MTAT.03.231 Business Process Management

Practice Session #7

IT Helpdesk Process

A client calls the help desk or sends an email in order to make a request. The help desk is staffed with 5 Level-1 support staff who, typically, are junior people with less than 12 months experience, but are capable of resolving known problems and simple requests. The hourly cost of a Level-1 staff member is EUR 40. When the Level-1 employee does not know the resolution to a request, the request is forwarded to a more experienced Level-2 support staff. There are three Level-2 staff members and their hourly cost is EUR 60.

When a Level-2 employee receives a new request, he or she evaluates it in order to assign a priority level. The ticketing system that tracks the process will later assign the request to the same or to another Level-2 staff depending on the assigned priority level and the backlog of requests.

Once the request is assigned to a Level-2 staff member, the request is researched by the Level-2 employee and a resolution is developed and sent back to the Level-1 employee. Eventually, the Level-1 employee forwards the resolution to the client who tests the resolution. The client notifies the outcome of the test to the Level-1 employee via email. If the client states that the request is fixed, it is marked as complete and the process ends. If the request is not fixed, it is resent to Level-2 support for further action and goes through the process again.

Requests are registered in a ticketing system. The ticketing system allows help desk employees to record the details of the request, the priority level and the name of the client who generated the request. When a request is registered, it is marked as "open". When it is moved to Level-2, it is marked as "forwarded to Level-2". When the resolution is sent back to Level-1, the request is marked as "returned to Level-1". Finally, when a request is resolved, it is marked as "closed". Every request has a unique identifier. When a request is registered, the ticketing system sends an email to the client. The email includes a so-called request reference number that the client needs to quote when asking questions about the request.

The current process is known to be error-prone. The most frequent types of errors include:

- Many requests take too long to be processed. Clients need to call often to remind the helpdesk that their requests are still unresolved. Level-2 staff are very busy and often take a lot of time to respond.
- When the client asks what is the status of a given request, oftentimes the helpdesk gives an incorrect answer. In other words, the Level-1 helpdesk staff are unable to accurately determine what is the status of every request.
- When reviewing the list of open requests, the Level-1 staff often find many requests marked as "open", but these requests are in fact already resolved.

Using the BPR principles as a references, propose a set of process changes that address the above issues.