

Know the Quality of Your Strategy, Project Portfolio and/or Improvement Efforts

“If you cannot measure it, you cannot improve it” says the old slogan. Well, how many board members, business directors and managers know in a true sense the quality of:

- the corporate strategy?
- the improvement project portfolio?
- the improvement efforts, i.e. the (total) process improvement yield?

The answer is not many, really. In fact, most of the board members, directors and managers are in a mode described best as “I believe that I know”. This mode is probably the worst enemy of a fact based management as these persons do not see any need for an improvement. Potentially, you could be implementing a bad strategy, with the wrong projects, utilizing a low actual improvement performance. A low score in any of these three areas increases substantially the pain of realizing the true potential of the company.

To create motivation, momentum and understanding an “eye opener” is needed to prevent major losses in terms of customer, personnel and owner satisfaction – the virtues that any director or manager should actively enhance, not only maintain, every day. The modular *VISTALIZER® Acid Test* is a fast and cost-effective way to find out the quality of these three fundamental business cornerstones.

The method to define the quality level of the company strategy is based on the initial analysis module of the solution *VISTALIZER® for Businesses*. Besides a total result in %, it will also provide a detailed specification regarding the quality of different strategic areas/issues. The input data required is a written strategy that will be evaluated according to the criteria defined by the mentioned method. The *VISTALIZER® Acid Test+* provides additional understanding regarding the quality and functionality of the underlying process (if existing) dealing with the creation and updating of the company strategy. This enlarged acid test will also consider the deployment and implementation of the strategy and provide suggestions how to improve the performance in this regard.

The definition of the improvement project portfolio quality is conducted in three steps:

1. Defining which processes are targeted by the projects in the portfolio.
2. Creating a *VISTALIZER® Report* for each process; disclosing the most important improvement objects of the specific processes (assuring the improvement effectiveness).
3. Reviewing and evaluating how well the project portfolio complies with the synthesis of the *VISTALIZER® Reports*. The end-result is a compliance score (0-100%) depicting the quality of the targeted improvement project portfolio.

If the project portfolio quality score is low, then it is necessary to review and verify the project approval procedures of the company to find the root causes of the deviation.

The method to define the (total) process improvement yield (%) is based on the initial analysis module of the solution *VISTALIZER® for Networks*. Besides a total result in %, it will also provide a detailed specification regarding the quality of different areas related to the process improvement plan and the implementation. The enlarged *VISTALIZER® Acid Test+* will provide a more thorough understanding about the company's competitive state according to the full (standard) criteria of the *VISTALIZER® for Networks* approach.

Practical Considerations

The main focus group for this approach is companies with at least 25 employees. The required management time consumption is approximately 3 h for the basic *VISTALIZER® Acid Test* and approximately one day for the enlarged *VISTALIZER® Acid Test+*. The results will be delivered within one week. The pricing of this solution is competitive and tempting so the price should not be an issue if the company has a true will to improve its competitive state and operations.

Additional reading: Pastinen, Markus. 2010. *High-Performance Process Improvement*. Berlin Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag. ISBN 978-3-642-10783-2 (printed), 978-3-642-10784-9 (ebook).

See also: <http://www.vitalize.fi>