

# information design

**Turning Your Information into Profitable Assets**

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{Business Overview Workbook}

# Help Yourself First

## Getting an Overall Picture of Your Business

Once KDK Information Design has discovered what their clients want technology to do for them (using the 20 Questions worksheet), we use this questionnaire to get a coarse overview of all the parts of a client's business. It is fine if you answer some of the questions with "I don't know" or "We haven't addressed it yet", just be as detailed as you can. At the end of each section we have included worksheets for you to write your answers down.

Unfortunately, we need you to learn a little bit of jargon so that we can point at the various parts of your processes and be able to discuss them clearly with mutual understanding, but we will try and keep jargon to a minimum and provide plenty of definitions and examples as we go.

In order to begin to create your Business Process Blueprint, you'll need to:

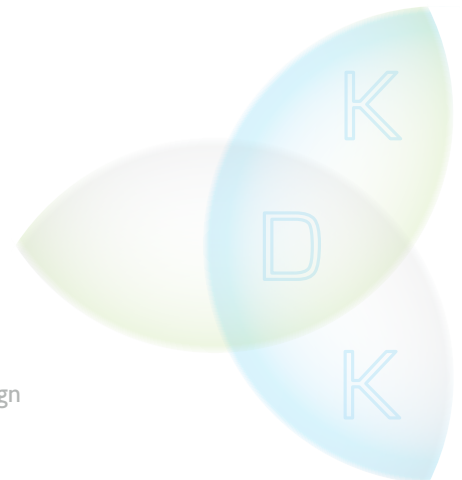
- \* List all of the Units of Work that are essential to your business
- \* Describe your Case Processes and how you do them
- \* Describe your Case Management Processes and how you do them
- \* Describe your Case Strategy Processes and how you do them

Additionally, you will need you to answer the following questions regarding the specific processes you are looking at improving:

- a) What are the *process principles*?
- b) What are the *process requirements*?
- c) Are there any *organizational constraints*, things you cannot change?

**Note:** Even though you are only going to be focusing on improving just a few of your processes, it is **essential** that you are fully aware of what is going on in all of the other processes in your business. The activity going on in your business is a *network* of interacting processes, a network that is changing from moment to moment. Only after you are able to see that network as a whole, will you then be able to ensure that you balance the needs of **all** of your stakeholders.

*Now, let's address each one of these items in detail.*



## Part 1: CP's, CMP's, and CSP's: Your 3 Layers of Processes

There are three types, or layers, of processes involved in any business.

- \* **Case Processes (CP's):** The process of doing individual Units of Work where you handle an X or process an X (X could be a client, an order, etc.)
- \* **Case Management Processes (CMP's):** The process of managing the flow of Units of Work (planning, reporting, monitoring, scheduling, prioritizing, etc.)
- \* **Case Strategic Processes (CSP's):** The process of maintaining a strategic view of the other processes (CP's and CMP's) and changing them when necessary (taking into account such things as: performance, profitability, trends, regulations, marketplace changes, etc.)

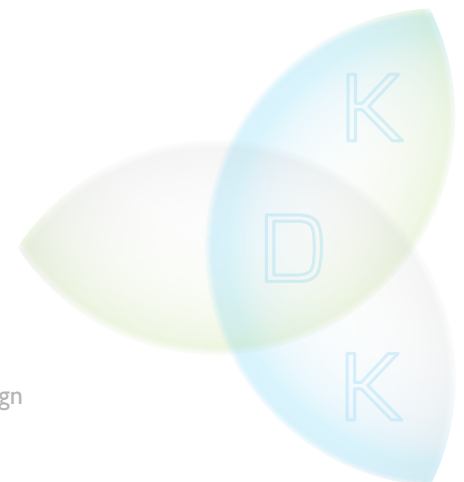
It's what people do, not what they do it to, that defines a process. A process is mainly about actions people do, not data or things.

### Example:

Let's say you have an Easter Egg factory. Your factory is a big place, but we're just going to look at a very small part of your operations. You have a conveyer belt that sends the eggs to your various employees who in turn decorate them as the order specifies. In order to illustrate the difference between Units of Work, CP's, CMP's, and CSP's, let me label what is going on in your factory. Your plain white eggs are Units of Work, waiting for an order to let your employees know how to decorate them. As soon as an order is given to the manager, you have a "case," let's call this case "Emily's egg," since Emily is the customer who ordered it. Joe who paints the blue dots on "Emily's egg" is engaged in a Case Process, as is John who paints the yellow stripes on "Emily's egg."

Mandy receives the cases as they come in and looks at all of the orders and realizes that some others should be rushed and "Emily's egg" can wait until it reaches Joe and John on the conveyor belt. Mary finds out Mandy's priorities and is in charge of controlling the speed of the conveyor belt and making sure that all of the cases (orders) are processed according to quality and client requirements. Mandy and Mary are both engaged in Case Management Processes and are concerned with the rates and levels of Case Processes.

Sam is standing back watching and improving how Mandy, Mary, Joe and John interact, looking into the latest conveyer belt technology, planning on offering new products, evaluating profitability, efficiency, etc. Sam is involved in Case Strategic Processes.



## Units of Work

If you work as a customer service agent in a call center, a phone call is a Unit of Work (a UOW) that is essential to your business. So, when a phone conversation from Jane Doe comes to your desk, you have an individual case of a UOW, which you might refer to as the “Jane Doe call”.

Here are some examples of units of work that are essential to their respective businesses:

### Some are tangible:

- \* a building, for a property management company
- \* a donation, for a charity
- \* a customer, for a services company
- \* a patient, for a hospital

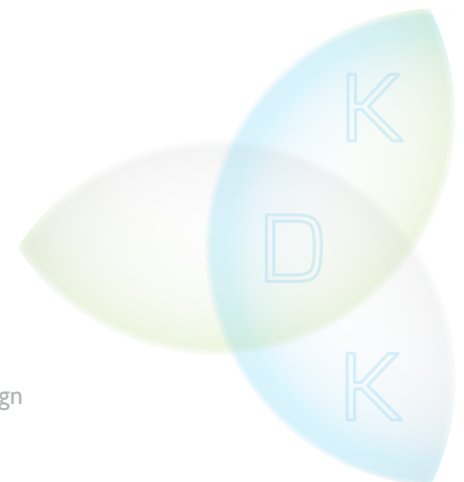
### Some are less tangible:

- \* a phone call, for a call center
- \* a purchase order, for a supplies company

### Others are abstract:

- \* a marketing campaign, for the Marketing Dept.
- \* a clinical trial, for a pharmaceutical company
- \* a meeting, for a committee secretary
- \* an amendment to a purchase order, for an office furniture company

Units of Work come in “cases” or “episodes,” each needing to be dealt with in a standard way. If you have a standard way of dealing with a UOW, you recognize that each case follows the same process. In this example, when you handle a customer service call by Jane Doe, you will follow a Case Process (a CP) to deal with that call in a standard way. Case Processes are simply the standard way of handling or preparing individual cases or instances of UOW’s.



## The Processes in Every Business

There are processes that exist in every business. The list below includes those processes that are truly universal. Take a moment and describe how you handle these processes in your business. Also, add those processes that are unique to your business and describe how you handle them. Often there are specific processes within the general categories we have provided, so get as detailed as you would like.

### Case Processes (CP's)

- \* Attracting Potential Customers
- \* Converting Potential Customers
- \* Handling Customers
- \* Collecting Money
- \* Accounting
- \* Government Compliance

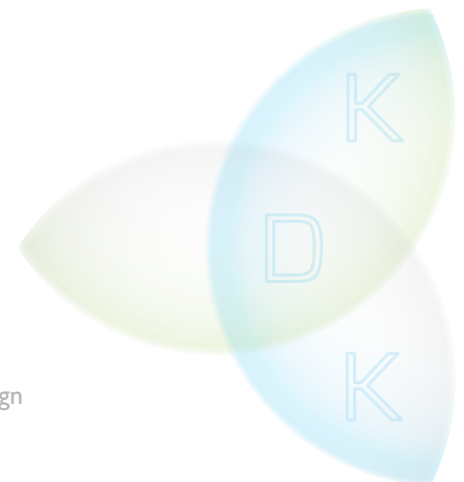
### Case Management Processes (CMP's)

- \* Managing Employees
- \* Managing Resources
- \* Managing the processes of Attracting Potential Customers
- \* Managing the processes of Converting Potential Customers
- \* Managing the processes of Handling Customers
- \* Managing the processes of Collecting Money
- \* Managing the processes of Accounting
- \* Managing the processes of Government Compliance

### Case Strategic Processes (CSP's)

- \* Correlating CP's and CMP's
- \* Evaluating Processes, Profitability, Investments, etc.
- \* Planning (developing new products, services, markets, etc.)

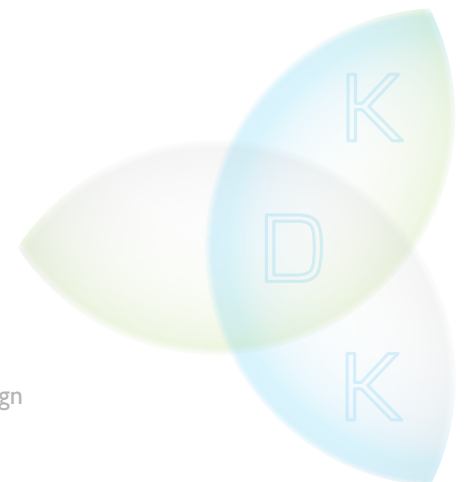
When you engage in a CP or a CMP you are working *in* your business. When you are engaged in a CSP, you are working *on* your business. You can outsource many of the processes that are CP's and CMP's, but you cannot outsource CSP's; you can only enlist advisors to assist you. The transition to becoming a true business owner depends on giving adequate attention to your CSP's.



## Part 1 Worksheet

**List the Units of Work that are essential in your business:**

See list above for examples.



**(CP) Attracting Potential Customers:**

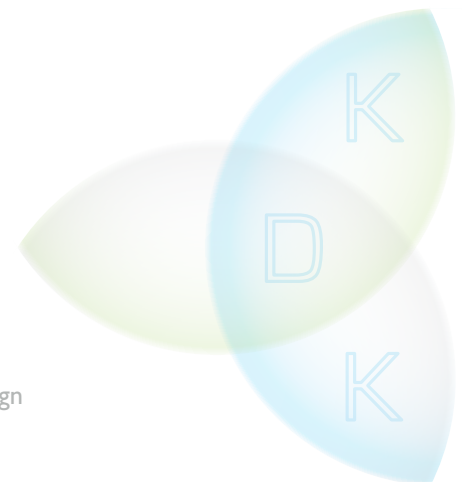
What activities do you engage in to Attract Potential Customers? What types of marketing do you engage in: print, web, direct mail, radio, etc.? Do you utilize retail space, word of mouth, return customers?

**(CP) Converting Potential Customers:**

What activities do you engage in to get a potential customer to commit to doing business with you? Sales people, send materials, seminars, proposals, etc.? How often do you contact them?

**(CP) Handling Customers:**

What activities do you engage in to handle customers and their needs? How do you handle fulfillment? How often do you communicate with the customer during the process? What does that communication consist of?



**[CP] Collecting Money:**

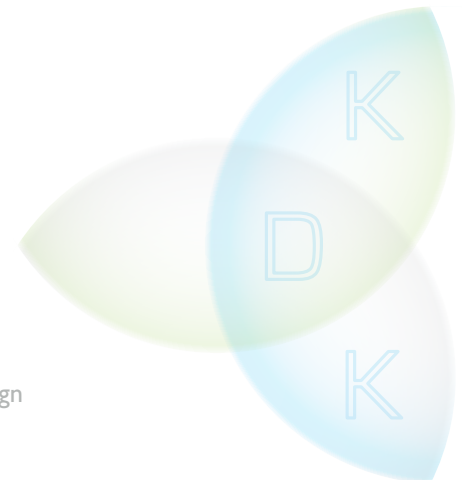
What do you do to collect money? Do you invoice your customers or do they pay up front (or some combination)? How do you go about following up with outstanding accounts? Do you utilize technology to process payments (credit cards, cash register scanners, check scanners, etc.)?

**[CP] Accounting:**

What activities do you perform to account for your time and money? Do you bill hourly for services or by the project? Do you make daily deposits or only when a “batch” has been created? How do you account for time spent on clients? What software do you use to keep your books?

**[CP] Government Compliance:**

What activities do you perform to comply with laws or accrediting agencies? What is your business entity’s structure (LLC, S-Corp, etc)? Do you outsource your payroll, workman’s comp, etc.? Besides taxes and licensing, what other types of compliance do you provide documentation for?

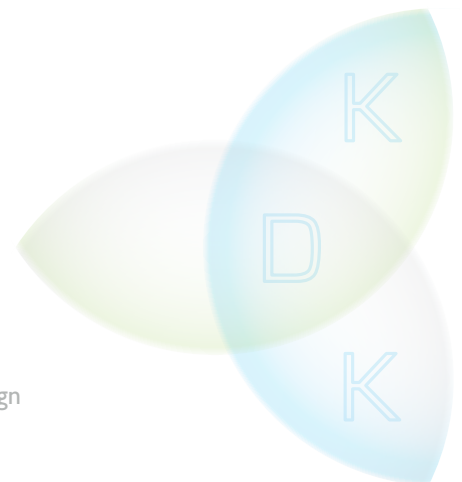


**(CP) Other Case Processes:**

What other Case Processes do you do that are specific to your business? Look at your list of Units of Work for ideas. How do you handle or process these cases?

**(CMP) Managing Employees:**

What regular activities do you do to manage employees? What does your functional and/or organizational chart look like (feel free to attach it)? Do you have an employee handbook? Do you have an operations manual? Are there clear reporting processes in place for employee activities? How often do employees account for their activities? Are employees relatively free to make decisions on how they utilize their time or is it very structured? What regular meetings do you have with employees?



**[CMP) Managing Resources:**

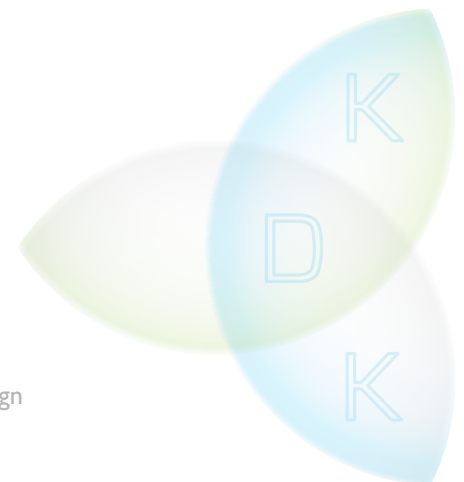
What regular activities do you engage in to manage your business' resources? You manage time, money, property, personnel, workloads, orders, availability of equipment, etc. What request forms do people fill out to get resources or purchase approval? What meetings do you have to discuss this topic and make decisions?

**[CMP) Managing the processes of Attracting Potential Customers:**

What regular activities do you engage in to manage and measure your marketing processes? What meetings do you have to discuss these processes? What reports do you generate? What types of things do you measure?

**[CMP) Managing the processes of Converting Potential Customers:**

What regular activities do you engage in to manage and measure your conversions? What meetings do you have to discuss these processes? What reports do you generate? What types of things do you measure?



**[CMP) Managing the processes of Handling Customers:**

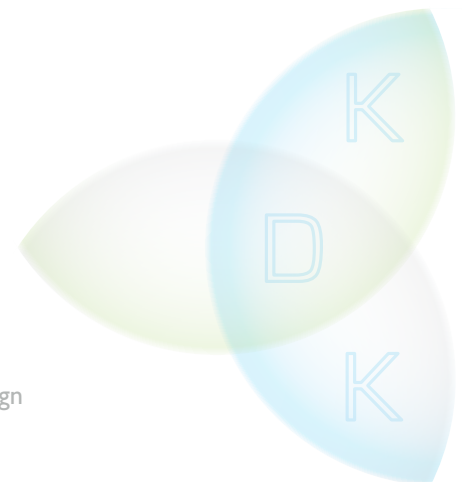
What regular activities do you engage in to manage and measure your handling of customers? What meetings do you have to discuss these processes? What reports do you generate? What types of things do you measure?

**[CMP) Managing the processes of Collecting Money:**

What regular activities do you engage in to manage and measure your collections rate? What meetings do you have to discuss these processes? What reports do you generate? What types of things do you measure?

**[CMP) Managing the processes of Accounting:**

What regular activities do you engage in to manage and measure your accounts of time and money? What meetings do you have to discuss these processes? What reports do you generate? What types of things do you measure?

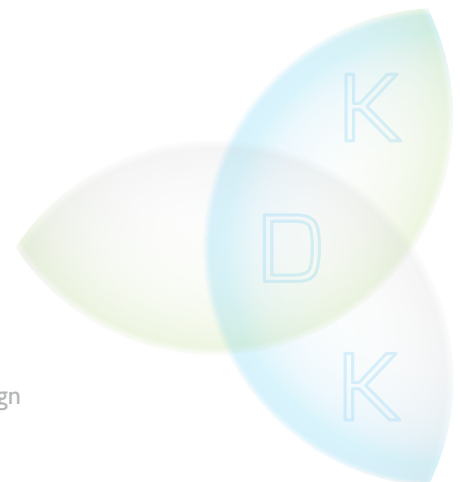


**[CMP) Managing the processes of Government Compliance:**

What regular activities do you engage in to manage and measure your handling of compliance to regulations? What meetings do you have to discuss these processes? What reports do you generate? What types of things do you measure?

**[CMP) Other Case Management Processes:**

What other Case Management Processes do you engage in that are specific to your business? Look at your “Other” Case Processes. How do you manage them? What meetings do you have to discuss these processes? What reports do you generate? What types of things do you measure?

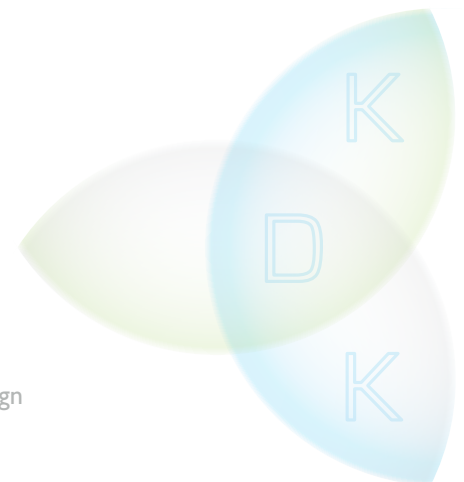


**(CSP) Correlating CP's and CMP's:**

What meetings do you have to discuss these processes and their interactions? What reports do you request from your managers and what are you most interested in measuring? What conflicts do you regularly face? What policies and procedures do you impose on your resource managers? Do you approve annual budgets for departments?

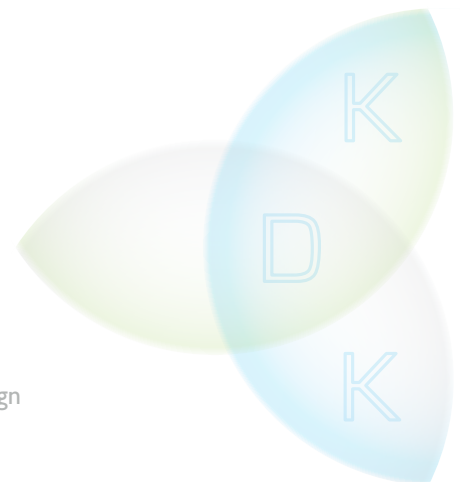
**(CSP) Evaluating Processes, Profitability, Investments, etc.:**

How do you define success in your processes? What margins should you be getting from your sales? How are you addressing growth? What constraints do you currently face? What changes are going on in your marketplace? How are your competitors currently doing? What are your main competitive advantages? What areas of your business need help? What are your main goals for the short term, medium term, and long term?



**[CSP] Planning:**

Are you developing new products, services, markets, etc.? For which challenges do you foresee needing to prepare?



## Part 2: Questions about your Improved Processes

First you must decide which processes you are specifically looking at improving. **Write down those processes here, you'll use them to answer the questions below:**

Now, there are a few crucial questions you need to answer for yourself regarding those specific processes you would like to improve. Again, feel free to write, "I don't know" where necessary.

### A) What are the process principles?

**What *should* your improved process be like?** How should it feel to use, how should it work within your culture, what standards must it conform to, etc? We are also looking for issues related to confidentiality, speed of responses, sensitivity to changes and input, etc. For example:

"When a customer calls in, he shouldn't be bounced from person to person."

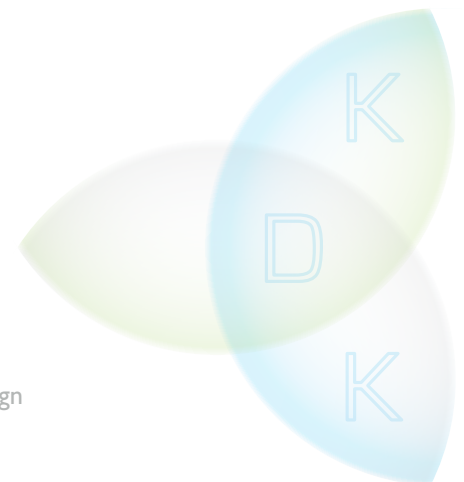
"Deliverables must be clearly defined in writing."

"It is a collaborative approach."

"Employees are not free to make x decisions without the approval of management."

"Quality is central to our approach."

**What are the principles related to those specific processes you'd like to improve?:**



## B) What are the process requirements?

**1) What is the starting state?** What will be the possible states which start your processes? There may be several different events that could trigger the beginning of a case. Remember to consider Case Processes and Case Management Processes.

“Approved plan put in the proper intake basket”

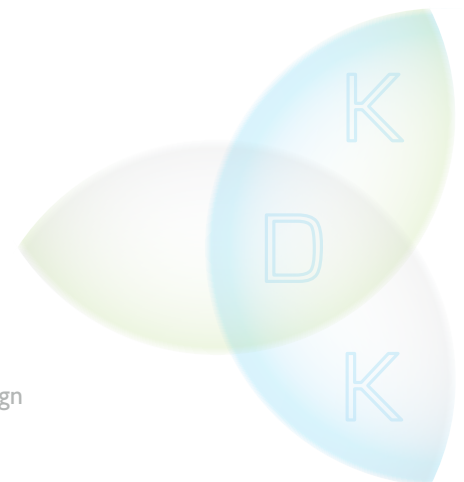
“Support call is transferred to the appropriate technician”

“Purchase order has been delivered to fulfillment team”

“A request has been received for a new product to be tested”

“A project has reported an overrun in budget”

**What is the starting state of those processes you'd like to improve?:**



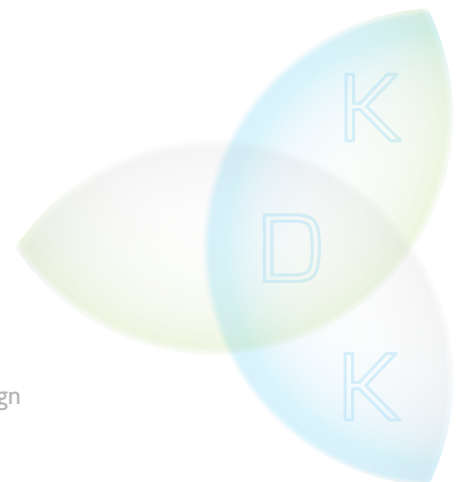
**What actions are required in the process?**

**2) What activities must take place to get your desired results? You may also have the need for reviews at certain points or certain checks to verify quality:**

“All units must be tested prior to packaging them”

“Customer must receive draft of document for review prior to scheduling presentation meeting”

**What actions are required related to the processes you'd like to improve?:**



### 3) What business rules govern the process?

Are there times when financial oversight is required? Will specified individuals have to make certain decisions or perform precise actions? The relationship between a Case Process and its corresponding Case Management Process will manifest itself here. For instance:

“All purchase orders must be verified by both supervisor and technician”

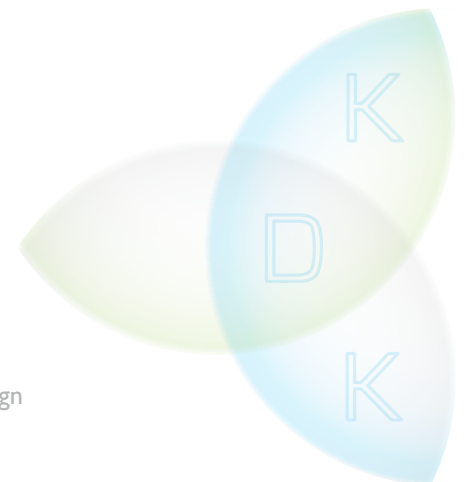
“CEO must be notified of progress every week”

“Management will verify that clients have received daily communication regarding their current cases”

“Sales Managers needs to be brought into discussions regarding new marketing campaigns to ensure proper timing”

“All communications supporting the resolution must be printed and filed”

**What business rules govern the processes you'd like to improve?:**



#### 4) What are the required outcomes of the process?

For a Case Management Process, what are the possible outcomes for each of the identified starting points? For a Case Process, what states do you want things to be in when the case has been handled or the process has been completed? There are several possible options: completed or cancelled, approved or not approved or returned for rework, etc.

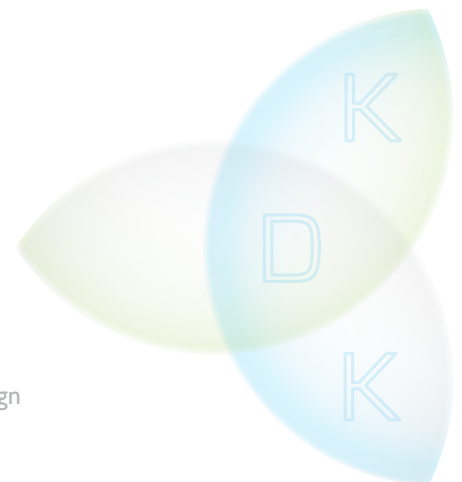
“Approved document printed, management apprised of content, and electronic files stored in database”

“Budget request returned to manager with CEO’s recommendations for resubmission”

“Shipping department informs client of tracking number for their product”

“Customer has made payment for goods received”

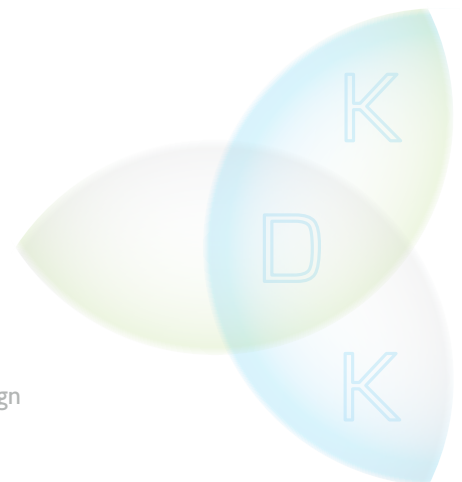
#### What are the required outcomes of the processes you’d like to improve?:



**C) Are there any organizational constraints, things you cannot change?**

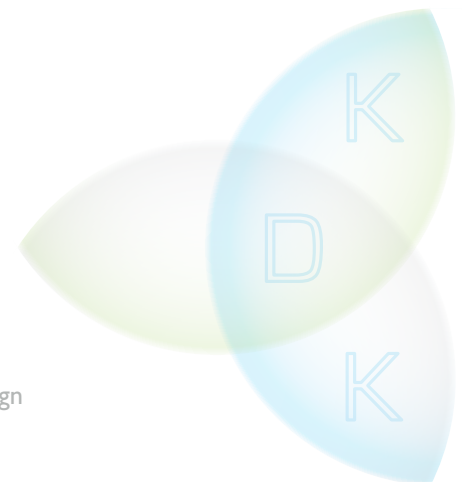
**1) Are you constrained by the current organizational structure?** Must the improved processes take place within the current roles and responsibilities? Is your organizational structure open to new roles and responsibilities? Are some roles fixed and others open to change?

**2) Does your IT infrastructure impose constraints?** Are you restricted in what you can expect in the way of availability of information, person-to-person communications, support for workflow and project scheduling, or creation and circulation of documents in all their forms?



**3) What constraints do regulatory agencies place on you?** Are there requirements for reporting on any of your processes? Are there mandatory levels of transparency? Which activities must be open to independent audit? Are there scheduled exchanges of information with regulatory agencies? Are there items or proposals that must be licensed or approved before you can proceed?

**4) Are there safety, security, or risk issues that need to be addressed?** Do you need individuals with independent oversight to verify compliance in these areas? What interactions with others will they need to have? Are there specific procedures that you must include in your own processes? Are there certain processes with which you must correlate to address these areas?



**5) Are there cultural norms that must be observed?** Are you an empowered or a “top-down” company? What behaviors do you anticipate from your staff and your managers that might lead you to choose certain styles of interaction or relationship? What challenges within your culture will you and your staff face as you seek to improve your processes?

