

## **The Three-Hour House: Business Process Quality Management**

### **Description**

The city of San Diego held a team competition among its construction trades. The challenge: to build a house in eight hours and still meet strict building codes. Considered an impossible task, teams had to completely rethink the process of building a house. It took the winning team a little under three (lightning speed) hours to build their dream house!

### **Learning Points**

If we take a close look at how the winning team did it, we find that they used a combination of many sound, yet innovative, approaches: creativity; minute-to-minute planning; simultaneous construction; training and practice; re-engineered processes; teamwork; and new technology. All of these elements are at the core of re-engineering the way we do our work. When we “think outside the box” about our own work processes and retool them, who knows what we can accomplish!

### **Discussion Questions**

**Question:** What do you see as the critical success factors for the successful construction of the three-hour house?

**Answer:** Creativity, simultaneous construction of the different house elements, detailed planning, contingency plans, applied technological advances, teamwork, careful human resource planning and utilization, good communication, practice, training of personnel, etc.

**Question:** In what ways did creativity play a role?

**Answer:** Simultaneous construction, applied advanced technologies, re-engineered building processes, 350 member teams, etc.

**Question:** What resistance do you imagine people had to overcome during the home construction process?

**Answer:** Concerns for safety, rigid building code requirements, teamwork requirements among the architects and builders, fear that the new cement technology would not work, work rule infringements, etc.

**Question:** How were these concerns overcome?

**Answer:** Shared project planning among all representatives, good communication among all team members, training, practice, shared mission, shared goals, etc.

**Question:** In what ways can we challenge the status quo in our jobs?

**Answer:** Responses will vary. Probe: What positive results might you anticipate? What might be the disadvantages? What opportunities may have been missed in the past by accepting the status quo?

**Question:** What process or processes in your company could benefit from business process re-engineering? What are some of the problems you experience with the process now? What can you do to nominate this problem for re-engineering?

**Answer:** Responses will vary depending on the process identified. Nominations for re-engineering should be made to the organization’s quality council or top executives. In most cases, business process re-engineering involves many departments requiring the support of top management.