



Linea Insights

**How to Evaluate the Scope for
Business Process Improvement
and Constraints**

Business process improvement is an essential method for organisations to maintain a continual pursuit of excellence, refining their methods and improving their structural efficiency over time.

However, as with any large-scale business project, continuous improvement efforts depend on sound planning to deliver the intended results.

This means that leaders need to accurately evaluate the scope for business process improvement and constraints in order to create a realistic plan that can deliver the required results within an acceptable timescale. A failure to properly scope the process may result in unexpected complications, unforeseen costs and preventable delays.

Here, we will explore the steps that must be taken to properly scope out a business process improvement project, as well as how to identify potential bottlenecks and barriers to ensure that your continuous improvement efforts yield success.



How to determine the scope of a business process improvement project

Setting out the scope of a business process improvement project requires you to examine your organisation holistically, assessing its current structure and processes to look for opportunities to address limitations and deliver company-wide improvements.

This means considering the following factors:

- What is the problem we are trying to solve? What is the measurable impact of any problems with our current business process?
- How long has this problem been going on? What metrics can we use to identify its impact?
- What parts of the organisation are being affected by the current issue? Which departments and teams will need to be part of the process of change?
- Which processes will need to change as part of this improvement project? Where do these processes begin and end?
- Do you have the internal capability and capacity to develop and implement the required improvements?
- What are the specific short and long-term goals of our business process improvement project? What is the deadline for achieving these goals? What metrics and milestones will we use to assess our progress towards these objectives, and how will we codify and track these key performance indicators (KPIs)?



Once all these factors have been considered, you will be able to compile a project plan that contains detailed information on the following:

- The overall objective of the project
- An organisational chart laying out the departments, stakeholders and employees that will be analysed and reformed as part of the project
- A complete list of all the business processes involved in the scope of the project
- The team members who will be responsible for implementing and executing the business improvement project, identifying who will take ownership of the processes when the project is complete
- Data that highlights baseline performance for each process, and the KPIs that will be measured
- A defined set of achievable and realistic “victory conditions” for the project, with deadlines and milestone dates

By being precise about the scope of the project, you will be able to develop a clear plan of the changes which need to be made to achieve your goals, without the risk of “scope creep” - the phenomenon that sees the parameters and size of a project changing during the process.



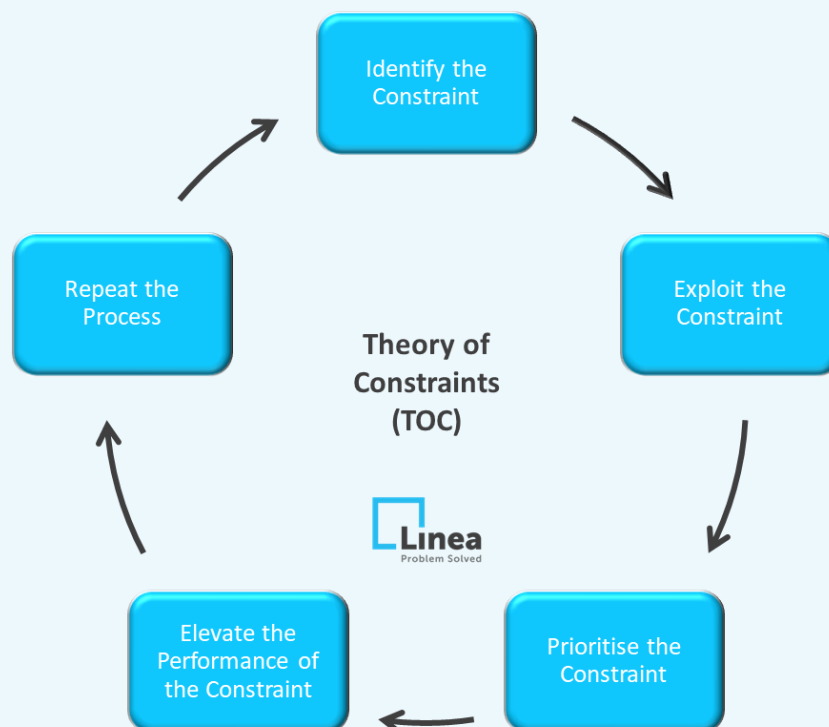
How to identify constraints to business improvement

Another key factor to consider when putting a business improvement process plan in place is the nature of any constraints and barriers that are preventing progress from being achieved and devising ways to remove these constraints.

This is known as the Theory of Constraints (TOC), and can be put into place through five key steps:

- **Identify** the constraint that is holding a process back, or limiting the rate at which goals can be achieved
- **Exploit** the constraint by improving the process and adjusting the limitation, within the scope of your current resources
- **Prioritise** the constraint, meaning all other elements of the process need to be reviewed and adjusted to make sure they are not putting additional pressure on this weakness, or interfering with the solution
- **Elevate** the constraint by investing additional resources and capacity into the system to deliver better performance, and ultimately remove the constraint from the process
- **Evaluate and repeat** the process to make sure the constraint has been removed, before starting the process again to identify any new issues to be solved

By taking an ordered and systematic approach to scoping your business process improvement projects, and to eliminating constraints, you will be able to deliver reliable and repeatable results, while creating a business culture dedicated to continuous improvement and excellence.



Find out more

To learn more about how to efficiently evaluate the scope for business process improvement and constraints within your company, get in touch with the business transformation specialists at Linea today.

You can find out more about how we can help your organisation to identify potential opportunities for continuous systemic improvements, highlight possible limitations and chart a path to sustainable future success.

Please call us on **+44 (0) 124 442 1095**, or complete our [contact form](#) to request a call back any time.

About the Author



Ian Chambers

A “Transformation Catalyst” supporting organisations that require strategic direction, accelerated performance and cultural change, adopting a holistic approach to deliver improved financial, operational and quality outcomes.

A Business Improvement specialist with over 20 years’ experience devising and leading complex Operational and Financial Turnaround, Transformation and Continuous Improvement Programmes. Ian has held numerous board and senior advisory positions across various industry sectors and is an approved member of Government and corporate turnaround panels.

Ian’s background in Change Management, Lean Transformation, Financial & Commercial Management, Supply Chain / Procurement Optimisation and Programme Delivery was gained working with leading UK and International Public and Private sector organisations.

An expert in delivering sustainable operational improvement and financial balance in challenging situations, Ian possess an extensive track record of devising, managing and implementing comprehensive, multi-million-pound, cross organisational transformation and continuous improvement programmes for Public and Private organisations.

Ian founded Linea in 2004 and operates as CEO assisting organisations to resolve complex problems such as Underperformance, Stagnation, Crisis & Distress.

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