processfix

Workshop details	
Client	Warwick Business School
Dates	15th January 2009
Venue	B0.08
Simulation	n/a
Improvement scope	
Process	PROD decision making procedure
Processing unit	Project specifications/ business case
Input volume	9 per month
Number of employees	20 members of the committee

Supplier	Input	Process	Output	Customer
Project Sponsors	Proposals	1. Submit outline	List of prioritised, actionable activities	ISSU
ISSU	Update report	2. Pre-circulation & reading		Project Sponsors
ISSU & Project Sponsor	Development Resource	3. Review progress to date & sign off	Transparency of development process	(WBS)
Steering	WBS's Strategic Priorities / Business Need	4. Consider new and revised proposals		(University)
Chair/membership		5. Create priority list & seek further Info		
Tech. Utilization Consultant	Membership & Terms of reference			
University Compliance Officer	Compliance & Technical Constraints	Minutes produced & distributed		

Level 1 process

Review progress to date & sign off	→	Consider new and revised proposals	→	Create priority list & seek further	→	Submit outline / Pre-circulation & reading / Minutes produced & distributed

Systems and technology
A workflow system for submitting and commenting on proposals exists but is not utilised
Opportunity statement: "Reduce the time spent on making decisions while retaining the quality and sustaining transparency" Need to use workshop to flesh out general questions about functioning and effectiveness of committees in WBS

Critical To Success Tree

PROD DECISION

ACCURACY
- Prod Decision Vs ISSU's Priorities
- Priorities Vs implemented decision
- Decision on each proposal

QUALITY
- Transparency/Fairness (common criteria)
- Representation (Feedback/record of decision/% Attendance)

TIMELINESS
- Frequency of mtgs
- Length of mtg
- Time getting decisions to customers
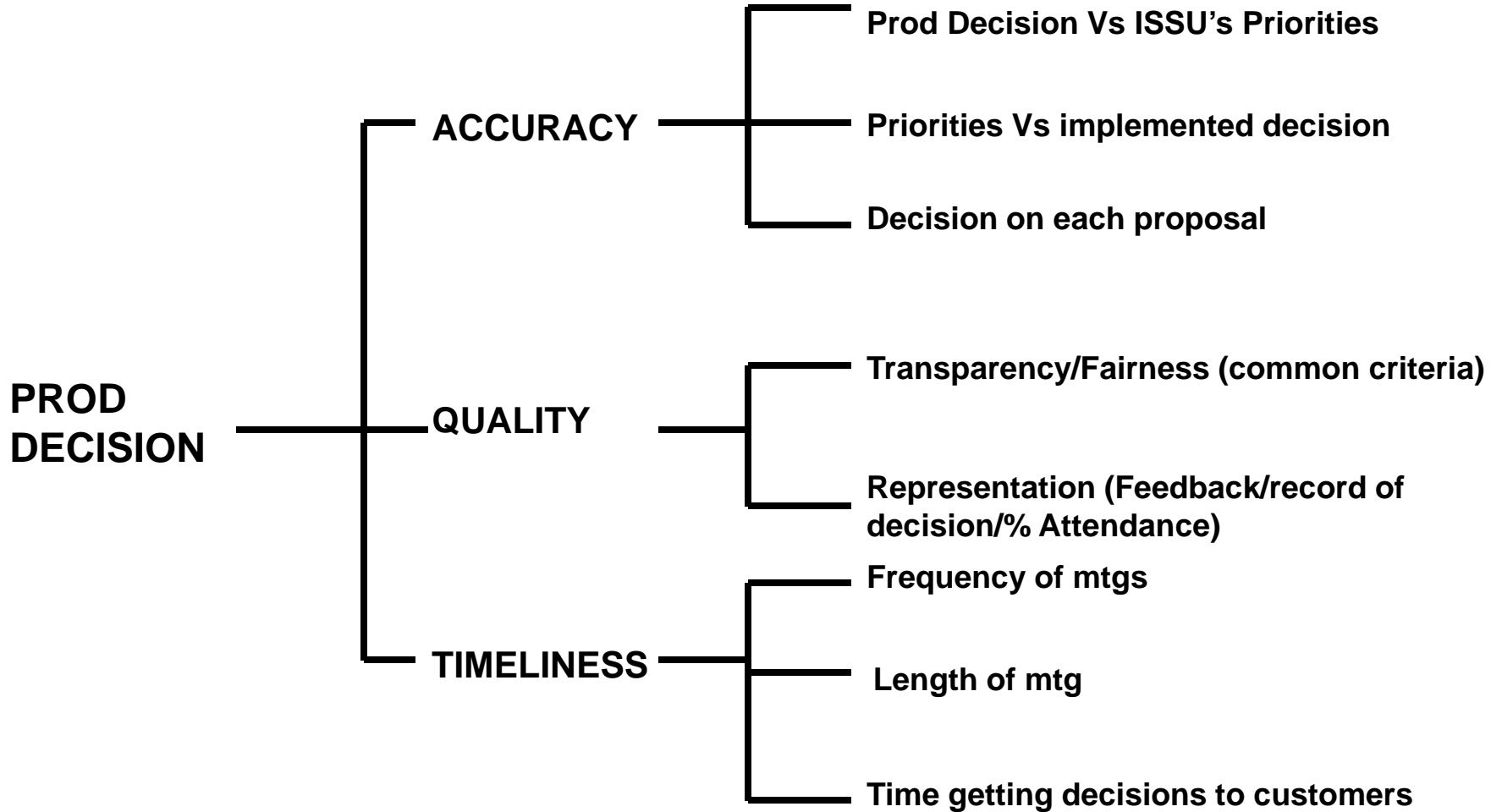
Need ⟶ *Driver* ⟶ *Measure*

Step One

Who :

- **ISSU Development Team (leader)**

- **Project Sponsor (not TIs)**

What :

Review of progress, make recommendations & sign off

Inputs:	How :	Outputs :
Development reports from: **Project team** **Technical team**	i) **Adopt standard templates e.g data flows, training, reporting, user interface, operation, implementation** ii) **Report on resource availability in reporting period** iii) **Reporting on milestones (velocity)** iv) **Describe next stages of development**	**Status of all projects** **Estimation of outstanding resource requirements** **Lessons learned**

Measures :

Accuracy – completion of pro-forma

Quality – true record (cf minutes) (contribution % and sign off)

Time – production of report & delivery of report

Step Two

Who :

- **Project Sponsor**

- **Development Team Member**

- **PROD or Chair PROD**

What :

Review of new/revised proposals

Inputs:	How :	Outputs :
Project proposal	i) **Project name**	**Comprehensive information for prioritising**
(Progress review)	ii) **Sponsor**	
	iii) **Purpose (brief description)**	
	iv) **Overview of outputs required in what form**	
	v) **Resources required to achieve outputs (tech estimate) including time (of sponsor, ISSU, anyone else) and funding; software etc**	
	vi) **Business case i.e. quantify (financial, time) benefits of doing, impact of not doing – tie in with WBS strategy (traffic light system?)**	
	vii) **Timescale for completion/implementation**	

Measures :

% rejected because of lack of info (accuracy & quality

Step Three

Who :

- **PROD Members**

What :

Creating Priority List & Seeking Further Information

Inputs:

ISSU report – time available

WBS Strategy

Approved project proposal assessments – list of projects to prioritise

Business needs – deadlines

Project specifications – time required, skills required, external dependencies

How :

i)   **Identify business-critical projects & prioritise**

ii)   **Create ideal priority list based on agree strategy & business needs**

iii)   **Assess feasibility against immediately available resources & deadlines**

iv)   **Review & discuss**

v)   **Produce agreed list**

Outputs :

Clear comprehensive priority list

Measures :

Clarity of priorities to implementers (feedback)

Comparison of priority list with delivered outcomes (analysis by ISSU/Chair)

Step Four

Who :

- **Project Sponsors**
- **Chair**

What :

Pre-circulation/reading
Minutes & distribution

Inputs:	How :	Outputs :
Project proposal (standard format/template)	**Electronically**	**List of priorities & decisions**
Recording decisions	i) **Proposals uploaded to my.wbs (date stamp)**	**Brief minutes of any other decision**
Recording priorities	ii) **Members download package on email prompt 1 wk prior to mtg**	**Report on who downloaded package (quality measure)**
Tablet PC for Chair ☺	iii) **Decisions (yes/no & priority) recorded electronically during mtg – also progress & sign off**	
	iv) **Decision schedule uploaded at end of mtg to my.wbs**	**Report to FRPC**
	v) **Any non-priority decision/discussion minuted briefly & circulated ASAP**	

Measures :

GENERAL LESSONS (BRAINSTORMING / AFFINITY DIAGRAM)

Membership
- Size of committee
- Without credit committee attendance is rarely full
- Justify your presence
- Monitor contribution of members to ensure active participation
- Committee members rarely read all of the accompanying documentation
- Review membership regularly – if a member never comes, remove from group or reallocate?
- Ensure correct members are on committee to be effective
- Consider size of committee to allow decision making
- Who decides who is on the committee?
- Who is on the committee?
- Why is the person who is on the committee there?

Clarity of Decision Making
- Transparency of decision making criteria?
- Are all decision processes the same?
- Proposal rejection criteria (self assessment)?
- Identifying clear roles and process can simplify and improve decision making
- Alignment with school/university strategy
- Accountability of decisions?
- Criteria for decision making
- More clearly defined purposes of meeting – questions that the group must answer (or defer to next mtg)
- Clarity of purpose transparent to non-members?
- Have clear criteria for decision making

Quality of Inputs
- Devote more resource to preparation than to committee time
- Should the committee really be seen as the tip of an iceberg, with more work being done outside in preparation and feedback as being done inside
- Quality of information presented to committee
- Identify implications of not doing a project, to school
- Clear templates or formats for inputs and outputs
- Insist on complete documentation prior to mtgs
- Pro-forma reporting
- Amount of paperwork generated?
- Proposals to a committee should have a well defined case in line with strategy
- Detailed specifications are an advantage in decision making
- Timeliness of info presented to committee
- Proper preparation of all members i.e read the pre-circulated documents
- Does the committee have the right info & membership to make good quality decisions
- Preparation / structure/ discipline

Decision Culture
- Specialist knowledge required?
- Why committees? Instead of hierarchy (hidden hierarchy rather than explicit)?
- Often critical issues are brought to light by the cross-examination of a project sponsor by committee
- Broad group discussion is not seen as a valuable component of decision-making
- The principal of subsidiarity does not seem to be valued in the business school
- Is it autocratic or democratic
- Appropriate staff representation on committees
- Adequate representation of specialist areas – 'guest speakers'
- Are the democratic or representational aspects of committees merely substitutes for poor organizational communications
- It might be better to manage prioritization and business development by a real internal market
- Decision making not democracy therefore smaller = more agile
- Personal interested vs objective assessment of proposal
- Appreciate value of committees for sharing info and reaching better decisions
- Get buy-in from all who contribute to committee workload
- Specialist vs democratic?

Governance
- Committees should reinforce the remits of other committees
- Overlaps with other committees/decision making bodies?
- Replication
- Prioritization processes can operate effectively and efficiently only in an environment of appropriate/agree supply/demand balance
- Does the committee overlap with /replicate the work of other committees

Terms of Reference
- Different layers of committees (and sub-committees) … endless rounds of approval
- Identify clear, realistic goals
- Many issues are addressed by subsets of committees, not the entire membership
- Know your 'customers'
- What would happen if committees didn't exist?
- Does the committee add value to WBS decision making
- Is committee needed? What role is it serving/what value is it adding
- The value of any committee that takes more than 1 ½ hr of a person/month is in question
- Clear limits to scope of group, enforced rigorously
- Strategic accountability (make this explicit)
- Review constitution of all committees and reallocate decision making to fewer committees
- Change in culture – committees resistant?
- Challenge terms of reference/actual role of committee by asking whether the job could be done just as well using fewer resources
- Groups avoid committee decisions where there are ways around them

- Identify clear objectives
- Justify your existence (or you die)!
- Clarity of remit
- Clarity of purpose

Communication
- Identify clear outputs with 'owner' & timescales
- Online agenda and papers fro download – no more distribution of paper
- Provide info on decision quickly after mtgs
- Punctuality of feedback (minutes)
- Only produce paperwork that is necessary output for customer (and go digital)
- Dissemination of decisions
- Recording of committee mtgs
- Minutes: concise & prompt
- When decisions are not required from people they rarely read the notices
- Share information on my.wbs
- How are decisions communicated?
- Feedback from committees
- Portal for people to see all agendas minutes etc. even if not in group (if they are allowed to)
- Use school assembly to show joined up picture of projects in context of wbs objective
- Does the committee provide good quality feedback about its decisions
- Dissemination of decisions
- Better whole school awareness of scarcity of resources i.e. not infinite capacity
- Need to feedback to whole school of decisions made

Effectiveness
- Who measure effectiveness of meetings/decisions
- Etiquette should allow you to tell someone to shut up without any recriminations
- Need to reduce work in progress
- Reduce work in progress
- How effective is committee
- Have a clear, precise implementation method
- Implementation of decisions
- Does the committee take steps to measure its performance (ie. how does it evaluate the quality of its decisions)
- More focus on previous success/failure to remind group of wider role
- Consider number and length of mtgs – necessary/effective?
- When & who reviews need to continue?

Efficiency
- Frequency of mtgs
- Time outs for sections of agenda – otherwise separate mtg
- Coherence/consistency of items to consider (templates)?
- Stick to agenda
- Mtg timetable

- Set your time and stick to it
- Are decisions made quick enough?
- Keep your agenda short
- Cost to school (staff time, printing etc) vs benefit
- Cost of supporting committees?
- Cost of committees?

Business Technology
- Many issues have a recurrent form – pro-formas/automation could resolve them
- Technology can be used to improve effectiveness & efficiency of committees/decision making