EXECUTIVE HANDBOOK

High-Performance Process Improvement (HPPI) and the VISTALIZER® Solutions

A Strategic Guide to Organizational Excellence

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1. Introduction: Why Organizational Improvement Matters

Every organization, regardless of industry, size or geography, competes on the performance of its **key processes**, core or support processes[1]. A process is the interaction of people, technology, information and materials to produce a desired output, whether a product or a service. The aggregate past, current and future performance of these processes determines customer satisfaction, employee engagement, profitability and long-term competitiveness.

Yet the uncomfortable truth is this: most organizations operate at a Process Improvement Yield (PIY) of only 2–5%[2]. This means that up to 95–98% of the real-life improvement potential locked inside their processes remains untapped year after year. The cumulative cost of this unrealized potential, in lost revenue, wasted resources and missed opportunities, is staggering.

Organizational improvement is not a new concept. Structured methodologies such as Lean, Six Sigma and Agile have been practiced globally for decades. Yet despite significant investments in these approaches, real-life improvement performance in the average company remains many times disappointingly low. The fundamental challenge is not a lack of effort, it is the wrong kind of effort, applied to the wrong issues, in the wrong way.

This handbook introduces the High-Performance Process Improvement (HPPI) paradigm, a systematic, results-oriented approach designed to address these shortcomings. Grounded in doctoral research and proven through practice across many industries, HPPI sets a new standard for what process improvement can and should deliver. The supporting technology, the VISTALIZER® solution suite, operationalizes the HPPI paradigm from strategic planning through to individual-level implementation.

Who Should Read This Handbook?

This handbook is written for board members, C-suite executives, senior managers and strategy leaders who:

- Are responsible for organizational performance and competitive positioning.
- Want to understand the true performance potential of their current improvement activities.
- Seek a technology-backed framework that delivers measurable, sustained results.
- Wish to move beyond conventional improvement paradigms to a high-performance level.

[1] A core process affects the cash flow *directly* (produces value directly to the customer), whereas a support process affects the cash flow *indirectly* (produces value indirectly to the customer). A key process is a crucial process.

[2] Process Improvement Yield (%) = The Process Improvement Plan Quality (0-100%) X the scope (0-100 %) X the improvement quality (0-100%) and scope (0-100%). The Plan Quality is defined using a 50 point scale, and the implementation quality using a 200 point scale. The PIY concept is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

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2. A Primer: Understanding Process Improvement

For readers new to the discipline, a brief orientation is useful before comparing methodologies and introducing HPPI.

2.1 What Is a Process?

A process is formally defined as "the interaction of people, technology, information and materials to produce a desired output." This definition, drawn from the academic and practitioner literature underpinning HPPI, is deliberately broad. It applies equally to a manufacturing assembly line, a software development sprint, a customer service workflow or a strategic planning cycle.

Process performance is measured along three dimensions: time (speed and throughput), quality (defect rates, consistency, reliability) and costs. Improving a process means meaningfully and lastingly improving one or more of these dimensions in a way that matters to key stakeholders, i.e. the customers, employees and owners.

2.2 The Improvement Hierarchy

Not all improvement activity is equal. It is useful to distinguish between three levels of ambition:

- Reactive improvement: fixing problems only when they become acute.
- Structured improvement: applying a defined methodology (Lean, Six Sigma, Agile) to targeted issues.
- High-performance improvement: systematically optimizing both improvement effectiveness (improving the right issues) and improvement efficiency (improving the issues right) under strict time and cost constraints.

Most organizations operate at the first or second level. HPPI operates at the third, and the gap between these levels in terms of realized improvement potential is substantial.

2.3 Why Improvement Efforts So Often Disappoint

The most common reasons why process improvement programmes fail to deliver their full potential include:

- Focusing on the wrong issues: improving what is visible or convenient rather than what drives the most value.
- Applying generic methods without customization to the specific process, organization and context.
- Weak implementation quality, i.e. high-quality plans poorly executed, or vice versa.
- Low coverage, i.e. only a fraction of relevant processes and people are included.
- Insufficient management commitment and change management capability.
- Over-reliance on enabling technologies (including AI) without first establishing improvement effectiveness.

HPPI addresses all of these failure modes systematically. It does so not by replacing existing knowledge but by elevating the ambition level and providing the structure and tools to operate at that level.

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3. Comparing Lean, Six Sigma and Agile

Three of the most widely adopted process improvement paradigms are Lean, Six Sigma and Agile. Each has genuine strengths. Each also has important limitations when evaluated against the full demands of high-performance improvement. The following presents a structured comparison across key dimensions, followed by an assessment of how HPPI positions itself relative to each.

Dimension	Lean	Six Sigma	Agile
Primary Focus	Elimination of waste and non-value-adding activities to increase flow and reduce lead time.	Reduction of process variation and defects using statistical methods and data analysis.	Iterative, incremental delivery of value with continuous feedback loops and adaptive planning.
Origin	Toyota Production System (TPS); manufacturing origins, now widespread across industries.	Motorola (1980s); popularized by General Electric. Strong manufacturing and transactional roots.	Software development (Agile Manifesto, 2001); now applied in product development and beyond.
Key Tools & Methods	Hoshin kanri and nichijo kanri; the PDCA[3] logic as the prime improvement engine. Associated approaches/tools: Value Stream Mapping, 5S, Kaizen, Kanban, Just-in-Time, Poka-Yoke, SMED.	DMAIC[4], control charts, hypothesis testing, DOE.	Scrum, Kanban (Agile variant), sprints, retrospectives, daily stand-ups, product backlogs.
Performance Measurement	Lead time reduction, cycle time, waste categories (8 wastes). Focus on flow metrics.	Sigma level (DPMO), Cp/Cpk indices. Strong statistical rigor; quantitative output targets.	Velocity, burn-down charts, story points. Focus on delivery throughput and team productivity.
Effectiveness Focus	Moderate: Lean targets waste but does not systematically identify the highest-value improvement objects across all process components.	Moderate: DMAIC frames the problem well but assumes the problem scope has been correctly defined.	Low-to-Moderate: Agile is primarily about how work is done, not which work is most important to do.
Implementation Support	Lean consultants, Kaizen events, workshops. Ongoing maintenance via Gemba walks and visual management.	Black Belt/Green Belt certification model. Project-based with executive Champions.	Scrum Masters, Agile coaches, product owners. Team-level autonomy and self-organization.
Knowledge Management	Largely informal; relies on visual management and cultural embedding.	Structured project charters and tollgates.	Wiki pages, retrospective notes, informal team

[3] Plan, Do, Check, Act or the Deming cycle (circle).
[4] Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control.

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Dimension	Lean	Six Sigma	Agile
		Data-centric documentation.	knowledge. Limited systematic capture.
Scalability Across the Organization	Good for operational/shop-floor processes. Harder to scale effectively to knowledge work and strategy.	Good for discrete, measurable processes. Complex statistical requirements limit broad deployment.	Best suited to product/software teams. Scalability frameworks (SAFe, LeSS) add overhead.
Theoretical Process Definition	Focuses on material and information flow; underplays the people and technology interaction dimension.	Process is a source of measurable variation; statistical emphasis.	Process is a cadence of delivery; stakeholder feedback-driven definition.
Typical PIY Range	Real-life ceiling approximately 7–15% given practical constraints. Theoretical maximum approximately 60%.	Varies widely by project selection quality. Typically 3–10% at portfolio level.	Delivery-focused; PIY as defined in HPPI is not a native concept.
Relation to HPPI	HPPI is compatible with and can amplify Lean; VISTALIZER® solutions provide the effectiveness layer that Lean lacks, besides the improvement performance.	HPPI complements Six Sigma by elevating the problem-selection and plan-quality dimensions, besides the improvement performance.	HPPI's PDCA-based implementation aligns with Agile's iterative spirit but adds strategic rigor.

The central insight from this comparison is that Lean, Six Sigma and Agile are all primarily concerned with doing things right in the focus process (i.e. improving the process productivity), but none contains a systematic, built-in mechanism for ensuring that the right things are being improved, in the right way, translates into improvement effectiveness and efficiency. This is the core gap that HPPI was designed to close, in a cost-effective and swiftly way.

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4. Introducing HPPI: The Three Modes of Improvement

HPPI theory identifies three distinct modes in which any organization can run its improvement efforts. Understanding which mode your organization currently operates in is the starting point for any genuine performance transformation.

Mode	Description	Key Characteristics
Mode I Process Change	Ad hoc changes to any process element without a structured approach. Outcome may be negative, neutral or positive — essentially random. No measurement of improvement yield. Examples: appointing new roles, reorganizing teams without process analysis, adding technology without process redesign.	Reactive, unstructured. No requirement for positive outcomes. Change is confused with improvement. High waste of resources.
Mode II Process Improvement	Structured approach to productivity improvement using recognized methodologies (Lean, Six Sigma, Kaizen). Focus on “doing things right” in the focus process being improved. No inherent performance requirements for the methodology itself. Examples: Lean waste elimination projects, Six Sigma DMAIC, Agile sprints.	Structured, methodology-driven. Productivity focus. Effectiveness not systematically assured (neither in the improvement work nor in the focus process) PIY ceiling: ~7–15% in practice (theoretically 60%).
Mode III High-Performance Process Improvement	Systematic, results-oriented approach improving both effectiveness ('doing the right things') and productivity ('doing the things right'). Operates under strict quality, time and cost constraints. The improvement process itself is treated as a process subject to the same performance requirements. Examples: HPPI using VISTALIZER Report + VISTALIZER for Enterprises under PDCA at >85% quality.	Systematic, results-oriented. Effectiveness AND productivity assured. Improvement work held to same standards as operational work. PIY potential: 75–100%.

The practical difference between modes is best illustrated through the hot-air balloon analogy used in HPPI theory (see picture below).

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Picture 1: The hot air balloon analogy (AI generated picture).

Faced with a balloon that is not performing as desired (not lifting from the ground):

- **Mode I says**: paint the basket, hire a motivational coach, reduce the crew by one person.
- **Mode II says**: repair the envelope, check weather conditions, optimize the fuel load.
- **Mode III says**: first determine whether a hot-air balloon is even the right vehicle for the journey, and if so, address Mode II items prioritized by real-life impact, fix the floor that is not properly attached, disconnect the anchor before lifting, and ensure the crew has the knowledge to sustain optimal performance throughout the journey.

The difference in outcome between these three modes, compounded over years, defines whether an organization leads its sector or falls behind it.

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5. Process Improvement Yield (PIY): The Core Metric

5.1 Definition

Process Improvement Yield (PIY) is the single most important metric in the HPPI framework. It quantifies the overall real-life performance of an organization's improvement efforts on a scale of 0–100%.

Formal Definition of PIY

PIY measures how effective (improving the right issues) AND productive (improving the issues right) the improvement efforts are.

PIY Score (0–100%) = f (Plan Quality × Coverage [Scope] × Implementation Quality × Coverage [Scope])

PIY captures all four key dimensions: plan quality, implementation quality, and the coverage of both planning and implementation across the organization's relevant process landscape.

5.2 The Four Components of PIY

- **Plan Quality**: How well does the improvement plan identify and prioritize the right improvement objects? Does it address the vital few issues that drive the most process performance improvement? Is the plan customized to the specific process, context and organization?
- **Implementation Quality**: How effectively is the improvement plan executed? Are PDCA cycles run at the required quality level (>85%)? Is improvement knowledge and skill maintained at all organizational levels throughout implementation?
- **Planning Coverage**: What proportion of the organization's key processes have been subjected to a high-quality process improvement plan?
- **Implementation Coverage**: What proportion of identified improvement objects are being actively and effectively implemented?

5.3 Typical PIY Levels in Practice

Based on the HPPI research and real-life application, the following PIY benchmarks apply:

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PIY Range	Interpretation
0–5%	Most companies operating in Mode I or early Mode II. Enormous unrealized potential.
5–15%	Companies with active Lean or Six Sigma programmes. Still significant unrealized potential.
60%	Theoretical maximum for Mode II approaches under ideal conditions. Rarely achieved in practice.
>75%	HPPI target range. Achievable with VISTALIZER Report + VISTALIZER for Enterprises (+ services)
>85%	High-performance benchmark. Sustained performance at this level constitutes a genuine competitive advantage.

5.4 Why PIY Matters Strategically

A PIY of 3%, which is typical, means that 97% of the improvement potential in an organization's key processes is being left unrealized. Over a five-year period, this translates into enormous foregone value in terms of profitability, customer satisfaction, employee engagement and competitive positioning.

Conversely, moving from a PIY of 3% to 75% is not merely a marginal improvement: it is a transformation. Organizations that systematically raise their PIY are able to deliver better products and services at lower cost, with shorter lead times, and with greater adaptability to market changes. This capability compounds over time and becomes one of the most durable competitive advantages available.

The PIY Calculator, embedded within the VISTALIZER for Enterprises app, enables executives and managers to calculate their organization's current PIY level and model the financial implications of improvement. This provides an immediate, data-grounded basis for strategic investment decisions in process improvement.

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6. HPPI Defined: Principles, Structure and Application

6.1 Core Definition

HPPI: Formal Definition

High-Performance Process Improvement (HPPI) is a systematic, results-oriented approach that improves both the effectiveness ('doing the right things') and the productivity ('doing the things right') of processes, under strict quality, time and cost constraints — including the improvement process itself.

Three elements in this definition deserve special emphasis. First, HPPI requires both effectiveness and productivity, not one at the expense of the other. Second, it operates under strict constraints: the improvement effort itself must be time-efficient and cost-effective. Third, the improvement process is itself subject to HPPI standards: the act of improving must be improved.

6.2 The HPPI Process Definition

HPPI adopts a rigorous, academically grounded process definition:

The HPPI Process Definition

"A process is the interaction of people, machines, materials and information to produce a certain service or product."

Fromm, H. (1992). 'Das Management von Zeit und Variabilität in Geschäftsprozessen.' CIM Management 5, pp. 7–14.

This definition is deliberately comprehensive. It encompasses the four process components (people, technology, information, materials) and requires that improvement addresses the interaction of all four, not merely one or two. This is a key differentiator from approaches such as Lean, which emphasizes material and information flow, or technology-first approaches that overlook the human and organizational dimensions.

6.3 Core Principles of HPPI

1. Improvement effectiveness must be assured before improvement productivity, i.e. selecting the right issues to improve is the prerequisite for improving them well.
2. The improvement plan must be of 100% quality: all relevant process components, key stakeholder considerations (customers, employees, owners), and improvement objects must be identified and prioritized correctly.
3. Implementation must be run at >85% PDCA quality, with adequate coverage across the organization's relevant processes.
4. The improvement process must be treated as a process in its own right, subject to the same time, quality and cost discipline as operational processes.

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5. Tacit knowledge, i.e. knowledge that is not available in digital format, must be actively identified, captured and embedded in the improvement plan and implementation.
6. Individual learning and organizational development are integral to HPPI, not peripheral: the right knowledge must reach the right people at the right time.
7. Steerability, i.e. the ability to adapt improvement direction and speed in response to changing internal and external conditions, must be built into the improvement system.

6.4 Key Processes Addressed by HPPI

HPPI is applicable to all key organizational processes. The most strategically significant typically include:

- The core (order-to-delivery) process, including invoicing.
- The research and development (R&D) process.
- The marketing process.
- The sales process.
- The after-sales and customer service process.
- The administration process (HR, finance, general management).
- The maintenance process where applicable.

HPPI's approach scales from individual process units to entire value chains, across geographies and organizational structures. At its smallest implementation level, the use case may even be just one person.

6.5 The PDCA Foundation

HPPI is operationalized through the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) or Deming Cycle, but with a crucial distinction: HPPI requires that PDCA is run at a quality level of >85% (preferably 90–100%). Most organizations run PDCA at a fraction of this quality level, which directly translates into low PIY. VISTALIZER® solutions are designed from the outset to assure PDCA quality at the required level.

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7. The Supporting Technology

The VISTALIZER® solution suite, i.e. the supporting technology to run and operate HPPI efforts, is developed and delivered by Vistalize Oy, the company founded by Dr. Markus Pastinen. VISTALIZER® solutions are the first and only technology platform designed from the outset to operationalize the HPPI paradigm end-to-end. They address both pillars of PIY: improvement effectiveness (the right issues) and improvement productivity (the right execution), under strict cost and time constraints.

7.1 The Two Core Solutions

VISTALIZER® Report: Assuring Improvement Effectiveness

The VISTALIZER® Report is a high-quality process analysis and synthesis, producing a customized, 100%-quality process improvement plan for a specific process. It is the planning cornerstone of any HPPI implementation.

The Report is grounded in the constructive logic developed in Dr. Pastinen's doctoral dissertation: it integrates diagnosis, remediation and implementation planning into a single, coherent whole, identifying the vital few improvement objects with the highest real-life traction for the specific organization and process. It incorporates tacit knowledge that is by definition absent from any digital database, and harmonizes the perspectives of executives, managers, employees and other key stakeholders.

A VISTALIZER® Report produced for each key process provides the improvement effectiveness foundation required to achieve a high PIY. The Reports can be delivered using Microsoft Teams or Zoom as the communication platform, making them accessible and efficient even for distributed organizations.

- Output: a 100%-quality, customized improvement plan for the targeted process.
- Coverage: one Report per key process; the aggregate of all Reports constitutes a comprehensive organizational improvement programme.
- Delivery: by Vistalize Oy professionals, using a structured engagement methodology.

VISTALIZER® for Enterprises (App): Assuring Improvement Productivity

The VISTALIZER® for Enterprises app (available for iOS, iPadOS, visionOS and Android; language: English) is the implementation backbone of HPPI. It ensures that improvement knowledge and skills reach every relevant individual in the organization, i.e. executives, managers and employees, in a customized, scalable and cost-effective way.

Key capabilities of the app include:

- PIY Calculator with financial Implications modelling; enabling real-time calculation of your organization's PIY.
- Proposed Learning Path system; individualized improvement education and training paths based on organizational level, current knowledge level, change resistance, preferred learning logic and quality assurance requirements.
- “Mini-Analogy” (with audio mode); the feature points out the underpinnings how to discover and deal with the cause-effect chain to make the company flourish.
- Car (Motoring) Analogy Module (with audio mode); an interactive module that makes HPPI concepts accessible and memorable across all organizational levels.
- The Mountain Analogy (with audio mode); an interactive module that makes organizational change management issues and considerations accessible and

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memorable across all organizational levels. The module contains the possibility to create an own (customized) presentation of the issues related to organizational change and the quest for operating at higher ambition levels (“our way of creating success”),

- Advanced story telling feature; an interactive customized story for dealing hands-on with key organizational change management issues related to the improvement journey. The module increases motivation and decreases change resistance, paving the ground for a successful real-life implementation.
- PDCA1 (PDCA-logic education) and PDCA2 (PDCA-logic training) modules with quality assurance; enabling high-quality PDCA implementation with integrated quality checks.
- Non-linear and linear learning logics; adapting to individual learning preferences and organization-specific contexts. Advanced ways of assuring the learning quality.
- Three audio blogs dealing with HPPI; the audio blogs are accessible also in the free version of the public app.
- Private app deployment: for larger organizations, the app can be customized and deployed as 'VISTALIZER for [Your Company Name]' via Apple Business Manager or managed Google Play.

The combination of VISTALIZER® Report (effectiveness) and VISTALIZER® for Enterprises (productivity) constitutes a complete, end-to-end HPPI process (system). This system delivers an implementation quality of >85% against an industry average of 16%, at total costs 35–85% lower and with results achieved 40–85% sooner than conventional approaches.

7.2 Additional VISTALIZER® Solutions

The VISTALIZER® portfolio also includes several complementary solutions:

Solution	Description
VISTALIZER® Acid Test	A rapid assessment tool that evaluates the quality of strategies, project portfolios and improvement activities. Utilizes elements from VISTALIZER® for Businesses, Report and Networks.
VISTALIZER® for Businesses	A strategic overview solution for executives, supporting the development and deployment of improvement strategy at the organizational level.
VISTALIZER® for Networks	Designed for multi-entity settings such as supply chains, business networks and value chains where improvement must span organizational boundaries.
VISTALIZER® for Consultants	Supports external and internal process improvement consultants in creating high-quality VISTALIZER® Reports efficiently.
Review & Feedback Services	Professional review services for strategy documents, essays and PDCA outputs, providing expert feedback to assure implementation quality. Available via VISTALIZER.com.
Integrations	Integrations extending the VISTALIZER® app's functionality; documented at VISTALIZER.com | Integrations.

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7.3 The End-to-End HPPI Technology Flow

The HPPI technology flow follows a clear sequence:

Phase	Activity
1. Assess	Use the e.g. PIY Calculator (available for free in the app VISTALIZER® for Enterprises) to establish your current PIY level and model improvement potential, or some other metrics pointing at improvement needs.
2. Plan	Engage Vistalize Oy to produce a VISTALIZER® Report for each key process, creating 100%-quality improvement plans.
3. Educate & Train	Deploy VISTALIZER® for Enterprises across the organization with individualized learning paths aligned to the improvement plan. Consider the use of verified internal educators, trainers or coaches to boost organizational learning.
4. Implement	Run PDCA cycles at >85% quality, supported by VISTALIZER® for Enterprises implementation modules.
5. Review & Improve	Utilize VISTALIZER® Review & Feedback Services and continuous PIY monitoring to sustain and raise performance levels.
6. Scale	Extend coverage to additional processes and organizational units, progressively raising total PIY. For larger settings, consider the use of VISTALIZER® for Consultants to produce internally VISTALIZER® Reports according to the requirements and scale.

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8. Theoretical Foundation: Dissertation and Book

8.1 The Doctoral Dissertation

The entire HPPI paradigm is rooted in a doctoral dissertation (in English) successfully defended at Helsinki University of Technology (now part of Aalto University), Finland.

Doctoral Dissertation (in English)

Title (English): *Process Improvement Essentials: A Framework for Creating and Implementing Operational Improvement Plans*

Title (Finnish): *Toiminnan kehittämisen olennaiset asiat: malli operatiivisten kehittämissuunnitelmien luomiseksi ja toimeenpanoksi*

Author: Markus Pastinen

Publisher: Vistalize Oy

Format: Paperback monograph, 200 pages

Editions: 1st edition (1998), 2nd edition (2000)

ISBN (both editions): 951-97912-0-5

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Tech. Martti Mäntylä

Preliminary Examiners: Prof. Dr. Tech. Pekka Kess; Prof. Dr. Tech. Josu Takala

Examiners/Opponents: Prof. Dr. Bo Bergman; Prof. Dr. Tech. Josu Takala

The objective of the dissertation is to construct and test a logic that produces customized process improvement plans using a standardized approach. The logic integrates diagnosis, remediation and implementation planning into a compact whole. A constructive research approach is applied, grounded in literature review, case studies and deductive reasoning. The dissertation identifies and addresses relevant problems within organizations based on optimal utilization of available resources, the foundational logic that underpins the VISTALIZER® Report to this day.

The dissertation is available from Vistalize Oy. Orders: info@vistalize.fi. An abstract is available at vistalize.fi.

8.2 The Book: High-Performance Process Improvement

The comprehensive treatment of the HPPI paradigm, including theoretical foundations, methodology, case studies and practical applications of VISTALIZER® technology, is published in book form by Springer.

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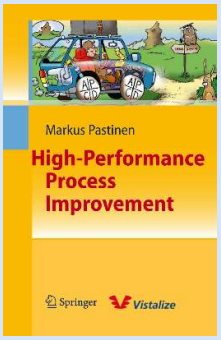
Book: High-Performance Process Improvement (in English)

Title: *High-Performance Process Improvement*
Author: Markus Pastinen
Publisher: Springer-Verlag
Edition: 1st edition, March 2010 (published 10 March 2010)
Format: Hardcover monograph, XXVIII + 260 pages;
24.2 × 16.3 × 2.0 cm (511 g)
ISBN (Hardcover/Print): 978-3-642-10783-2
ISBN (Online/eBook): 978-3-642-10784-9
ASIN (Amazon Kindle Edition): B008CNBQ7S



The book presents the complete HPPI concept with real-world cases illustrating the application of VISTALIZER® solutions across different industries and organizational contexts. Section 5.5.1.2 contains the detailed logic for identifying the best process improvement objects within the VISTALIZER® Report framework. The book is available from the VISTALIZER.com web shop, directly from Vistalize Oy (orders to info@vistalize.fi) and from the publisher at link.springer.com.

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9. Blog Insights: Key Writings Summarized

The HPPI blog at highperformanceprocessimprovement.wordpress.com is the primary online resource for topical HPPI commentary, case-level discussion and updates on VISTALIZER® solutions. The posts are also available at VISTALIZER.com. The following provides a summary of all substantive blog posts:

August 25, 2026 — **So You Want to Improve Your Organization with AI? Do You REALLY Know What It Takes?**

Argues that adopting AI does not remove the need for organizational improvement capability — if anything, it makes that capability more important, since AI is, from a process improvement perspective, just another technology affecting people, information and materials. Distinguishes education (understanding process improvement theory) from training (applying it in practice), and argues that consultants alone cannot build lasting organizational capability. Introduces the "4%/40% rule": improvement work can realistically consume only about 4% of annual working time (roughly 10 days), and at least 40% of staff must genuinely understand the improvement philosophy before larger-scale change becomes achievable. Identifies five dimensions that must be managed to educate and train at scale — organizational layer, current knowledge level, resistance to change, preferred learning logic, and quality assurance — and positions VISTALIZER® for Enterprises as the technology for running this education and training process itself at a high-performance level.

August 24, 2026 — **Germany's Improvement Engine Has Lost Its Power. It's Time for a New Vehicle.**

Examines why German labour productivity growth has slowed to roughly 0.4% (2025), despite decades of investment in Industry 4.0, Lean, Six Sigma and continuous improvement — a rate that would take about 174 years to double productivity, versus 35 years at 2% growth. Uses the metaphor of an improvement system as a vehicle: the improvement "engine" is only one component, and a more powerful engine does not make the vehicle fit for a heavier load, higher speed or more demanding terrain unless the surrounding structure (wheels as PDCA cycles, steering, brakes) and the driver's (employees') motivation, knowledge and skills are also fit for purpose. Argues that few companies have a comprehensive metric for how effectively and productively their improvement system operates, and presents Process Improvement Yield (PIY = Plan Quality × Plan Coverage × Implementation Quality × Implementation Coverage) as that missing metric. Concludes that German companies need to improve the improvement system itself, not simply launch more improvement initiatives, and that HPPI provides the paradigm while VISTALIZER® provides the technology to realize it end-to-end.

August 21, 2026 — **How Much of Your Company's Improvement Potential Are You Still Burning?**

Argues that most companies measure the results of individual improvement projects but not the performance of their improvement system as a whole, leaving significant value — likened to cash burning in a bonfire — continuously lost despite heavy spending on Lean, Six Sigma, automation and AI. Distinguishes three levels of ROI — of an individual improvement, of the improvement portfolio, and of the improvement system itself — and argues the third is almost never asked about. Because PIY is multiplicative across its four factors, weakness in any one factor sharply reduces realized potential: a company scoring a respectable-sounding 70% on all four factors is actually only realizing about 24% of its potential. Proposes five yes/no questions executives should be able to answer about their improvement potential, and recommends an annual, HPPI-expert-verified PIY score reported to the Board of Directors.

August 19, 2026 — **Improving Development vs. Developing Improvement: Why Nokia Lost the Game and VW's Best Improvement Program Still Can't Catch Up**

Uses Nokia's missed smartphone transition and VW's Cariad software struggles to examine why even well-resourced companies lose competitive momentum. Introduces a red/yellow/green "arrogance and

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complacency" flag system, based on real decision-making authority and remaining time before crisis, as the precondition for any improvement effort to succeed. Distinguishes "improving development" — running an initiative that upgrades one specific process, such as VW's China-speed program, which cut car-development time by up to a third and costs by roughly 40% — from "developing improvement": building a durable, repeatable, organization-wide capability to run high-performance improvement anywhere. Concludes that Nokia in 2007 was a red-flag case where leadership's unwillingness to cannibalize a highly profitable existing business, not technology, was the real blocker, and that VW's China-speed discipline never propagated into its German restructuring effort, which remains stuck at the plan-approval stage.

August 17, 2026 — **The Forgotten Half of the Process Improvement Yield: What Actually Happens After the Improvement Plan is Ready?**

Argues that most companies focus only on the first half of the PIY formula — Plan Quality and Plan Coverage — while neglecting Implementation Quality and Implementation Coverage, the half that determines whether a good plan is ever actually realized. Attributes the breakdown to organizational culture: a constant "busy mode" that leaves no real time for implementation, "PDCA theater" where the Check and Act phases are skipped or hollowed out, and problems such as a departing improvement champion or a bias toward implementing only the easiest objects. Shows that a 100%-quality plan with reasonable coverage can still yield a PIY of just 5.4% if implementation quality and coverage are both weak. Recommends management track four signals (time-to-implementation, resources allocated, threshold targets, willingness to learn) and presents VISTALIZER® for Enterprises as the tool for building the staff motivation and PDCA skill (>85% quality) needed to close the gap.

May 2026 — **What is the High-Performance Process Improvement Way of Understanding What Issues Need Most Attention if the Improvement Setting is Very Large to Huge?**

This post introduces the **Rate My Company** feature as a scalable, crowd-sourced diagnostic tool, i.e. the missing piece for large and complex organizations where conventional HPPI analysis methods alone cannot efficiently capture the full organizational picture. It complements the VISTALIZER® Report (process-level planning), VISTALIZER® for Networks (network/company-level analysis and synthesis), and the VISTALIZER® for Enterprises PDCA implementation module, completing the four-method HPPI analysis and synthesis framework.

April 2026 — **Prompting "How Could [Company Name] Utilize VISTALIZER® Powered High-Performance Process Improvement Solutions?" — Which AI Chatbot Platform(s) to Use?**

Explores the use of generative AI chatbot platforms to produce company-specific road maps for HPPI implementation. Based on testing across multiple large multinationals, Gemini (Google) and Claude (Anthropic) provide the highest-quality answers in terms of identifying key improvement areas and matching them to specific VISTALIZER® solutions. ChatGPT provides medium-quality output; DeepSeek provides low-quality output. The recommended approach is to combine outputs from Gemini and Claude as the basis for a boardroom or management team discussion on future process performance.

December 2025 — **Enhancing Steerability in Process Improvement**

Examines steerability, i.e. the ability of improvement efforts to respond appropriately to changing internal and external conditions, as a built-in feature of HPPI. Using the motoring analogy, the post distinguishes between the substance (improvement mission, vision, plans) and the mechanism (deployment and PDCA logic) required for steerable improvement. Argues that many organizations have poor integration between these elements, resulting in improvement efforts that cannot respond effectively to change. VISTALIZER® Report and VISTALIZER® for Enterprises are identified as the tools that provide the required steerability.

September 2025 — **Your Process Improvement Solution May Not Be as Fit for the Purpose as You Think**

Challenges the assumption that existing improvement solutions are adequate. Introduces PIY as the key metric for evaluating improvement solution fitness, and argues that most solutions, including AI-based approaches, cannot deliver a high PIY because they do not address improvement

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effectiveness. The VISTALIZER® Report is presented as the route to 100%-quality planning, and VISTALIZER® for Enterprises as the route to >85% PDCA quality in implementation.

June 2025 — **Process Change vs. Process Improvement vs. High-Performance Process Improvement**

Introduces and explains the three modes of improvement (Mode I: Process Change; Mode II: Process Improvement; Mode III: High-Performance Process Improvement) using the hot-air balloon analogy. Contrasts the practical implications of each mode and makes the case for operating in Mode III as the only approach capable of delivering sustained, high-yield improvement.

May 2025 — **Are AI Agents the Way to Go When Improving the Company Performance?**

Cautions against the 'technology-first' approach to process improvement, using the hammer-and-nails analogy. Argues that AI agents are a tool, potentially useful within a properly structured HPPI framework, but are not a substitute for improvement effectiveness. Companies that implement AI agents without first establishing which issues to improve are essentially gambling. The VISTALIZER® Report is recommended as the prerequisite to any technology deployment.

January 2024 — **What to Do When the Economy is Freezing?**

Addresses the challenge of declining markets and economic pressure, arguing that the root cause is typically long-term neglect of key process improvement. Provides the business case for raising PIY from below 3% to 75%+ as the most effective response to adverse economic conditions. Positions HPPI as essential for organizational survival and competitiveness in difficult times.

August 2022 — **Can You Fight Inflation with Process Improvement Efforts to Keep Afloat?**

Examines how systematic process improvement can offset inflationary pressures by improving time, quality and cost performance across key processes. Quantifies the limitations of Lean-based approaches in achieving high PIY and presents the VISTALIZER® Report and VISTALIZER® for Enterprises as the solutions required to achieve inflation-beating improvement performance.

April 2022 — **Re-Engineering the Process Improvement Learning Process in Companies | Part 3**

Provides the solution to the “average individual dilemma” in process improvement learning: a digital, individualized learning platform (VISTALIZER® for Enterprises 3.3) that delivers personalized learning paths based on organizational level, current knowledge, change resistance, preferred learning logic and quality assurance level. Details the practical benefits in terms of faster realization of improvement potential, lower training costs, improved retention and scalability.

March 2022 — **Re-Engineering the Process Improvement Learning Process in Companies | Part 2**

Identifies the main obstacles to effective process improvement learning, centering on the “average individual dilemma”: the mismatch between generic group-based training and the individual learning needs of each person in the organization. Argues that top-down, one-size-fits-all approaches are fundamentally unsustainable and proposes a bottom-up, individually customized alternative.

March 2022 — **Re-Engineering the Process Improvement Learning Process in Companies | Part 1**

Opens a trilogy on process improvement learning by diagnosing the persistent gap between investment in improvement education and actual real-life improvement performance. Distinguishes between improvement effectiveness (doing the right things) and efficiency (doing them right), and identifies the learning process itself as a key improvement lever that most organizations have failed to re-engineer.

January 2018 — **Where Can I Learn More About How the VISTALIZER® Report Detects the Best Process Improvement Objects?**

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Explains the identification logic used in the VISTALIZER® Report to distinguish between the trivial many and the vital few improvement objects. The detailed methodology is documented in section 5.5.1.2 of the book High-Performance Process Improvement.

January 2018 — **The Essential Rule of High-Performance Process Improvement**

States the fundamental principle of HPPI: that improvement efforts must address both effectiveness (doing the right things) and efficiency (doing things right) simultaneously, and that achieving a high PIY requires a systematic approach to both dimensions.

2015 — **Is Your Organization Driving with Zero Improvement Visibility? | Trilogy Part 3/3**

Highlights the danger of running improvement efforts without adequate visibility into their performance. Without clear metrics and tracking, improvement becomes aimless and resources are wasted. Calls for transparent measurement of improvement yield and progress.

2014 — **Are Your Improvement Methods Old Scrap? | Trilogy Part 2/3**

Challenges organizations to critically evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of their current improvement methodologies. Arguments that many widely-used methods have become outdated relative to the performance levels now achievable.

2013 — **Outperform Toyota by Improving the Processes | Trilogy Part 1/3**

Challenges the assumption that Toyota's improvement methods represent the ceiling of what is achievable. Argues that any organization can surpass that performance level through the disciplined application of high-quality process improvement methods and their effective implementation.

2012 — **On What Decade Are Your Improvement Efforts?**

Provides a historical perspective on the evolution of improvement paradigms from pre-1980s production focus through the TQM era of the 1980s to the present, arguing that many organizations are still operating with improvement approaches that are decades behind the state of the art.

2012 — **The Process Improvement Yield Reveals Your Actual Improvement Traction**

Introduces PIY as the definitive metric for evaluating the real impact of process improvement efforts. A low PIY is identified as a clear signal that both the methods employed and their implementation require fundamental improvement.

The blog also cross-references the HPPI blog summary post (September 2025) which provides an AI-generated index of all posts up to that date.

Visit: highperformanceprocessimprovement.wordpress.com

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10. Online Resources: VISTALIZER.com vs. vistalize.fi

Vistalize Oy maintains two distinct websites, each serving a different purpose. Understanding the difference enables users to navigate directly to the information or service most relevant to their needs.

Dimension	VISTALIZER.com	VISTALIZE.fi
Primary Audience	Current and prospective users of the VISTALIZER® for Enterprises app; buyers of extended services and the HPPI book.	Organizations and professionals seeking strategic-level information about the full VISTALIZER® solution suite and Vistalize Oy.
Core Content	App downloads (iOS/iPadOS App Store and Google Play links for VISTALIZER® for Enterprises). Review & Feedback Services (PDCA review, strategy review, essay review). Web shop: purchase of the book High-Performance Process Improvement (€85 incl. VAT). Blog with topical HPPI commentary and case-level articles. App integrations documentation (VISTALIZER.com | integrations); Rate My Company Docs & Script.	Overview of all VISTALIZER® solutions: • VISTALIZER® for Networks, • VISTALIZER® for Consultants, • VISTALIZER® Report, • VISTALIZER® for Enterprises. • VISTALIZER® for Businesses, and • VISTALIZER® Acid Test. Publications page: detailed bibliographic information and ordering for the doctoral dissertation and the Springer book. Strategic overview documents for executives: white papers, outsourcing guides. Company information (Vistalize Oy).
Best Used When...	You want to download or subscribe to the VISTALIZER® for Enterprises app, purchase review services, buy the book, or read the latest HPPI blog posts.	You want to understand the full VISTALIZER® portfolio, access publication details and ISBNs, order the dissertation, or explore strategic-level engagement with Vistalize Oy.
Language	English.	Multi-lingual: English, Finnish, Swedish.
Key URL	www.vistalizer.com	www.vistalize.fi

In summary: VISTALIZER.com is the operational and commercial hub, i.e. the place to download, buy and engage, especially for app users. VISTALIZE.fi is the strategic and informational home, i.e. the place to understand the full solution landscape, access publications and engage with Vistalize Oy at a strategic level.

Both sites link to the HPPI WordPress blog and to each other. For app-specific support and integrations, VISTALIZER.com is the primary resource. For publication orders, company background and the complete VISTALIZER® solution overview, vistalize.fi is the primary resource.

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11. Prompt Guide: How to Analyze HPPI for Your Organization

Generative AI platforms, particularly Google Gemini and Anthropic Claude, can provide rapid, company-specific analyses of how HPPI and VISTALIZER® solutions could benefit a given organization. This capability is especially valuable for preparing boardroom or management team discussions on process improvement strategy.

The approach is straightforward: enter the prompt below into your preferred AI platform. The AI will draw on publicly available information about your organization (strategic priorities, announced challenges, recent initiatives) to generate a tailored road map of the highest-value HPPI application areas.

Based on testing reported in the HPPI blog (April 2026), Gemini and Claude consistently provide the highest-quality responses. Using both platforms and comparing their outputs is recommended for the most comprehensive perspective.

11.1 Three Recommended Starter Prompts

Prompt 1: Strategic Overview

Primary Prompt:

"How could [Company Name] utilize VISTALIZER powered high-performance process improvement solutions?"

Purpose: Generates a company-specific road map identifying key improvement areas where HPPI and VISTALIZER® solutions would deliver the highest value. Use as the opening discussion document for a management team session.

Prompt 2: Competitive Benchmarking

Benchmarking Prompt:

"Given [Company Name]'s strategic priorities and competitive environment, which specific processes would benefit most from high-performance process improvement using HPPI methodology and VISTALIZER solutions, and what would the competitive impact be?"

Purpose: Focuses the analysis on competitive differentiation — linking process improvement directly to market positioning. Useful for strategy and business development discussions.

Prompt 3: PIY Assessment and Financial Modelling

Financial Impact Prompt:

"If [Company Name] currently operates at a typical process improvement yield of 2–5%, what would be the financial and operational impact of raising PIY to 75% or above in its core, R&D, marketing and sales processes using HPPI and VISTALIZER solutions?"

Purpose: Generates a business case for HPPI investment based on the financial implications of raising PIY. Directly connects improvement activity to shareholder value, customer satisfaction and employee engagement. Ideal for CFO or board-level presentations.

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11.2 How to Use the AI Output

The AI output should be treated as a structured discussion document, not a definitive recommendation. It surfaces the most likely high-value improvement areas based on publicly available information. The next step is to engage Vistalize Oy for a VISTALIZER® Report on the one or two processes identified as the highest priority, which will provide a 100%-quality, customized improvement plan grounded in your organization's specific context, including the tacit knowledge that no AI can access.

Contact: pdca@vistalizer.com to initiate a conversation about your organization's HPPI journey.

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12. Recommended Next Steps

For executives ready to move from interest to action, the following sequence is recommended:

#	Step	Action
1	Calculate your current PIY	Download the VISTALIZER® for Enterprises app (iOS/iPadOS/Android) and use the PIY Calculator with the Implications feature to establish your organization's current PIY level and model the financial impact of raising it.
2	Read the Book	Obtain a copy of High-Performance Process Improvement (Springer, ISBN 978-3-642-10783-2 print / 978-3-642-10784-9 online / ASIN B008CNBQ7S Kindle). Available at VISTALIZER.com web shop, Springer, Amazon, and others.
3	Run the AI prompts	Use the three prompts in Section 11 with Gemini and Claude to generate a company-specific HPPI road map. Combine the outputs as the basis for a management team discussion.
4	Engage for a VISTALIZER® Report	Contact Vistalize Oy (pdca@vistalizer.com) to commission a VISTALIZER® Report for your highest-priority process. This is the foundational step for achieving a high PIY.
5	Deploy VISTALIZER® for Enterprises	Roll out the app across your organization, as a public app, or as private 'VISTALIZER® for [Your Company]' app for larger deployments, to assure improvement productivity and sustain knowledge levels. Use integrations to gain strategic insights. Use VISTALIZER® services to the extent needed to assure required expert knowledge to reach the targeted PIY level (e.g. educating and training internal experts, the management or key other persons; verification of PDCA implementation quality).
6	Extend and Scale	Progressively commission VISTALIZER® Reports for additional key processes, building a comprehensive HPPI system that delivers consistently high PIY across your entire process landscape.

Key Contacts and Resources

Resource	Location
HPPI Blog	highperformanceprocessimprovement.wordpress.com
App & Services (e-commerce)	www.vistalizer.com
Strategic Solutions & Publications	www.vistalize.fi
General Enquiries / Book Orders	info@vistalize.fi
HPPI Engagement	pdca@vistalizer.com
App (iOS/iPadOS)	Search 'VISTALIZER for Enterprises' on the App Store
App (Android)	Search 'VISTALIZER for Enterprises' on Google Play
Book (Publisher)	link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-642-10784-9

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This handbook is based on publicly available materials from Vistalize Oy, the HPPI blog and the published work of Dr. Markus Pastinen.