GEARY A. RUMMLER
COAUTHOR OF THE BEST-SELLING BOOK
Improving Performance: How to Manage the White Space on the Organization Chart
ALAN J. RAMIAS
RICHARD A. RUMMLER

White Space Revisited

Creating Value Through Process

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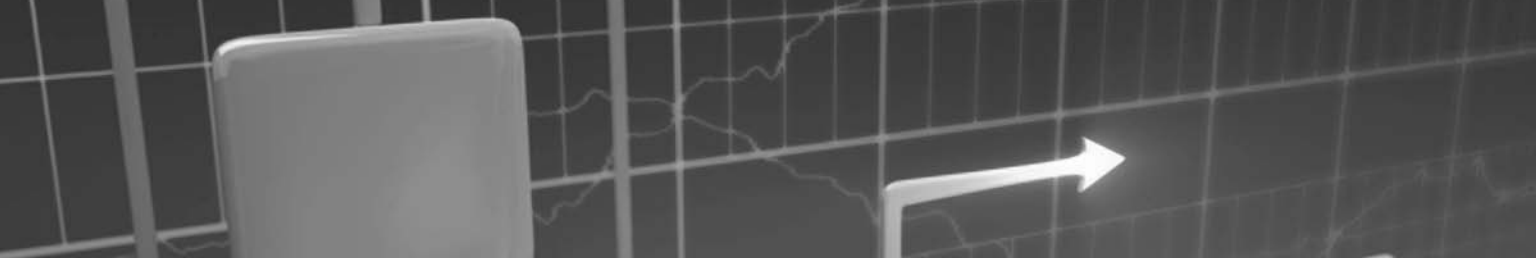

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FOREWORD BY PAUL HARMON

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GEARY
Once again, for the girl from Ann Street.
Without you, none of this would have happened.

ALAN AND RICK
To Geary Rummler, exceptional leader,
patient mentor, tireless innovator,
wise and generous friend and father.

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FOREWORD BY PAUL HARMON

Businesses have likely been trying to improve processes for as long as there have been businesses. One imagines that ancient Egyptian pottery shop owners worried about how to make production of pots faster, better, and cheaper. Systematic efforts at business process improvement are usually thought to have begun when Fredrick Winslow Taylor published his best-selling book, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, in 1911, just about the same time that Henry Ford was revolutionizing manufacturing with his ideas about a continuous production line.

Throughout the early half of the twentieth century, industrial engineers carried the torch for process improvement and often met at annual Work Simplification conferences. In the years following the Second World War, process work came into its own. Factories in Asia and Europe had been destroyed in the war and needed to be rebuilt from scratch, and everyone wanted to be sure that their new factories were as efficient as possible. Quality control engineers like W. Edwards Deming and Joseph Juran played a major role in helping companies design efficient processes. In the late 1980s a group of people at Motorola combined process work with quality control techniques to create Six Sigma, a popular approach to improving the quality and consistency of processes. In 1990, James Womack, Daniel Jones, and Daniel Roos wrote *The Machine That Changed the World*, which reported on the huge strides that Toyota had made and coined the term *lean*.

In a similar way, the rapidly evolving field of computing led to massive and widespread changes in the way business processes were organized. Companies had begun to use computers to automate their processes in the 1960s. In the 1980s, with the introduction of the personal computer, automation became available to managers and office workers. In the 1990s, gurus like Michael Hammer, James Champy, and Tom Davenport urged companies to reengineer their processes to take better advantages of the improvements that process-oriented computer systems could offer.

In addition to the gurus in the quality control and automation traditions, there have always been process advocates among business management theorists. Michael Porter, for example, is known for his work on strategy and value chains, and James Heskett has led a reevaluation of how organizations relate to employees and customers. The leading guru in the management tradition, however, was Geary Rummler.

Dr. Rummler began his career in Michigan in the 1960s. He earned his MBA and his doctorate at the University of Michigan and proceeded, over the course of the remaining decades of the twentieth century, to elaborate an integrated methodology for improving processes in organizations.

In reality, Geary Rummler never focused on processes as such. Instead, he focused on corporate performance and on how companies could be organized and managed to produce superior performance. When I think of Rummler's impact, I usually think first of his performance matrix, which is pictured in Table F.1. More than anything else, the matrix suggests the scope of Geary Rummler's vision. He imagined an organization comprised of three levels: one concerned with the organization as a whole, one concerned with the specific processes the organization used to accomplish work, and one focused on the concrete activities that people and systems performed. He assumed that at each level organizations would define goals and measures, create designs for achieving their goals and measures, and establish management practices that would assure that the designs achieved the desired goals and measures. Thus, although process was extremely important to Rummler, it was always just one part of a comprehensive approach to performance improvement, and it was important only because it supported the goals of the organization.

When I first started working with Geary, in the late 1960s, he was already using flowcharts to describe business processes, although he had not yet arrived at the "swimlane" diagrams that he made ubiquitous when he joined with Alan Brache to publish *Improving Performance* in 1990. Similarly, in the 1960s, the Activity Level of the Organization Performance Matrix was entirely focused on the employees who performed activities. Thus the Activity Level focused on how goals were defined for employees and how they were trained, managed, and motivated to perform their jobs. In the course of the 1980s and 1990s, like the rest of us, Rummler struggled to understand the role of computers in modern organizations and to incorporate software systems into the Activity Level of the Performance Matrix.

Table F.1 Rummler's Performance Matrix

	Goals and Measures	*Design and Implementation*	*Management*
Organizational Level	Organizational goals and measures of organizational success	Organizational design and implementation	Organizational management
Process Level	Process goals and measures of process success	Process design and implementation	Process management
Activity or Performance Level	Activity goals and measures of activity success	Activity design and implementation	Activity management

In the 1980s, Geary Rummler joined with Alan Brache to form Rummler-Brache and undertook a number of consulting engagements that widely influenced how people today think of process change. To provide two examples: it was during the 1980s that Rummler worked at Motorola, revising processes and teaching the process analysis techniques that laid the groundwork for Motorola's subsequent development of Six Sigma, which marries process and quality control techniques. In a similar way, IBM practitioners took courses from Rummler-Brache and then went on to create LOVEM, an IBM business process reengineering methodology that relied on Rummler's diagramming concepts. Today we find those same concepts in the latest flowcharting notation: BPMN. Many would emphasize the swimlanes that provide business people with insights into who is responsible for managing specific activities. In fact, the idea of always placing the customer of the process in the top swimlane and then diagramming every interaction between the customer and the business process is probably the more valuable insight. The latest approaches for improving service industry processes rely on an ability to model a customer's activities and then change the service business's activities to create a better customer experience.

Geary Rummler achieved widespread recognition in the 1990s. Hammer, Champy, and Davenport convinced companies they needed to reengineer but didn't provide much specific guidance about exactly how processes were to be analyzed and redesigned. Many companies, once they decided to commit to reengineering, looked around for a systematic methodology and discovered *Improving Performance* and the Rummler-Brache training courses. There was an irony here, since Geary Rummler was never a fan of reengineering. He had always advocated a more comprehensive, systematic approach and thought that reengineering's emphasis on radical change would be too hard to implement. In hindsight, Rummler was right, but in the meantime a whole generation of process practitioners learned to approach process change projects using the Rummler-Brache methodology.

Rummler sold his interest in Rummler-Brache and retired at the end of the 1990s. Within a couple of years, however, he realized, as he once told me, that he had "failed retirement." There were still too many problems he wanted to investigate, too many new insights he wanted to incorporate into his performance improvement methodology. Thus, in the early years of this decade, Geary joined with a group of colleagues to create Performance Design Lab (PDL), a new consulting and training company that provided Geary an organizational base from which he could continue to explore ways to improve organizational performance and elaborate his comprehensive approach to performance analysis and organizational design.

Geary Rummler died unexpectedly on October 29, 2008. In the year before his death, Geary, his son, Rick Rummler, and his longtime colleague, Alan Ramias, had begun work on a new book that would pull together all the insights they had garnered during the previous two decades. The book was nearly done when Geary died. Rick and Alan have done the entire business process community an important service by completing the book and seeing it through publication.

To my way of thinking, Geary Rummler was always the performance analyst's performance analyst. He didn't promote himself in the way that others did and was never as well known to

the general public as process gurus like W. Edwards Deming or Michael Hammer. On the other hand, over the course of his career, he did more to influence the way process improvement work is done today than anyone else I know. The quality control community owes the emphasis on defining processes at the core of Six Sigma to Geary's work at Motorola. Similarly, the IT community owes its current swimlane-based, customer-focused BPMN diagrams to Geary's efforts to create flow diagrams that business people could easily understand. We all owe Geary thanks for his relentless emphasis on process change that improved corporate and human performance.

Over the years *Improving Performance* has been a bible to many process practitioners. Reviewers have consistently said that it was the best book to give to business managers who were looking for an introduction to process. Predictably, this new book, summarizing Geary Rummler's latest thinking about process analysis, process management, and organizational performance, will be widely read by new managers who are trying to make their organizations more process centric, and by today's process practitioners who are trying to figure out how to fit all the various technologies together into a whole.

Isaiah Berlin famously divided great thinkers into two types: Foxes and Hedgehogs. Foxes, he explained, knew many different things, but Hedgehogs knew one big thing. Geary Rummler was a hedgehog. He knew that organizations were systems that transformed customer needs and raw materials into valuable products or services. He knew that everything was connected to everything else and that effective change required a comprehensive knowledge of how the whole system worked to achieve its goals. His vision of the performance system that used processes to create value is one of the key managerial insights of our time. Other process gurus had a similar vision, but Geary Rummler's vision was uniquely powerful because he continually stressed the importance of a systematic, integrated approach.

So many things are changing. So many new techniques become available each day. It's very easy to get lost in the details. We are lucky to have this new book to provide us, once again, with Geary Rummler's comprehensive vision of how we can systematically improve the performance of our organizations.

PREFACE
BY GEARY A. RUMMLER

This Preface was found in Geary's notes. It is rough and probably incomplete, but it contains his own words on the purpose for writing this book.

What we wish to present is a view with an edge. We need to elbow our way into a crowded, noisy field. It's sort of a "Hello! Remember, it's still about work!" The only way a business creates value for its customers and an organization for its stakeholders is through its value-adding work processes.

Unlike in the first book in 1990, which laid the foundation for the field, it is now an established, mature, and increasingly confusing field. There are endless lectures, articles, journals, conferences, and workshops devoted to process modeling tools, BPMS products, maturity models, governance models, design and improvement methodologies, process culture, business process leadership, process management, process-centered organizations. . . .

But despite all this activity, the undercurrent of a recent Gartner conference [in February 2008, where Geary was a keynote speaker] was, "Where are the results?" "Is BPM a fad?"—the whole thing powered by technology and training vendors who themselves are busily maneuvering and consolidating. I guess we would say that BPM is, at best, stalled. It certainly has not realized the potential we saw in 1984 when doing our early work at Motorola.

From our perspective, the BPM/process movement has gotten off track. In fact, it is even hard to find a reference to what we think are the basics: identifying and improving the work required to deliver organizational results. "Process" was not some invention to improve productivity; "process" was itself a process that started not with the work but with the results desired and worked backward from there to identify and redesign the work that must produce those results. That is the essence of industrial and process engineering.

Yet the "field" of BPM seems to be all about the "means," with no connection to the end. It's about how to model a process, how to automate a process, how to automate the

management system. It's about the technology to run a process, the tools and techniques for projects, the organization culture to support a process orientation, and about BPM leadership. Which leaves us far off track from the core concept—which is about work.

We think it is way past time to get back to some basics: like understanding the organization results we are trying to deliver, realizing that there are no shortcuts to value creation in any business, and identifying, designing, and managing the work required to achieve those results—and treating process as the best-known way to engineer those results.

Thus this book . . .

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To our partner and friend, Cherie Wilkins, who contributed greatly to this book, not only writing parts of it but also giving an endless amount of inspiration, ideas, energy, and material. In particular, she wrote the Sara story, which provides the reader with a detailed walk-through of the Rummler Process Methodology. Bravo, and deepest gratitude.

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GEARY A. RUMMLER

Dr. Geary A. Rummler was the founding partner of the Performance Design Lab (PDL), where he was continuing his lifelong work on organizational performance improvement in complex systems. He died on October 29, 2008. At the time of his death, Geary was working with his partners on two books. One was this book; the other addresses management and focuses on the design and operations of an effective management system from a process perspective.

Prior to founding the Performance Design Lab, Geary was the founding partner of the Rummler-Brache Group, an organization that became a leader in the business process improvement and management business in the 1980s and 1990s. Prior to that, Geary was president of the Kepner-Tregoe Strategy Group, specialists in strategic decision making; cofounder (with Thomas F. Gilbert) and president of Praxis Corporation, an innovator in the analysis and improvement of human performance; cofounder (with George S. Odiorne) and director of the University of Michigan's Center for Programmed Learning for Business.

Geary was a pioneer in the application of instructional and performance technologies to organizations and brought this experience to the issue of organization effectiveness. His clients in the private sector included the sales, service, and manufacturing functions of the aircraft, automobile, steel, food, rubber, office equipment, pharmaceutical, telecommunications, chemical, and petroleum industries as well as the retail banking and airline industries. He also worked with such federal agencies as IRS, SSA, HUD, GAO, and DOT. Geary's research and consulting took him to Europe, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, China, and Mexico.

In addition to consulting, teaching, and presenting at conferences, Geary published a steady stream of articles and a variety of books ranging from labor relations to the development of instructional systems and his articles appeared in numerous professional and management journals and handbooks. In 1988, he coauthored *Training and Development: A Guide*

for Professionals, with George S. Odiorne. In 1990, he coauthored *Improving Performance: How to Manage the White Space on the Organization Chart*, with Alan P. Brache.

Geary received his MBA and PhD from the University of Michigan and served as:

- The national president of the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI)
- A member of the board of directors of the American Society of Training and Development (ASTD)
- A member of the editorial board of *Training* magazine

Geary's professional accomplishments include:

- Induction into the Human Resource Development Hall of Fame in 1986
- The Distinguished Professional Achievement Award from ISPI in 1992
- The Enterprise Reengineering Excellence Award from *Enterprise Reengineering* magazine in 1996
- The Distinguished Contribution Award for Workplace Learning and Performance from ASTD in 1999
- The Lifetime Achievement Award from the Organization Behavior Management Network in 1999

ALAN J. RAMIAS

Alan J. Ramias is a partner of the Performance Design Lab (PDL). He was employed by Motorola for ten years as an internal consultant on organizational performance. As a member of the team that founded Motorola University, he was the first person to introduce Geary Rummler's pioneering concepts in process improvement and management to business units within Motorola. Alan advocated and led several of the first groundbreaking projects in process improvement that evolved to the invention of Six Sigma and Motorola's winning of the first Malcolm Baldrige Award in 1988.

After joining the Rummler-Brache Group (RBG) in 1991, Alan led major successful performance improvement engagements within Fortune 500 companies. His experience spanned several industries and the full spectrum of corporate functions and processes, such as strategic planning, manufacturing, product development, financial management, and supply chain. Major clients included Shell, Hewlett-Packard, 3M, Citibank, Motorola, Steelcase, Citgo, Hermann Miller, Louisiana-Pacific, and Bank One. After leading many high-profile projects, he became a partner and managing director of consulting services at RBG. He led development of much of RBG's products and services, and was responsible for selecting, training, and mentoring RBG's consultant teams. He joined PDL in 2005.

Alan can be reached at aramias@ThePDLab.com.

RICHARD A. RUMMLER

Richard A. Rummler is a partner of the Performance Design Lab (PDL). He brings more than fifteen years of consulting experience in the analysis, design, and implementation of organization performance systems. He has worked with organizations in Asia, Europe, and North America to achieve improvements in organization performance.

Rick's consulting experience includes a wide range of interventions, including process improvement and reengineering, organization redesign, and measurement and management system design. These projects have addressed various business sub-systems, such as customer acquisition, manufacturing, product development, and customer service. Organizations that have benefited from Rick's consultation and project leadership include ABB, Applied Materials, GE Plastics, and Sun Microsystems.

An experienced presenter of the concepts and tools espoused by PDL, Rick has delivered training programs to manufacturing and service organizations as well as government agencies and the military. Organizations that have specifically requested his training delivery services include Citibank, DuPont, and Hewlett-Packard.

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