



MUNICIPAL COURT BUSINESS PROCESS APPROACH

# Purpose to Product

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**Congratulations!!!**  
You're A Clerk of Court, Court  
Administrator, Director, etc.



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# YOU ARE NOT ALONE



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What is Our Purpose?

**Our Purpose is  
the Effective  
Administration of Justice.**

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What is Our Product?

**Our Product  
is Information**

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### Information is a Product? Huh?

- Our information is used by various agencies in the Criminal Justice System
  - ICE
  - Homeland Security
  - Local and State Law Enforcement
  - FBI
- Our information is used by various businesses
  - Pre-Employment Criminal Background Checks
  - Criminal Background Checks for Housing
  - Insurance Companies for insurance rates

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### What is your Product Quality?

- Is it complete and accurate?
- Is it readily accessible?
- Do you question its validity?
- Do you have internal controls in place to ensure confidential/sensitive information is not released?
- Do you have quality checks to ensure completeness and accuracy?
- Is it processed according to internal and external requirements?
- Does it meet the needs and demands of stakeholders?

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### Increasing Product Quality

- Know the process from beginning to end – including Law Enforcement, Codes Enforcement, Prosecutor and sometimes Public Defender/Pro-Bono Attorney.
- Map your specific overall process and its respective sub-processes to assist in assigning internal and external requirements.
- Begin communicating with various stakeholders – Law Enforcement, Codes Enforcement, City Council, Finance, etc. on the high-risk elements and their direct/indirect influence.
- Establish internal controls to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and consistency.

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### Rules of Two's

- The Court has two sides of its House – Judicial and Administrative
- Each side of the house has two functional areas:
  - Financial – **YOUR JOB.**
  - Operational – **YOUR JOB.**
- There are essentially two high-risk liability areas:
  - Financial Management – **Clerks can go to jail.**
  - Records Management – **Clerks can be fined or go to jail.**
- Each have internal/external requirements guiding them.

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### Process Perspective

- Our process is much like an assembly line.
- Each stage of the process – from beginning to end – has something added to it from different internal/external stakeholders.
- Each part of the process may have internal and external factors guiding who, what, where, when, why and how.
- However, your assembly line depends on agency structure and available resources.
- With each step, remember the Rules of Two's.

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### Creating the Product

- The first stage of our product begins with our agency's Law Enforcement and/or Codes Enforcement – **Records Risk**.
- **JUDICIAL** - They make the cases and present them to either a Presiding Judge during a Bench Trial; or, if arrested – to a Judicial Officer (within 24 hours) to have bond set – **Records & Financial Risks**.
  - Municipal Court Jurisdiction
  - State Court Jurisdiction
- **ADMINISTRATIVE** - Calendaring and Docketing is the next stage in the product – **Records Risk**.
- **JUDICIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE** - Court Proceedings is next – **Records Risk**.

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### Creating the Product - Continued

- **JUDICIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE** - Disposition and Sentencing – **Financial and Records Risks**.
- **ADMINISTRATIVE** - Case Finalization – **Financial and Records Risks**.
- **ADMINISTRATIVE** - Records Retention and Disposal is the final stage – **Records Risk**.
- Each stage in your product assembly process will have respective sub-processes within them.
- For example, Docketing has bench trials, jury trials and preliminary hearings. Each of these is a sub-process – jury trials and preliminary hearings have Rules of Court and statutes guiding them.

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### Process Mapping – Simple



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### Gap Analysis

- Once the process is defined according to specific agency structure and available resources, research the Bench Book for those items included in each section – by each section.
- Remember – **ROME WAS NOT BUILT IN A DAY.**
- Determine where the process may not be maximizing the requirements – either from SC Supreme Court Orders, Memos, State Statutes, City Ordinances, SC Department of Revenue, Treasurer's Office (State and Local), Rules of Court, etc.
- Each stage also have different forms involved (e.g., Tickets, Warrants, Checklists, Transmittals, Jury Trial Requests, etc.).

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### Your World Determines your Process

- SC Supreme Court Orders/Memos, State Statutes, City Ordinances, Human Resource Rules/Regulations, etc. guide your process – they **DO NOT DEFINE PROCESS STEPS IN YOUR WORLD.**
- You have to incorporate these into the steps of your process.
- Your process drives your product – your product is EVERYTHING.
- You have internal and external customers depending on your product:
  - Law Enforcement – local, state, federal
  - Prosecutors
  - General Public
  - Businesses

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### Internal & External Stakeholders

- Each agency will have internal/external stakeholders, but they may differ between peer agencies.
- The Gap Analysis will help define the stakeholders and what type of impact (direct or indirect) they have on your product's assembly line.
- For example, City Council (internal) has direct impact on structure and resources through budget and charges through city ordinances.
- State Legislators (external) have direct impact – think EXPUNGEMENTS.

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### Cost Benefits Analysis

- Once the process is defined, stakeholders identified and improvements determined, you may want to find out how cost effective the current system is:
  - Can any other part of the process be automated?
  - Can any part of the process be delegated to a different department, stakeholder, etc.
  - Can we prove a large capital investment now will save money for over 5 – 10 years?
  - Can sub-processes be combined or broken down for better efficiency and effectiveness?

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### Take Away Items

- **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!!!**
- **DO NOT** get overwhelmed with all the regulations – define your assembly line according to structure and resources **FIRST**.
- Assign respective regulations to assembly line stages after your current process is defined.
- Conduct a **Gap Analysis** to determine improvements and stakeholders.
- Find ways to show cost reduction, maximization of resources and increases in levels of customer service.

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