

Using An Improvement Frame to Create an “Operational Definition” of a Critical Initiative

	What is in it	Why this is needed
Objectives: Background, UDRs, Problem statement Goal statement	An externally (i.e., customer) focused description of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What lead to the current situation, including previous attempts to address this problem • Observable, measurable conditions or outcomes you are trying to change. • Fundamental business reason for doing the initiative. • A list of specific performance characteristics which are expected to be upgraded by carrying out the initiative. To the extent possible these characteristics should be measurable. 	Provides necessary context so people understand what has come before this. A simple, direct statement of purpose is generates alignment and understanding. To define the problem in terms of data, not causes or presumed solutions The best way to understand why you are doing something is to clearly define what you expect to get out of it.
Methods: How will you create this improvement?	A statement describing the basic approach the team believes will solve the problem or achieve the goal.	This gives the basic direction for the work, such as indicating which of the four problem types you are dealing with and how it will be approached.
What outcomes or effects do you expect?	A description of the changes in roles, structure and function that will take place in the organization as a result of successfully completing the initiative. This often includes specific "deliverables."	Provides insight into how people hope things will look and feel after the initiative is completed. In a sense it creates an "updatable vision" and helps everyone agree on what the initial version of that vision is.
Define the scope (boundaries):	A set of statements which define what is "fair game," what must be addressed, and what should not be touched in carrying out the initiative.	This section addresses many of the reasons why initiatives falter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to narrow of an approach • attempts to "eat an elephant" • unspoken taboos
Measures: How will you know you improved?	A set of specific quantities which will be measured and used to assess how well the initiative has been carried out and whether the goals have been achieved.	Provides the answer to the question "how are we going to know if this thing works?" The measures operationally define some of the goals listed earlier. It also pinpoints the baseline data needed.
Problem Solving Plan:	A list of key points which provide a 10,000 foot view of how the initiative will be carried out. Usually provides guiding information on timing, phasing, what happens before, during and after the work, and how it will be managed.	This provides a rough framework for answering the question "how are we going to do this?" It is often necessary for the Core Team to create a more detailed plan.
Roles	A table of key roles and the people who will fill them in carrying out the initiative. These usually include team leader, facilitator and team members for both the sponsor and Core Teams.	This section assigns responsibilities and therefore "accountability." It also helps identify what capabilities and skills are needed to move ahead.