

The Process of Process Management

Mastering the New Normal in a Digital World

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Abstract: Today business strategies and operations are driven by scores of ever-shifting factors: from demographic changes, capital availability and legal regulations to technological innovations and an all present digitalization. Static business models are no longer able to keep pace with such dynamic change. Companies need a management approach that fits to this environment. Organizations need to master the “new normal” and deal proactively with our “digital world”. In effect, they must know how and when to modify or enhance their business processes, which processes are optimal candidates for intervention, and how to move rapidly from strategy to execution. That’s where the Business Process Management-Discipline (BPM-Discipline) helps. It enables organizations to deal with change successfully and create immediate as well as lasting competitive advantage. It delivers significant business value by converting strategy into people and IT based execution at pace with certainty. The BPM-Discipline creates a “strategy execution network”. The BPM-Discipline is implemented through the “process of process management”. Organizations look for a way to systematically establish their process of process management efficiently and effectively. This can be achieved using a holistic framework and reference model for the process of process management. The paper introduces the BPM-Discipline and how it is implemented through the process of process management, leveraging a powerful reference architecture in form of comprehensive information models as well as related tools and templates.

1 INTRODUCTION

In today’s business environment organizations’ strategies and operations are driven by scores of ever-shifting factors: from demographic changes, capital availability, legal regulations and customers who require something new every day to technological innovations and an all present digitalization. Static business models are no longer able to keep pace with such dynamic change. Companies need a management approach that makes them successful in this volatile environment. Organizations need to master the “new normal” and deal proactively with the opportunities and threats of our “digital world” (Sinur, Odell, Fingar, 2013). Companies need to become “Exponential Organizations” who achieve a significant higher output than peers through the use

of new organizational techniques and related technologies available in a digital environment (Ismail, Malone, van Geek, 2014). In effect, organizations need to know how and when to modify or enhance their business processes, which processes are optimal candidates for intervention, and how to move rapidly from idea to action.

That’s where the Business Process Management-Discipline (BPM-Discipline) helps. It enables organizations to deal with change successfully, drive their growth agenda and create immediate as well as lasting competitive advantage. Companies increasingly invest in areas of “intangibles” such as “business process” (Mitchel, Ray, van Ark, 2015). The BPM-Discipline delivers significant business value by converting strategy into people and IT based execution at pace with certainty to meet the

requirement of the “new normal” and benefit from the opportunities of digitalization (Kirchmer, Franz, 2014) (Rummler, Ramias, Rummler, 2010).

Existing approaches to BPM focus in general on one or very few aspects of process management, e.g. implementing a process automation engine or setting up an enterprise architecture. There is a need for a comprehensive overarching approach to identify and establish all process management components required to form a simple but successful BPM-Discipline in the context of a specific organization. This is the topic of the research presented in this paper.

The BPM-Discipline is implemented through the “process of process management”, just as other management disciplines are implemented through appropriate business processes: human resources (HR) through HR processes, finance through finance processes, to mention a couple of examples. The process of process management (PoPM) operationalizes the concept of the BPM-Discipline. It applies the principles of BPM to itself.

This paper defines the BPM-Discipline and its value. It explains how this management discipline is further operationalized through the Process of Process Management (PoPM). Then it gives an overview over a reference model for the PoPM, developed to enable a systematic application of the PoPM approach to build and run a value-driven BPM-Discipline. Finally the paper will share first experiences with the practical application of the PoPM.

2 VALUE AND DEFINITION OF THE BPM-DISCIPLINE

Research involving over 90 organizations around the world of different sizes and in different industries has shown that companies who use BPM on an ongoing basis get significant value in return (Kirchmer, Lehmann, Rosemann, zur Muehlen, Laengle, 2013) (Franz, Kirchmer, Rosemann, 2011). Basically all surveyed organizations state that the transparency BPM brings is a key effect. This transparency is on one hand a value by itself: It enables fast and well informed decisions which is in the volatile business environment we are living in crucial for the success of a company. On the other hand BPM and the transparency it provides also help to achieve other key values and enable the management of the trade-offs between those values. BPM enables four key “value-pairs”:

- Quality and Efficiency
- Agility and Standardization (Compliance)
- External Networks and Internal Alignment
- Innovation and Conservation.

Let’s look at an example. A company wants to improve its call centre process. Only few sub-processes are really relevant for clients and their willingness to pay a service fee for them. Hence you improve those sub-processes under quality aspects. Other sub-processes are more administrative. Clients don’t really care about them. Hence, you improve those processes under efficiency (mainly cost or time) aspects, using appropriate BPM approaches. BPM delivers the transparency to achieve both values and end up with the highest quality where it matters and the best efficiency where this counts most. Or BPM helps to identify where it is really worth thinking of process innovation and where you can conserve existing good practices. Since an organization only competes with 15-20% of its processes it is key to identify where innovation pays off. This is again possible though the transparency BPM delivers. The values BPM delivers are shown in figure 1 (Kirchmer, Franz, 2013).

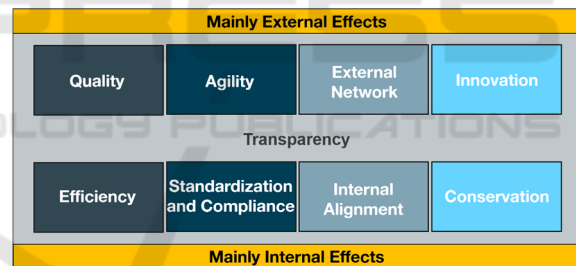


Figure 1: Values delivered by BPM.

In general all those values are important for an organization. However, depending on the overall business strategy, companies focus on a subset of those values. These values and the underlying strategic objectives need to be realized across organizational boundaries within a company and beyond, while focusing on creating best results for clients.

In order to achieve those values consistently it is required to establish BPM with its infrastructure as an ongoing approach to run an organization (Alkharashi, Jesus, Macieira, Tregear, 2015) (von Rosing, Hove, von Scheel, Morrison, 2015). BPM becomes a management discipline.

We define BPM as the management discipline that transfers strategy into execution – at pace with

certainty (Franz, Kirchmer, 2012). Hence, we refer to BPM as the BPM-Discipline (BPM-D). This definition shows that BPM uses the “business process” concept as vehicle for a cross-organizational strategy execution, including the collaboration with market partners like customers, agents, or suppliers. The execution of the strategy can be people or technology based – or a combination of both. This definition is consistent with newest findings in BPM related research (Swenson, von Rosing, 2015). But it stresses the value that processes management produces and its key role as strategy execution engine.

The BPM-Discipline addresses the entire business process lifecycle, from design, implementation through the execution and control of a process. Hence, it handles the build-time as well as the run-time phase of a business process. The definition of BPM as a management discipline is shown in figure 2. We refer to it as the BPM-D™ Framework.

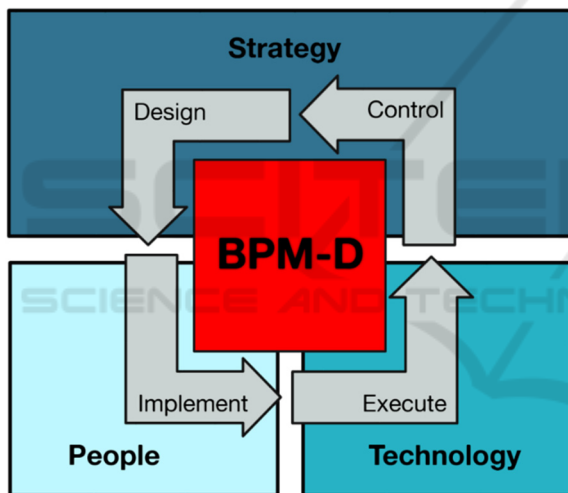


Figure 2: The BPM-D™ Framework: Definition of BPM as Management Discipline to Execute Strategy.

3 THE PROCESSES OF PROCESS MANAGEMENT TO IMPLEMENT THE BPM-DISCIPLINE

While over years many practitioners, especially executives, questioned the value of BPM, this situation has changed significantly in the past 5-7 years. Most organizations and their leadership start at least understanding the value proposition and the broader dimension of BPM. The challenge has

become how to establish it in an organization in a pragmatic but systematic way with minimal up-front investment.

In order to resolve this issue we can look at other management disciplines and how they are implemented. An example is the discipline of Human resources (HR), as mentioned before. How do you implement the HR discipline? You introduce it into an organization through the appropriate HR processes, like the hiring process, performance evaluation or promotion process.

Consequently, you can implement a BPM-Discipline through the “process of process management”, the BPM process. You address the BPM-Discipline just like any other management discipline. If you interpret the BPM-Discipline as process itself, you can apply all the process management approaches, methods and tools to it – enabling an efficient and effective approach. You basically implement BPM using BPM.

In order to identify and address all key aspects of the process of process management we use the ARIS Architecture (Scheer, 1998), a widely accepted and proven framework to engineer processes from different points of view. This enables the operationalization of the framework so that it can be applied to specific organizations. Based on ARIS, the BPM-D Framework is decomposed into sub-frameworks. Result are four core frameworks describing the process of process management:

- BPM-D Value Framework
- BPM-D Organization Framework
- BPM-D Data Framework
- BPM-D Process Framework

The decomposition of the overall process of process management as shown in figure 2 into sub-frameworks based on ARIS is visualized in figure 3. The BPM-D Process Framework covers both, a functional decomposition and aspects of the control view of ARIS.

The BPM-D Value Framework is shown in figure 1 and has been discussed before. It describes the key deliverables (values) the process of process management (PoPM) produces. The use of this framework enables a consequently value-driven approach to BPM. This is especially important when you establish BPM as a management discipline so that you don’t end up just with another overhead unit but an organization that drives systematically value by executing strategy.

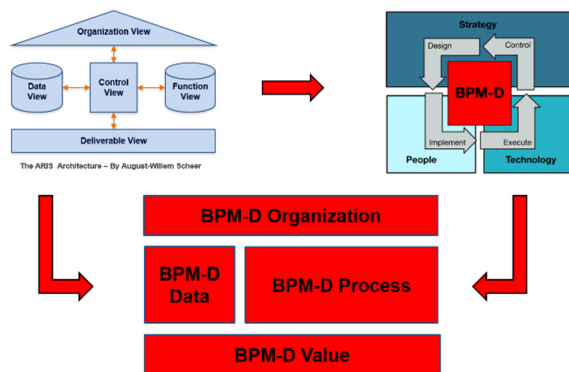


Figure 3: Operationalizing the Process of Process Management using the ARIS Architecture by A.-W. Scheer.

The earlier mentioned research studies also shows that organizations who apply BPM successfully have multiple different process specific roles in place. We identified over 40. The segmentation of those roles led to the BPM-D Organization Framework.

There exist two big groups of process-related roles: Core roles and extended roles. People with BPM core roles are part of the core BPM organizational unit, for example a centre of excellence (Alkharashi, Jesus, Macieira, Tregear, 2015) (Franz, Kirchmer, 2012). People with roles in the extended BPM organization are part of other organizational units. BPM roles can be centralized to achieve best synergies or decentralized to be close to operational improvement initiatives. Roles can be permanent or project based, relevant only for a specific initiative. In most of the cases the roles are internal roles. However, there is in more and more organizations a tendency to procure more administrative roles, like helpdesk activities or the maintenance and conversion of process models, externally, as a managed service. The BPM-D Organization Framework is shown in figure 4.

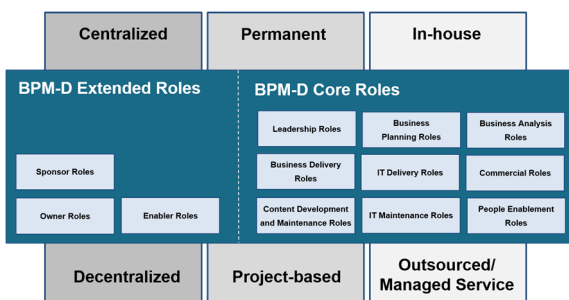


Figure 4: BPM-D Organization Framework.

Very important is an emergent top leadership role in the BPM-D core organization: the Chief Process

Officer (Kirchmer, Franz, von Rosing, 2015) (Kirchmer, Franz, 2014a). This business leader owns the overall process of process management, hence leads the overall BPM-Discipline. The empirical research confirmed the trend of such an emerging top management position. Successful BPM organizations report in many cases directly to the board of a company.

The most important role in the extended BPM organization is the process owner, responsible for the end-to-end management of a business process. This role has to make sure things get done with the expected impact on the strategic value-drivers, using the BPM core organization as internal service group. Other groups of core and enabling roles are shown in figure 4.

In most of the organizations you don't have representatives for all the groups of roles right away or only part time roles. It depends on your overall BPM agenda which roles you need when. The required roles change over time, driven by the specific value the BPM discipline has to provide to execute on an organizations strategy. It is important to have both, core and extended roles in place to be on one hand able to execute, on the other had avoid to re-invent the wheel for every new initiative.

Next "ARIS view" to be addressed is the data view. The information used in or produced by the process of process management is summarized in the BPM-D Data Framework. That view helps to plan information requirements for the process of process management. This includes business strategy related information to enable the link between strategy and execution. Example are strategic goals or value-drivers. But also operational information, like project related information, enterprise architecture, organization or tool and technology related information. The BPM-D Data Framework is shown in figure 5 in form of a simplified entity-relationship model.

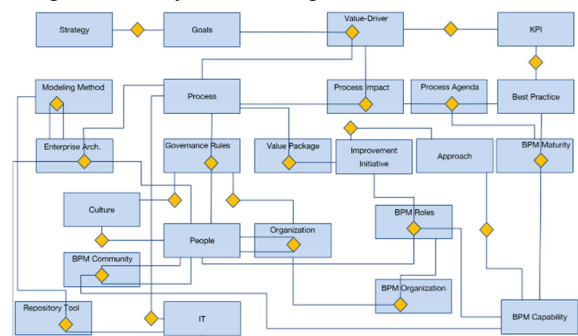


Figure 5: BPM-D Data Framework.

Most important for the operationalization of the process of process management is the BPM-D

Process Framework, covering the function and control view of the ARIS Architecture. It represents basically the first three hierarchy levels of a functional decomposition and a content related segmentation of the key activities of the PoPM.

The structure of the Process Framework is based on the principle thinking suggested in Scheer's Y-Model to segment the processes of an industrial enterprise (Scheer, 1995). In order to make the PoPM happen an organization requires project-related sub-processes (activities), focussing on improving specific business processes. On the other hand it also needs to have "assets-related processes" in place to execute improvement projects efficiently and effectively. Both, project and asset related sub-processes require planning and execution. This results in four groups of BPM-related sub-processes as shown in figure 6.

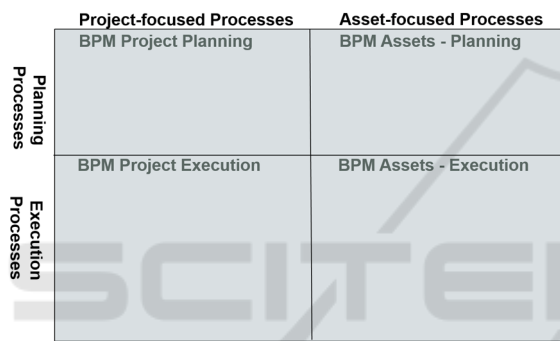


Figure 6: Segmentation of BPM-related activities.

The specific sub-processes of the PoPM were identified based on the analysis of over 200 process management initiatives. The result is shown in the BPM-D Process Framework in figure 7.

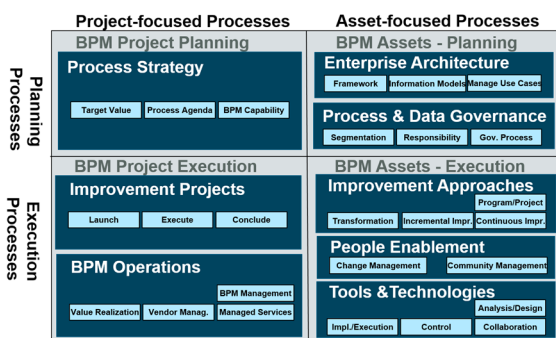


Figure 7: BPM-D Process Framework.

The BPM Strategy identifies high impact low maturity processes, BPM capability gaps that need to be filled to improve those processes and the development of a BPM Agenda, showing which processes are improved when to achieve specific

business objectives and which BPM capability gaps are closed during that specific improvement initiative. Hence, every initiative delivers immediate business value while creating lasting process management capabilities. Improvement projects follow a straight forward project approach: launch, execution, and conclusion of the project. BPM-Operations enable the execution of activities outside specific projects, for example the value realisation once a project is already concluded.

The Enterprise Architecture related sub-processes handle all activities necessary to create and manage information models, necessary to improve specific processes or keep them on track. Process and Data Governance sub-processes organize the way process management is executed, hence, grant the power to take decisions, drive action and deal with the consequences of those actions. Important here is the integration of process and data governance (Packowski, Gall, Baumeister, 2014). Insufficient master data quality leads in many cases also to ineffective processes. An integrated governance approach aligns both aspects.

The availability of improvement approaches and of people trained in those approaches enables improvement projects which use those capabilities. People enablement is all about information, communication and training. Hence it prepares people to think and work in a process context and deal with process change successfully. Tools and Technology related sub-processes handle the technical infrastructure required for a successful BPM-Discipline, including for example automation engines, rules engines, repository and modelling tools, process mining, strategy execution tools, social media, the internet of things and other internet-based approaches, or e-learning applications. These are core BPM tools but also additional technology required to increase the performance of a process to the required level.

While all the sub-processes of the PoPM shown in figure 7 can be important in a specific company context, organizations only rarely need all of them in full maturity. The specific objectives of a company's BPM-Discipline determine the importance of a specific sub-process and the required maturity level. Once the relevant sub-processes of the PoPM are selected and their required maturity level is defined, the necessary roles and information are identified using the appropriate BPM-D frameworks. All frameworks need to be configured consistently to a specific organization, its strategy and business context. The right application of the BPM-Framework and its sub-components enables

companies to focus on what really matters, improve those areas efficiently and effectively as well as to sustain those improvements. These key tasks of a BPM-Discipline are visualized in figure 8.

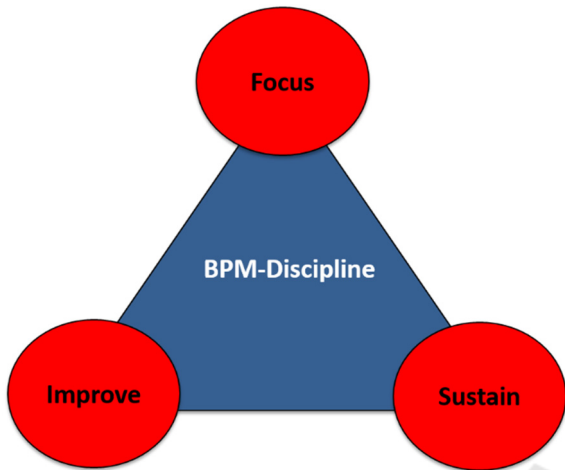


Figure 8: Key Tasks of a BPM-Discipline.

The BPM-D Framework with all its components is patent-pending. It is a strategy execution environment helping organizations dealing successfully with the challenges of the new normal in a digital world.

4 REFERENCE MODEL FOR THE PROCESS OF PROCESS MANAGEMENT

In order to operationalize the BPM-D Framework and its components further, the framework is transferred into a more formalized reference model. Reference models are generalized knowledge, structured and documented in a manner that enables adaptability to specific situations (Kirchmer, 2011) (Fettke, Loos, 2007).

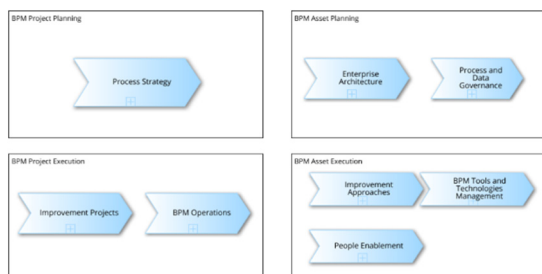


Figure 9: Level 1 of BPM-D Process Reference Model.

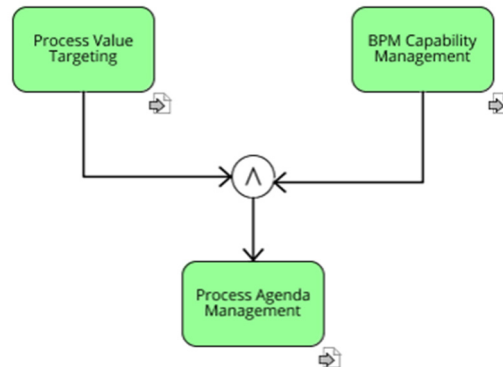


Figure 10: Level 2 of BPM-D Process Reference Model – Process Strategy.

During the development of the BPM-D Reference Model the BPM-D Process Framework is further detailed and integrated with the other BPM-D sub-frameworks. The control flow logic is added to the functional decomposition. Key functions are linked to tools, templates or other job-aids supporting their execution.

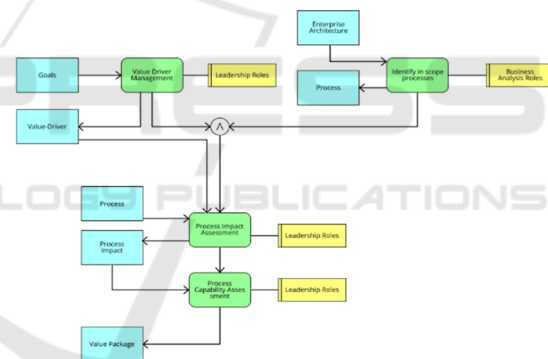


Figure 11: Level 3 of BPM-D Process Reference Model – Targeting Value of the Process Strategy.

The process framework is described on 3 levels of detail. The top level is represented as value chain diagram (VCD), level 2 and 3 as event-driven process chain (EPC). The EPC notation was selected since it is focusing on the description of the business content and has less formal requirements than other methods like the business process modelling notation (BPMN). It is in general easily understood by business practitioners. Also people used to work with other modelling methods can usually quickly adjust and understand the EPC notation. In order to support a potential automation of some of the sub-processes of the process of process management, level 3 processes are also available in BPMN (simple model

conversion). These BPMN models can be used as starting point for the specification of application software supporting the PoPM. While this redundancy needs to be managed we feel that at the current point of time it helps to achieve both, easy use of the content by process practitioners and by software developers.

Figure 9 shows level 1 of the process reference model. Examples for levels 2 and 3 are represented in figures 10 and 11. On level 3 process models, for example in the model shown in figure 11, it is exactly described which BPM roles are required, what the people in those roles have to do, which data (information) they use and in which logical sequence they work. Hence, the process is sufficiently described to be implemented (Kirchmer, 2011).

The reference model is developed in a web-based process repository tool. This enables the easy access from all relevant locations and reduces tool maintenance to a minimum. It can be easily transferred into all market leading modelling and repository applications. The reference model currently consists of 67 individual information models.

The implementation and execution of the level 3 processes is further supported through the link of the models to execution tools, templates and other job aids. The sub-process “BPM Capability” of “Process Strategy” is, for example, linked to a BPM maturity assessment tool, based on the BPM-D Framework. The “Responsibility” sub-process of the “Process and Data Governance” is linked to job aids supporting the establishment of a BPM Center of Excellence with its different roles and the introduction of process and data governance to a specific end-to-end process. The reference model includes over 20 tools, templates and other job-aids.

5 FIRST EXPERIENCES

The BPM-D Framework and Reference Model or components of it have been applied in 23 organizations of different industries and sizes over the last two years to implement or apply the process of process management. This has been done through a combination of consulting, coaching and educational activities, combined with appropriate research activities to continuously improve the process of process management reference model.

Let’s look at a couple of examples: The CEO of a medium-size consumer goods company has focused for several years successfully on a small niche market. The company offers their products at a high

price enabling high revenues and profits – in spite of a relatively high cost level. Now competitors entered that niche market and offer similar products at a much lower price. The CEO decided to adjust strategy, reduce their prices in the current market and enter new market segments with new products. However, to reduce prices they need to reduce cost. None of the functional executives sees significant cost reduction potential in their own areas. They blame other departments for the cost issues. Also the innovation related processes are not performing at the level required. A process repository with its process models did not really help: the models are outdated and inconsistent regarding semantic content as well as modelling format. The only person who is somehow familiar with the models and the repository has left the organization. There is no cross-functional management in place with responsibilities beyond department boundaries. It is very difficult or even impossible to identify focus areas for cost reduction or a consistent approach for the development and launch of new products.

The situation is addressed through a combination of defining and establishing an appropriate BPM-Discipline through the according process of process management, combined with the immediate application of the new capabilities to “no regret” processes. Additional improvement targets are defined when all high impact low maturity processes are identified by the new BPM-Discipline. Key areas of the PoPM addressed in this initial BPM-Discipline launch are the development of a process strategy, introduction of a simple process and enterprise architecture approach, definition of a basic process governance, outline of a straight forward model-based improvement approach and some targeted training.

Another typical example is a large financial organization. They have invested over the last four years significant money into what they call “BPM”. However, none of the top executives has seen any business impacts or usable results after all that time and money spent. A stakeholder assessment and BPM maturity analysis showed that almost all BPM related initiatives focus on tools and technologies – for all business units in parallel. There is, for example, a process repository in place with over 2000 models – how to get value out of them is unclear. A flexible process automation is in the works – but business changes faster than the technology can be adjusted. And it is impossible to focus on just one area because business priorities are not or not well enough defined.

The introduction of a value-driven BPM-Discipline, led by a top manager as Chief Process Officer” and its use for a simplification of processes with known issues as preparation for a more focused and business-driven automation is used here to

address the current issues. Key areas of the PoPM addressed are the value-driven process strategy with its prioritization approach, process and data governance, a process model based simplification and standardization approach and several people enablement initiatives. Existing capabilities are linked to specific outcomes to achieve step by step a value-driven approach to BPM.

The experience with the first 23 organizations shows that organizations looking for the systematic implementation of a BPM-Discipline through the process of process management fall into three groups:

1. Organizations have launched one or even multiple process improvement initiatives but the results are not sustained. Every new improvement initiative starts from scratch, not using existing knowledge about business processes systematically.
2. Organizations put in place many components of a BPM infrastructure (e.g. process execution environments) but have not achieved real business value through their BPM activities.
3. Organizations launched some improvement initiatives and built some BPM infrastructure but both do not really fit together, it is unclear what the next steps and priorities are. The produced business value is limited.

Organizations of the first group establish the “project-focused” sub-processes of the PoPM but forget about the activities and infrastructure necessary to keep the improved processes on track and to be able to create synergies between different initiatives over time. In those cases “asset-focused” sub-processes need to be addressed. In most of the cases this results in a combination of governance, enterprise architecture and people enablement processes, combined with the development of an appropriate value-driven BPM agenda.

The second group of organizations gets lost in all the available methods, tools and technologies but forgets to identify how to create business value through them. The link of BPM activities to strategic value-drivers and the launch of initiatives effecting those value-drivers is key here. Hence, the “project-focused” sub-processes of the PoPM need to be addressed. The launch of a process strategy initiative is here most important: identifying high impact low maturity processes, the required BPM capability and based on those the development of the BPM agenda. This needs to be combined with the launch and execution of improvement projects and the consequent value-realization. BPM capabilities can

be adjusted according to the requirements identified in the BPM agenda.

Most organizations belong to group three. They have some BPM capabilities and improvement initiatives in place but the BPM journey is missing direction, focus and clear business impact. They don't have a BPM-Discipline in place but know how to apply a number of methods and tools, e.g. Six Sigma. Instead of strategy execution, BPM activities result in operational fixing of symptoms. Here a combination of a real outcome-focused process strategy, the management of the process knowledge in an enterprise architecture and a well defined (but simple) governance approach are good starting points to move towards a value-driven BPM-Discipline.

Here some key lessons learned from first practice experiences:

- Get top management support. Establishing a value-driven BPM-Discipline requires the top-down support, best for the entire company, but at least for the business unit in scope.
- Identify business processes where you can deliver immediate benefits while building the required lasting BPM capabilities. Otherwise sponsors will lose patience.
- Set clear priorities, don't try to “boil the ocean”. Organizations who launch too many initiatives at once often fail.
- Keep things simple, “less is often more”. This is especially true for the use of tools and technologies.
- Encourage innovation and creativity instead of punishing people for making mistakes.
- A value-driven BPM Discipline is an enabler of growth and strategic agility, not just a cost reduction engine.
- People are key for success. You need to treat them accordingly.
- A value-driven BPM-Discipline and its leadership recognizes the business value potential of technology and digitalization and makes it transparent to the organization. It enables real business value from digital initiatives.

The first experiences with the BPM-D Framework and the reference model of the process of process management have demonstrated the business impact of the approach and enabled the continues improvement of the reference model. The reference model allows to identify and establish the appropriate BPM capabilities in the company-specific context

quickly and at low cost while applying them immediately to achieve fast business benefits.

A company can use the adjusted reference model as basis for the definition of the company-specific BPM processes. The process of process management is transferred into an operational business process. It becomes part of the enterprise architecture of the company. The owner of the process of process management, a “Chief Process Officer”, manages this process.

6 CONCLUSION

Business Process Management (BPM) has become a value-driven management discipline that transfers strategy into people and technology based execution – at pace with certainty. This management discipline is implemented through the process of process management. It enables an organization to master the new normal in a digital world.

The BPM-D Framework with its sub-components and the reference model for the process of process management help organizations to establish a value-driven BPM-Discipline efficiently and effectively. The reference model and the tools behind it are continuously improved based on practice experience as well as newest academic thinking.

While BPM-D frameworks and reference model have already reached a good maturity level, there are still improvement potentials left. Here are several areas we focus our on-going research on: The reference model in the current level of detail needs to be continuously updated to include new thinking and even better practices. Areas where this is especially important are the integration between process and data governance, people enablement using appropriate tools and technologies, e.g. social media based approaches (“Social BPM”) and the consequent link to value of the various enterprise architecture, tool and technology components.

In some areas of the reference model the addition of level 4 processes (one level of detail more) can be helpful. This is the case in areas that are less company and implementation specific, e.g. around the process strategy.

Most powerful for the practical application has been the addition of execution tools and templates related to the PoPM reference model, e.g. the development of the process prioritization tool, the capability assessment tool, the weak point analysis for rapid process simplification and improvement or the process governance and BPM Center of

Excellence job aids. More of such enablers can be added.

The PoPM reference model also lays the basis for the development of an application software system supporting the management of a value-driven BPM-Discipline. A design of such a system is developed, a related patent is pending. Innovative add-on components are continuously required.

The BPM-Discipline and the underlying process of process management enables companies to create an end-to-end “value network” around the existing organizational structure. This is the basis for performance and productivity in the new normal of our digital world. The BPM-Discipline becomes the strategy execution engine of an organization.

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