

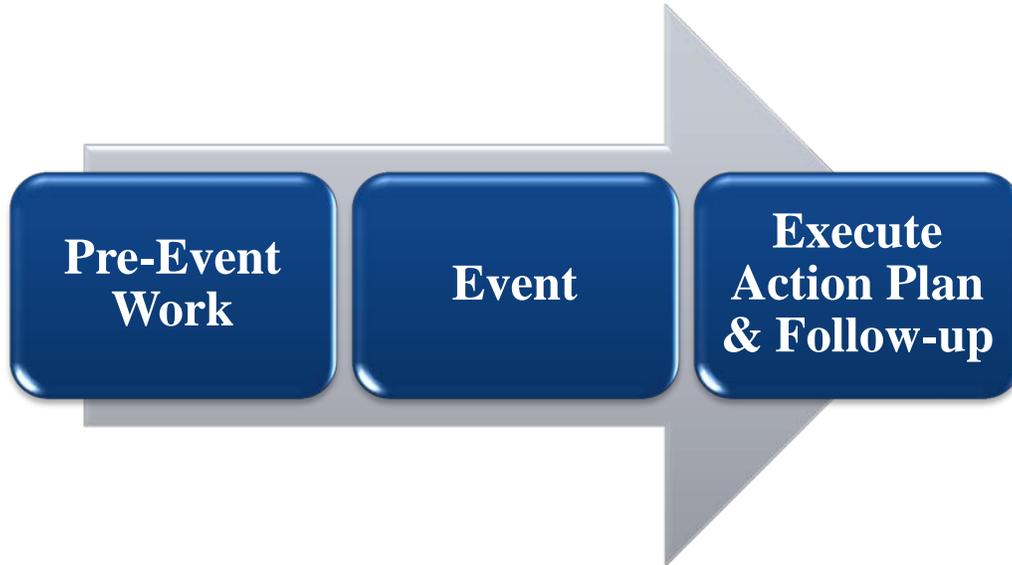
# Preparation Guide for a Rapid Improvement Event

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## Introduction

A Rapid Improvement Event (RIE) is part of the Lean toolkit and provides a structured approach to achieve breakthrough improvement in quality and performance in a relatively short time span.

For a Rapid Improvement Event to be successful, the following three stages must be executed successfully:



This document deals with the first stage: **Pre-Event Work**

## Pre-Event Work

This stage can last anywhere from a few weeks to a couple of months depending on the complexity of the issue and processes, the make-up of the team and the availability of that team, among other factors.

## Scope

It is important to have a well-defined scope for the RIE. The success of the RIE lies in its focused nature and having a vague scope will invariably dilute the team's efforts and the effects of the RIE. When defining the scope, think about:

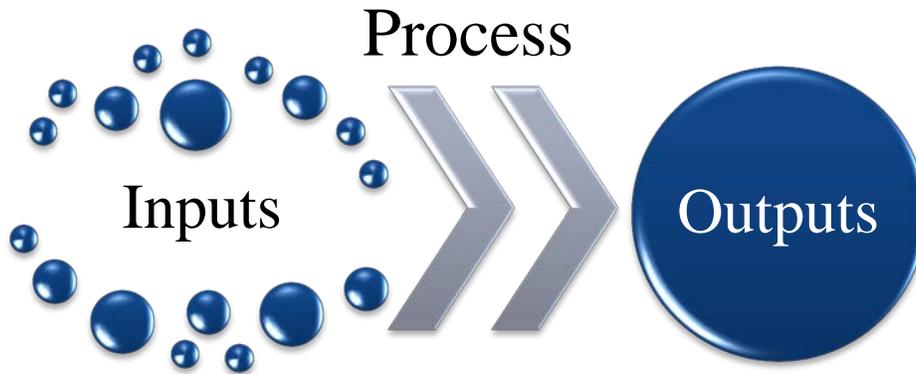
- What is the issue?
- Why do we need to fix it?
- How soon do we need to fix it?
- What do we control?
- What will happen if we do not fix it?
- What do we not want to get involved with?
- What do we not have control over?

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## Team Selection

When selecting members for the RIE team, all the different areas that are affected by this process must be considered. A stakeholder analysis is a tool that can help during this phase. It helps to think of the process in three major buckets:



**Inputs** – Anyone that provides an input or participates in a process that is an input to the RIE process

**Process** – The people actually involved with the process which is the focus of the RIE

**Outputs** – People who receive what comes out of this process

When selecting team members from these areas or buckets, it is important to bring in the subject matter experts and the people that are the leaders in their areas, whether explicitly or implied. It is also important to consider personality types, since the benefits of a RIE are realized when the team is engaged and people are not afraid to speak up.

## Communication

Communication can never be overdone. Communications about the RIE should start as early as the need for a RIE has been identified. Throughout the preparation phase, communications should be frequent and contain information about the event, expectations, roles & responsibilities, logistics, etc. Obviously, those who have been selected to be part of the RIE need to be notified of their involvement, what it means and what is expected of them and of the event.

If there is a Project Charter, a Project Ticket or any other formal project document, it must be shared with the team and other stakeholders.

## Training

If your organization has some training (online, video, classroom) that will help the team such as an introduction to Lean, an introduction to Quality Improvement or an overview of the Seven Quality Tools, team members should be encouraged to take this. The more knowledgeable team members are about Performance Improvement, the more successful the RIE will be.

The Pre-Work phase should also be used to identify training that must occur during the event. The expertise of the team with Performance Improvement methodologies (Lean, Six Sigma, PDSA, Kaizen, etc.) must be evaluated and knowledge gaps identified to be addressed during the RIE.

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## Data Collection

During the Pre-Work phase, data needs to be collected to establish:

- We have a problem
- How bad this problem is

Data also serves to dispel any misconceptions or debunk any myths about the issue, or the possible causes of it. For example, some team members might have had the experience where they received three bad parts from heat treatment, or they had to call registration on three different occasions to fix patient appointment records. For these team members, the issue is in those steps of the process. What if your data showed that there were only 3 defects attributed to those steps out of 300 total defects over the last three months? Data will help guide the team through the root-cause analysis. The more data that can be gathered, the more robust the root-cause analysis will be. **Data collection can be as elaborated as reports from electronic systems or as simple as manual observations on a check sheet.**

It is important to mention that **data must be reliable**. The sources and collection of the data must be shown to be credible and reliable in order for the team to believe it and to remove any bias.

## VOC

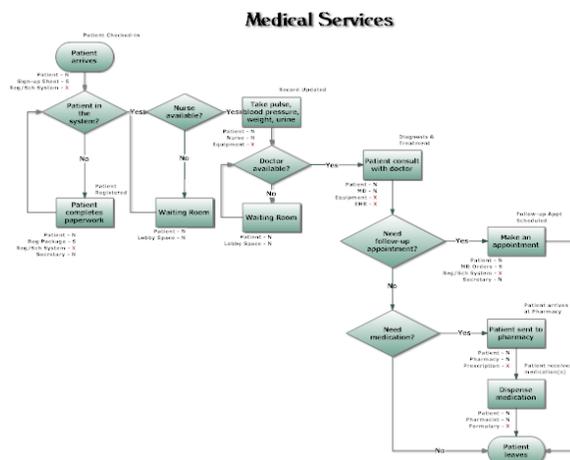
Collecting the Voice of the Customer (VOC) is a necessary step for the success of the RIE. This customer does not necessarily refer to an external customer. The customer could be another downstream process or a different unit in the organization. These are referred to as **internal customers**. Whoever the customer is they must be contacted prior to the event to gather their input.

This VOC can be captured via surveys, focus groups, interviews or other methods.

If the customer can participate in the event, even better!

## Process Maps

Process Maps are a great visualization tool and if a preliminary version can be created prior to the RIE, it will accelerate the rate of achievement during the event. Only the **Current State Process Map** is needed at this point (the team will work together creating the **Future State**), and it is ok to have just a preliminary version of it, with the understanding that it is just a preliminary version to get the team thinking about the process.



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## Logistics

The logistics of the actual event must be planned during this phase as well.

- Secure the venue
- Secure commitment of resources (team members will be made available)
- Confirm facilitators
- Send meeting invite (add to attendees' calendars)
- Coordinate materials (easels, Post-It ® Notes, markers, handouts)
- Coordinate food (light breakfast/morning snack/coffee/water, lunch, afternoon snack/coffee/water)
- Coordinate advertising (bulletin boards, electronic boards, emails, etc.)
- Send reminders

This list is not all-inclusive and the actual logistics will vary depending on size of the team, size of the organization and many other factors.

## What to look forward to

All this Pre-Work will ensure the success of the Rapid Improvement Event. This is an expensive activity and it is important to maximize its value. This Pre-Work guide is intended to help the team planning the RIE get the most out of it.