

Customer Experience & Operations

Reducing Delays Through Clear Responsibilities and Documented Processes

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Delays often arise when a task passes between people without a clear owner, required information is missing or approval steps are poorly understood. Documented processes make work easier to hand over, monitor and improve.

Map how the work actually happens

Choose a recurring process, such as approving a purchase, serving a customer, issuing a quotation or replenishing stock. Write down each step, who performs it, what information is needed and where waiting commonly occurs.

Define ownership at every step

For each stage, identify the person responsible for doing the work, the person accountable for the outcome and any required approver. Avoid vague instructions such as “finance to handle” when a specific action and deadline are needed.

Set realistic service times

Agree on target turnaround times based on complexity, workload and risk. Define when the clock starts, what pauses it and how exceptions are escalated. Safety, legal and professional checks must not be skipped just to meet a speed target.

Standardize inputs and approvals

Use a short checklist or form to reduce missing information. Specify approval limits, supporting documents and substitute approvers. Keep controls proportionate: unnecessary steps create delay, while missing controls create risk.

Use a visible tracking method

A shared register can show the request date, current stage, owner, deadline, status, reason for delay and next action. Limit access to authorized staff and avoid storing sensitive customer details unnecessarily.

Review bottlenecks and improve

Measure where requests wait, how often they return for corrections and how long the full process takes. Test one improvement at a time, such as a clearer form or a scheduled approval window, then compare the results.

Example: purchase requests

A branch requesting stock can submit a standard request with quantities, current stock, sales evidence and required date. The designated reviewer checks the request, an authorized manager approves it and the requester receives a status update.

Key takeaway

Document the process people actually follow, assign clear ownership and monitor bottlenecks. Improve speed without weakening essential controls or professional judgment.

Next step

HBC Business Consultancy can help document workflows, clarify responsibilities and develop practical process-tracking tools.

Editorial note

This article is general operations guidance. Process changes affecting employment, regulated activities, personal data or statutory controls should be reviewed by the appropriate qualified person.