ASIT case study: Documentation problem at An Indian telecom company
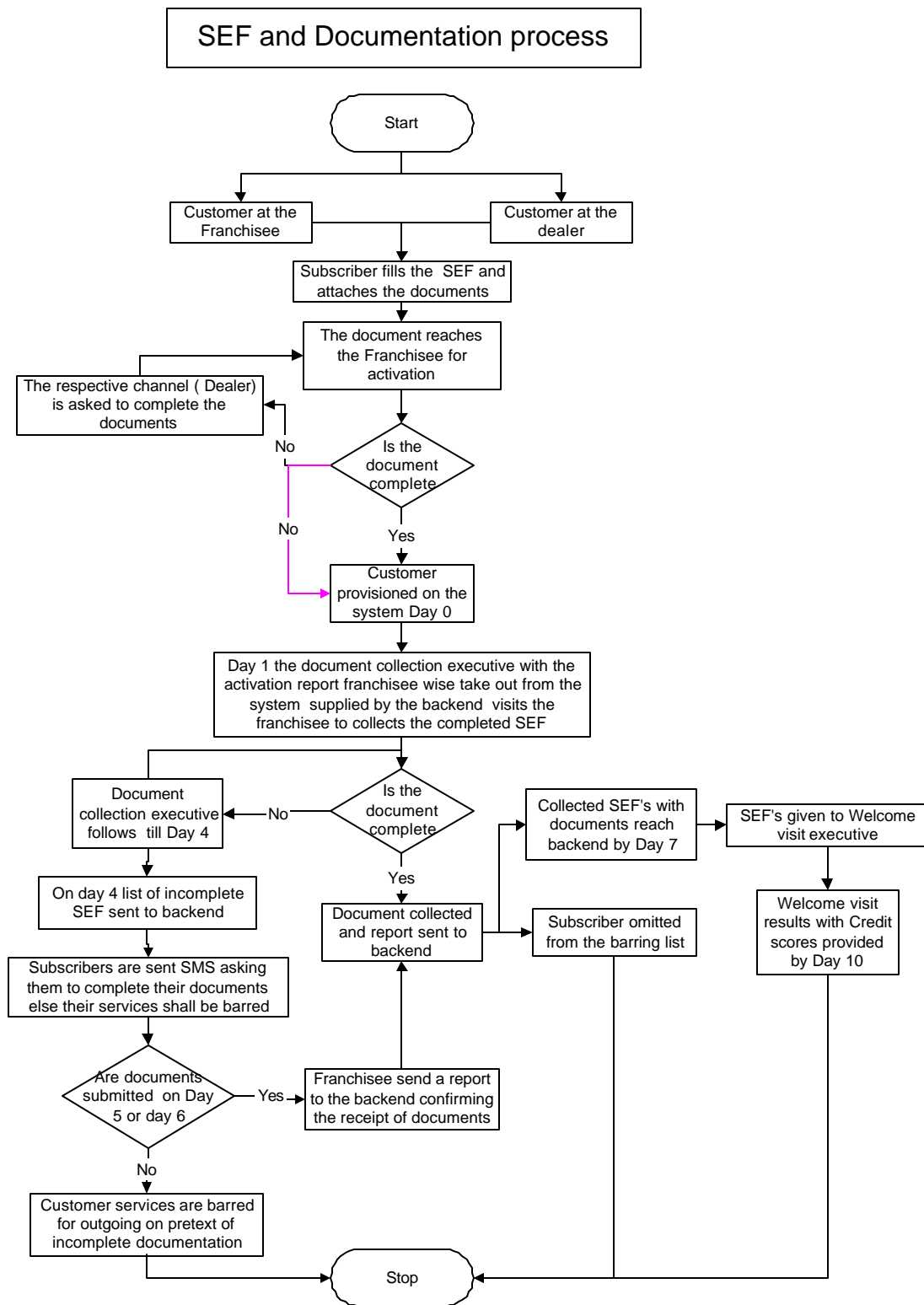
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It started during a discussion with one of the General Managers of a telecom company in India, who was not able to figure out a vigorous solution to reduce non-compliance in documentation.

Before we start with the case and the solution let me give you a brief about the **CW** – Closed world. (*Editor's note: This is an ASIT term for the problem environment.*)

- **Day zero**: Every prospect who wish to avail the services of the telecom company need to fill a SEF- Subscriber Enrolment Form at one of the retailers who sells the product (in this case product is a non activated SIM card)
- Once the SEF is filled the customer needs to submit proof of his identity and address of residence along with a passport size photograph
- This process is followed
  - o As a statutory requirement to check who is using the services. During surprise audit if any subscriber is found to be active without documents in the system after a certain time, the license for providing cellular services for the entire region can be suspended.
  - o For company's record and to be used to credit verification and address verification to reduce exposure and prevent fraud
- After getting the form filled by the customer and attaching the required documents the retailer hands over the non activated SIM card to the customer
- The Completed SEF comes to the Franchisee location (Bigger exclusive retailer) for activating the SIM Card.
- The systems are available at the Franchisee location wherein the customer details are punched in and the SIM card is activated according to the customer's requirements.

- **Day 1**: The document executive goes to the franchisee location to collect the completed SEF with documents
- The completed SEF are collected and a report of the same is sent to the backend on the same day.
- The completed SEF are handed over to the Welcome Visit Executive who goes and verifies the address, ascertains the credit to be given to the customer, and verifies signature and photograph. The Credit score is then updated on the system. The welcome visit was a process introduced to provide customer delight by not only doing AV/CV but also providing information to customer about 'How to read the bill', 'Bill payment modes and places etc.' For doing this the Welcome Visit Executive is paid by the company @ Rs.X per visit.
- The incomplete SEF – with some or all document missing but activated are followed through *Day 2 till Day 4*
- On *Day 5* a SMS is sent to all such customer that they are required to submit the documents otherwise their services shall be barred.
- On *Day 7* the services of all such customer with incomplete SEF submitted are barred to avoid further exposure.

- Till the time the credit scores flow in no value-added services are activated like STD, Roaming, ISD etc. to prevent fraudulent customers increasing exposure and resulting in bad debts.

SEF and Documentation process

```
                          ( Start )
                             |
            +----------------+----------------+
            |                                 |
  Customer at the                    Customer at the
   Franchisee                           dealer
            |
   Subscriber fills the  SEF and
   attaches the documents
            |
   The document reaches
    the Franchisee for
      activation
            |
   The respective channel ( Dealer)          Is the
   is asked to complete the  <---- No ----  document
      documents                              complete
                                                |
                                    No         Yes
                                                |
                                           Customer
                                        provisioned on the
                                          system Day 0
                                                |
   Day 1 the document collection executive with the
   activation report franchisee wise take out from the
   system  supplied by the backend  visits the
   franchisee to collects the completed SEF
                                                |
   Document                         Is the                Collected SEF's with          SEF's given to Welcome
   collection executive   <-- No -- document               documents reach              visit executive
   follows  till Day 4              complete                backend by Day 7
        |                              |                                                       |
   On day 4 list of incomplete       Yes                                              Welcome visit
   SEF sent to backend               |                                               results with Credit
        |                     Document collected    Subscriber omitted                scores provided
   Subscribers are sent SMS asking   and report sent to    from the barring list      by Day 10
   them to complete their documents  backend
   else their services shall be barred   |
        |                               |
   Are documents              Franchisee send a report
   submitted  on Day -- Yes-> to the backend confirming
   5 or day 6                 the receipt of documents
        |
        No
        |
   Customer services are barred
   for outgoing on pretext of
   incomplete documentation
        |
                          ( Stop )
```

Problem : <u>***Only 58% SEF reach the backend within the first 5 days***</u>

- *Environment*: Sales pressure forces the franchisee to activate the customer without completed documents.
- Document team pressurises for completing documents and hampers focus on sales especially during month ends.
- To have competitive advantage in a six-player market the differentiation is that the company offers faster activation of services.
- Post verification activation is customer unfriendly process (customer wants immediate activation)

Identifying the world : Customer, Franchisee, Retailer, SEF, Documents, Government, documentation executive, and Welcome Visit Executive, vast geography of the region.

The ASIT solution

1- Unification: Combine the process of document collection and welcome visit
2- Multiplication : The document verification executive after three days of following the franchisee to complete the documentation shall collect the SEF (with no or incomplete documentation). The same shall be forwarded to the Welcome Visit Executive who in turns besides his normal job shall also collect the document from the subscriber during his visit.

The solution then was treated for robustness and the following contradiction was seen.
The franchisee might completely put the document collection on to the Welcome Visit team who gets paid by the company thereby reducing his (the franchisee's) accountability to collect documents as well, and not just sell.

In order to have the discipline also incorporated in the system but not making the system hamper sales, the solution was modified.

New process

- Franchisee gets three days to complete the SEF with documents.
- On Day 3 all incomplete SEF of Day zero activations are collected and handed over to the welcome visit executive to get them completed during his visit.

For this service being provided by the company itself the franchisee shall be charged @Rs.X per subscriber. This has been incorporated in the channel partner terms of trade. A penalty clause has been added in case the channel partner just to complete the SEF by day 3 attaches false/forged documents.

Thus in any case 100% documents shall flow in the system by the fifth day hence no customer shall be barred (Mistake proofing). It shall also reduce the probability of any customer being active in the system without a documented record, thus exposing the company to the risk of regulatory sanctions for non-compliance.

This solution has been successfully implemented and has achieved the desired result, 100% documents reaching within day 5 and no barring for incomplete documentation for the last two months.

To further facilitate improvements in starting new customers, details of completed and incomplete SEF collected franchisee wise is being made available on an intranet site, which can be accessed by the franchisees.

About the author:
Indresh Singh Saluja is working as a Six Sigma Black belt. He has successfully completed black belt projects in areas like retention and has mentored green belts across departments to achieve business goals. Currently he is designing a Business Performance Management System linking the top business objectives to the critical processes. He has been a keen follower of TRIZ and has combined it with Six Sigma to create new processes (DMADV) with mistake proofing. He can be contacted at indreshs@airtelindia.com