

How do you select the members of your process improvement team?

You should choose people that represent a broad spectrum of roles that “touch” the process. Someone “touches” a process when they are affected by or can change the outcome of that process. The following framework provides a model for determining who touches a process. Because processes are often more complex than we originally think, this model helps us define all the people involved, including those who supply inputs to the process, those who actually perform the process, and those on the receiving end of the process (customers).

- **Suppliers** – someone who supplies information, equipment, or anything else that must be present at the beginning of the process
- **Process** – all the people / roles involved in performing the actual tasks within the process
- **Customers** – does not always refer to an external customer. Many processes have internal customers. For example, a main purchasing department would have a production area as their internal customer.

“Choose passively reluctant people for your team versus aggressively reluctant people”

Other guidelines for selecting team members

- Most improvement teams should have about 6-10 people. This size is the ideal balance between having too few people (unable to fulfill the scope of the project) and having too many people (takes longer to be a unified group). If you include a sample of the suppliers, customers, and process owners and the team is too large, perhaps the scope of your project is also too large.
- The more balanced the team is in terms of multi disciplinary distribution, the more likely it is to be a high performing team.
- Try to pick a balance of people between those who are “early adopters” and those who are reluctant to change itself. This diversity in team make up will be a key to the team coming up with solutions that are more broadly accepted. Having one or two passive reluctors is useful because when changes are successful, those are the people who are often the best spokespeople for talking to (and changing the minds of) other reluctors. We call this the 20 –60 – 20 rule. In change situations, 20% are excited for change, 60% are participative and the remaining 20% are reluctant. This is natural and necessary to understand as your team moves through the change cycle.