wazoku
where innovation works

Process Improvement

Using Challenges for Process Improvement:

When people think about the term 'Innovation', they often lead to the big and the bold. They imagine it as being once-in-a-lifetime ideas, generated from scratch that turn industries on their head overnight

Occasionally, these revolutionary moments do come along. Far more regularly incremental changes, made to existing processes, deliver surprisingly effective results. When people in an organization focus on how to make their jobs more efficient, the potential upsides for the business are infinite.

At Wazoku, we've found that our Challenge-Driven Methodology allows businesses to focus their innovation targets on any aim they may have.

In this guide, we're going to look at some of the reasons for enacting change in this way. We'll also discuss how organizations are already doing this and share some of the success stories that we at Wazoku have helped businesses achieve over the years.

Reasons for Improving Process:

In our experience, the reasons for improving processes fall into one of the following categories:

1. **Competitive Advantage:** businesses that canvas employees who may use the products or services of a competitor gain a better understanding of the shortcomings of its offering. In this way, a company can increase its competitive advantage by fixing these issues.

2. **Time to Market:** a company that manufactures its own products can find incremental ways of improving this process. In doing so, new products can get to market at a quicker rate than before.

3 **Waste Reduction:** by improving processes, organizations can eliminate wasted time and resources on tasks that deliver minimal results.

4 **Cost-Efficiency:** in a lot of businesses, budgets reduce in size: causing staff to have to do more with less. Leveraging our crowd can result in vastly improved processes that allow for cost savings in many cases.

Now that we've laid out the reasons for improving processes, we'll look at how companies can achieve it and highlight some real-world success stories from Wazoku clients.

How Are Companies Achieving It?

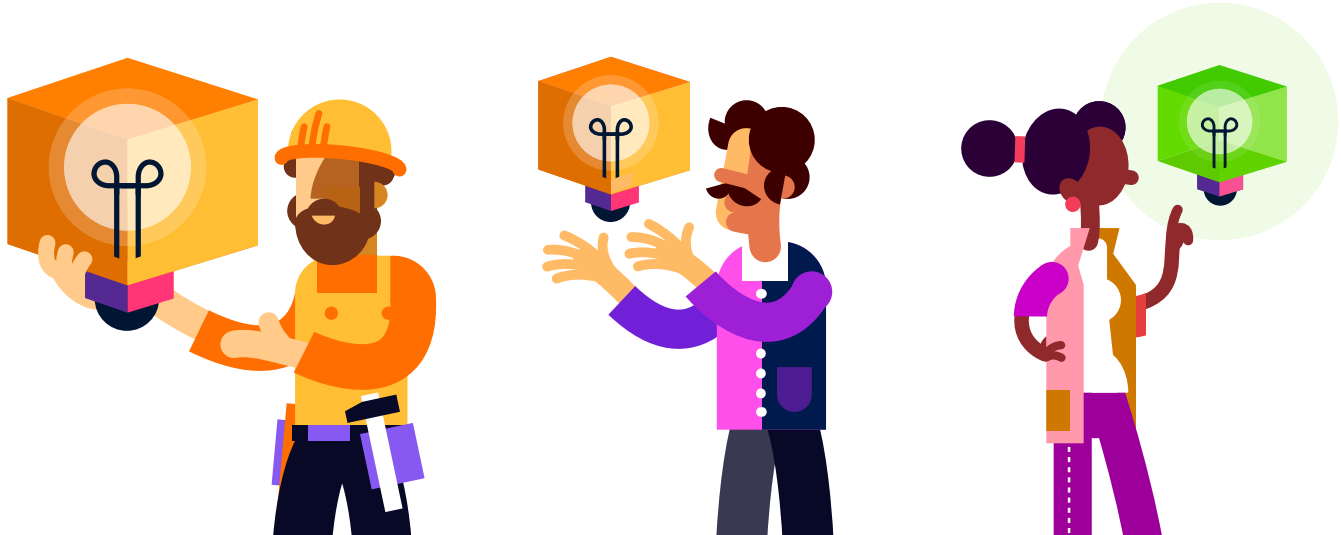
Process improvements need to be flexible, as outcomes, timescale, and scope fluctuate from case to case. Some examples that show how a business might go about achieving this include:

1 **Improving Product Challenges:** businesses operating customer communities or forums can harness the insights of users. With current issues and their remedies suggested by a customer, this provides an organization with an unparalleled view of its offering.

2 **Ways of Working Challenges:** these Challenges center employees within an organization and ask for their inputs on how current operations can be optimized. The result of these Challenges should hopefully create a more content and productive operation.

3 **Communication Challenges:** in an increasingly digital world, these Challenges focus on how communications can be made simpler. With so many avenues through which customers and employees can be reached, people can feel overwhelmed. These Challenges seek to unify messaging channels to avoid this scenario.

4 **Waste and Repetition Challenges:** these take an organization-level view and attempt to identify waste and repetition throughout the business. As digital transformation becomes more integrated, these Challenges are proving increasingly effective in identifying problem areas.



Success Stories:

Having run Challenges like these for over a decade, Wazoku has a wealth of expertise in this area. Below are just a couple of examples where, through using our Challenge-Driven Methodology, businesses have been able to improve processes and achieve incredible results.

WAITROSE & PARTNERS

→ Our partnership with Waitrose has seen the company completely overhaul its approach to innovation.

One Challenge saw a simple process amendment to cleaning schedules. Previously, different counters were cleaned on different days. The idea to unify this process came from one of Waitrose's in-store employees. The resulting change delivered a saving of around £500,000 per year across the Waitrose network.

Similarly, it was noted – again by an in-store staff member – that the receipts from the tills wasted between 4-5 inches of paper each time. So, she submitted a proposal that would rectify this issue, ensuring the receipts only contained essential information. As this was rolled out nationwide, it delivered a saving of approximately £168,000 per year.

AVIVA

→ Insurance giant Aviva had previously held an annual tournament that 36,000 global employees could participate in. The goal was to maintain a competitive advantage. However, the responses acquired were UK-centric and took four dedicated staff to oversee.

After partnering with Wazoku, the process was overhauled, engaging a wider range of staff and being managed through only one staff member. This made the running of the tournament less admin-heavy and more efficient, and generated ideas which resulted in millions of pounds being saved by the organization.

In this guide, we've discussed process improvement Challenges. Having highlighted reasons that businesses run them, we also discussed some ways in which positive outcomes can be achieved. Finally, we highlighted how our experience in this field has delivered impactful results for our clients.

Without optimizing the processes that businesses rely on, millions could be spent on selling products that are outperformed by rivals. Any company that improves its processes stands to save this capital. An organization that fails to do anything about these shortcomings won't survive for very long. Making sure that processes are improved effectively and efficiently is vital to success and longevity.

About Wazoku:

Wazoku is a pioneer in open innovation, crowdsourcing, and innovation at scale. For more than two decades, we've been helping our clients deliver sustainable and scalable innovation practices. As both for-profit and for-purpose, our software and expertise have been used to gain competitive advantage and overcome humanitarian crises around the globe, all of which are underpinned by the belief that anyone can be an innovator.