



identify | innovate | implement

The competitive push for more efficient plant operations has put the spotlight on work processes in order to achieve higher productivity, fewer human errors, and dependable plant availability. To that end, the importance of optimized processes with a proactive, operations-driven culture promotes continuous improvement and the type of plant that can remain competitive in any economic climate.

Process Optimization

Meeting the Challenge of Change

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What does it mean to optimize?

Optimization is the action of making the best or most effective use of a situation or resource. In a plant environment, that consists of doing the right work, at the right time, with the right resources to maximize an asset's rate of return and assure desired availability. Orchestrating operations, maintenance, management, engineering, and even supply chain to work safely, in harmony is the goal of the work management process. It's the key to optimization, a great source of added value, or possibly, your plant's biggest pain point.



The Case for Change

In the last 20 years, organizations have seen significant investment in new equipment and technology, a need to properly maintain existing equipment, cost pressures, and a loss of experienced employees. Any one of these elements, on its own, could likely be handled with minimal change to the status quo. However, all of these elements compounding the situation, puts a great deal of stress on an often-inexperienced management team and adds risk to the entire organization. It is important to have all employees work through the challenge of change together with experienced facilitators leading the process.



Building a Foundation for Change

Empowering Leadership

Effort and perseverance are required to truly drive transformational change. Like the people who work for them, managers also have their own routines, comfort zones, distractions, and initiatives they want to accomplish. It's important to remember that change isn't easy, in large part, because it's happening to them and everyone else simultaneously. However, management is typically charged with leading by example and maintaining change momentum.

However, it is critical, for change to be successful, that the management team has a consistent message and works towards the same goals and objectives. If this is lacking, the organization will hear conflicting messages and becomes confused resulting in resistance and pushback. Developing a common vision of the future operations of the plant is a needed first step in any change initiative.

Organizational Participation

Employee involvement is one of the most fundamental pieces of ensuring a sustainable process or transformational change. Employees always have the fear of change, and unless they are involved in the change process, it is highly likely that even the most loyal members of your teams will resist the change and be skeptical of the proposed benefits.

The biggest mistake some organizations make is failure to involve employees early enough in the change process after a common vision has been established. This spikes fear of the unknown, lack of desire to embrace new behaviors and eventually put up a complete barrier to the change.

Efforts to introduce change succeed when you get employees involved in the change process as much as possible. This includes a robust communication plan that kicks off prior to any analysis. It's critically important to get key employees involved, listen to their opinions, accounting for their input, and assure that the change is for the good of all in the organization, including their job function. We utilize cross functional teams to ensure all parties that could be impacted by the change are part of the solution thus eliminating push-back and unforeseen issues. Providing relevant, sufficient resources to drive them towards change is a necessary thing to do, so that they are comfortable and ready to adjust to the new development within the organization.

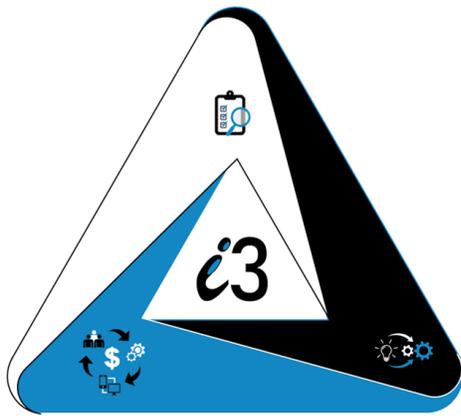
Developing an Optimized Culture

Collaboration with salaried and hourly personnel to design and implement optimized work processes, aligned with leadership's vision, strengthens all parties' commitment to the change. Gaining commitment from all stakeholders invokes unique perspectives and opportunities to optimize the processes. This includes developing solutions to organizational issues, addressing business drivers that are part of the desired future state vision, and ensuring employee and plant safety; being environmentally compliant; reducing production costs through improved asset reliability and availability; and effectively managing labor, inventory, contractors, and fuel costs. It's important to utilize those closest to the issues as they often have the perfect insight to address the challenge.

The Engagement Methodology

When the organizational pain gets to be too much to overcome, that’s when organizations typically reach out for help. At i3 Consulting, we believe it’s critical for an organization to get the support they need with resources that work well with the organization, even if that’s not us (hard to believe a consulting firm would say that, right?). But it’s true, if you don’t respect, trust, and like the consultant you are working with, the effort will have less of an impact.

It’s equally important to understand where you are as an organization before embarking on a change initiative. A line in the sand needs to be drawn, from where all progress moving forward can be measured. A plan must be formulated. Milestones and metrics should be used to gauge success. It’s impossible to execute a strategy without a plan. Our engagement methodology follows three simple steps with many sub-steps designed to solicit engagement, create buy-in, and ensure sustainability.



identify



An analysis of existing processes, procedures, available data, and field observations that identify the organization’s strengths and opportunities. The deliverables include a recommended business improvement and optimization plan to capture the financial benefits of the recommendations.

innovate



A systematic approach utilizing the analysis results to address improvement opportunities. Detailed planning with roadmap development including:

- Innovative process development utilizing templates, aligning resource and technology needs
- Alignment from strategic direction through tactical execution
- Establishment of project governance and stakeholder engagement
- Milestone development

implement



A dedicated approach to early adoption and engagement throughout the organization. Heavy focus on job-site reinforcement through training, coaching, and individualized mentoring. Tracking, monitor and control measures, and metrics are used and interpreted to assure performance improvement and sustainability.

The importance of sustainability cannot be under shadowed. We have identified six key elements to process change sustainability represented below:



These elements are woven into each of the three key steps in our engagement methodology and drive the sub-step activities. Properly assessing, anticipating and addressing these elements in the project plan significantly improve project success.

Properly updating these elements and recognizing progress and changes, we maintain focus on the objective of change.

Where to Start

Can you commit to a schedule? Do you manage emergency and break-in work? Are roles, responsibilities, and expectations clear and communicated? Do you hold cross functional meetings with representation from multiple departments to assure alignment and coordination?

Improved work scheduling will create pull for better initiation and more planned work while pushing efficiencies in execution and documentation. Additional benefits include:

- Increased workforce productivity
 - Improved coordination and timely support between departments:
 - Ops support for Maintenance- permitting, equipment handovers
 - Maintenance completion of priority work
 - Engineering support of maintenance and operational reliability
 - Inventory and production material availability
 - Increased craft coordination- more work completed on time
- Reduced workforce errors causing production loss and/or repairs
- Reduced O&M spend through reductions in contractor costs and employee overtime

Quick Process Checks

- Are you able to plan and execute a weekly, integrated department schedules with compliance at or above 80%, including outages?
- Do you have less than 8% emergency work each week?
- Are you predicting equipment failures before they occur?
- Does your monthly spend and monthly completed work track your annual budget and work plan?
- Is your backlog healthy, current, and generating enough work to justify contractors?

These are 5 quick questions that if you can't answer 'yes' to, it might justify having a conversation with i3 Consulting today.