

San Pasa's Questions to Ask About
PROCESSES
(and other stuff)

Observe and think about how work and communications flow in your environment. Note opportunities for improvements. Ask questions about apparent problems—record information about WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, HOW and WHY—and write down ideas and suggestions for improvements as you collect them from the people “on the ground.” Ask if there are:

1. Existing or potential **backlogs** of important work or documentation to be processed.
2. Unwanted, unnecessary **delays**.
3. Undue amounts of highly time-consuming, **repetitive** clerical tasks.
4. Needless **duplications** of effort or unnecessary **redundancies** of information.
5. Manual processes that people say require **too much work**.
6. Excessive processing of **exceptions**.
7. **Peak workloads** that require exceptional effort or that are particularly disruptive.
8. **Bottlenecks or breakdowns**, including poor or outmoded workstation layouts, worn out or outmoded equipment, or outmoded functions.
9. Troublesome, outdated or undocumented **methods or procedures**, especially those that are incomplete or unnecessarily complex.
10. Areas for **potential changes** in practices, procedures, functions or the way policy is implemented.
11. Forms, methods, procedures, functions or workstations that could be **combined or eliminated**.
12. Processes or procedures that require better **controls**.

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13. Areas of possible **cost savings or increases in productivity** or where mechanization or automation could be of help.
14. Problems of getting numbers and other kinds of **information when needed** or problems of getting information in the **right form** or that is **correct and complete**.
15. Difficulties in **responding to inquiries** for information or status, or in producing special request reports, or in **expediting** priority and other special work.
16. **Unnecessary** papers or forms or files and paper **storage** problems.
17. **Electronic data and file** control and storage problems.
18. People performing necessary but **time-consuming** tasks that keep them from more important or more productive work.
19. **Communications breakdowns** (both human and electronic) or other communications problems, such as unwanted delays.
20. Particular products, services or processes where **poor quality** or **unacceptable variability** or **poor response or delivery** is a problem.
21. **Computer systems** not working well. Remember to record who is having problems, which aspect of a system (hardware, software, telecommunications, etc.) they are having problems with, and what kinds of problems they are having.
22. **Policies** implemented poorly or policies needing change.
23. Incomplete or incorrect **knowledge** of policies, processes, procedures and business practices.
24. Deficiencies in understanding **customer requirements** (of both *internal* and *external* customers).
25. Deficiencies in understanding **management requirements** (for example, priorities, goals and standards).

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26. **Complaints**—from customers, from suppliers and vendors, *and* from staff.
27. Equipment, supplies or staff **shortages**.
28. **Inappropriate uses** of staff, equipment, supplies or technology.
29. **Cycle time** problems or opportunities for improvement.
30. Unclear definitions of **roles** and **responsibilities**.
31. **Rework**.
32. Unnecessarily long **wait** queues or time.
33. Erroneous **rumors and assumptions** about people, policy, processes and procedures.
34. Poor **supplier or vendor** products or performance (including response).
35. Inappropriate levels of **authority** (including “empowerment”).
36. People who routinely “**don't get the word.**”

End.