# Management of a Financial Institution: Evidence of Banca Nazionale Del Lavoro (BNL) After the Acquisition by BNP Paribas

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# Abstract

The paper examines the quality strategy case of Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL) in Italy after the acquisition in 2006 of the group BNP Parisbas. Based on the past studies we develop a specific detailed research questions: 1) How is the quality and lean management strategy BNL after the acquisition by BNP Paribas?

2) What is the specificity of lean management in the bank sector?

The paper intends to answer to these questions; it offers a unique description of a successful strategy implementation in banking sector based on BNL case. It analyzes in detail the management implementation and the process of change management of the bank.

# 1. Introduction

In this paper, we analyze the case of Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL) after the acquisition by BNP Paribas and its strategy of planning, controlling and improvement quality and lean management in the bank (Pellegrino 2014; De Antonio, 2008)

In our knowledge, no researches are available on this important topic on international level on this bank; while there is a broad range of literature on manufacturing sector (Juran 1989, Juran and Gryna 1990; Juran et al. 1989; Holweg, 2007; Chiarini 2012; Riva, 2007, 2008, 2012) still few paper (Majorana and Morelli 2011; Alexiadou et al. 2017; Gigante and Previati 2011; Chiarini and Baccarani 2016; Delgado et al. 2010) are written on the process to determine critical success factor in process improvement and quality management and knowledge creation in service and banking sectors.

With this in mind, this study intends to investigate on this problem. Based on the experience of BNL (Banca Nazionale del Lavoro) after the acquisition (2006) by BNP Paribas this study analyzes the implementation of a set of methodologies of process improvement and quality management (Pilotti, 2017, 2005) after the operation of acquisition (Riva, 2009).

The objective of quality process improvement practices in BNL bank is not only reducing cost (De Antonio, 2008) and increase the profits but also improve the quality of the services and value creation for the stakeholders (Pellegrino, 2014). Lean practices and techniques can improve a bank by reducing the time spent performing specific activities, reducing the total cost of doing business by eliminating wasted time and effort, increasing customer satisfaction by delivering faster and better quality servicer (Dixon et al. 1994; Koning et al. 2008). A set of methodologies applying is analyzed in detail for quality planning, control and improvement. The results of application of these methodologies in BNL show a reduction of the total cost and also of an increasing of customer quality satisfaction by delivering faster and better-quality service. Given these premises, this paper reports the interesting case of BNL after the acquisition by BNP Paribas. It analyzes the strategy of quality implementation and the process of change management of the bank (Mottura, 2011).

Based on the past studies we develop a specific detailed research questions:

*Q1:* The key question of the paper is: *how is the quality and lean management strategy in Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL) after the acquisition by BNP Paribas? O2: What is the specificity of lean management in the bank sector?* 

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For study the first question, we analyze the case of BNP based on the previous literature and performance data before and after the acquisition. For answering the second question, we define a model of the specificity of lean banking (Majorana and Morelli 2011) based on this case. Recently banks begin to build upon the principles of quality and lean management (Liker, 2004; Liker and Meier, 2006) and BPM (Business process management), BPR (Business Process Reengineering and benchmarking) (Hammer et al. 1993, Hammer, 2000; Camp 1989; Cook 1995; Shoettl, 2003; Kathleen et al. 1996) and change management and knowledge creation (Gigante and Previati 2011; Ross and Ross 1997). The outline of the paper is as follows: the second section describes the theoretical review and the methodological aspects; the thirds section describes a short history of BNL and the acquisition process of BNP Paribas; the fourth section examine the process of planning, control, improvement of quality in the bank, the fifth one concludes.

#### 2. Theoretical review and methodology approach

#### 2.1 Previous literature

Several studies have shown how the methodology of quality and service management (Grönroos and Ravald, 2011), reengineering (Hammer 1990; Hall et al. 1993), change management (Senge 1999, Lewin 1951), lean manufacturing (Womack and Jones, 1990,1996; Collis, 2016) learning organization and knowledge creation (Nonaka, 1988, 1995, 2000; Qintas et al. 1997; Stack et al. 1992; Grant, 1997) permit to improve the results in the general service sector (Pilotti, 2017, Goldratt, 1992).

On the contrary less studies are focused on the banking and financial sector. In particular for what concerns the banking sector some papers are particular relevant; in this section, there is a chronological description of some of more important research in the international literature on this topic.

Halleck et al. (1991) describe the importance of benchmarking world-class performance across sectors not only to quantify performance gap but also to compare and manufacturing and management processes. While competitive analysis is limited to firms of the same sector, the world class benchmarking permits to learn from the best in class and focus on the processes more important. The typical output measures of a quality process are: cost, quality and time. To start a benchmarking process there is a analysis of the supply chain of the firm and the definition of the key processes to be benchmarked. The most advanced formula of this tool is the analysis of the best practices of the present in the world (best- in-class benchmarking), Frei et al. (1999) explore the relation between retail banks' branch-based processes and financial performance. The study analyzes 11 processes, which represent the core of the activities performed in a typical retail branch (e.g., opening checking accounts). The results show that the financial performance of banks that perform better across these processes tend to get better results than that of other banks. Banks that performed well in one process often performed no good in another. The paper presents an analytical model that shows that improvement in process variation can be more important than improvement in aggregate process performance Yassar et al. (2000), study a group of 227 organizations for identify the critical success factors for effective internal transfer of best practices. The results show the importance of training and open communication for best practices. The benchmarking methodology is of Anglo-Saxon origin and has found its first application in the world of private enterprises, which are more exposed, to the problems of measurement competitiveness. The study describes the importance of formation, motivation and culture in the process to transfer best practices.

Shin and Jemella (2002), investigate the process of BPR in Chase Manhattan Bank. The paper attempts to provide guidelines for projects in service financial institutions that will help achieve dramatic performance gains. The project include specifics four phases for the business process reengineering (energize, focus, invent, and launch.) The results of the projects are new services with increases in revenue and cost reduction.

Dattakumar and Jagadeesh (2003) describe the evolution on the literature on benchmarking; the paper analyze 382 publications on benchmarking; these publications can divided in forth category: a) general and fundamental models; b) specific application and case studies; c) innovations and extension or new approaches on benchmarking; d) benchmarking in service and educations. There is a study in different area (public sector, banks, finance, accounting process, core competence). Through this technique it is possible to recover the improving quality by obtaining of the maximum potential in all processes identification of the dimensions to be monitored, communication of the results, involvement with other processes for improvement Van der Aalst (2004) describes how process reengineering, combined with the use of modern process-oriented information technology, can lead to substantial improvements in quality.

Through the combination of process restructuring and the application of modern IT, processes can be improved significantly. The results show that the cycle times of the restructured business processes have been reduced and the reliability of processes has been improved (see Table 2).

Roth (2010) describes ACE (achieving competitive excellence) methods used in developing, aligning, and communicating business specific strategies. This case study provides an *example of managerial and organizational changes* that permits significant performance improvements. The ace methodology is based on some management principles: a) the process improvement (5S - visual workplace, value stream management, process control certification, standard work, production preparation process, total productive maintenance, set-up reduction; b) problem solving techniques: market feedback analysis, QCPC -quality clinic process charting-, relentless root cause analysis, mistake proofing; c) decision making (passport process).

Văduva (2011) shows what organizations in particular *commercial banks*, can gain from lean management transformation. The implementation of a lean management program in a bank will result in a lean banking organization with more satisfied customers, less waste and bureaucracy, more employee knowledge and empowerment with more productivity. As practical implications, the study shows how to address change and the importance of culture and management.

Cordesse (2012) shows the case lean transformation of the group BNP Paribas Bank. The process of continuous improvement is based on specific method based on management of projects. Lean strategy has been successfully implemented. The results show a performance improvement by 10 to 40%, with an average between 20 and 25%. It is above all an improvement in the fluidity of tasks and the speed of the processes.

Samsul and Ahmed (2012) describe the *business service process of credit card department of a multinational bank*. Before the project of process reengineering it require0s eight to nine days to complete the process of issue of a card. The new proposed process reduces half of the time of the cycle time for the process with better customer satisfaction. This is possible by eliminates the wastes. The application of BPM and reengineering permits to the bank to increase card market share in the segment of consumer products with economic benefits.

Singh (2013) analyzes the process management process to sustain a *competitive advantage for organizational performance and improvement*. Transformational leaders have a tremendous influence on the work place and organization's culture. McKinsey's 7S framework is a model for analyzing organizations and their effectiveness: strategy, structure, systems, shared values, style, staff and skills. This framework must be aligned and this permits to reach leader the excellence.

Mbarchyan (2013) proposes methods of comprehensive analysis of Banking Group member efficiency based on the case of *BNP Parisbas Polska SA (Poland)*. The banking group financial result depends on financial results of each group member. These methods provide comparison of relative changes of the Banking Group member financial ratios with relative changes of financial ratios of the whole Banking Group and other member banks. The paper analyses the financial statement data of the Banking Group and its members using method of comparison and ratio method.

Nelson (2013) describes a consistent trend towards outsourcing in financial services in Asia. Nelson is head of the client development Asia BNP Paribas Security service. He notes since the beginning of the survey in 2009 a diffusion of outsourcing process in finance sectors. From over 150 broker dealers and investment banks every year, 27 per cent of the region's brokerages have outsourced some part of their post-trade. Outsourcing from back office is necessary to remain competitive in Asia-Pacific market

Alexiadou et al. (2017) study based on a sample of 165 bank branches and 1522 respondents (463 front-line employees and 1059 customers) evaluate the quality perception of customers and front line employees. It examines also the managerial consequence of the perception of reliability and empathy and a methodological procedure to detect the potential mismatching in how customers and employees perceive the quality.

### 2. 2 Methodology

The empirical method of this analysis follows the logic of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), developing a single case study methodology (Eisenhardt, 1989). We based our study on an important Italian bank Banca Nazionale del Lavoro. Quality management practices in lean production stress the concept of built core competence and eliminate waste and re-engineering (Folpmers and Lemmens 2004; Dixon and al. 1994; Hall and al. 1993; Elewaut et al. 2003; Güler 2015) by using a group of methodology (just in time, poka-yoke, source inspection automated inspection, sigma six).

These methodologies are also coherent with the theory of synchronous manufacturing and theory of constraints (Majorana and Morelli, 2011) and other managerial strategy (Anderson and McAdam 2004; Hax and Majluf, 1996; Scozzese 2005; Simon 1995).

## 3. The case of Banca Nazionale del Lavoro of BNP Paribas

Banca Nazionale Lavoro after the acquisition of BNP Paribas Group is one of the major Italian banking groups (Pellegrino 2014, BNP Paribas Annual Report 2015; Gatti 1999; Osservatorio Processi Bancari, 2010; Mottura 2011). It has about 2.5 million retail customers, including 130 thousand small businesses and professionals and over 33000 of enterprises and organizations.

BNL is founded in 1913 and it is one of the leading Italian banking groups and one of the most recognized names in Italy. BNL has about 900 outlets in Italy and offers a broad range of traditional to highly innovative products and services for individuals, businesses and government agencies (Skinner 2015). It continues upgrading of the product line with some new product (Conto Revolution, Mutuo Revolution, Prestito Revolution). BNL is under the control of the French group BNP Paribas from 2006 (the integration process ended in 2008 BNL) (Bollard et al. 2014).

The BNP Paribas is present in over 85 countries, with about 155000 employees. The group holds key positions in three major business segments: finance and investment banking, asset management & services, and retail banking. BNP Paribas also has a important presence in the United States and a positions in Asia. It is a leading banking and financial services provider, with strong positions in its two core activities: retail banking, corporate and institutional banking.

In Europe, the group has four main domestic markets, Italy, Belgium, France, and Luxembourg. The group is present also in Turkey and in Eastern Europe and has a large network in the Western US. It is present in Europe in the Americas and in Asia-Pacific.

#### 4. The relevant aspect of BNL process improvement

In BNL the process of quality improvement is based on the trilogy concept, based on the three management processes of quality planning, control and improvement (Juran 1989, Juran and Gryna 1990; Juran et al. 1989).

#### 4.1 Quality Planning in BNL: Customer quality satisfaction and VOC methodology and program Ace

The tool of VOC (voice of the customer) used by BNL permits to collect detailed data from customers (Ohmae, 1982; Tonchia and Napoli, 2011) on their perceptions and needs correlated with the financial services. It provides objective data on past customers, current customers and lost prospects to make decisions about products and services offered. It identifies the quality attributes needed for a supplied component or material to incorporate in the process or product; it is a proven quality tool in the lean operations.

The focus is on finding solution on customer's problems to permit to the bank to work in better way (Delgado 2010; De Antonio 2008; Majorana and Morelli 2011; Wang and Chenb, 2010). A service of value is that product which is able to satisfy the consumer (prize and quality and intrinsic characteristics). It is necessary the identification of the value for customer and define and analyze the flow of value, or the whole process that led to the realization. The VOC (Womack and Jones 1996) is a process used to capture the requirements from the customer (internal or external) to provide the customers with the best in class service quality based also on a set of question (see Table 1).

Quality planning question	BANK LOAN (information transformation process)
FUNCTIONALITY –	Interest rate, term and conditions
How well the service does it job ?	
APPEARANCE –	Aesthetics of information, website, etc.
Which are the sensory characteristics of the service: its aesthetic appeal, look, feel, etc.?	
RELIABILITY –	Keeping promise (implicit and explicit)
What is the consistency of the service's performance over time	
DURABILITY –	Stability of term and conditions
How much is the total useful life of the service	
RECOVERY –	Resolution of service failures
How is the ease with problem with the service can be resolved?	
CONTACT –	Knowledge and courtesy of branch and call centre staff
What is the nature of the person-to-person contact that might take place?	

It can be captured in a variety of ways: interviews, field reports, complaint surveys (histograms and basic statistical sampling principles generate a picture of customer needs and perceptions), focus group. It is based on a procedure (Küng and Hagen 2007): 1) identify who the customers and the needs of those customers; 2) translate those needs into clear attributes; 3) design the service based on real needs; 4) delivery services and product with the features defined; 5) optimize the process; 6) quality improvement: to find always a better way to do the activity; 7) control and create a database of "best practices". The idea is that quality does not happen by accident and needs to be planned and organize and it is important using a integrated set of methodology (Salaheldin and Abdelwahab, 2009; Sudden M, 2013). ACE (*achieving competitive excellence*) is methodology developed by UTC United Technologies Corporation. Ace is a operating system broader then the six sigma approach (Pellegrino 2014, BNP Paribas Annual Report 2015) based on some continuous improvement (Bogan 1994; Bocchino1995; Oriani ,1996; Brodel et al. 2014). The Ace methodology is based on : waste elimination, set of decision making tool and problem solving tool (Hutton 2004). They are focuses on competitive excellence.

The phase of Ace methodology (Roth 2010) can be defined in: a) proof of the need (the reason to change is analyzed); b) vision: definition of desired outcome (this is defined in a 90 second objective); c) developing commitment (strong commitment to change; d) sustaining change (sustain the long run transformation); e) monitor progress (measure the real progress, set benchmark and realize indicators establish to guarantee performance).

Ace methodologies show how competitiveness and process improvement in the service industry can be improved (George 2003; Hagel et al. 1993; Stack et al. 1992).

#### 4.2 Quality Control in BNL: process management and KPI (quality, competitiveness, operative risks)

The quality strategy of BNL is based on the control of a set of KPI (see Table 2). For BNL business processes permits the administrative and supervisory control. The process of quality improvement is based on the three financial management processes of planning, control and improvement (Juran 1989,1980.1988).

	Kpi of Quality Management	Control
	-Customer satisfaction	
	-Market share rate	
Quality And	-Profit per customer	
Costumer	-Customer retention rate	Quality
	-Profit per customer	
	-Customer increasing rate	
	-New service items	
	-Costumer complaints	
Internal	-Transaction efficiency	Competitiveness,
Service Process	-Rationalized form & process	
	-Management performance	
	-Sales performance	
	-Responses of customer service	
Learning And Growth	-Professional training	Operative risks
-	-Employee stability	
	-Employee satisfaction	
	-Organization competence	
	Kpi of Financial Management	
	-Sales	
	-Return on assets	
	-Debt ratio	
Finance	-Earnings per share	
	-Return on investments	
	-Net profit margin	
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#### Table 2: Quality, competitiveness and operative risk

In order to achieve these among the methodology there is called 5S are an example of lean practices: 1) sort; 2) straighten; 3) scrub; 4) systemize; 5) standardize. It is essential for a bank to exercise discipline in maintain the work place and institute processes in a standard manner (Itami and Roehl 1993). Business process management is important to control the activity of the bank and it can be defined (Van der Aalst, 2004) as follows: business processes using methods, techniques, and software to design, control, and analyze operational processes involving humans, organizations, applications, documents and information.

#### 4.3 Quality improvement in BNL: problem solving and project methodology

The set of methodologies used in BNL are: a) problem solving; b) PDCA; c) A3; d) Project management (see Table 3). The quality strategy takes priority over all other strategies and affects everyone in the company (Ohno, 1988; Druker, 1998; Holweg, 2007). This means that any person at all levels of the corporate hierarchy even at the lowest level, when he realizes that something is wrong is allowed to fix the problem (Lever and Moormann, 2014).

Duration at task (days)	Typology of quality problems	Methodology of quality
1 a 5	Fix an immediate problem,	Problem solving
	Implement a simple improvement, simple cause	Daily task assignment board;
	analysis	Follow up
6 to 30	Problem solving process for more	Pdca. A3
	Complex cause analysis, solution	Via one-page (a-3) visual project
	Or recommendation	Plan reviewed at weekly project
		Review session
30 to 90	Long term or more complex	Project management
	Problems or opportunities	Via one-page (a-3) visual project
		Plan reviewed at weekly project
		Review session

### **Table 3 : Quality Improvement**

The application of quality and lean strategy requires that is observed at the highest levels of the corporate hierarchy (Liker and Meier 2006) based on strong philosophy, control of the processes, people empowerment and application of problem solving (see table 4).

The evolution of a problem is controlled used the visual controls. The visual comparisons highlight when the process is not performing as expected (Kovacs, 2016). The typical procedure of process improvement in the service management can be based on a set of integrated methodology as reengineering, benchmarking, activity management (Porter 1985, 1996; Ostroff and Smith, 1992; Masoud, 2014; Lizza, 2005; Zairi 1996; Spendolini 1992). It involves collecting a database of performance indicators relevant to the case under consideration, drawing data from similar activities.

Philosophy - long term	1. Base your management decision on a long- term philosophy even at the expense of short-term financial goals
Deserver Deserverte flages	
Process – Promote flow:	2. Create a continuous process flow to bring problem to the surface
creating a pull production	3. Use pull system to avoid overproduction
system that has	4. Level out the workload ( <i>heijunka</i> )
continuous flow	5. Build a culture of stopping to fix problems, to get quality right the first
and balanced workload	time
	6. Standardized task are the foundation for continuous improvement and employee empowerment
	7. Use visual control so no problem are hidden
	8. Use only reliable, thoroughly tested technology that serves your people
	and processes
People – Respect and	9. Growing leaders who thoroughly understand the work, living the
development	philosophy, and teaching it to others
-	10. Developing exceptional people and teams who follow you company's
	philosophy
	11. Respecting your extended network of partners and suppliers by
	challenging them and helping them improve
Problem solving – continuous	12. Go and see for yourself to thoroughly understand the situation (genghi genbutsu)
improvement:	13. Make decisions slowly by consensus, thoroughly considering all
Organize their continuous	option, implement decision rapidly
improvement	14. Become a learning organization through relentless reflection ( <i>hansei</i> )
r	and continuous improvement (kaizen)

#### Table 4 Strategy of improving quality and lean management (our elaboration from Liker 2004 and Majorana and Morelli 2011)

The information obtained is used to compare the performance. In benchmarking can be used different techniques of the best practice technique (Morris and Brandon 1995) for analyzing the past years for the comparison. This methodology can used with lean management, reengineering, balance scorecard (Dos Santos and Rosario Cabrita, 2016; Burch 1994; Hagel et al. 1993).

# 5. Conclusion

The effort of BNL (Pellegrino 2014) is to create a set of organized KPI to determine the evolution in the time of a set of organized objectives (Delgado 2010; Wu et al. 2009; 2012). For application of quality and lean management in service sector is important to measure the impact of process improvement (Balkoskava and Fineva 2016; Ben Bouheni 2016; Hitt et al. 2014; De Antonio, 2008). The purpose for visual controls in lean management is to focus on the process and make it easy to compare expected versus actual performance (De Koning 2008a; Imai, 1986).

With reference to the first question, (the quality and lean management strategy in Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL) after the acquisition by BNP Paribas), we discover that: *First*, the strategy of process improvement in BNL after its acquisition (Cordesse 2012; Riva, 2009) form BNP Paribas is based on a set of integrated methodologies based *on planning, controlling and improving quality* integrated with lean management (and other methodologies (benchmarking, reengineering, processes management, theory of constraints, knowledge management) (De Antonio, 2008; Pilotti, 2017; Gigante and Previati, 2011; Ross and Ross, 1997.

*Second*, in *planning phase* the customer quality satisfaction and VOC and the ACE methodology (De Koning et al. 2008a) are used to understand and determine the quality strategy and targets. It is important to explicit the value stream based on customer's needs (using KPI-key performance indicators), VOC (voice of customers) and VOP (voice of processes). In banking, by implementing lean management, the organization improves business performance by using simple, practical tools and techniques to enhance quality, cost, delivery and people contribution (Dembowski, 2013). Achieving competitive excellence (ACE) operating system permit to identify and control variation in the processes that most affect performance and profit; the aim is to increase both speed and quality at all levels.

*Third*, in the *control phase* there is a use of a set of organized KPI (quality, competitiveness, operative risks) (Mottura, 2011): Important is the visual control and monitor a reduction of costs and improve the response times and reduce process errors in the bank activities. Teams, who study a problem by analyzing process variation and the causes, control the process performance during the time to evaluate possible gap of performance based on the target.

*Forth.* in the *improvement phase*, there is a of application of an integrated set of methodologies (George, 2003): use processes improvement activity to incremental continuous improvement that increases the effectiveness of an activity eliminate waste and to produce more value (find always a better way to do the processes by give a critique to the process) (Delgado et al. 2010).. Also is important to create more value for the customers by using problem solving, PDCA, A3 methodology, project management. The strategy of process improvement (Collis and David 2016) based on a strong commitment of the employers. At all levels of the organization a strong desire to evolve and to improve must be applied from the top to the bottom of the organizational pyramid.

The results of the first question are consistent on the model of quality management (De Antonio 2008; Juran 1989) integrated with the model of lean management in service sector (Womack and Jones, 1996) and lean banking (Delgado et al. 2010)

*For what concerns the second question, (the specificity of lean management in the bank sector)* we discover that: *First,* lean banking can benefit from a set of integrated methodology (De Koning et al, 2010; Pellegrino 2014):

- a) customer quality satisfaction and VOC methodology and program Ace;
- b) process management and KPI (quality, competitiveness, operative risks);
- c) problem solving and project methodology.

*Second*, in lean banking is important to control the performance by KPI and a useful tool is BSC (balance score card) (Al Najjar et al. 2012). The creation of a strategic map permits to consider different perspectives: (Balkovskaya and Fineva 2016), Kaplan and Norton 1996; 2001; 2004a; 2004b; 2004c): a) customer and quality perspective (Elewaut et al. 2003); b) internal business processes perspective (Samsul and Ahmed 2012); c) learning and growth perspective (Gigante and Previati 2011); d) financial perspective (Mottura 2011). The results

of the second question are consistent on the model of lean banking (De Antonio 2008; Ndaita and Gachie 2015; Salaheldin and Abdelwahab, 2009 Delgado et al. 2010). The limit of this study is to analyze only a case of single bank. Future research can analyze the impact of new technology strategy and study other case process of improvement strategy after an acquisition.

The strategy of the bank is to deliver services more quickly and this is an essential element for the bank (*time and* quality based strategy). Focus on speed and on quality has as consequences lowering costs and more customer satisfaction based on improvement on KPI in quality, competitiveness and operative risks.

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