

## EMBEDDING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT WITH BRONZE SILVER GOLD

Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do.

**Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.**

### Aristotle

*Greek critic, philosopher, physicist, & zoologist (384 BC - 322 BC)*

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## 1.0 A SUMMARY OF THE BRONZE SILVER GOLD SYSTEM

The [Burge Hughes Walsh](#) 'Bronze Silver Gold' Programme is a structured approach to engage the organisation's people in workplace improvement activity and complements existing improvement initiatives, such as:

- 'Customer First'
- Investors in People
- Right-First-Time
- Lean
- Six Sigma
- Systems Thinking

'Bronze' is essentially the *education and culture change* step, following which Team members will be able to launch into 'Silver', which focuses very strongly on *problem solving and improving performance continuously*.

The aim is to embed Continuous Improvement in the workplace, with the observable outcomes of:

- changed behaviours – a demonstrated culture of Continuous Improvement
- mindset focused on customers and processes
- better operational practices – self-monitored, lean and a benchmark exemplar
- improved performance, ie
  - *flexible, self-managing teams*
  - *increased capacity*
  - *reduced operating costs*
  - *better customer satisfaction*

### How the Bronze-Silver-Gold approach works

The embedding of a continuous improvement culture is predicated on two mechanisms – project-based activity and self-assessment against a predefined set of performance-related behaviours, which have been graded as 'Bronze-Silver-Gold'.

In simplistic terms, ‘Bronze’ level is about ‘*doing what we are supposed to do well*’ and creates a ‘quality service’ mindset; ‘Silver’ is about ‘*improving our processes and quality to better satisfy customers*’ and sees the introduction of problem-solving behaviours, tools and techniques to team members; ‘Gold’ level represents world-class practice as a recognisable description of daily activity in the organisation.

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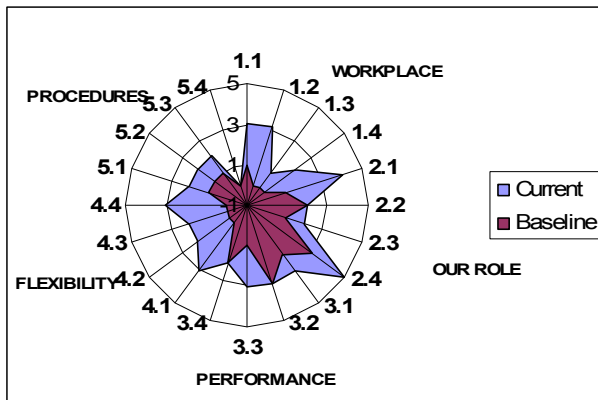
Figure 1: Schematic of the Bronze-Silver-Gold levels of performance

Figure 2 illustrates the ‘audit cycle’, which gives rise to a number of actions which are designed (by the orientation of the audit at Bronze Level) to develop the mindset of Continuous Improvement by focusing on improvement in the five Bronze qualifying requirements, namely:

- Workplace – how we take pride in our working environment
- Our role – how we contribute to service provision
- Performance – how well we perform
- Flexibility – how we work flexibly
- Procedures – how we do our work



Figure 2: the audit cycle



	Max	Baseline	Current
WORKPLACE	20	1	9
OUR ROLE	20	7	13
PERFORMANCE	20	8	11
FLEXIBILITY	20	0	10
PROCEDURES	20	3	6
Total	100	19	49

Figure 3: audit results – a typical radar chart

The actions are executed by the team members, both management and operational. During the Bronze phase, the company’s Team Leaders conduct a series of workshops with the team members. This combination of audit-workshop-action is what affects a change in the cultural mindset of the people.

Bronze workshops include:

- Vision workshop to develop a local vision that aligns with the corporate goals
- 5S workshop to create an organised workplace
- NVA workshop to identify and eliminate wasteful activities in the workplace
- Procedures workshop to establish standards
- Metrics workshop to develop an ethos of self-monitoring of performance
- Skills and training matrix development to build a robust team

‘Silver’ is very much a *transformation* phase. The Qualifying Requirements of Silver address the shifting of effort from ‘do it right’ (‘Bronze’ Level) to ‘do it better’. Thus emphasis is upon developing planning and problem-solving behaviours and team working, including the attitudes and practices of leaders/managers towards an empowered workforce, in which their role is to enable self-managing teams.

**The Bronze Award focused and continues to focus on putting people and customers first.**



**The Silver Award focuses on improving our effectiveness.**



**The Gold Award focuses on attaining excellence.**

It is no coincidence that the SILVER Qualifying Requirements resemble the *enabling and results criteria* of the EFQM model (a self assessment model that gives a business health check) –

TEAMWORKING maps onto *Leadership and People Management*

PERFORMANCE maps onto *Processes*

WORKLOAD maps onto *Resource Management*

PROBLEM-SOLVING maps onto *Processes and People Management*

CUSTOMER FOCUS maps onto *Customer Results*

The remaining criteria – *Policy and Strategy, People Results*, (to some degree *Societal Results*) and of course *Key Performance Results* will be positively affected by the work towards ‘SILVER’.

To draw a parallel with the EFQM Model scoring (which has a scale up to a 1000), ‘Bronze’ is like moving a Team’s score from 300 to 500, whereas ‘Silver’ is 500 to 700 – but the slope is considerably steeper (see again fig1).

The attainment of ‘Silver’ will be a longer term continuous improvement journey and one should think in terms of many months, not weeks. A year would not be untypical and it should be appreciated that this is not a race (despite the Olympic analogy) but an attainment of a performance improving/problem solving culture – and in any case, the ‘finish line’ that is *World Class Standard* is constantly moving away from the runners (like the rainbow in the next field).

An alternative analogy for the ‘Bronze-Silver-Gold’ metaphor would be that of precious metal mining, where the greater rewards lie deeper in the ground, waiting to be unearthed and requiring some effort to attain.

## **2.0 PREPARING FOR A LAUNCH**

### **3.1 Bringing the Management Team on board**

Within the complex hierarchy of the organisation, there are several levels of communication required, each with a slightly different emphasis and which are supported with different, yet complementary materials:

- Senior Management on-boarding presentation
- Area/Team Manager briefing and planning meeting
- Team Launch

Depending on circumstance, the Senior Management on-boarding may be combined with the Management and Team Leader launch session. The time made available by the group may also vary and so some tailoring of these sessions may have to be undertaken.

The aims of the preliminary planning steps are to:

- ◆ ensure that the manager responsible for the area is aware of the principles, aims and approaches used in the Programme. Do not assume that they will be fully aware of these matters, even though they may have attended a presentation on the Programme.
- ◆ ensure that the implications of implementing the Programme are fully understood
- ◆ agree the expected outcomes of the deployment
- ◆ agree a timing and resource plan for the deployment
- ◆ gain enthusiastic commitment to the Programme

### 3.0 'BRONZE SILVER GOLD' ROUTE MAP

The Programme is devised around the cycle of audits and workshops shown earlier. In the Bronze phase, it looks like this:

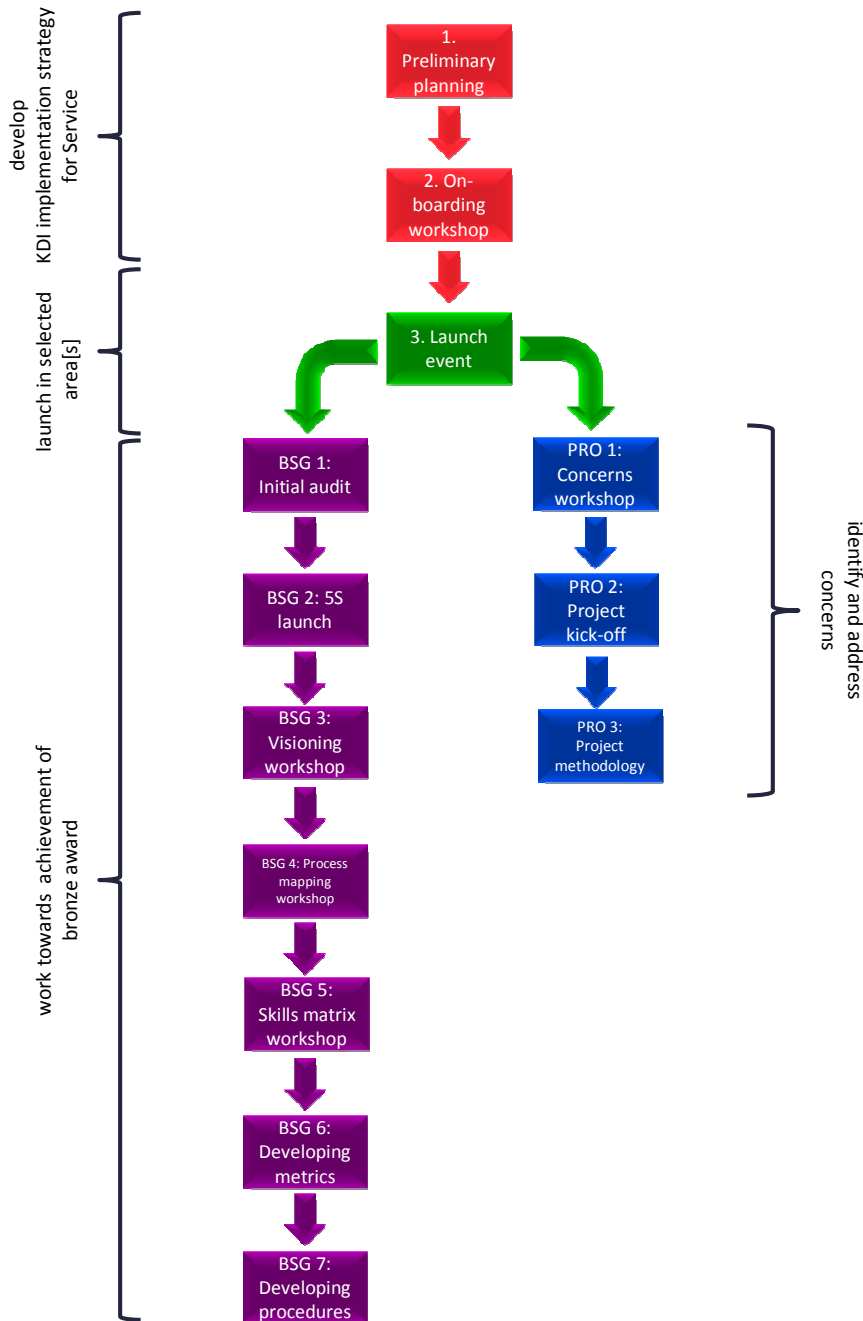


Figure 6: Route Map for 'Bronze'

The order of workshops can be varied.



## 4.0 MANAGEMENT REPORTING

A simple management reporting mechanism has been established to report on BSG penetration, team status and benefits realisation.

*BSG penetration includes:* number of teams launched in each Service Area, number of audits and workshops completed.

*Team status includes:* number of people engaged, current audited score, RAG status of team (ie Red, Amber or Green), with respect to actions completed.

*Benefits realisation* is currently being tested. In 'Bronze' some of the activities return intangible positive results (eg improved workplace through 5S), whilst others will provide cashable benefits, such as the nva elimination and process streamlining activity.

All reporting information will be forwarded to Sue Brown. This will be provided by the team managers/leaders, who in turn will gather the information from the members in their team and the reports should be delivered at the end of each month.

The report is Excel-based and provides an at-a-glance overview of the BSG deployment. More detail will be available on any team by accessing that team's audit sheets and log book.

The 'one page' report is illustrated below:

		KAIZEN FOR DAILY IMPROVEMENT: DEPLOYMENT PROGRESS REPORT																													
		ACTIVITY										STATUS										ENGAGEMENT									
Updated: DATE WEEK NO.		Red no. boarding conducted	Other no. boarding conducted	Team launch (planned or actual)	Initial audit conducted	audits conducted (week no.)					workshops conducted (week no.)					Current Score (click for team)	PROGRESS TO BRONZE				RAG STATUS (click for team)	BRONZE TARGET DATE	No. of staff in Team	No. of attendees of on-boarding	No. of attendees of launch	Updated: DATE WEEK NO.					
						vision	5S	nva	metrics	skills	proc. maps	proc. maps	other	other	other	other	other	other	other	other	other	other	other	other	other	other	other	other			
		AAAA	BBBB	CCCC	DDDD	EEEE	FFFF	GGGG	HHHH	IIII	JJJJ	KKKK	LLLL	MMMM	NNNN	OOOO	PPPP	QQQQ	RRRR	SSSS	TTTT	UUUU	VVVV	WWWW	XXXX	YYYY	ZZZZ	AAAA	BBBB		
Service Area	Team 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Team 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Team 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Team 4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Team 5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Team 6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Team 24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Figure 7: Deployment Progress Report

The Team log book, accessible from the top level report above, looks like:

TEAM LOG BOOK page 1 of 3				
Team Title:		Team Bronze launch date:		date
Title		BRONZE Audit History by month		
Team Manager:	name	Audit	Date	Score
CI agent:	name	1	end month 1	
Team Members		2	end month 2	
		3	end month 3	
		4	end month 4	
		5	end month 5	
		6	end month 6	
		7	end month 7	
		8	end month 8	
		9	end month 9	
		10	end month 10	
Audit Review	SCORE	COMMENTS		
Date:				
Date:				
Date:				
Date:				
Date:				

RAG DEFINITIONS	
R	Team has not progressed over the last month, w.r.t. BRONZE activity. Investigative action from Service Manager and CI agent required.
A	Some of the actions have passed the stated deadline, but reasons are evident and transitional.
G	Team on track to meet objectives and timings of BRONZE status (ie 20 weeks from BSG launch or other milestone approved by CI agent and Service Manager).
	A Blank Cell - Not yet launched

Figure 8: Team Log Book

The Benefits are to be summarised for each team in their Team Log Book:

TEAM LOG BOOK page 3 of 3					
Team Title:		date			
Title		BRONZE BENEFITS REALIZATION			
<b>Qualifying Rqmnt 1   WORKPLACE: HOW WE TAKE PRIDE IN OUR WORKING ENVIRONMENT</b>					
Key Actions with measurable benefits	Action RAG Status	Benefit Description	Benefit Measure		
			Time (hrs)	Cost (£s)	Quality (%)
5S workshop		Engagement in w'place organisation			
"SORT" conducted		Reduce nva of searching			
"STRAIGHTEN" conducted		Reduce nva of inefficient layout			
SUMMARY STATUS:		Totals of realisable benefits:			
<b>Qualifying Rqmnt 2   OUR ROLE: HOW WE CONTRIBUTE TO SERVICE PROVISION</b>					
Key Actions with realisable benefits	Action RAG Status	Benefit Description	Benefit Measure		
			Time (hrs)	Cost (£s)	Quality (%)
Vision workshop		Engagement in empowerment			
Mapping of key internal processes		Recognise roles & responsibilities			
Identification of customers' rqmnts		Customer focus			
SUMMARY STATUS:		Totals of realisable benefits:			
<b>Qualifying Rqmnt 3   PERFORMANCE: HOW WELL WE PERFORM</b>					
Key Actions with measurable benefits	Action RAG Status	Benefit Description	Benefit Measure		
			Time (hrs)	Cost (£s)	Quality (%)
Establish Visual Display Board		Improved daily operations commns			
Establish individual targets		Clarity of operational requirements			
Establish performance measures		Improved efficiency of individuals			
SUMMARY STATUS:		Totals of realisable benefits:			
<b>Qualifying Rqmnt 4   FLEXIBILITY: HOW WE WORK FLEXIBLY</b>					
Key Actions with measurable benefits	Action RAG Status	Benefit Description	Benefit Measure		
			Time (hrs)	Cost (£s)	Quality (%)
Develop and update skills matrix		Ability to plan team development			
Develop and update training matrix		More efficient resource planning			
Train individuals for flexible working		NVA of 'downtime' reduced			
SUMMARY STATUS:		Totals of realisable benefits:			
<b>Qualifying Rqmnt 5   PROCEDURES: HOW WE DO OUR WORK</b>					
Key Actions with measurable benefits	Action RAG Status	Benefit Description	Benefit Measure		
			Time (hrs)	Cost (£s)	Quality (%)
Identify and develop SOPs		Reduce variation in operation			
Improve standard operations		Improve operations by nva elimination			
SUMMARY STATUS:		Totals of realisable benefits:			

Figure 9: Benefits Realisation Capture