted time and effort improving processes and tasks which shouldn't actually exist in the

first place.

Start with the customer, define what they need and align your organisational processes to that need and you can't go far wrong.

4. Implement Change Management (Properly!)

Change Management.

That's that warm and fuzzy feel-good stuff, puffed up with words like "engagement" and "actualisation", right? Wrong.

It's time everyone started to take Change Management more seriously – studies have shown that projects are six times more likely to succeed if they have good change management.

Get a change manager on board and on-board early.

A good change manager is worth their weight in gold – it's a specialised skill that requires experience, expertise and a structured approach.

5. Bring The Business into the Project (Fully!)

Part-time business commitment is the first sure-fire sign of a delivery disconnect.

If the business are unwilling to commit at least one full-time resource to a process improvement project then stop the bus and let everyone off.
Not only is the business's expertise essential to progressing the project, but a lack of commitment on a project that is designed to improve the business itself shows that they either do not adequately understand or appreciate the benefits that the initiative will bring or have no faith in your ability to deliver!

Either way, business commitment is another critical step on the path to success.

6. Prove The Concept

Start small. Never go "big bang".
Prove the concept.

It's far too risky in this day and age to start with a huge transformational implementation of software if you have never implemented the software before. Start with a small project that can prove the benefits of your business case and ramp it up from there.

It will also help you to confirm that you have the right project team skills and that your cost estimates are correct before you sign a big cheque that may have you throwing yourself on your own sword come the end of financial year.

There are many other ways to improve the success of a process improvement initiative but getting these six right at the start will take you a long way towards the goal of a happy business, and most importantly, happy customers.

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