Systematically apply processes

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1 Question

How can I be systematic in applying processes?

2 Answer

The first step is to always make your processes explicit. Write the various steps you go through while doing something. First, simply write down those steps as you do them. Then indicate the dependencies between the steps. You may notice that some steps can be done earlier in the process if all their dependencies are already completed.

As you write down more and more of your processes, make sure that you can easily refer to them. If possible, keep them in a centralized location where it is easy for you to edit them. In my case, I write my processes in this blog.

When you begin doing something which you've never done before, create yourself a document and write down the steps you are doing as you do them. Once you are done with the task, save your document.

When you begin doing something for which you already have a process in place, open up your process document and quickly glance at it. Start going through the process without using the document and jot down what you do. After you are done, look at what you did and compare it against the existing process. Is it the same or has something changed? Did you forget to do something? Did you do something new? Did you change the order of some of the steps? Apply the changes you think are useful to your process and repeat this discovery phase a few times.

After you've established a process, you can simply open the process document and follow it. If you notice that some steps are still missing, do add them to the document. If you version control your processes, you will be able to observe how it evolves over time.

One benefit of making your processes explicit is that it allows you to stop doing them for an extended period of time. When you need to do them again, you can simply look at them again and know what you need to do. It is also beneficial if you work in a team where you could delegate some of those processes to other people.

3 References

- Reducing your error rate