



Operational Framework - Issues Management

Briefing Document

1 Use of This Document

This document presents an overview on the use of Issues Management within a Team / Group / Organisation as part of the Operational Framework for Board – Executive Relationships. Aimed at those participating, conducting, reporting on or auditing performance, this document outlines what issues management is and how to implement within an organisation.

2 Issues Management

Issue management is about operational areas tracking issues as they arise, addressing them where possible and escalating issues them to ensure resolution. Issue management occurs at all levels, top down and bottom up, but it is the bigger items impacting multiple areas of business or significantly impacting service delivery that are important to senior and executive leadership. Therefore, a filtering process is required for issue escalation.

A simple tracking tool is required for reporting issues including items for action and follow up. Whether it is a simple spreadsheet, a database or a more powerful application, the following information is the sort of details that need to be tracked:

- Issue Number - A number for tracking an issue.
- Date Raised – The date an issue was raised.
- Issue Owner – Who in the business owns the issue.
- Business Country – Country of the customer that raised the issue.
- Customer Name – Name of the principal customer impacted.
- Business Area – Name of the impacted business area.
- Business Activity – The business activity that is causing the issue.
- Issue – A description of the issue.
- Business Impact – An assessment of the impact to the business from not addressing the issue: Extreme, High, Medium or Low.
- Resolution Date: Expected date for resolution of the issue.
- Issues Status – The status of the issue: Open, Closed, Re-opened or Deactivated. In line with standard audit practice: once raised, an issue cannot be deleted.
- Name of Raiser – Name of the person who raised the issue.
- Comment – A general comment field for further details.

A proposed process for issues management within an organisation is shown in Figure 1. As items are reported, they are raised and tracked to assure resolution. As part of weekly or other team and business meetings, the issues will be reported, managed and resolved accordingly. Staff will need to be trained on management of issues and should not be afraid or penalised for reporting issues.

3 About Issues Management

Answers to common questions about the Operational Framework – Issues Management are presented.

What is the Operational Framework?

The Operational Framework is a set of tools and techniques, (an Operational Framework) for use between Boards and Executive Leadership, or other groups, particular within Not for Profit (NFP) organisations.

What is the purpose of the Issues Management?



The purpose of Issues Management is to have a Board / Team / Group / Organisation record, track, manage and resolve issues to improve the level of performance.

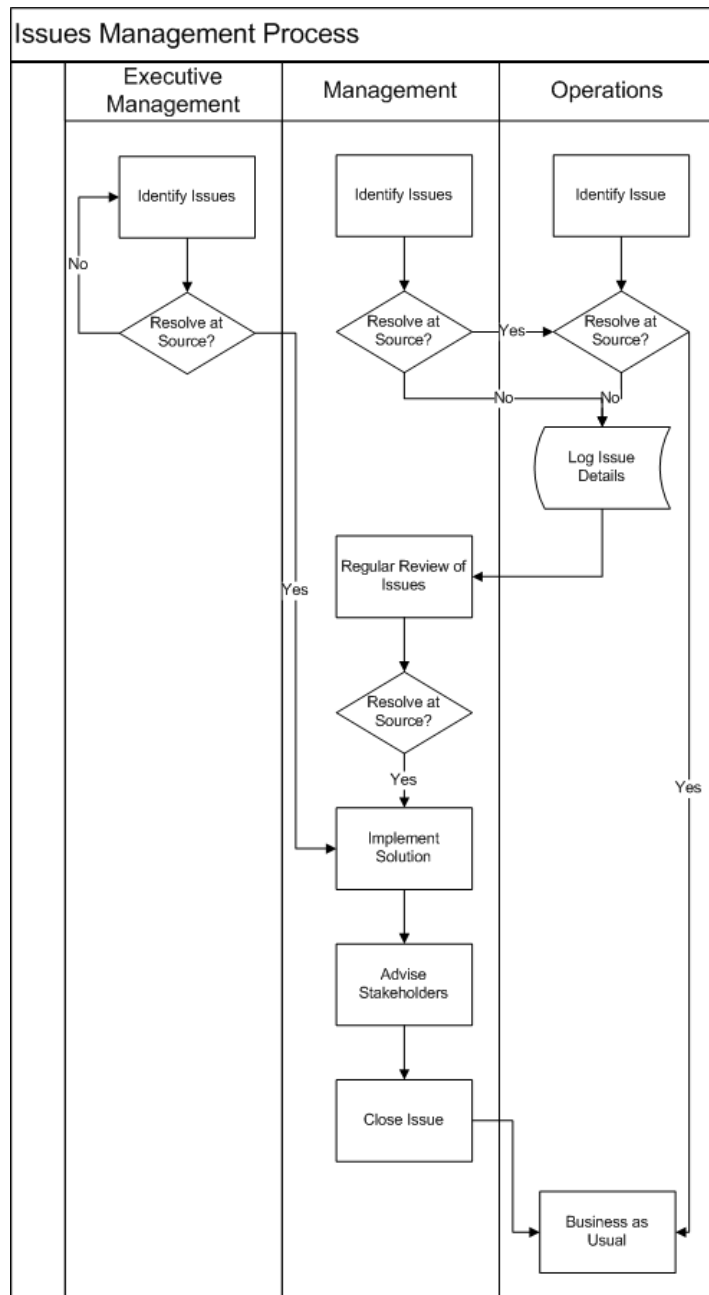


Figure 1. Illustration of Issues Management process within an organisation.

What is the focus of Issues Management?

The focus is on having issues resolved at source, at the coalface. Where issues cannot be resolved, then the focus is about having them escalated to the right audience for prompt resolution. The focus is on using Issues Management as a tool to aid productivity.

How is issues management implemented?

Details of the implementation are detailed below. In essence, Executive Leadership / Board needs to endorse the activity. An area of activity is taken the staff skilled and the tools implemented. After a period of operation and adjustment, extend to other areas of business.

What is the effectiveness of Issues Management?



Issues Management is just a tool to help an area of business of operation. The effectiveness is only as good as those implementing and using. Issues Management is not an end in its own right; it is a tool to facilitate ownership and accountability.

Who should partake in Issues Management?

All areas of business should be involved, though it is best to start with an area that sees the need and significance of issues management.

What needs to be in place for Issues Management?

Apart from Board / Executive Leadership endorsement, the right governance structure needs to be in place, including management accountability.

What is the outcome of Issues Management?

A range of outcomes are seen depending upon the success of the implementation. Whilst having a list of issues is advantageous, it is the timely resolution of the issues and the changes of culture to drive ownership and accountability that is significant.

4 Recipe

A recipe for the implementation of issues management is as follows. Remember:

- It is about the organisation and business areas wanting to claim ownership of the implementation.
- The implementation needs to be simple and pragmatic and focus on being a tool.
- The significance to the participant lies in transferring the tool and the expertise so that they can use it for themselves.

Ingredients

Agreed implementation plan

Board / Executive Leadership mandate

Briefed participants

Competent facilitator

Copy of Operational Framework – Issues Management: Briefing Document

Governance structure, including escalation process, feedback mechanism and accountability structure

Identified area of operation

Tool for tracking issues, e.g. spreadsheet

Instructions

1) Board / Executive Leadership to work with Facilitator to have them briefed, identify area of organisation for implementation and provide mandate.

2) Facilitator to work with Executive Leadership and manager of area of operation to determine governance structure.

3) Manager and Facilitator to work with identified area of operation to establish implementation plan and identify specific training needs.

4) Manager and Facilitator to brief participants and answer questions. A focus on selling the benefits and the non-threatening nature of Issues Management.

5) Using the implementation plan and a copy of the Operational Framework – Issues Management Briefing Document, Facilitator guide participants through the process and tools to be used, including participants completing example issues and using the process.

6) Facilitator to discuss implementation with participants and advise of next step in the process.

7) Participants to implement and follow up on.

8) Participants to partake in moderated follow up session with Facilitator to resolve aspects of the implementation.

