

Total Cycle Time[®]

Total Cycle Time Defined

Total Cycle Time (TCT) is the combined effect of the cycle times of all business processes from the time a need exists until it is satisfied. More simply, it is the total time it takes to get things done, to bring a new product from concept to cost-effective production or to take an order for a product or service and satisfy the customer's need.



These are not just sequential processes but are all concurrent and sequential processes involved in running a competitive business. Frequently the cycle times of these processes are rolled up into one or more measures to be used as the primary drivers of competitiveness improvement.

Total Cycle Time Applied

The need to move quickly in today's environment is critical; responsiveness is only one aspect of being competitive. In a short cycle time environment, there is no room for non-value added activities. All such activities need to be eliminated to reach the shortest possible cycle time. Similarly, a short cycle time process has no room for rework—it must be right the first time.

An understanding of the conditions surrounding fast processing (short cycle time) compared with slow processing can be obtained from an analysis of the shortest and longest cycle times.

Requirements for accelerating positive Total Cycle Time change include:

- Set the objectives: Objectives provide the focal point for many other parts of the process.
- Lead from the top: Change of any magnitude must come from the top of the organization and flow throughout the existing management fabric.

- Communicate: By both words and deeds. While many programs link to communication by deeds, change is undermined when the words and the deeds do not link together.
- Continually review the plan: Every step in this process is an opportunity to learn. Learning and taking changes into account throughout the process is critical to keeping the right objectives in focus and accelerating results.
- Manage and prioritize the work: Too many initiatives and underestimating the time required for change are common pitfalls in achieving major change. Use a top-down action item technique to keep focus on high leverage actions.
- Measure: Without the right measures you can not answer the inevitable questions: "Are we there yet?" and "How much longer will it take?"
- Use a structure process: For removing the barriers to increased performance.
- Balance running the business and improving it: This requires focusing on the change process throughout the company. Use a regular process of feedback and control to maintain focus.

Total Cycle Time at Thomas Group

The Total Cycle Time conceptual framework is based on experience. The fact that TCT reduction drives improved responsiveness and accelerated results at minimum resources has been verified many times by proving that the rate of improvement in a process is heavily dependent on the cycle time of the process because of Cycles of Learning[®].

Thomas Group believes TCT is more than driving down cycle time through process change; it is also a systematic process for culture change, which is necessary to achieve lasting results. A Thomas Group TCT program provides a continuous set of interconnected, managed projects that are driven by Thomas Group and the client's top management together. It is a partnership where each partner contributes to the solution of problems. 