
The NESTT: Rapid Process Redesign at Queensland University of Technology

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Abstract

- (a) **Situation faced:** The higher education sector faces like most information-intensive industries an opportunity-rich, digital future. Nowadays, students demand contemporary, multi-channel learning experiences and fast evolving digital affordances provide universities with a growing design space for their future processes. Legislative changes, a globalizing market of learners and educational providers, and the emergence of new technology-based business models (EduTech) are further features of the current situation in this sector. In order to prepare for and to capitalize on this changing environment the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), like any university, needs to ensure operational inefficiencies are addressed as part of the required organisational transformation. However, traditional BPM approaches are often time-consuming, exclusively focused on pain points and not tailored to immediate process transformation, meaning a new, dedicated and agile approach for QUT was needed.
- (b) **Action taken:** A rapid process redesign methodology called the NESTT was developed by QUT, facilitating accelerated process improvement in the four stages of 'navigate', 'expand', 'strengthen' and 'tune/takeoff'. An integral and defining feature of the NESTT is the way physical space is used as part of the methodology. Each of the four walls and the floor of the workshop space carry specific meaning leading to a new process design experience. Two such NESTT rooms have been established at Queensland University of Technology and a number of processes have been redesigned based on this methodology. Further, the involvement of QUT's human

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resource experts ensured that the NESTT experience is embedded into QUT's capability building framework.

- (c) **Results achieved:** The NESTT led to three tangible outcomes for QUT. First, the performance of the processes, which were redesigned using the NESTT, has been significantly improved. Many of the ideas were implemented within a 20 days timeframe and proposals for 20 months and by the year 2020 now guide QUT process implementation teams. Second, the NESTT, as a methodology, a dedicated physical space and with its growing team of trained facilitators has provided the organisation with a much valued, business-as-usual redesign capability and capacity. Third, participation in the NESTT has been an important up-skilling for the QUT staff involved (across a broad range of designations) and has had a positive impact on the organisational culture and attitude towards change.
- (d) **Lessons learned:** It is proven possible to rigorously redesign complex business processes in 20 days. However, a number of success factors needs to be addressed including (1) a sound methodology with short term milestones and well articulated and monitored intentions for each stage, (2) participants who are intellectually agile, collaborative and have a positive attitude towards emerging design options and the changes required to today's process, (3) facilitators who are able to guide conversations under time pressure on multiple levels of conceptualization, from vision to individual idea assessment, (4) a decisive attitude among the NESTT team and the judging panel, and (5) a smart utilisation of the spatial affordances, in particular the ability to articulate the right level of information and to ensure an always correct, relevant and easy to use display of information across all dimensions of the NESTT space.

1 Introduction

The digital age has triggered a shift from an economy centered around corporations to an economy of people. As a consequence new customer engagement channels, business models, revenue streams, sourcing strategies and pricing models have emerged in many information-intensive sectors. Higher education is no exception and universities around the globe are exposed to a rich design space promising new value propositions while at the same time existentiell disruptive forces emerge (Coaldrake and Stedman 2016).

Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Brisbane, Australia, proactively engaged in this context by establishing the REAL Difference project. With more than 46,000 students, QUT is an established, but still young university with a focus on transdisciplinary research and a contemporary under-graduate and post-graduate curriculum grounded in a strong focus on the real-world requirements of today and tomorrow.

Motivated by the possibilities of the digital economy, students who are expecting personalised service delivery and driven by legislative changes to the

economic model of higher education in Australia, the REAL Difference project is dedicated to creating both new and unlocking hidden value across the entire university.

A subset of this initiative has been the requirement to develop the capability and capacity for rapid process improvements in order to quickly secure operational efficiency gains for essential decision making processes. However, current Business Process Management methods and tools are not designed for fast process change. They tend to be either selective in their scope (e.g., resolution of problems via lean management) and are analysis-intensive making them a time-consuming undertaking. Thus, the QUT team needed to design and implement an entire new approach that was not just dealing with short-term fixes, but also catered for new digital opportunities.

This approach was named the NESTT, an abbreviation capturing the main four stages navigate-expand-strengthen-tune and take-off. This chapter will outline its unique methodology including the way spatial affordances are used, reflect on QUT's experiences and elaborate on the perceived success factors. The article is grounded in the higher education sector, but the methodology and findings are so generic that the NESTT will be of interest for organisations in all types of industry sectors.

2 Situation Faced

In the context of the REAL Difference initiative, QUT desired to establish a rapid process redesign capacity and capability for the following reasons

- Identify and benefit from quick wins for operational gains within selected, high volume decision making processes,
- Contribute to a culture of positivity with regards to the changes required,
- Create a capacity that accelerates design activities in other, significant REAL Difference projects such as travel management and
- Upskill QUT staff in the areas of process analysis and design.

It was important that the new methodology aligned with the endorsed design principles of the REAL Difference project such as user-centred design, manage by exception, standardise where possible or simple and sustainable.

The opportunity to create an entire new process redesign methodology was facilitated by the fact that QUT is home to one of the largest and most influential Business Process Management Disciplines in the world. The availability of unique intellectual property in the area of systemic ideation (Recker and Rosemann 2015) allowed the accelerated development of the NESTT methodology and ensured availability of qualified facilitators. The ambitious goal was *to redesign one decision-intensive process every month.*

3 Action Taken

Based on the need to develop a fast and engaging process improvement methodology, the NESTT approach was developed. The acronym NESTT stands for navigate-expand-strengthen-tune/take-off, i.e. the four main stages of its methodology. Inspirations for the NESTT came from a number of areas including

- Business Process Management (Hammer 2015; Rosemann and vom Brocke 2015), in particular simple process visualisations, issue identification and resolution and process design principles,
- Design Thinking (Brown 2008), in particular, customer and employee journey mapping, customer/employee empathy, acting out of process scenarios and the use of space as part of the redesign and
- Agile methodologies and sprint approaches in terms of speed and decisiveness of the process, but also in terms of the use of visualisations (Larman and Vodde 2004; Knapp 2016).

The NESTT consists essentially of a space with five viewpoints, a methodology and a number of teams, i.e. the innovation team, the panel, the facilitators and the implementation team.

3.1 The NESTT Space

It is a unique characteristic of the NESTT that it takes full advantage of the spatial affordances of a dedicated room. The room needs to be able to cater for a group between 8 and 10 people and should allow the use of all four walls and the floor. Each wall and the floor itself depict a different viewpoint on the process. This design was loosely inspired by the IGOE approach (Long 2012) where a process integrates the four areas input, guidelines, enablers and output.

3.1.1 The Future

The most important wall within the NESTT is *'The Future'*. This wall describes the ambition for the future process and is broken down into the three columns *20 days*, *20 months* and *2020*. Each of these columns (drawn on the wall) is a place to capture related ideas as they emerge during the NESTT. With the intention of the NESTT to be a rapid redesign capability, it is not surprising that a core focus of the work in the NESTT is on 20 days improvements.

The heading above these three columns is the *process vision*. A process vision is a motivational, simple statement articulating the ambition and future state of the process. Examples for a vision are 'The zero-touch claim process', 'One-click shopping' or 'Every applicant gets a job'. In particular, the process vision helps to channel the subsequent ideation. For example, calling an insurance customer regarding the status of a claim submitted is not a design option, if the vision is a zero-touch claim process.

In the ideal case, it is possible to define a vision that captures the demand for a streamlined process as well as possible new design opportunities. An example is the vision, '*Minimum effort, maximum impact*', the process vision that was derived as part of QUT's NESTT on travel management. Here, minimum effort captures the idea of a friction-less, self-service process, and maximum impact is related to the opportunity of capitalising on the consolidated years QUT staff is spending every year overseas as part of their travel. These two parts of the vision can then be used for each of the three timeframes (20 days, 20 months, 2020) and help to cluster the emerging ideas.

Articulating the right process vision is one of the most important, but also most difficult activities within the NESTT. It is desired to have the process vision and the unconditional commitment of the team to this vision early on in the process. However, often the vision will be the result of an iterative process and only shapes up in its final form in the second part of the NESTT.

3.1.2 The Now

The wall opposite to *The Future* is called *The Now*. This is essentially the as-is model of today. This wall is used to:

- Capture the core value chain of the process. It is recommended to break down this value chain into three to four stages to derive a simple point of reference. These will be often a sort of apply/request, use or produce and consume or other post-usage activities.
- Model a detailed, swimlane visualisation of the process describing the main activities in each of the value chain phases. Where possible, the process should be modelled with not more than five stakeholders involved (swimlanes) and not more than 15 activities. These constraints help to make discussions about the process intuitive. It also channels the team to the right level of conversation, i.e. ideas should have, where possible, an impact on these activities, and not be simple micro-improvements to single activities only.
- Describe the emotional state along the process in the form of three states (happy, indifferent, disappointed). These states are modelled above each activity and follow the idea of customer journey mapping. Depending on the customer, this is an internal and/or an external customer. Capturing the employee journey can be helpful in identifying gaps between customer and employee experiences.
- Capture issues along the process leading to a so-called 'pain wall'. Issues will be written down on post-it notes in individual colors depicting specific types of issues, e.g., these could be the seven types of waste as per the lean management approach or policy/system/people issues.
- Capture any further information about the process, e.g. number of instances, processing time, probabilities or areas that are supported by systems.

Depending on the context of the specific NESTT project, different aspects of the NOW will be more important than others. For example, if the focus is on reducing

processing time, this would get more attention than creating new customer experiences.

3.1.3 The Resources

The third wall captures all the resources involved in the current and in the future process. Again, this wall graphically displays three vertical sections called (1) systems, (2) people and (3) documents. Each of these sections is further differentiated into the Now and the Future sections.

1. The systems section consolidates all the IT artefacts involved in this process. These could be enterprise systems, apps, databases or specific hardware. Screenshots and identified issues with any of these systems will also be captured on this wall.
2. The people section summarises all human resources involved. This could include relevant organisational charts, job descriptions, roles, external stakeholders such as vendors or customers or interaction diagrams.
3. Finally, the document section is the place where the paper or digital forms used within the process are visualised.

3.1.4 The Policies and Procedures

The wall opposite the *Resources* wall has the purpose to capture all existing internal and external policies and procedures that guide and often constraint the process. Depending on the comprehensiveness of the related policies and procedures, this means the relevant documents will be attached to the wall. Like the pain wall in the Now, this could lead to a *visually dramatic* display of the comprehensiveness or variety of policies and procedures. Color coding helps to differentiate between policies that can be changed and policies that cannot. Like the resources wall, this wall is separated into the two sections The Now and the Future.

3.1.5 The Ambition

Finally, the floor is used to articulate the ambidextrous ambition of the NESTT (Rosemann 2014) and is differentiated via a line in the middle of the room into problem resolution and opportunity deployment.

Problem resolution is the half of the room closest to the Now wall. Improvements as part of the problem resolution are initiated by the current state and the reactive analysis and overcoming of identified issues. They can be characterised as ‘pain relief’ and most of the solutions generated in this half of the room are result of a ‘reactive ideation’. Such ideas tend to be predictable and constraint-driven. Typical BPM methods and approaches such as root cause analysis and weakness-focused approaches such as lean management and Six Sigma are typically used here.

The room half closest to the Future wall is called *Opportunity deployment*. Working in this half of the room requires much more design than analysis, ‘proactive ideation’ and a strong sense for what (else) is possible (as opposed to what is broken). Working and thinking in this part of the room is driven by the process

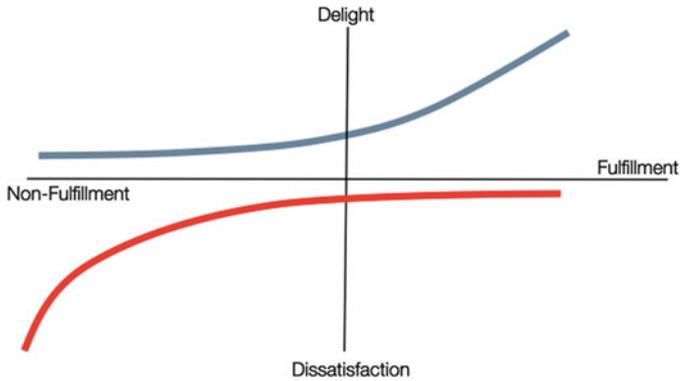


Fig. 1 The ambidextrous NESTT: Working above and below the line

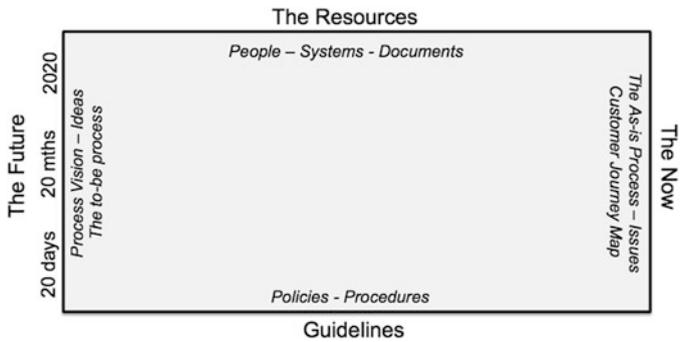


Fig. 2 The use of the four walls in the NESTT

vision, i.e. the future state. In this space, there is a scarcity of tools and finding appropriate methods and capable facilitators for this second half of the NESTT is a significant challenge. Additionally the vocabulary used in this space is positive and future-focused, discouraging of certain language and unrestrained by known constraints typical of the Now sector.

The figure below captures these two halves of the room using the common Kano model (Kano et al. 1984). Problem resolution is depicted as the bottom curve and characterizes that this has largely become a hygiene factor. Opportunity deployment is visualized by the curve above the line (Rosemann 2014) (Fig. 1).

The populated walls and the ambidextrous ambition of the NESTT are a defining feature and make the act of process redesign tangible. In fact, when QUT staff talked about the NESTT they often meant first of all the actual room. The following figures visualises the use of the four walls in the NESTT (Fig. 2).

3.2 The NESTT Methodology

The physical space comes to life with the NESTT methodology. Overall, the NESTT consists of three main stages over a period of 3 months. The first 4 weeks are dedicated to scoping the initiative, defining expectations, constraints and forming the team. The second stage, the focus of this article, is concentrated on the actual redesign of the process. The final stage then takes the NESTT ideas and implements these where possible within a 20 day timeframe and under the leadership of an implementation champion (Fig. 3).

According to QUT's intention of 'one process change every month', stage 2 of the methodology (Innovate) had to be constrained to a roughly 20 working day period. The 20 days are split into the first 10 days being dedicated to divergent thinking followed by the second 10 day period dedicated to convergent thinking. Each of the 4 weeks will be outlined in the following.

3.2.1 Week 1: Navigate

The focus of the first week is on the initial population of all four walls of the NESTT. This includes activities such as

- Deriving the process vision and essential attributes characterising the vision (e.g., agile, free of paper, self-service, one click),
- Collecting and grouping ideas regarding possible future states for the three timeframes 20 days, 20 months and 2020,
- Modelling the current value chain and a more detailed process in swimlane notation,
- Capturing emotional states, KPIs, efforts and issues along the process (customer/employee journey mapping) and
- Capturing information regarding the Now of the resources (systems, people, documents) and policies and procedures.

In addition to these activities, the first week is spent on activities such as agreeing on the overall objective of the NESTT project, defining its scope, i.e. the unit of analysis and also team bonding.

3.2.2 Week 2: Expand

Based on the process contextualisation as the main outcome of week 1, week 2 is exclusively focused on the 'The Future' wall. The activities in this week are dedicated to rapidly broadening the design space and to derive a comprehensive set of ideas with a focus on the 20 days period. The main methods used here are derived from QUT's systemic ideation methodology (Recker and Rosemann 2015). Thus, selected days are concentrating on

- *Enhancing* the existing process using improvement patterns such as elimination, resequencing, integrating or specialisation and reactively generating ideas based on addressing the issues as depicted in the 'pain wall',

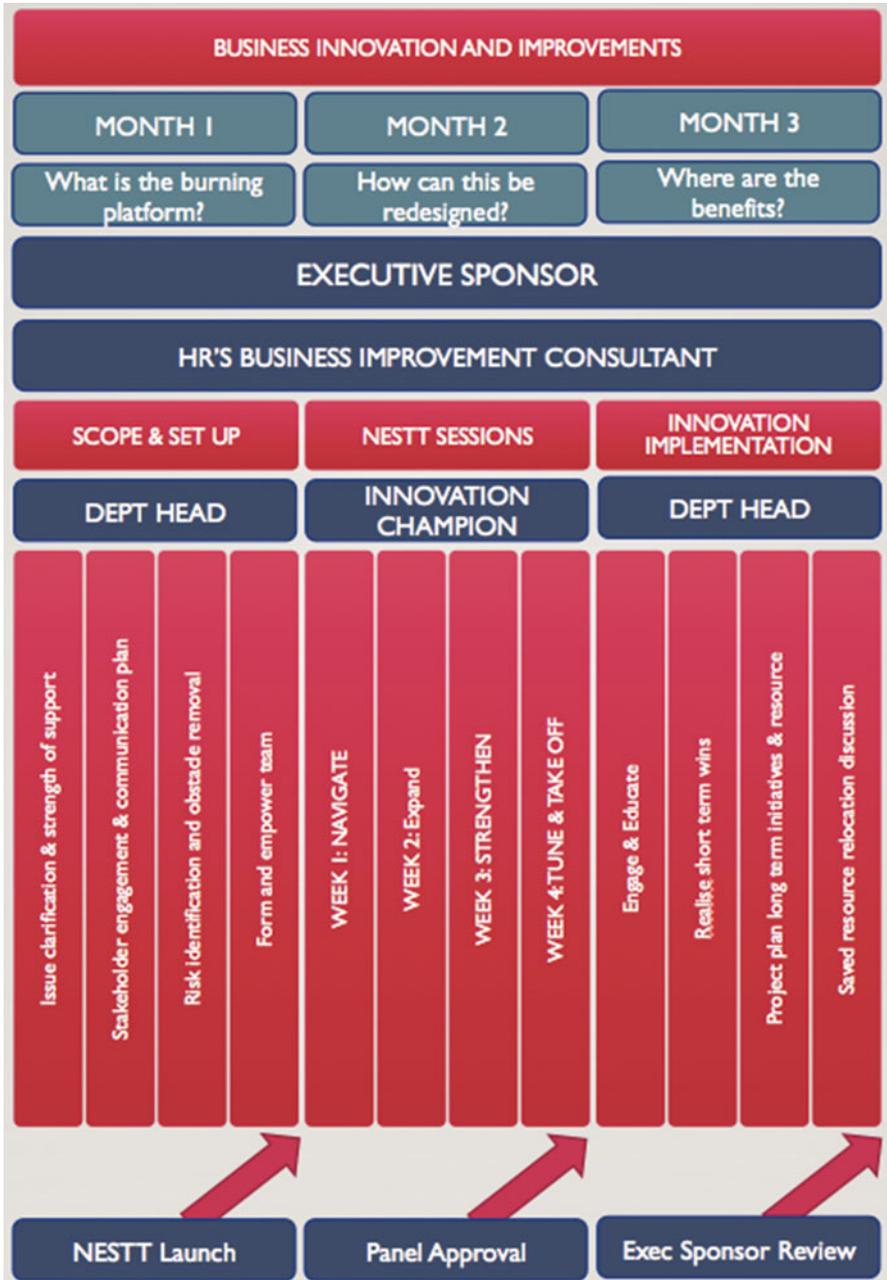


Fig. 3 The NESTT methodology

- *Deriving* ideas from different industries either in the form of general industry patterns (e.g. dynamic pricing/airlines; pockets of creativity/film production; intelligent triage/emergency department) or via learning from specific organisations. The latter means inviting representatives from these organisations to selected sessions into the NESTT,
- *Utilising* idle assets which could be systems, (big) data, employees, customers, physical assets, etc.,
- *Designing* new experiences based on design-led innovation techniques. A particular feature of the NESTT is a session in which a drama teacher facilitates acting out current and future process experiences leading to much deeper, authentic insights into the emotional states along the process than what could be derived via whiteboarding or process modelling.

At the end of the second week the possible design space, i.e. a comprehensive set of clustered, interrelated and numbered ideas should be defined.

3.2.3 Week 3: Strengthen

The third week starts with the allocation of idea champions to each of the identified ideas. Based on individual expertise, passion and closeness to the required data and users, each member of the NESTT team will take ownership for one or more ideas.

The essential document during this week is called '*Idea on a Page*'. It is literally a one page document capturing the essence of each idea and it is the main working document for each idea champion.

In this document, each idea is profiled in terms of its timeframe (20 days, 20 months, 2020) and the relevant stage in the value chain. The idea champion is named and the idea is briefly described. The next two sections are used to quantify current and future efforts (e.g., costs of execution, time required) or experiences (e.g., net promoter score) leading to a defined impact statement. Depending on the process and the data available this will require making assumptions. This work is similar to the development of a brief business case (for each idea).

In addition to the analysis-intensive work of writing these mini business cases, user validations are required. Here, and in line with design thinking principles, selected ideas are presented by the idea champions to and discussed with user groups allowing early feedback and important input to the further development of each idea. In QUT's NESTT, such user validations are attended by approx. 30 colleagues and the draft process changes are socialised by the idea champions in preparation for the final executive panel presentation.

Finally, and this requires a dedicated session with a representative from the internal risk management team, each idea needs to be risk assessed and where required risk mitigation strategies need to be described.

A successful third week leads to completed, validated and risk-assessed ideas-on-a-page documents and idea champions who are excited about and proud of their achievements. It is to be expected that after the validations in this week a number of the initial ideas as derived in week 2 will be excluded from further consideration.

3.2.4 Week 4: Tune and Take-off

The fourth and final week in the NESTT is all about the 20 days ideas and getting these ready for the 'take-off'. The ideas-on-a-page documents are the key input and complemented with further artefacts needed for their implementation.

The week starts with developing a framework consolidating and interrelating all ideas-on-one-page, i.e. an investigation into any cause-effect relationships among these ideas. This could, for example, mean aligning the ideas along the value chain. This framework will also be used to calculate the total impact of the NESTT project on this process.

Tuning every idea involves activities such as developing revised policies and procedures, crafting new forms as required by the new process or a detailed assessment of the compliance of an idea with external requirements. Job descriptions might need to be revised requiring HR involvement or minor IT changes need to be discussed with the IT department.

A highly interactive session during this week is about the pitching of the idea as ultimately each idea champion will have to 'sell his/her idea' to the panel.

The most important milestone of the entire NESTT is the presentation to the panel, i.e. a group of senior stakeholders who judge the ideas. A '*Decisions-on-a-page*' document lists all ideas per row and the panel will be asked to endorse, or reject, each idea. The panel receives all ideas-on-a-page documents in advance and might fast track some obvious ideas while question other ideas in more detail. Ideally, a decision can be made for each idea by the panel in this assessment session. The decisions need to be documented and provide the go-ahead for the idea implementation, i.e. the take-off.

A separate implementation team will work on the accelerated idea implementation. Selected members of the innovation team might be members of the implementation team to ensure the design intentions are considered. In many cases implementation might entail an incubation phase where an idea is further tested in one area (e.g. a school in the context of a university) before the company wide roll out (take-off) of the (revised) idea.

3.2.5 Process Selection

In order to select the most relevant business processes for the QUT NESTT three focus groups involving more than 40 senior leaders (Head of Schools, Directors and Faculty Admin Managers) have been conducted. In these focus groups participants were introduced to the overall intentions and high level methodology of the NESTT. Each participant was given the opportunity to propose business processes that should be considered for upcoming NESTTs. These processes needed to be decision-intensive, repetitive, involving a number of stakeholders and be of medium complexity. Each process was discussed in smaller groups and the improvement potential for each process was captured. All processes were then depicted in a two-dimensional framework covering impact of change and likelihood of success. Processes rated as high in both dimensions were shortlisted. The REAL Difference project steering committee selected finally the first three processes, i.e. corporate card, web page approval and travel management.

3.3 The NESTT Teams

The NESTT consists of four teams, the innovation team, the facilitators, the panel and the implementation team.

3.3.1 The Innovation Team

The innovation team is made up of approx. 8 stakeholders from across the organisation and consists of the following roles.

1. The *innovation champion* is the inspirational, positive, consolidating leader and external interface of the team assembled for the process. The innovation champion has to be carefully selected as this person needs to have the right authority, respect, mindset, ambition and network. As the core node, the innovation champion has to manage the dynamics of the internal team, liaise regularly with and provide feedback to the facilitators and be the spokesperson to the outside world. Communicating updates about the NESTT at QUT included activities such as a NESTT-Open-Day or regular updates via the social enterprise solution Yammer. In the context of QUT's redesign, the innovation champion is typically a Faculty Admin Manager, a Director or a Head of School.
2. Two *intensive users* ensure the ongoing inclusion of customer viewpoints and understanding of and empathy with the user requirements. The users involved should be diverse (e.g., an academic and a professional staff) and should have a consumption view on the process, i.e. they do not need to be aware of the technical details behind the line of visibility.
3. The *service/process owner* will have a vested interest in improving this process. However, it is essential that the NESTT is not perceived as an opportunity to push pre-formulated ideas and concepts to accelerated implementation.
4. Two *service providers* ensure that access to substantial end-to-end process experience, but also expertise with all process-related viewpoints, e.g. policies, systems or job descriptions is available. These stakeholders will often be tasked to provide relevant figures such as transaction volumes or probabilities.
5. The *process expert* is the team member closest to the process. This role represents the micro-expertise needed to discuss every single step and will be invaluable for detailed feasibility assessments.

3.3.2 The Panel

The panel ultimately judges, and in this capacity endorses, the ideas proposed by the innovation team. As such, the panel needs to have the authority and the competence to assess the proposed process changes. The panel will meet the innovation team shortly after the 20 days period when all ideas are consolidated into a 'Decisions-on-a-page' document leading to simple go-or-stop decisions.

Ideally, the head of the panel is the most senior executive available. In the context of QUT, the NESTT panel was regularly made up of the Vice Chancellor (head of the panel), the relevant Deputy Vice Chancellor, a senior service owner (e.g., director of marketing), an intensive user, an outside challenger (e.g., a partner

of a consulting company) and a member of the REAL Difference Project Leadership Group.

3.3.3 The Facilitators

A number of facilitating roles are needed to ensure the success of each NESTT initiative. Besides the senior facilitator who takes care of the entire management of the initiative including methodology, facilities, team composition and communication, other facilitators contribute as moderators of sessions, analysts, ideators or coaches for pitching, business cases, etc. As the NESTT captures the entire process lifecycle from process vision to detailed idea implementation, facilitators need to have a broad, comprehensive skillset not just of typical BPM methods, but also design, communication, conflict management, team work, project management and motivation skills.

A specific feature of QUT's NESTT is a drama facilitator, i.e. a facilitator trained in helping stakeholders to uncover experiences, emotions and improvement ideas by acting out current or future process scenarios. In our case, this has been a drama teacher from QUT's Creative Industries faculty.

3.3.4 The Implementation Team

Once the ideas have been presented and endorsed, an implementation team takes over. It is of importance to keep up the momentum and aim towards rapid implementation and communication of the change. In many cases, this might first involve further discussions of detailed concerns with selected stakeholders as the panel might not have been able to go to this level in their assessment. At QUT, we conducted road shows at both campuses to communicate the changes as resulting from the NESTT project.

In addition to the innovation team, the panel, the facilitators and the implementation team, a number of *other stakeholders* are involved in ad-hoc engagements within the NESTT, including vendors (of current systems or new vendors showcasing future development pathways of their systems), selected benchmark organisations (ideally from outside the sector) for the ideate-via-derivation exercise, internal HR, IT, legal or policy advisor as needed as well as internal risk managers.

3.3.5 The Processes in the NESTT

As the time of writing this article, QUT had engaged in four NESTT initiatives covering the following processes, corporate card, web page approval, travel management and research grants. As an example, we will elaborate on the corporate card process in more detail.

A complex, costly corporate card process becomes a roadblock to the wider roll-out of corporate cards and the related benefits, as the administrative costs-to-serve are higher than the benefits gained from card payments. At QUT, approx. 500 staff used the corporate card in more than 20,000 transactions annually leading to approx 5,000 monthly statements. Besides addressing the immediate process issues within the corporate card process, an improved corporate card experience also facilitates

significant improvements in other substantial processes such as procurement or travel management.

The NESTT innovation team working on corporate card was headed by a Faculty Admin Manager and included representatives from finance, selected intensive users (e.g., alumni manager, academic) and experts on the different aspects of the process.

The vision created in the NESTT for this process was *'Enabling business, anytime, anywhere'*. 2020 ideas related to near field communication (NFC) and cardless payments were generated, but the core focus was on immediate 20 days improvements. The process was broken down into the stages issue card, use card and reconcile expenses. It became clear that the act of issuing a card was approval intensive (up to seven signatures), paper-intensive (up to ten documents) and as a consequence time consuming and costly to facilitate. Furthermore, the reconciliation was constrained by system limitations leading to time-consuming coding and approval processes.

In summary, it became obvious in the navigation stage (week 1) of this NESTT initiative that this process had significant potential for improvement.

3.4 Results Achieved

The NESTT innovation team worked for 4 weeks on the corporate card process following the four staged methodology and using the NESTT room. The ideation stage involved acting out future corporate card scenarios and in fact being the corporate card (!). Vendors from large Australian banks were invited to elaborate on the features of their related future services.

In total, ten significant ideas were developed ranging from streamlined, self-training and single approval arrangements as part of the issuing of the card over to an increased use of credit cards replacing purchase orders and reimbursements to digital receipts and declarations (instead of time-consuming state declarations). Revised, streamlined procedures complemented these process-centred ideas.

The ideas were presented to a panel consisting of QUT's Vice Chancellor, the CFO and further senior stakeholders where the majority of the ideas were approved. In follow-up meetings, details of the implementation (e.g., risk assessment, policy implications) were discussed with relevant stakeholders leading to a dedicated roadshow a few weeks after the presentation to the panel. During this roadshow the new process was communicated to the wider QUT community. In summary, these ideas eliminated the administrative efforts per corporate card process by more than 50% and eliminated the majority of approval steps and documents involved.

In addition to these tangible process performance improvements, the NESTT had a substantial impact on the mindset and design capabilities of everyone involved. Staff involved in the NESTT appreciated the insights into design-centred process improvement, the positive, constructive and decisive energy and the satisfaction of the fast idea-to-implementation cycle. As a consequence, other colleagues expressed an interest in being involved in future NESTTs.

3.5 Lessons Learned

The experiences with the NESTT have demonstrated that rigorous process change can be done quickly and that conducting such change can be a highly enjoyable experience for everyone involved. As such the NESTT adds a new capability to the BPM framework and provides in particular new approaches for governance, methodology and people as part of the six elements of BPM framework (Rosemann and vom Brocke 2015). Consequently, the three essential lessons learnt affiliated with the NESTT are in the areas of governance, participants (people) and facilitation (methodology).

Decisive Governance

It is essential to embed the rapid NESTT approach into an equally rapid governance structure. Otherwise, the NESTT loses its momentum and the desired accelerated idea-to-implementation is impossible to achieve. At QUT, this was addressed by fast tracking the implementation in the form of an endorsing, decisive panel immediately after the NESTT work was finalised. Furthermore, a senior executive (Deputy Vice Chancellor) was the named executive sponsor overseeing the work of the innovation champion and the implementation champion.

Intellectually Agile Participants

The NESTT relies heavily on the creativity, energy, mindset, competence and attitude of the participants. Over a period of 4 weeks, the team will see each other on a daily base 1–2 h per day and working constructively as a team is essential. This will be often challenging, in particular when there is no agreement regarding controversial ideas, but the constrained NESTT timeframe requires quick decision making processes. Participants may also arrive opinionated at the NESTT. However, being stuck to past ideas and being reluctant to consider design alternatives will become a roadblock to progression.

Our experiences show that working in the problem resolution part of the NESTT comes easy to most participants, but that the second half of the room is at least initially a challenge as most participants, including trained BPM professionals, will not be used to this sort of thinking and ideation.

Finally, participants need to be receptive to the guidance of the facilitator. In particular, it is crucial to channel conversations into the right sessions, i.e. to decouple, for example, conversations regarding the current state from their weaknesses and possible solutions.

Comprehensive Facilitators

The core of the BPM body of knowledge abstracts from the role of the facilitator. In fact, most BPM methods and techniques are people-agnostic and ignore the impact of the facilitator on the quality of the outcomes.

The NESTT is the opposite and the role of the facilitator is probably the most critical success factor (Rosemann et al. 2011). NESTT facilitators are not expected to be domain experts, but they must have the following characteristics

- Being able to work in the second half of the room, i.e. strong design capabilities and an ability to develop shared stories of compelling future process scenarios,
- Strong conceptualisation and system thinking skills, for example the ability to quickly ‘see’ essential process triage opportunities or clusters of ideas,
- Being decisive and being able to guide conversations in a limited timeframe towards the desired outcomes and
- Being able to work with stakeholders who are diverse in terms of seniority and attitude towards change.

A common mistake of the facilitators has been to be too enthusiastic with collecting lots of information. In the spirit of the moment, it is exciting to see the flood of input and a significant amount of post-it notes are seen as the outcome of ‘a great session’. However, it is important that each wall at any point in time will be intuitive, concise, relevant and simply ‘beautiful’. Thus, it is required to continuously reflect on the content of each wall and redesign, synergise and literally clean up a wall before beginning the next session. This could mean rewriting post-it notes to ensure they are consistent and actually can be read.

Ultimate future *success* with the NESTT will come in three ways. First, the NESTT has significantly improved the performance of a number of essential, decision-intensive processes at QUT. Only tangible success provides credibility—now there is a long queue of processes lined up for future NESTT sessions. Second, the NESTT is exposed to an over-supply of staff members who like to be part, contribute and benefit from this rapid redesign methodology. Third, and ultimately, success will mean the NESTT has become a widely used verb, i.e. when staff are exposed to a process problem they propose ‘*to nestt*’ it.

Beyond our very own organisation, success would materialise in other organisations, across industries and regions, replicating NESTT-like initiatives and making these a successful part of their business-as-usual operating model.

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