



## What is a Rapid Improvement Event?

Rapid Improvement Events (RIE), also known as Kaizen events, are workshops structured to lead teams through workplace improvements using operational excellence tools. Lasting two to three days, an RIE is led by a facilitator to review current process, find problem areas, identify the cause of the issue, and guide the team to possible solutions.

The facilitator of this event, working with the area supervisor or team lead, structures the meetings and selects the operational excellence tools to be utilized. This planning process typically begins about two months before the event. Preparation and collecting of materials for the event starts four weeks prior to the event day to ensure appropriate resources are available. A follow up meeting with the team after the event is vital to the process.



## When is the RIE useful?

- When a process is determined to be insufficient or broken, by either a team member, customer, or stakeholder. As collaboration among these groups takes place to review all aspects of the issue, the potential solutions are more valuable.
- When a process is not necessarily broken, but needs an update or a review in efficacy and efficiency. The caution here, however, is that the scope of the RIE should focus on a very specific area.
- When a process is in need of restructuring or reorganization. This could be due to turnover, additional duties, new resources, or any other major change or addition to a process.
- When customers (or any stakeholder) are frustrated about a process.

## Who is involved?

<b>Executive Leader/Sponsor</b>	The individual in the key area that has the authority to sign off on the project, provide resources, clarify scope, and resolve barriers or conflicts
<b>Facilitator/Project Lead</b>	Individual who will coordinate the event and ensure action items are completed
<b>Owner of the Process</b>	Individual who directly leads the team and is accountable for the work being reviewed; can be the project lead
<b>Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)</b>	These team members may be part of the team itself or brought in to answer questions during the event
<b>Customer/Clients</b>	If you are able, utilizing the voice of the customer (VOC) is always beneficial in process improvement
<b>Stakeholders</b>	This could include a consultant, contractor, or other outside individual or group with a stake in the process

## Things the RIE Facilitator Needs to Know

The most important thing for the RIE facilitator to remember is that their role is not responsible for having all the answers.

The responsibilities of the RIE facilitator include:

- 1) preparation for the event,
- 2) keeping the team focused,
- 3) keeping the team within scope, and
- 4) guiding team toward their goals.

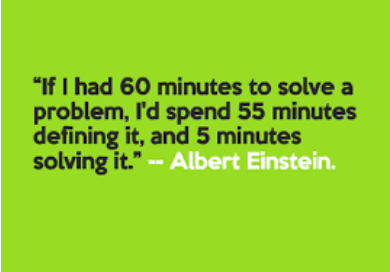
The facilitator position is fundamental from the beginning to the end of the RIE process; from organizing team members and resources to follow up with the team after the event. While the facilitator may not be a content expert, the role is to lead the group, using the operational excellence tools as guideposts, on the journey to success.

Perfection is not the goal. There will be mistakes along the way. If all people and circumstances were perfect, there would be no need for an RIE! That said, there is a statewide [Operational Excellence Team](#) to use as a valuable resource, should questions arise. The goal is progress forward, not perfection.

# Facilitating the RIE

## Plan

RIE success can be directly linked to how well the event was planned for. This step of the process is critical to ensure that the problem is well defined, the project is scoped appropriately, and the right people are at the event.



**"If I had 60 minutes to solve a problem, I'd spend 55 minutes defining it, and 5 minutes solving it." -- Albert Einstein.**

### Project Charter

A project charter is a short, concise document that states the reason and desired outcome for the project. It should be used to inform and obtain approval from high level leadership to move forward with the project. A project charter includes:

- Problem Statement
- Business Case
- Goal(s)
- Project Scope
- Project Milestones
- Team/ Stakeholders

#### [Project Charter Template](#)

Learning Resource(s):

[Project Charter Guide](#)

### Assessment

Once the project charter is drafted, the next step is to determine if the RIE is needed. Many tools exist to help decide if a Kaizen Event is the right tool to solve the problem.

#### [Rapid Improvement Event Checklist](#)

If the RIE is the most appropriate Lean Process Improvement Tool, then follow the next steps.

### Measurement

During any improvement project, it is important to identify an indicator, or measure, of how the process is performing. Having baseline data before going into the project allows measurement of the impact of the improvements and support the change.

Learning Resource(s):

[The MO Way Training Series: Performance Measures and Dashboards](#)

## Prepare

Preparing for the actual event can be quite a daunting task, but it is doable!! Below are main steps needed to complete before the event, not in sequential order.

### SIPOC

SIPOC is an acronym for Suppliers, Inputs, Process, Outputs, and Customers. This tool will help define the stakeholders for an event and it will identify the inputs and outputs of the process.

#### [SIPOC Template](#)

Learning Resource(s):

[How to use SIPOC Diagrams](#)

[SIPOC: Detailed understanding of a process](#)

### Root Cause

Don't soak up precious time with late-to-the-game discussion and the verbal cyclone about possible root causes. If process complexities or lack of data is identified as a risk in your project charter, dedicate time focused on the root cause before the event.

Learning Resource(s):

[5 Whys](#)

[5 Whys Jefferson Memorial Example](#)

[5 Whys Overview](#)

[5 Reasons to Use 5 Whys](#)

### Participant Training

RIE participants are usually not Continuous Improvement experts and may not have a Lean Six Sigma Belt. Prepare them ahead of time to hit the ground running. Having a baseline familiarity with lean terminology and tools will give the team clear expectations.

Learning Resource(s):

[Show Me Excellence White Belt Training](#)

### Event Agenda

It's not time to wing it! Plan for structure + effectiveness + flexibility. This will also help determine the length of time needed for the event.

[Agenda Template](#)

## Logistics and Supplies

There is nothing like spending the first 30 minutes fussing with technology to drain the energy from the team right at the start. Think ahead to avoid delays!

[Event Planning Checklist](#)

## Event

The goal during the event is for the team to develop and make a plan to implement a solution. Keeping everyone focused and moving through the agenda will be critical to meeting that objective.

### Ground Rules

One of the first tasks is to agree on behaviors that are expected of all participants. These are called ground rules. For example, if you want participants fully focused on the event, set a ground rule on use of cell phones.

Learning Resource(s):

[List of Typical Kaizen Event Ground Rules](#)

### Scope Tool

Setting the appropriate boundaries, or scope, of a project is important to the success of the process improvement. The scope was identified in the project charter, but as the team digs in, questions may arise. Keeping the scope visible and adding to it as decisions are made during the event will help. Have a designated parking lot for items that need attention but are out of scope.

[Scope Tool Template](#)

### Current State Tools

The current state is described as the process being used right now. This includes all steps and action, plus the problems identified. When outlining the process, roles (not people) should be identified, and the flow of information should be captured. There are several different tools that can help you accomplish this and two are referenced below.

a. Process Mapping

This tool allows the team to identify the actual sequence of events in a process that any product or service follows, this is referred to as process flow.

Learning Resource(s):

[Process Mapping](#)

[Making the Invisible, Visible: Process Mapping](#)

### [Swim Lane Process Map](#)

b. Fishbone

A Fishbone, also referred to as a cause and effect diagram, can help in brainstorming to identify possible causes of a problem and in sorting ideas into useful categories.

#### [Fishbone Template](#)

Learning Resource(s):

#### [Fishbone Diagram](#)

## Identifying Strategies

Once the team has the process outlined and problems identified it is time to find a solution and reach consensus on how to improve.

c. Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a method teams use to generate ideas to solve clearly defined problems. Refrain from judgement/criticism and unleash out of the box idea thinking.

Learning Resource(s):

#### [Brainstorming Techniques](#)

#### [Brainstorming Tools: Digital tools for successful brainstorming](#)

d. Priority Matrix

After brainstorming, use this tool to focus on the most impactful strategy.

Learning Resource(s):

#### [Impact/Effort Matrix Guide](#)

e. 5S

It may be time to organize the workspace, physical and/or virtual. Use this tool to find a place for everything and put everything in its place.

Learning Resource(s):

#### [5S Overview](#)

#### [5S Step by Step Instructions](#)

f. Standard Work

Establish the safest, easiest, and best way to work. Use this as a foundation for continuous improvement, as a training resource, and reference for team members.

Learning Resource(s):

#### [Come for the Standard Work, Stay for the Port Roast](#)

## Next Steps

Before the event concludes, it is important to summarize and ensure everyone is aware of the action items and timeline. Once the solution is selected, identify who is in charge of implementation, when will it happen, and how it will need to be communicated? Capturing this level of detail will allow the team to identify the best roles to ensure the work is distributed properly.

[Action Item List Template](#)

## Follow-up

Don't lose steam now! Without solidifying actions and items in the follow-up phase, all the hard work that has done to this point will have very little chance of turning into anything meaningful.

### Action Items

After the meeting, track action items that were assigned during the event. Follow-up on any outstanding questions. It may be beneficial to schedule on-going meetings through the check phase.

### Check Your Results

Monitor results throughout the implementation phase and for a period, post implementation, to ensure the change is effective and sustainable.

### Communication

On-going communication should take place with all stakeholders. Although the message may vary, each stakeholder group should be aware of why the change is needed, how it will impact them, what to expect, and when it will happen. A communication plan will help identify who should deliver the message and the mode that is most effective, but remember the team and sponsor are your champions.

[Communication Plan Template](#)

### Recognize and Share

A lot of great work has happened, don't forget to recognize the team and share their success. Continuous Improvement is contagious!

Learning Resource(s):

[Recognition Menu](#)