



**Improvement of Cross-functional Communication and Alignment
in Order to Deliver Identified Business Objectives
(Organizational Change / Management Goal Statement)
Parker Hall**

Issue: In an increasingly competitive marketplace, a need exists to deliver business objectives (which are increasing in number) at a faster rate with flat to declining resources (monetary and human). Additionally, project scope is often determined while in process, leading to changing objectives and targets. The result is suboptimal delivery of projects and often a contentious work environment.

What has been done: I have partnered and integrated my teams more effectively with senior leaders and cross-functional partners in order to improve communication and understanding of key issues. Because this is a company-wide issue, several corporate solutions have been implemented. The primary and most effective solution is a gating protocol in which all projects within a business group are evaluated at determined points in the development process. A sub-committee (which I am a part of) evaluates all projects for business impact and strategic fit at prescribed points in a project lifecycle. Key metrics (such as timing to market, economic impact, test results, manufacturing capability, etc.) are presented and evaluated. The action of the subcommittee can be one of three outcomes: approve (allow the project to proceed to the next gate or commercialize depending upon the gate), redirect (more information or additional work is needed prior to passing through the requested gate), and cancel (project is permanently terminated and resources reassigned). To date, there have been 3 monthly gate meetings.

Impacts: Although an official communication plan and mechanism is not complete to date (a comprehensive process is in development), the result has been clearer understanding of priorities, elimination of confusion on whether a project is active or canceled, and aligned resources against approved projects. Additionally, because the gating process evaluates all aspects of a business proposition, functions are more prepared at the time of "gating" to present and justify projects (all with defensible data).

My role in this process is as follows: (1) provide leadership and technical direction for all Research and Development input to the gating process, (2) participate as an active and engaged thought and business leader in the gating process, and (3) lead the communication process to the Research and Development functions on gating process outcomes. As previously stated, no official communication process has been approved to date, the ad hoc process used has driven clarity and understanding through the organization.

The work described is accomplished at a business team level. There are 2 primary business teams in the division. Another expected outcome of this process is to drive for clarity and prioritization within the division. This work is in process as well.

Funding Sources, Cooperators, Partners, Mentors, etc.: The funding for this process comes from the division in which I work, cooperators are all senior division leaders, business team leaders, and functional leaders. Key partners in the development and implementation of this process include Supply Chain Master Planning experts and an outside consultant that developed the process used. Mentors in the process as it relates to me directly include my immediate manager (Julie Simonson), my cross-functional manager (Darren Serrao), and my identified FSLI mentor (Sean Connolly).

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