

Improving Personal Efficiency

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson discusses how personal efficiency can be improved. You will also learn what flexibility is. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. [Personal Efficiency](#)
2. [Flexibility](#)

1. Personal Efficiency

Now that you can identify factors that influence workforce productivity, how can you improve personal efficiency? There are many things someone can do to improve their own efficiency:

- **Clarify requirements:** Clarifying requirements is the first thing. Wasting too much work adding bells and whistles or achieving an unnecessary level of quality (being a perfectionist, for example) can get in the way. Establish the desired level of quality and scope early on to avoid inefficiencies in this area.
- **Focus on goals:** Keep your eye on the goals. Keeping the high-level goals in mind can help clarify thinking and avoid losing time making difficult decisions when there are multiple options relative to how to proceed.
- **Be aware of dependencies:** Ask yourself: what are the dependencies? When one task is dependent on another, time may be wasted if a hand-off is missed or if the wrong task is completed first.
- **Prioritize:** Make sure your priorities match the priorities of your team and the organization as a whole, and communicate your challenges and obstacles.
- **Communicate obstacles:** Time can be lost struggling with a obstacle or difficult decision that might be quickly solved if other team members were brought in.
- **Communicate strengths and challenges:** Be sure to share your strengths and your challenges. It's important to communicate when a particular task is not a good fit. Someone else might be able to complete the task with much greater efficiency. And there might be a role that is a better fit for you.
- **Leverage team members:** Leveraging your colleagues is important. If a particular task is well-suited for you but part of that task is out of your zone of expertise, call someone in who's knowledgeable rather than trying to muddle through it yourself.

- **Request feedback:** Be sure to ask for feedback. If tasks are unclear or if it's inefficient, ask your supervisor for direct reports for feedback.
- **Open mind:** Be willing to change your approach and try something new. Think outside the box, especially if your current approach is not working for you or if it's inefficient.

2. Flexibility

Flexibility is defined as the ability to handle change well. Since change is a constant element for any organization, it's valuable to be flexible, and it's even more valuable to develop a flexible team. Flexibility may include the ability to handle new roles for tasks; the ability to work with a wide range of people; being open to new ideas, techniques, and methods; and being comfortable with altering existing processes or trying new ones.



DID YOU KNOW

People who are flexible receive benefits in many ways. They're more likely to be given new tasks or roles, since they're more likely to handle the transition well. These new tasks and roles may lead to an enhanced skill set, further enhancing this person's flexibility.

New tasks and work may lead to professional advancement or increased responsibility. Flexible people are better able to contribute to team success. When an individual is successful and the team is successful, morale is high.

For those who are resistant to change, there are ways to improve flexibility. Practice being flexible. Often, people resist change because they think they know how things will turn out.

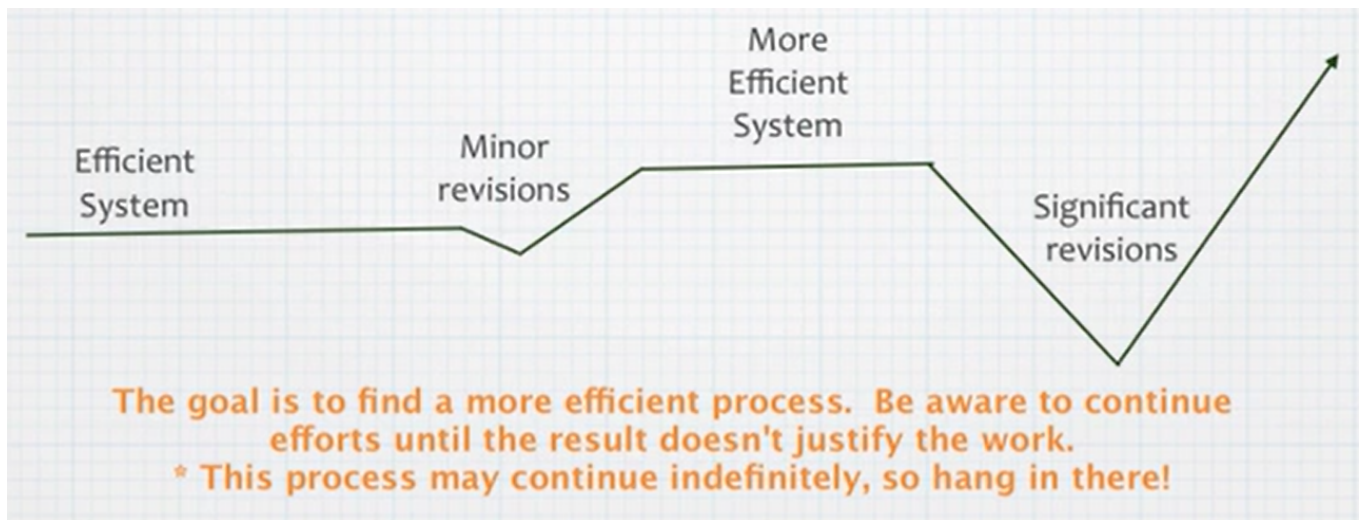


TRY IT

Try saying yes. Recognize that there usually is a reason for change. Most of the time, changes are being implemented or requested in an attempt to improve the overall state. Although the changes are initially uncomfortable for those who are resistant to them, keep an open mind and allow for the possibility that the changes will be beneficial in the long run. Remember all those benefits of flexible individuals.

When processes have achieved a high level of efficiency or they've settled into a particular approach, there's often resistance to significant changes.

Resistance or inflexibility in the situation is common because significant changes almost always result in an initial loss of efficiency. After all, you're developing new parameters and approaches, and new elements are revised or incorporated. The hope is that the temporary loss of efficiency will propel the overall efficiency of the entire process higher.



Since optimizing efficiency involves experimentation and making changes, flexibility of all team members will bring a more rapid improvement to efficiency. Flexible teams, after all, are able to be more creative, since the team as a whole will handle change well. Ultimately, this results in a greater efficiency and a higher-performing team. The thinking here is that taking that risk in a loss of efficiency will bring higher results overall.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned how **personal efficiency** can be improved by asking for feedback and clarifying roles. **Flexibility** means being open to new roles, tasks, processes, and methods.

Source: THIS TUTORIAL WAS AUTHORED BY KELLY NORDSTROM FOR SOPHIA LEARNING. PLEASE SEE OUR [TERMS OF USE](#).