



SIMPLIFYING BPM IMPLEMENTATIONS

“Business Process Management”

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Overview

Organizations small and large have come to realize that BPM (Business Process Management) is no longer just a fancy buzzword. BPM is a business strategy that organizations can use to gain competitive advantage in today's highly competitive global market. The problem however, is that organizations only think about software suites and tools when they think about BPM. As we all know, there is more to BPM than software suites. BPMS (Business Process Management Suites) and other software tools such as workflow, and EAI are very important for successfully implementing BPM. Equally important is the "human-side" of BPM. This article will focus on the "human-side" of BPM and discuss a simple yet powerful methodology to manage the "human-side" of a BPM implementation.

The "human-side" of BPM

To gain competitive advantage, organizations embark on the BPM journey and strive to increase productivity, improve scalability, improve throughput, shrink cycle times and enhance customer service. What organizations fail to realize is that unless technology, people, processes, and organizational goals are aligned together, these goals are unattainable. By installing the latest and greatest BPM software, an organization will only be able to see a marginal increase in volume. Similarly, training and motivating key personnel on managerial techniques will only result in minor improvements in task handling. We all have read numerous articles and columns that explain how process stakeholders are critical to an effective BPM project.

For a successful BPM implementation, organizations should look beyond the technology piece of the project and focus on the "human-side" of the project as well. Organizations should become process-driven to ensure successful BPM implementation. To become process-driven or process-centric, organizations must be willing to change and change must start from the top. Change as we all know is not easy. As Machiavelli pointed in his book, *The Prince*, "There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things." It takes individual, team, and organizational learning to implement BPM successfully. Executive support is a critical success factor for BPM implementations of any size as BPM projects span across departmental boundaries.

Organizations fail to manage processes well because processes typically involve multiple departments and each department has its own goals and interests in the project. With multiple departments involved, there are usually power struggles, ownership issues, and accountability issues. In most organizations managers are rewarded for the effectiveness and efficiency of their own departments, often creating functional silos. Processes that are cross-functional and cross-departmental are difficult to manage because of the complexities created by functional silos. The rewards, the compensation plans, and benefits offered in most organizations create a culture where managers and teams focus on their own team and processes instead of looking at the "bigger picture".

RACI Methodology

A simple yet powerful methodology that focuses on the "human-side" of BPM is the RACI Methodology. The RACI methodology is similar to the Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM) from the Project Management Institute. In the Project Management Body of Knowledge, RACI chart is explained as a type of RAM because it assigns the role that the resource is to play for each given activity. Additionally, the RACI Methodology can be found in *Business Process Management: Practical Guidelines to Successful Implementations* by John Jeston and Johan Nelis. Then authors reference the methodology as a useful method of helping to identify activities, roles, and responsibilities.

The methodology is a relatively straightforward tool that can be used for identifying roles and responsibilities during a BPM implementation process. BPM projects require organizations to transform and adapt to new culture. Transformation does not happen overnight, and it sure does not happen automatically. People who are involved in the process from top to bottom have to contribute so that successful transformation happens. BPM projects of any size will

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be controlled and systematic, if roles and responsibilities are defined. RACI helps organizations to assign roles and responsibilities for every process, so everyone involved in the process know what they are responsible for.

- **Responsible** – The person(s) responsible for the process or project.
- **Accountable** – The person(s) to whom “R” is accountable. He/She must sign off or approve assignments and is ultimately accountable.
- **Consulted** – The person(s) who has information and/or resources needed to successfully complete the assignment. He/She must be consulted for the successful completion of the assignment.
- **Informed** – The person(s) who must be informed of project status, updates, and milestones. He/She need not be consulted, but needs to be informed on the status and progress of the assignment.

*A variation of RACI uses “S” – Supportive, person who can provide resources or play a supportive role in the implementation.

RACI is typically supported by a RACI chart (or RACI matrix), which helps players involved understand what their role is and who is responsible, and who is ultimately accountable. A RACI Chart is useful for clarifying roles and responsibilities in a cross-functional/cross-departmental project or assignment. Below is a simple RACI chart:

	Board of Directors	Project Manager	Production Manager	Sales Manager	Production Supervisor
Process 1	A	R	I		C
Process 2	I	A	R	C	S
Process 3		A	RC		I
Process 4			RA	C	I
Process 5	RA	I	C		S

RACI Chart

- The first step in developing a RACI chart is identifying all the processes/activities in the BPM project. Once the processes are identified, create a matrix and list the processes on the left hand side of the chart.
- The second step is to identify all the key players (roles) and list them along the top of the chart.
- The third and final step is to complete the cells in the matrix and identify who has the R, A, C, and I for each process.

Important Considerations

- As a general rule of thumb, every process should preferably have only one "R".
 - A gap occurs when a process exists that has no "R" and an overlap occurs when a process exists that has multiple "R".
- Avoid gaps and overlaps. If a process exists and doesn't have an "R" or has more than one "R", the process generally can be broken down into sub-processes.
 - Every process should have a unique process owner. This will ensure that all activities within the process are streamlined through the process owner.
 - If a process exists without an "R", the person accountable should determine who is responsible for the process.

Taking time to document these key roles and responsibilities for processes will uncover all of the stakeholders involved, identify who's accountable, who's responsible, and who should be consulted and informed. The RACI Chart is straightforward and takes minimal effort and time. Once completed, however, the chart is of great value as everyone involved in the process knows exactly what their role is and who is responsible, and who is accountable.

RACI – Business Case

In a recent consulting engagement with the human resource department for a mid-market manufacturer, the client was assisted to streamline their processes and implement a department-wide BPMS application. The initial project schedule was based on the vision of the client company's CEO, which was tightly integrated with his vision for the entire organization. Working with the HR department and with the VP of the Human Resources department, it was discovered that the VP had several priorities of his own. The CEO had appointed the Director of HR as the Project Manager for the project, who had priorities of her own. With three different individuals, with different priorities spearheading the project, the project team was a bit confused, to say the least.

The CEO was preoccupied with various other priorities; he had very little time to devote to the project. The Director of the department had several issues within the department, which kept her firefighting, even though she was the Project Manager, she had very little time to work on improving the processes. The VP of the department, in the middle of the project changed his priorities for the department, which caused changes in project priorities and reallocation of resources. The reprioritizing was done without consulting or informing the CEO, making him quite upset. The whole incident created tension within the client's project team. The team wasn't sure who was responsible, who was accountable, and to whom they needed to consult and inform. It was at this point, the team finally developed a RACI chart.

Developing a RACI chart was the turning point of the project. The RACI chart helped uncover all the stakeholders involved. The team was able to identify who was accountable, responsible, and who should be consulted and informed. By developing a RACI chart, all stakeholders involved, their roles and responsibilities were clearly visible for the clients. They were able to assign roles and responsibilities for all the processes involved. Once the RACI

methodology was in place, the project implementation phase progressed quickly and successfully. The project team was able to implement its process improvements while knowing who was accountable, who was responsible, and who should be consulted and informed throughout the implementation phase.

Summary

A key ingredient for successful BPM implementation is the involvement from all key participants. The RACI methodology helps organizations clearly assign responsibilities and ensure that key participants are involved. BPM success largely depends on a given organization's culture, and how well the players involved can adapt to change. In order to become a "process-driven" organization, top management's involvement and support is a must, especially if processes are cross-functional and cross-departmental. Change is rarely successful if driven from anywhere other than the very top of the organization chart. Using the RACI methodology, organizations can clearly identify all the key participants, including stakeholders for a given process, and ensure that tasks are performed, while everyone is kept in the loop.

Bibliography

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