Workshop on Standard Operating Procedures

Understanding and Developing SOPs

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<td>Reflection</td>
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<td>9.45am</td>
<td>What is an SOP? Why have SOPs?</td>
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<td>Example SOPs</td>
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<td>Make your own SOP</td>
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<td>Q&amp;A, Feedback, Wrap-up and Close</td>
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Introductions

- Name
- Position / Designation
- Number of years in current Position
- Number of years with organization
- Favourite Food
- Expectations about the workshop
Reflection

• What did you do this morning?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
What is an SOP?

• A step by step written description of a process
• Describes how something needs to be done
• An SOP: describes the procedures that should be followed in order to achieve uniformity in the performance of specific functions of an organization.
• SOPs are designed to give guidance in a clear and concise manner and should be agreed and adopted by those for whom they are produced.
• Commonly used in multi-national companies, universities, government agencies, NGOs and SMEs
What is a Procedure? Types of Procedures?
Why have SOPs?

• Helps maintain **consistency** and **quality** of products or services (QA and QC)
• Operationalize and communicate key organizational/corporate policies, regulations of the government as well as any best practices
• Good reference point for staff in case they forget what to do for a particular situation/problem
• Helps new/promoted employees settle into their jobs
• Helps managers to supervise/train team members
• Helps achieve international certifications, e.g. ISO
• Helps minimize risks/hazards and manage emergency situations (OHS)
Example SOPs

• SOP Types

<table>
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<th>Short-type</th>
<th>Long-type</th>
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<td>A short list of steps. When no details or clarification are needed. For people familiar with procedure, terminology, etc. Sometimes like a checklist.</td>
<td>For more complex procedures, involved several roles and responsibilities.</td>
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## Example SOPs

- **SOP Types**

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<th>Steps</th>
<th>Hierarchical</th>
<th>Flow Chart</th>
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<td>For routine procedures that are short, have few possible outcomes, and are fairly to the point. Apart from the necessary documentation and safety guidelines, it's really just a bullet list of simple sentences telling the reader what to do.</td>
<td>For long procedures (usually more than 10 steps), involving a few decisions to make, clarification and terminology. This is usually a list of main steps all with substeps in a very particular order.</td>
<td>If the procedure has a number of possible outcomes, or the results and situations are not always predictable.</td>
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Example SOPs

• SOP Types

Simple checklist example
• Unlock the car
• Open the driver door and take a seat behind wheel
• Adjust the seat so that you can see adequately
• Adjust the side & rear view mirrors
• ...

Hierarchical (Multi-step checklist)
• Unlock the car
  • Use the unlock button on the key
  • If the remote button doesn’t work put key in lock
• Open the driver door and take a seat behind wheel
  • Adjust the seat so that you can see over the wheel
  • Adjust side and rear view mirrors
  • Ensure that you have all round vision through windows
  • ...

Symbols Key

- Start / End
- Decision
- Process
- Document
Example SOPs

• Language of SOP (wording) is important:
• Which one is better?
  • Example 1: Make sure that you clean out all of the dust from the air shafts before you begin using them.
  • Example 2: Vacuum all dust from air shafts before use.
## Challenges with SOPs?

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<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Possible Solution</th>
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Things to Avoid

1. People not familiar with the procedures write the SOP
2. SOPs focusing only on “how” and forget to mention “why”
3. Boring format – too much text
4. Complicated writing style
5. Not reviewing and updating SOPs
Role Play

• Form groups of 2 or 3 people
• Choose one of the following scenarios:
  A. Management Meeting trying to decide if SOP system should be introduced
  B. Manager trying to convince team to follow an SOP
  C. Team member asking reluctant Manager to develop an SOP
  D. Staff not able to understand a SOP
• Develop a small skit (short scene in a play) showing your chosen scenario with different roles for each group member.
• During the coffee-break discuss who will play which role and prepare a small script outlining the main discussion points
• Each group will have 5 minutes to present to the whole team
SOP Structure

1. Title Page, document ID number, version number, effective date
2. TOC
3. Purpose / Objective
4. Scope
5. Pre-requisites and list of relevant SOPS
6. Definitions and Abbreviations
7. Responsibilities
8. Procedures
9. References
10. Document History
11. Approval Signature
Other Requirements related to SOPs

• Quality standards
• Record keeping and documentation system (indexing, version control, review and updating protocols, etc.)
• Training
• Clear job descriptions and responsibilities
Brian Storming

• List some common functions or procedures related to your job/position
• Compare your list with neighbour and discuss any items that are different
Steps for making an SOP

1. Identify the policy or standard(s) relevant that your procedure addresses.
2. Consider your audience: prior knowledge, language, skills, number of people likely to read/use the SOP
3. Give a title to the SOP
4. State clearly the purpose/objective of the SOP, i.e. basically the rationale of the procedure
5. Think about the scope of the SOP: What areas (departments, functions, processes) of the organization will be affected by the procedure being designed.
6. Are there existing SOPs that are relevant? Any preconditions/pre-requisites? Equipment?
7. Who are the relevant people? List the particular roles and responsibilities, what is each person listed supposed to do?
8. Draw a logical sequence of activities, thinking about possible decision points and events/situations that can require other existing/new SOPs
Steps for making an SOP

9. Describe step by step the procedure following each logical sequence; which outlines what the activities are and the sequence of steps or tasks for the given procedure.

10. Make a list of abbreviations used in the procedure description. For any technical terms, provide the definitions so that untrained readers can easily understand.

11. List important indicators, which clearly show that the procedure was done correctly, achieving the required standard and policy goal. Try to make the indicators SMART.

12. Provide any relevant References e.g. guidelines, standards, policies, etc.

13. Test the draft SOP with someone who is supposed to follow it. Revise steps and descriptions as required.

14. Check SOP ID no., update version number, send for review, incorporate reviewer’s feedback, get it signed off and dated (incl. date for next review of SOP).

15. If a new SOP was required (step 7), then inform supervisor in writing (email).
Make your own SOP

• Working in pairs, develop an SOP for one of the procedures you listed in the Brain Storming Session

• Some points to note:
  • Use the SOP template provided
  • If you can not complete a section, move on to the next one.
  • In general, don't use "you."
  • Speak in the active voice
  • Start your sentences with command verbs.
Wrap-Up

• Q&A
• Summarize
• Feedback