Introducing process orientation to the Sri Lankan apparel industry

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Abstract

As a key contributor to the country’s economy, the Sri Lankan Apparel Industry plays a major role in apparel business world. The intense competition from regional players is the main challenge that industry faces at present. As a result, many apparel manufacturers focus on continuously improving their business performance. Though they are targeting on improving the business process, still the understanding on the concept of process among majority of them is low. This factor is proved by a survey conducted prior to this study, to identify the level of understanding and application of processes among Sri Lankan apparel industry. Further, many industry experts agree that industry still operate as functional units, but not as processes [2]. Thus, many of their improvement initiatives are focused on optimizing the functional units leading to local optimizations, rather being globalized. Being process focused creates the ‘process culture’ among organizations by penetrating process thinking in all aspects. Further, being process oriented is a way to reduce cost, to increase quality level of the output, to improve overall performance of the business and to improve both customer and employee satisfaction. The key aim of this study is to introduce the concepts of process and process orientation to the Sri Lankan Apparel Industry (SLAI), thereby enabling to make improvement initiatives more effective. The business process was initially studied function-wise and then grouped into 6 key sub-processes and their validity was proved by comprehensive questionnaire surveys conducted among Sri Lankan apparel manufacturers.