

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Most of the people engage in small and mid-size business in India or any developing country think that Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are meant for large and complex business houses only. It's a false belief to have these days especially when compliances need to followed day in and day out, Customers & suppliers asking for more and more detailed information on quick interval. Employees overloaded with Information. So, Operational Excellence irrespective of the size of business is the need of the business and can only be achieved when you have well laid processes in place.

In my consulting practices, I have noticed the three key components of the business in this Knowledge based economy, namely People, Process and Technology are not aligned properly. We have to be very cognizant about the value loss in the organization be it large or small due to this mis-alignment. When we say having a process and it being aligned with your business needs are two different things. For example, travel policies and approval process are changed phenomenally post Covid 19 pandemic. So, the hiring processes, finance & accounting, vendor management, Purchases, customer supports, business meet, promotion events, client meeting set up etc. and what not? Are our processes defined as per the emerging need of the business in the post Covid era? If the top management finds any of these answers in NO.. Then there is a need for intervention and get it aligned as per the current business tools.

First step should be defining the business objectives and then aligning People, Process and Technology in order to drive the operations to achieve the Objectives as defined. We need to define every aspect and relate that to achieve operational excellence.



People Role & Job description, Ideal profile, manpower mapping, hiring strategies, Inviting Ideal Candidate, Shortlisting, Final Negotiation, Selection, Induction Training, Other training programs on Sales/ Marketing, Leadership and other training Programs.

Processes should be defined to achieve Core function flow smoothly and so we must think and adopt IT Beyond and the IT Department, Financial Process. Marketing process, Standard Operating Procedure. Manufacturing/Project Management, Supply Chain Process, Value Chain/ Forward Integration Process, Purchase Process, CRM etc.

Technology should not be limited to manufacturing or trading/ ecommerce platforms rather every aspect of business and should include Hardware and Networking need of the business, requirement of productivity Software and an IT Beyond the IT department. Willingness for the digital Initiative and using Big Data Analytics wherever business demands. Integrating social media and Platforms in Businesses as per need, IOT (Internet of things), Data Generation, Analysis and Treatment for Business gain Innovation mindset in the Team and Management Inclination on Technology Implementation. SAAS, PASS, IASS (Cloud Initiative), Realtime Predictive business and customer analytics for mobile, Potential Action and result attitude.

So, just to sum up, we define Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) as a scientific approach and guide map critically defined to achieve business objectives for smooth operations, well laid transparent step by step work guidelines to achieve best result with team. This is a winning formula for any organization be it big business houses or small business.

(Note-The writer is a subject matter expert and has helped many small businesses in implementing SOP, you can write to us to know more and our work area)

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