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Process

FEATURE ARTICLE

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The beauty of improvement.

At Clientek, process plays a central role in our ability to deliver value to our clients. From planning to execution, development to production, we are always on the lookout for ways to improve. While there is no shortage of recommendations for refining and optimizing existing procedures, a look beyond the confines of our business highlights some reassuring parallels.

After years of dating (and most recently marrying) a professional hairstylist, I have come to notice numerous similarities between her profession and my own. In particular, her approach to coloring hair shares many of the same characteristics as our approach to process improvement.

Here are five key parallels that I've gathered from her methodology:

1. Establish Current State

Coloring hair is a science. Before applying a single drop of color, my wife needs to understand the current state of her client's hair. They assess factors like its natural color, condition, and past treatments to determine the best course of action. By asking the right questions, she obtains information that guides the intended transformation. Similarly, businesses must define the current state of existing processes through comprehensive questioning before enacting any improvements.

2. Start Small

Even the most experienced stylists recognize the uncertainty that exists when coloring someone's hair for the first time. To mitigate risks, my wife will often start small. Conducting a strand test ensures the selected color and technique

produces the desired results. This same approach is valuable in business process improvement. By implementing small adjustments first, leadership can gauge their effectiveness and impact on the existing process. From there they can devise a plan for further improvements.

3. Keep Notes

Hairstylists are meticulous note-takers. Throughout the coloring process, my wife will record key details such as color formulas, mixing ratios, processing times, and any deviations made from the initial plan. These records serve as a reference for future appointments and troubleshooting. Documentation is equally as valuable in process improvement. Businesses should document every step, adjustment, and outcome. This not only enables continuous refinement but also supports future enhancements.

4. Give It Time

After applying the color, my wife patiently waits for the color to process. Rinsing too soon will lead to underwhelming results, while waiting too long can spell disaster. It takes a professional eye to monitor progress and intervene at the right time. Business process improvements are no different. They require patience and a watchful eye. Not every change will yield immediate, visible results. Leaders must give adjustments time to take effect. Hasty retractions or additional changes can disrupt progress.

5. Adapt

Despite careful planning, not all coloring appointments go smoothly. My wife must be capable of adapting her strategy on the fly to address the altered state of the hair while still achieving the desired results. Unexpected challenges are something businesses know all too well. Adaptability ensures that process improvements remain both effective and relevant.

As we all continue to seek innovative ways to enhance our business processes, I encourage you to look for more insights in unexpected places. Next time you sit in your hairstylist's chair and see someone across the salon with their head under that hood dryer, I hope you can appreciate the process that got them there.

That's one good looking process.

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