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3 Ways to Streamline Company Workflows Amidst Budget Cuts

As budget cuts begin to bite, organisations are feeling the pain. Streamlining workflows is an effective strategy that can ensure essential service delivery continues while cash is constrained. We describe three tried and tested ways organisations of all sizes and all specialisms can streamline company workflows.

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UK Government figures show that business investment fell by 7.4% in 2020 as companies tightened the purse strings due to COVID-19. Despite promises from the Government, up to £16bn is being slashed from public sector budgets.

To balance the books, organisations must find efficiencies without compromising the quality of service expected by today's demanding customers. But it's not easy. Inefficient operations, legacy toolsets and manual processes, as well as workflow platforms that aren't fit for purpose are common issues affecting teams.

The result? Poor communication and a lack of collaboration are the tell-tale signs of siloed working.
So, where to start? In this in-depth guide, we provide three successful strategies that businesses of all sizes can use to streamline workflows and improve productivity.

You'll learn why the most successful organisations focus on adaptation, regularly reviewing and revitalising tired processes. We will delve into why they're not afraid to transform systems and improve ways of working that will unlock efficiencies. And lastly, how they quickly embrace the potential of new technologies to help them achieve their goals.

Here are 3 practical ways to increase productivity and streamline company workflows amidst budget cuts.

"Open Banking services simplify payments, taking out costs, reducing complexity and fraud and increasing the options for innovation to the benefit of consumers, businesses and banks."

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Your Quick Section Guide

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Struggling with organisation silos?

Re-think business processes, automate workflows and transform the customer and employee experience with Unifii.

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Intro

At its simplest, siloed working occurs when teams and departments aren't communicating effectively. This disconnect can appear in any organisation, and we have seen them in the private, public and even the charitable sector. Organisational silos can be found among all services and specialisms, including finance, HR, IT, customer service, marketing and sales.

It creates obstacles and introduces inefficiencies in how data moves through organisations. Like traffic on the road, even a few roadblocks can cause significant delays.

Silos create, embed, and reinforce an 'us vs them' culture that is damaging to businesses and can significantly impact morale. It breeds division and drives disappointment.

Strategically, working in silos limits leaders, reduces transparency and curtails control. The damage siloed working can do is deep, and it can be quick - this is why removing silos should be a key strategic priority for leaders.

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Why the best change is bottom-up, not top-down

Before we explain three strategies successful organisations use to streamline workflow practices, it's worth reflecting on different approaches to organisational change.
In our experience, it's better to build processes from the bottom up, not the top down. As leaders, we focus too often on providing the answers. Instead, we should be focusing on asking the right questions.

To succeed at identifying new solutions to existing issues, you must shrug off any preconceptions, and avoid being limited by the status quo.
When attempting process and cultural change, attitude is everything.
With the right mindset, you're already making progress toward greater productivity.

Ready to start?

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Way 1:

Create meaning to improve motivation
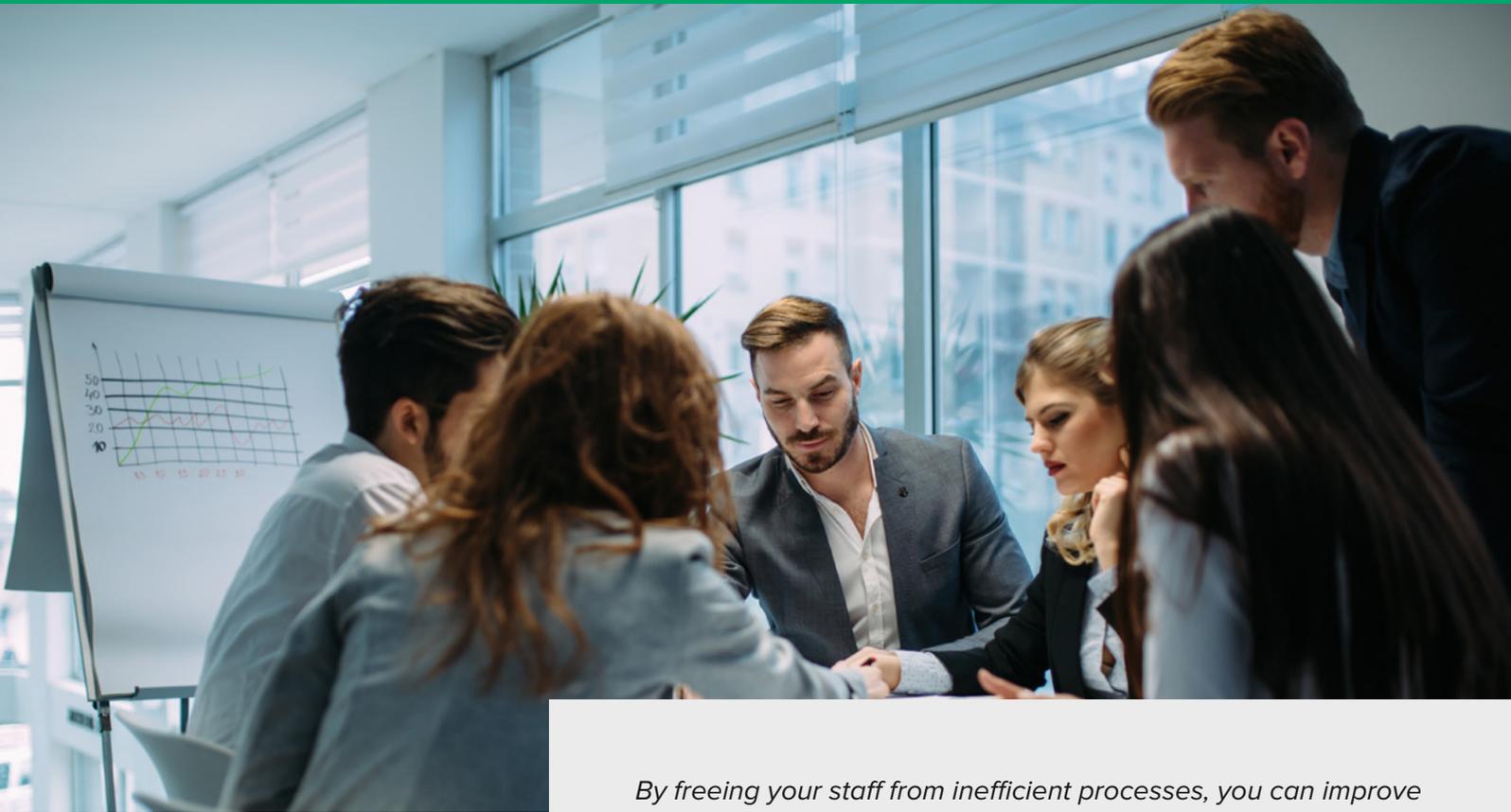
By freeing your staff from inefficient processes, you can improve motivation and increase productivity.

Too much employee time is wasted on monotonous and repetitive activities that cost your business but don't add to the bottom line.

Your staff know the challenges and problems they face every day, so harness this information and insight to build better processes. By consulting and communicating with everyone involved in a process, you can tap into a rich source of information and insights that can create efficiencies.

Listen to your employees and learn from them. Together, you can identify time, effort and cost savings that can improve the way they work. The process of building solutions together, called co-creation, is both powerful and productive.

The solutions you develop will be specific and targeted, but some simple ways you can improve workflows include:

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- **Reduce meeting fatigue** – Removing the need for employees to attend unproductive and unnecessary meetings. Empowering them to choose can benefit your business.

- **Improve access to customer's data to increase the speed of resolution** – Give all employees the data they need when they need it to ensure a rapid resolution.

- **Digitise document returns** – Digital document returns and offering online signatures can improve the speed of return.

- **Tackle triage time** – Better training and investigation scripts can reduce the amount of time spent on the phone triaging or providing advice.

- **Simplify performance management** – Streamlining and simplifying performance reporting into a dashboard, for example, can bring significant benefits.

You can motivate your staff by freeing them to focus on meaning, giving them a different focus in delivering service and more time to focus on what matters instead of monotonous, repetitive activities that don't deliver a specific outcome. Engaging employees isn't just an investment in your business; it demonstrates you care too.

Employee mental health isn't a priority for 43% of businesses, a recent survey has found. Simple process improvements, driven by staff, can reduce many of the frustrations and inefficiencies that can cause anxiety, stress and depression.

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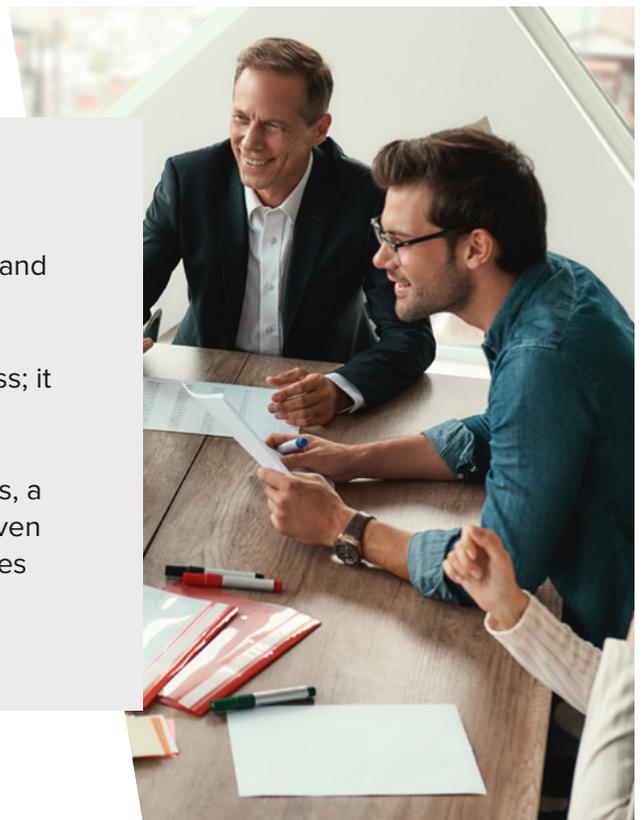
Way 2:

Refresh and revalidate cross-departmental business processes
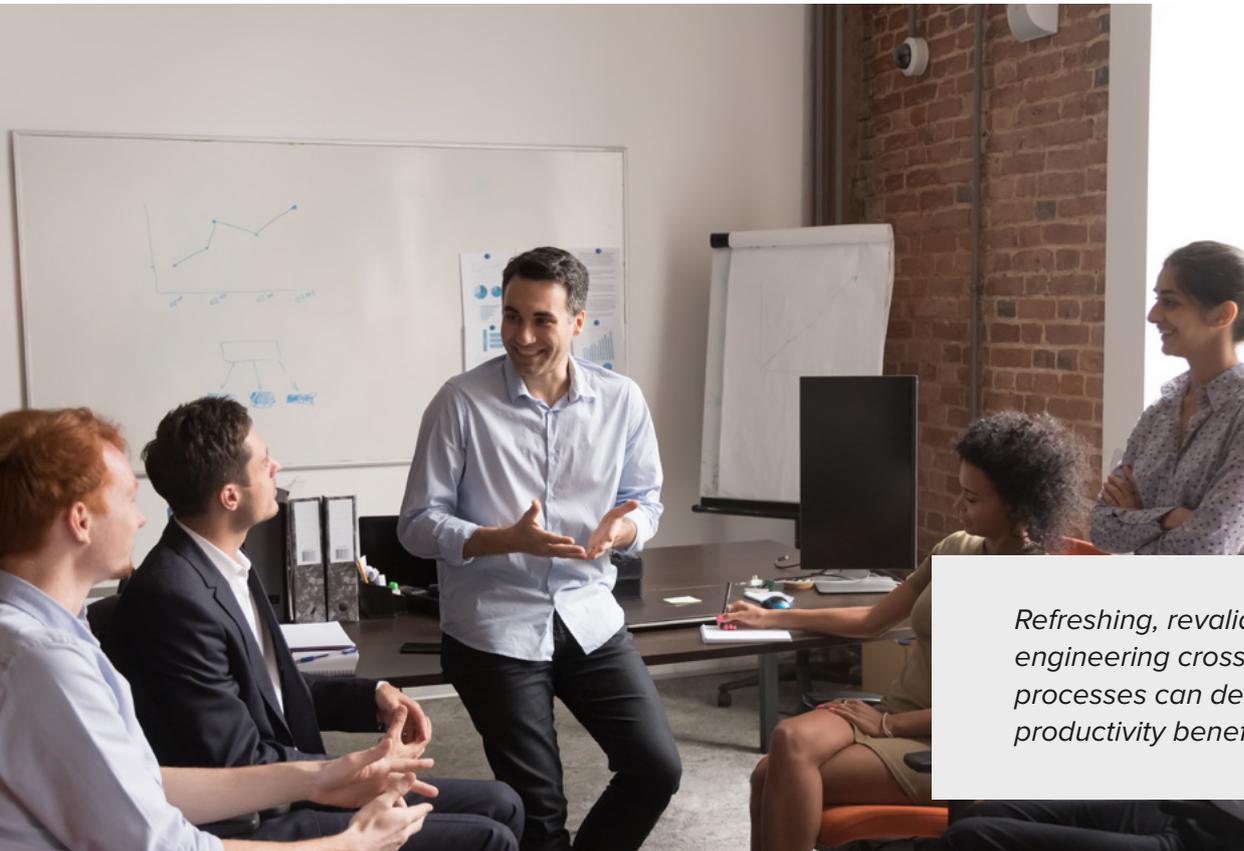
Refreshing, revalidating and re-engineering cross-departmental processes can deliver significant productivity benefits to your business.

Government productivity statistics show that the UK workforce is doing less than ever. The main reason? They're hampered by outdated processes and legacy systems.

Revalidation is part of business process re-engineering (BPR). The majority (56%) of businesses are speeding up process re-engineering plans due to the pandemic – and you should too.

Processes can be split across departments and become stuck inside silos. This fragmentation can cause frustration for those performing the tasks – and for those measuring them.

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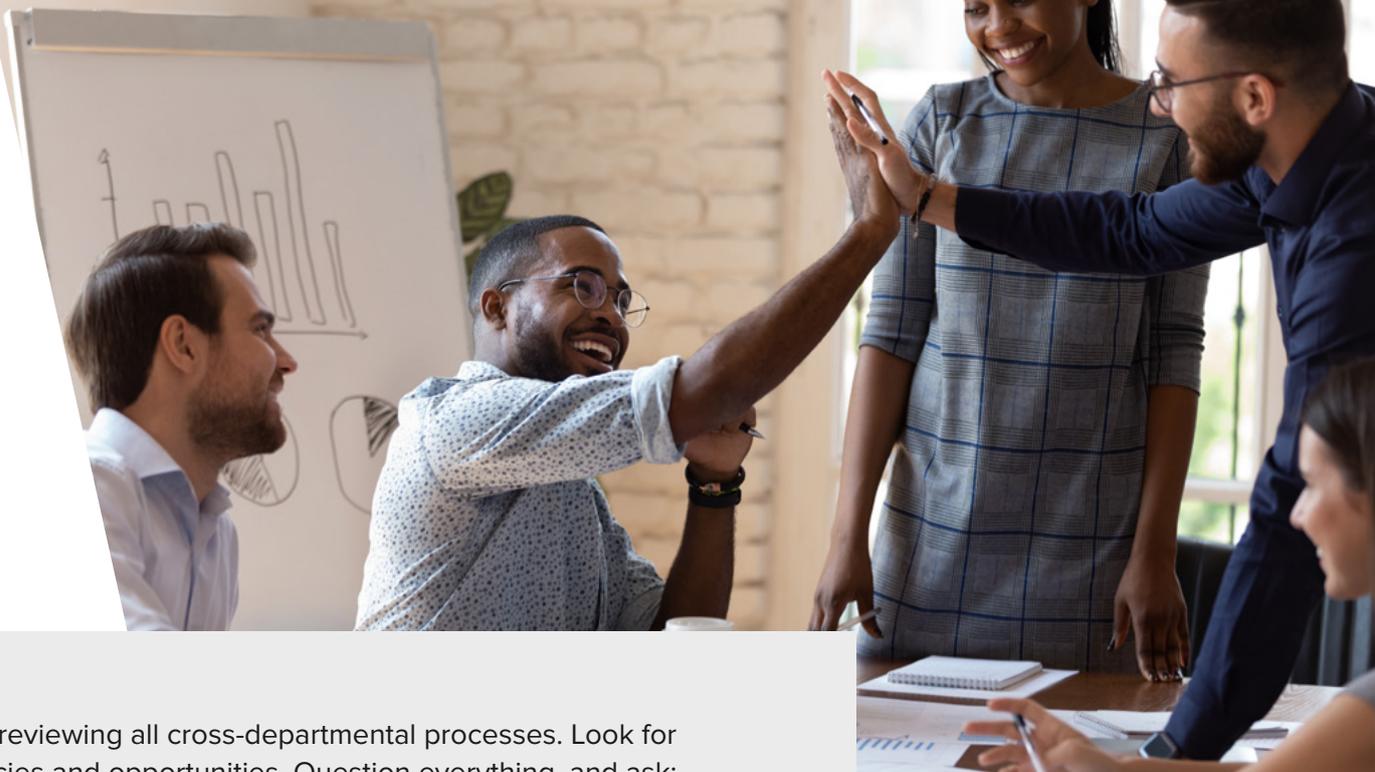
Begin by reviewing all cross-departmental processes. Look for inefficiencies and opportunities. Question everything, and ask:

- Is this process the best it can be?
- Is it as fast, as efficient or as effective as possible? If not, how can we improve it?
- Is there an opportunity to restructure those processes to benefit the various teams?
- Are there steps or activities we can remove that will reduce complexities and challenges?
- How can we improve the overall customer experience?

Regularly revalidating cross-departmental processes provides a valuable health check and commits the organisation to a path of continual improvement. The increase in productivity translates into profit, reducing the time wasted on inefficient tasks or using unsuitable or outdated tools.

We know from Way 1 that staff involvement is critical. Employees involved in defining change are more likely to implement it successfully. It also helps to establish an organisational culture that embraces change.

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Way 3:

Introduce an enterprise workflow system

Enterprise workflow platforms provide a single source of truth for organising, streamlining processes. They can improve transparency and increase productivity.

Enterprise workflow platforms often incentivise cross-departmental collaboration, helping ensure information flows seamlessly between teams. New operational processes driven by shared KPIs can bring groups together, ensuring they're working toward a shared organisational goal, not team targets. They can also smash silos for good.

Innovative leadership teams have quickly made resources available to accelerate change. 77% of UK businesses have increased their digital transformation budget. They recognise that new technologies hold the key to unlocking efficiencies, and you should too.

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Some of the benefits of an enterprise workflow system include:

- **Joining up teams** – Technology enables leaders to redefine and validate processes and touchpoints between teams and departments while breaking down silos.

- **Information accessibility** – Advanced enterprise workflow systems give employees access to the information and resources they need to improve the user experience.

- **Built for flexible working** – Enterprise workflow systems enable staff to collaborate and communicate wherever they are in the world.

- **Single source of truth** – A workflow platform provides a single source of trust for leaders, bringing all data they need in one place instead of having to process and collate data from disparate sources manually.

- **Shared KPIs** – Targeted, specific and measurable KPIs are intrinsic to the success of your enterprise workflow platform.

Harmonisation of data provided by an enterprise workflow platform gives leaders a holistic view of organisational performance and progress on tasks, projects and deliverables. Driven by strategically defined KPIs, a workflow programme can ensure an organisation's work is transparent, targeted and together.

A centralised workflow platform increases trust and improves transparency. It's central to enhancing communication and powering collaboration that's critical to eliminating siloed working.

These digital improvements translate into real-life benefits culturally and in communication, too. Staff can operate with complete transparency and with all the information they need. It's empowering and motivating for staff, managers and leaders.

Enterprise workflow systems are the future for organisations. By 2030, 30% of all business processes will be automated, forecasts McKinsey. By investing today, you're strengthening your position for the future.

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Commit to change

Successful organisations make workflow improvement a strategic priority. It's essential when budgets are stretched and internal investment is limited.

By following our approach, you're simply unlocking the information, insight and potential that already exists within your organisation to transform processes. Many of the strategies we suggest can be performed by your existing team with some planning and preparation.

If you're serious about innovation and are willing to match it with investment, an enterprise workflow programme provides a platform for all staff and employees to build on. It's a cost-effective solution that can break organisations free from siloed working.

By recognising and rewarding process improvement, you can establish an organisational culture that's committed to change.

Organisational change isn't a one-off activity; it's a continual process. Think about improvement as being iterative. Each step takes you further forward toward your goal of being the best you can be.

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At Unifii, we provide people-focused, technology-driven solutions that can break your organisation free from siloed working.

Contact us today

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