

Newsletter

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Welcome to the November Edition of the Kreston Pedabo Newsletter!

For many Nigerian business leaders, the drive for growth is clashing with the reality of internal bottlenecks, rising costs, and processes that cannot scale. Acknowledging the problem is one thing; having a clear path to fix it is another.

This month, we go from diagnosis to delivery. Drawing directly from our experience in the Nigerian market, we are unveiling a robust framework that has delivered lasting operational transformation for leading companies.

We invite you to explore our featured article – **The Operational Excellence Cycle: A Proven Framework for Business Process Optimisation**

Settle in and enjoy the read!



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The Operational Excellence Cycle: A Proven Framework for Business Process Optimisation

Introduction

In the complex and competitive Nigerian business environment, characterised by rapid growth and unique operational challenges, achieving sustainable efficiency is paramount¹. Many organisations struggle with processes that are inherently wasteful, poorly documented, and unable to scale, leading to increased costs, customer dissatisfaction, and stunted growth. While the need for improvement is widely acknowledged, the absence of a structured methodology often results in superficial changes that fail to address systemic issues².

¹ Okonkwo, C. (2020). Managing for Competitiveness in Nigeria: A Guide for Modern Enterprises. University of Lagos Press.

² Davenport, T. H. (1993). Process Innovation: Reengineering Work through Information Technology. Harvard Business Review Press.

Drawing from extensive field experience within the Nigerian market, we have developed and validated a robust, four-phase framework designed to deliver lasting operational transformation. This article introduces the **DASS Framework** (Diagnose, Assemble, Streamline, Sustain), a comprehensive approach that guides organisations from problem identification to embedded, measurable improvement, illustrated with case studies from leading Nigerian companies.

The DASS Framework: Diagnose, Assemble, Streamline, Sustain

The DASS Framework is a cohesive and iterative cycle, ensuring that process optimisation is not a one-off project but a discipline integrated into the organisational fabric³.

Phase

01

Diagnose

The foundation of any successful optimisation lies in a deep and unbiased understanding of the current state. The Diagnose phase is an immersive exercise involving structured interviews, cross-functional workshops, and direct observation. We collaborate with the teams who own and execute the processes daily to document the complete “as-is” workflow. This includes mapping all steps, identifying key personnel, technology platforms, data inputs and outputs, and, crucially, capturing the qualitative pain points and informal workarounds that employees have developed. The output is a comprehensive current state assessment that serves as the single source of truth, ensuring that all subsequent recommendations are grounded in reality, not theory.

Phase

02

Assemble

With a clear picture of the current state, the Assemble phase focuses on designing the optimal “to-be” process. This is where we translate diagnostic findings into a concrete blueprint for change. The core activities involve the simultaneous development of two critical tools:

- **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):** We create detailed, step-by-step documents that provide unambiguous instructions for executing the new process. These SOPs ensure consistency, reduce variability, and serve as a foundational training resource.

³ Kreston Pedabo. (2025). The DASS Framework for Business Process Optimisation: An Internal Methodology. Internal White Paper.

➤ **Process Flowcharts:** To complement the textual detail of the SOPs, we develop visual flowcharts. These diagrams provide an at-a-glance understanding of the entire workflow, making complex procedures easily digestible, facilitating stakeholder buy-in, and helping to identify any remaining logical errors in the new design. This combined output forms the “Blueprint” for implementation.

Phase

03

Streamline

The Streamline phase is the execution and refinement stage, where the designed blueprint is implemented and fine-tuned for peak efficiency. This involves managing the transition from the old process to the new one, which includes training personnel, configuring systems, and updating relevant documentation. The term “Streamline” emphasises that implementation is an active process of smoothing out initial friction, addressing unforeseen challenges, and ensuring the new workflow operates as intended. It is a period of close support and adjustment to guarantee the architectural design functions effectively in a live BAU environment.

Phase

04

Sustain

The ultimate test of any optimisation initiative is its longevity. The Sustain phase ensures that improvements are locked in and deliver continuous value. We conduct a formal Post-Implementation Review (PIR) approximately three months after the new process has been operational. This critical step involves measuring key performance indicators (KPIs) against the baseline established in the Diagnose phase. We assess whether targets for efficiency, cost, accuracy, and cycle time have been met. Furthermore, we gather feedback from users to identify any lingering issues or opportunities for further refinement. This phase closes the loop, validating the return on investment and embedding a culture of continuous improvement by making the optimisation process cyclical.

Detailed Benefits of Implementing the DASS Framework

Adopting the DASS Framework yields significant, multi-layered advantages that drive tangible business outcomes:

1

Holistic Problem-Solving with Root Cause Elimination: The Diagnose phase prevents the common pitfall of treating symptoms. By thoroughly mapping the current state and conducting a rigorous gap analysis, the framework ensures that solutions are targeted at the fundamental root causes of inefficiency, leading to more permanent fixes and preventing recurring issues⁴.



2

Enhanced Clarity, Compliance, and Risk Mitigation: The Assemble phase, through its dual output of SOPs and Flowcharts, creates unparalleled clarity. This standardisation minimises operational ambiguity, ensures regulatory and procedural compliance, and significantly reduces the risk of errors caused by misinterpretation or informal practices⁵.



3

Accelerated Adoption and Reduced Operational Friction: The Streamline phase, with its focus on managed transition and active support, dramatically increases user adoption rates. By anticipating and addressing implementation challenges proactively, it reduces resistance to change and shortens the time required to achieve proficiency in the new process, thereby minimising productivity dips during the transition⁶.



4

Measurable ROI and a Culture of Continuous Improvement: The Sustain phase moves the conversation from anecdotal success to data-driven validation. The Post-Implementation Review provides concrete evidence of the project's impact, justifying the investment and building a case for future initiatives. More importantly, it institutionalises a mindset of ongoing measurement and refinement, transforming the organisation into a learning entity that continuously seeks to better itself⁷.



⁴ Rummler, G. A., & Brache, A. P. (2012). Improving Performance: How to Manage the White Space on the Organisation Chart. Jossey-Bass.

⁵ Porter, M. E. (1985). Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance. Free Press.

⁶ Liker, J. K. (2021). The Toyota Way: 14 Management Principles from the World's Greatest Manufacturer (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill.

⁷ Adeyemi, A. (2019). The Future of Work and Process Automation in the African Context. Journal of African Business Studies, 14(2), 45–62.

Case Studies from Leading Nigerian Enterprises

PZ Cussons Nigeria: Streamlining a Complex Supply Chain

Confronted with mounting costs and inefficiencies within its extensive supply chain, including distribution logistics, inventory management, and production bottlenecks, PZ Cussons needed a transformative approach. The journey began with a comprehensive Diagnose phase, where detailed mapping of the end-to-end supply chain pinpointed critical issues such as high fuel costs from inefficient delivery routes and significant production downtime. To tackle these gaps, the company moved to the Assemble stage, developing new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for logistics and predictive maintenance, all supported by clear flowcharts that defined a streamlined workflow from factory to distributor. During the Streamline phase, these new blueprints were implemented across operations. The commitment to Sustain was demonstrated through the continuous monitoring of Key Performance Indicators like "On-Time-In-Full" (OTIF) delivery, which led to documented cost savings and a substantial reduction in equipment downtime, locking in the gains for the long term⁸.



Flutterwave: Securing Growth through Operational Rigour

As Flutterwave experienced rapid growth, the scalability of its merchant onboarding and fraud detection operations became a critical concern; the existing manual processes were unsustainable and posed a security risk. The initial Diagnose effort, which involved analysing support tickets and onboarding drop-off rates, revealed that manual KYC (Know Your Customer) checks were a primary bottleneck. In response, the Assemble phase saw the creation of automated systems, underpinned by rigorous new SOPs for risk management that functioned as digital flowcharts, guiding transactions through secure pathways. As these new systems were rolled out in the Streamline phase, the focus shifted to refinement and Sustain. The company instituted a culture of constant validation through A/B testing of new processes and regular reviews of fraud metrics, ensuring that operational integrity and customer trust were maintained even as the company scaled at an unprecedented pace⁹.



⁸ PZ Cussons PLC. (2022). Annual Report and Financial Statements 2022. PZ Cussons Nigeria.

⁹ Opawoye, T. (2021). How Flutterwave Scaled to Become Africa's Leading Payments Platform. TechCabal.

Guaranty Trust Bank (GTB): Engineering a Digital-First Customer Experience

Guaranty Trust Bank identified that its traditional, branch-heavy account opening process was a significant barrier to customer acquisition in an increasingly digital age. To address this, they embarked on a Diagnose phase, leveraging customer feedback and process mining to highlight specific friction points in the physical onboarding journey. This analysis informed the Assemble stage, where the bank designed its pioneering GTWorld app, supported by clear back-office SOPs and system flowcharts to handle the new digital application processes seamlessly. The Streamline phase involved the managed rollout of this digital platform. True to the Sustain principle, GTB did not see this as a one-time launch but committed to ongoing refinement, evidenced by regular app updates and feature releases informed by customer usage data, ensuring the onboarding experience remains best-in-class and continuously improves .



¹⁰ Guaranty Trust Bank Limited. (2021). Corporate Profile & Digital Transformation Strategy. GTBank.

Conclusion

The path to operational excellence in the Nigerian context demands a disciplined, structured, and repeatable approach. The DASS Framework—Diagnose, Assemble, Streamline, and Sustain—provides a proven blueprint for achieving transformative and sustainable process optimisation. By moving systematically from a deep understanding of current challenges to the design of robust solutions, managed implementation, and rigorous validation, organisations can build the operational resilience and efficiency required to thrive in a dynamic market^{11,12}.

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