



# Continuous Business Optimization Is A 21st Century Next Practice

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Business optimization efforts have been around for years and are aimed at redefining the way work is performed within a business area. They explore issues surrounding what work is performed, how it is accomplished, when it's done and by whom. It's not unusual for a firm to totally reconstruct its departmental workflow and reorganize its workers during a business optimization. In most cases, these programs are driven on a case-by-case basis, though. We spend 6 months optimizing the finance department and move onto engineering.



That type of approach is too slow!

Twenty-first century business calls for something much faster and devastating to the competition. As I've written in an earlier article for Inc. on Next Practices, we need to:

*"Invigorate velocity by working past implementation concepts and focus on delivery strategies... Implementation is process, delivery is advantage. Establish a business mindset that believes in agility, velocity, and high impact value and through impeccable product and service delivery you will possess the power to differentiate your firm from all the rest."*

Indeed, the only way to do that is to adopt a continuous optimization mindset – one where the entire company is continually being improved and enhanced. The adoption of this philosophy enables business leaders to ready their organizations for the agility required in today's global competitive landscape.

Sure, continuous change can be disruptive to an organization that is not accustomed to it. But, embracing it through **a continuous optimization program can make a firm more agile and improves its ability to pivot** when confronted by other unexpected business challenges or industry disruption.

If agility is not reason enough, here are few more reasons to consider embracing continuous optimization:

**1. The producer / consumer dynamic has changed.** Customers have a wider array of choices than ever before. They don't have to accept shoddy quality or service. Alternatives are widely available in the global marketplace. So, if you're not constantly optimizing what you do, someone else will.

**2. The game has shifted from mass production to mass customization.** Manufacturers are recognizing that the only way to keep customers is to deliver to their specifications. Most have embraced quality programs in order to grow and maintain their competitive positions. With the continued advancement of technology, though, even marketing and advertising has become a customized proposition. And optimization programs become the necessary conduit to re-imagining the customer experience throughout the entire value chain.

3. The push towards both mass customization and unsurpassed service delivery is leading **businesses to become very focused on their ecosystem and need to forge new relationships** with vendors who can be entrusted with managing important parts of their business operations – affording firms the ability to scale to size and capacity to meet fluctuating demand, as well as to extend reach otherwise unavailable without a dependable network of partners that span the globe.

It is important for companies to consider optimizing business processes now, because most business processes were contrived before the advent of the more sophisticated automated support tools that are currently available. While many firms tweak work activities by piling automation on to them, most should redefine their processes before automating them.



Indeed, optimization programs are an essential ingredient in positioning today's organizations for success in the exciting times that lie ahead. Workflow redesign needs to be continual and ever evolving in order to take advantage of the latest technological advances and to seize market opportunities as they arise.

To close, global integration, customized products / service offerings and ultra-responsiveness are the goals shared by every 21st century business. By implementing continuous optimization programs, today, firms improve their chances of achieving these goals tomorrow. If you'd like some help in getting this kind of program started, reach out to me and we can continue the conversation.