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Business Process Management

1. Introduction

In recent years, business process management (BPM) has been getting a lot of attention and gaining adoption. It promotes business effectiveness and efficiency, while striving for innovation, flexibility and integration with technology.

2. What is Business Process Management?

Business process management is defined as “a holistic management approach focussed on aligning all aspects of an organisation with the wants and needs of clients”. It attempts to improve processes continuously, hence helping organisations to gain higher customer satisfaction, product quality, delivery speed and time-to-market speed. BPM makes an organisation’s workflow more effective, efficient and more capable of adapting to an ever-changing environment.

BPM is also sometimes used to refer to the set of tools, ideas, and techniques that are applied to manage business processes. It is focused on managing and coordinating a variety of organisational tasks and activities that are conducted for the purpose of accomplishing organisational goals. Generally, BPM is focused on the automation of mechanistic and human-driven business processes. This refers to the set of activities by which human and machine interaction takes place to complete a desired task and goal.

3. Why is Business Process Management Important?

One of the critical reasons for organisations to adopt BPM is the mounting business pressure arising from fierce competition, fast-changing business environment, and more demanding customers. Today’s market place is a far cry from what it was before. Twenty-first century businesses are facing the challenges brought about by globalisation and automation. In order for an organisation to ride out the competition, it must learn to compete in both the local and international levels. Organisations, therefore, need to gear themselves to think in a global perspective and adapt to the automation of the market

place. To ensure that all of these efforts will create rewarding results, organisations must control and manage their flow of work – hence, the adoption of BPM. With a good BPM framework, organisations can efficiently and effectively improve their operational performance, manage risk, reduce cost, and create customer value.

The goal of BPM is to reduce human error and miscommunication, and focus stakeholders on the requirements of their roles. It is a subset of infrastructure management, an administrative area concerned with maintaining an organisation's equipment and core operations.

While the initial focus of BPM was on the automation of business processes with the use of information technology, it has since been extended to integrate human-driven processes in which human interaction takes place in series or parallel with the use of technology. BPM can also be used to “understand organisations through expanded views” that would not otherwise be available to organise and present, such as relationships between processes. When included in a process model, these relationships provide for advanced reporting and analysis. BPM also enables organisations to respond to changing consumer, market and regulatory demands faster than their competitors, thus creating competitive advantage.

4. Benefits of Business Process Management

BPM can bring competitive advantage to the organisation through the following benefits:

- Time optimisation and money savings
With the right combination of technology and management programmes, the cycle of tasks can be significantly shortened. This can help organisations reduce cost and increase productivity, thus saving more money and optimising time in return.
- Improvement of work quality
A study conducted by IT research and advisory firm, Gartner, showed that in addition to BPM's time and cost advantages, implementation of business process management can substantially reduce errors, such as omission of important information and loss of forms and documents. It was also found to have significantly improved the visualisation and flow of processes by defining duties and providing understanding of different processes.

- Centralisation of data and realisation of process automation
By implementing BPM solution data can be efficiently logged and retrieved when required. All business technologies and systems can also be automatically aligned in accordance with the flow of business processes.
- Transparency
With BPM, all business processes will be made transparent, improving efficiency and visibility in return. Problematic areas can be easily determined and bottlenecks can be easily identified and removed.
- Refinement of business processes
BPM helps organisations see problem areas in their workflows. Hence, it will be easier for managers and business decision-makers to re-purge, refine and remodel processes to make it more effective and more efficient.

5. Elements of a Business Process Management

BPM comprises various elements that play a critical role in its successful implementation.

Among the most common elements usually found in a BPM system are:

- Strategy
This element involves planning how BPM will be introduced and implemented in accord with the existing business strategy. It entails deciding which processes or activities will be restructured and automated to ensure that every business process is geared for the achievement of organisational goals.
- Tool/Technology
Successful implementation of BPM necessitates the use of some tools, solutions, or software. A tool is necessary to create a model of the business processes, integrate BPM solution with the enterprise's information system, and monitor business processes step by step.
- Talents/People
This is the most important element of BPM. As the approach involves the management of both human-related and automated activities, it needs human talents for successful implementation.

6. Business Process Management Life Cycle

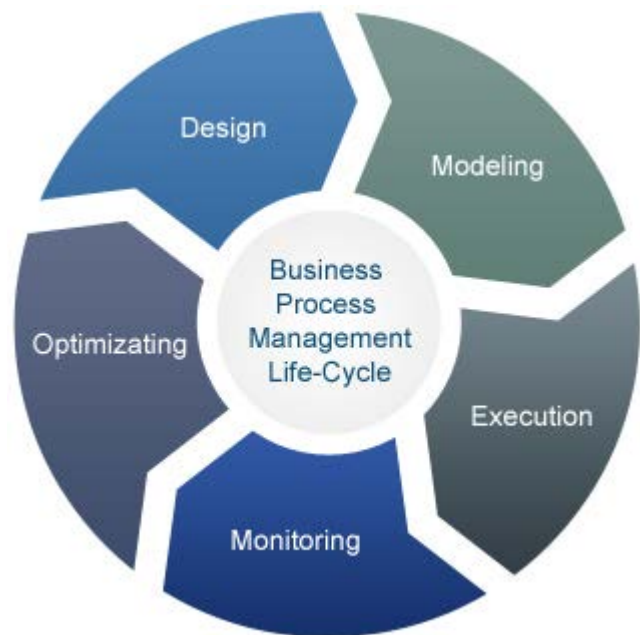
BPM cannot be adopted or implemented instantly by organisations. It needs to be implemented in a series of activities and requires careful planning as well as analysis to ensure that it is properly adapted in line with the organisation's existing system and goal.

BPM is implemented following an established life cycle to ensure that BPM goals are achieved at each stage of implementation.

Organisations use BPM lifecycle to address questions such as:

- How do I standardise my processes in a post merger-and-acquisition environment?
- How do I achieve safety and regulatory compliance?
- What does it take to scale up my processes to meet the next level of growth?
- How do I achieve real business value through a process-oriented implementation of ERP (SAP, Oracle, etc.) or similar systems?
- How can I manage standard operating procedures and facilitate their use?
- How can I identify "quick wins" for process improvement?
- How can I identify shared services opportunities?
- How can I develop a process-oriented requirement definition as the basis for software development?
- How can I enable a process-driven application consolidation that minimises business risk?
- How can I prepare for a successful process automation to achieve cost and cycle-time reductions?
- How can I focus my process management initiatives on high-impact business processes?
- How can I enable smart, well informed decisions and the fast execution of resulting actions?
- How can I measure the performance of my processes?

- Is it more efficient to outsource components of my process management?



Source: Business process management. (n.d.). Retrieved March 30, 2012, from <http://www.softwebsolutions.com/business-process-management.html>

The activities which are involved in a business process management are cyclical and comprise the following steps: design, model, execute, monitor and optimise. BPM solution implementations are iterative by nature, with the solution allowing for the ability to optimise processes as the organisation evolves.

1. Design

The process design phase encompasses analysis and design activities. This is the stage where the organisation's existing processes and current environment are thoroughly assessed, and the processes that need to be improved are determined. Potential solutions that meet the identified process needs and requirements will first be evaluated, before proceeding with the designing of business process. In this phase, the areas of focus will include the process flow, its key players, the standard operating procedures (SOP), and service level agreements (SLA).

The design phase is a crucial step in business process management (BPM) implementation because it is where potential problems are identified and eliminated. The flaws in the existing business processes are addressed with the goal to ensure that a correct and efficient theoretical process design is prepared.

2. Modelling

In the modelling stage, the theoretical BPM design is visualised, enacted, or simulated. By creating a model of the “to-be” business process, business analysts and managers are given a tool to understand and see how the improved process will behave or take effect in the actual world or business environment.

Process modelling is the most critical phase of BPM implementation. It takes the theoretical design further for thorough analysis and testing. It introduces a number of variables, such as cost of supplies, increase in prices, etc., that are not considered in the design phase. It also involves a series of “what-if” analysis that are aimed at addressing all probable problems and challenges.

3. Execution

Business process management (BPM) execution phase entails real world application of the new business process. Often, the newly developed process model is implemented and executed with the aid of an application or a BPM software solution that executes the required steps of the process. It is at this stage that all process elements, including human-related and automated activities, are integrated and connected, so that they can seamlessly interact and communicate to achieve business goals.

BPM execution provides users with the capability to run and use the process that is modelled. Meanwhile, automation of the process helps improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the modelled process.

4. Monitoring

Monitoring encompasses the tracking of individual processes, so that information on their state can be easily seen, and statistics on the performance of one or more processes can be provided. The degree of monitoring depends on what information the business wants to evaluate and analyse and how the business

wants it to be monitored, in real-time, near real-time or on an ad-hoc basis.

Business processes that have been implemented are monitored the performance by closely calculating Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and other measures that had been pre-determined. Monitoring is done by using the data in real-time, so it will fit with the real situation on the ground. From the results of such monitoring, management can view and analyse whether the necessary repairs to a business process or not.

5. Optimisation

While in the monitoring stage, the areas where problems and bottlenecks occur are analysed and identified. These issues are addressed to improve the overall business process in the optimisation phase. BPM optimisation means process continuous improvement. This involves improvement of process flows, so that organisations can continuously manage business processes effectively and efficiently despite changes in trends and the market environment.

Optimisation also entails identifying, or rather finding solutions and applying them in the design process. This BPM enhancement can greater value for business, as well as provide greater business agility and competitive management advantage that are necessary for sustainable business development.

Case Study

Ministry of Manpower – Work Pass Division

The Ministry of Manpower strives “to maintain a globally competitive workforce and a great workplace, for a cohesive society and a secure economic future for all Singaporeans”. The ministry’s Work Pass Division has assumed the responsibility for processing and issuing work passes for foreign workers since the 1970s. It has since taken considerable steps to improve speed and efficiency over the years. To date, it “ranks among the best performers in international benchmarking studies”.

In 2008, in the midst of its third round of Business Process Redesign for the Work Pass Division, the Ministry’s officials recognised that any future improvements would need to come from higher-quality policies, products, and offerings – including excellence in customer service. The Work Pass Division partnered with IDEO, an award-winning global design firm, to achieve that fundamental shift. The resulting project was an intensive collaboration that spanned the whole spectrum of research, design, and prototyping.

While governments often think in terms of policy, creating a process and then considering how to make the best of the customer experience, both IDEO and the Work Pass Division flipped that logic. The creative team first considered the target customer and the kind of experience that the customer should have, before proceeding to design the internal processes and policies to support it. In arriving at the specifics of its human-centred approach, the team members asked themselves, “What happens when we look at the work pass process through the lens of the people (staff, agents, and foreign workers) who use it?”.

The team was inspired by partners and work pass holders who had succeeded in the system, but looked even more closely at those who struggled to figure it out, challenged it, avoided it, and failed within it. Ultimately, the team identified and prototyped 40 opportunity areas, from which it selected 24 to implement. This “portfolio of innovations” – which is being rolled out over three years – is a comprehensive response to the Work Pass Division’s existing process and the needs of internal and external stakeholders. It comprises incremental, evolutionary, and transformational upgrades in services, interactions, spaces, communications, and staff training. The re-designed model captures a fundamental paradigm shift that looks beyond the sequence of functional processes (from applications to the cancellation or expiration of work passes) to cover the entire customer experience (from a foreigner’s decision to work in Singapore while still in his home country to engaging him even after he has left Singapore).

The “linchpin of this project” was the design of a new service centre, which had to be completed within the challenging timeframe of just three months. Designs for the ambitious space were sketched out based on the team’s research, because officials wanted its form and function to differ from traditional government offices. Concepts were roughly prototyped in the space, and then stress tested twice with one day’s full customer load.

The new Employment Pass Services Centre (EPSC) was opened in July 2009 in The Riverwalk building. The EPSC “radically departs from the usual large-waiting-room-with-hard-chairs aesthetic and queue displays with row after row of alphanumeric characters”. Instead, visitors can book appointments online in advance, even before they set foot into Singapore and log their arrival at self-service kiosks. Employees will then call visitors by name (a change from queue numbers) when it is their turn.

The centre’s enrolment bars are modular, for scalability, and built in a square “doughnut” instead of the traditional straight-line or cluster-style counters. Hence, these counters never seemed inadequately manned, even when staff needed to leave their stations during lunch or other breaks. Families conduct their business in special “cabanas” with amenities provided to entertain kids while their parents register for work passes. In the spirit of ongoing innovation, the centre was designed as an ongoing prototype that can continue to evolve – staff members also hold weekly meetings in which they discuss ideas pinned up by visitors in a prototyping space.

The Work Pass Division, which aims to be the best in the world at what it does, now benchmarks its consumer service against not only other government agencies, but also the top companies around the globe. Previously, the Work Pass Division struggled to serve at least 80 percent of visitors within 30 minutes. Now more than 95 percent of clients are served within 15 minutes – and 90 percent within 10 minutes – at the new EPSC. Foreign workers say that they are impressed by how the governmental procedure has evolved into a customer service, “that truly puts people before process”.

Recommended Readings

Articles can be retrieved from
NLB's e-Resources –
<http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>

Books are available at the Lee
Kong Chian Reference Library.

van der Aalst, W. (2000). *Business process management: Models, techniques, and empirical studies*. New York: Springer.
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SINGAPORE PRODUCTIVITY ASSOCIATION

The Singapore Productivity Association (SPA) was set up in 1973 as an affiliated body of the then National Productivity Board, now SPRING Singapore. Its objective is to promote the active involvement of organisations and individuals in the Productivity Movement and to expedite the spread of productivity and its techniques.



SINGAPORE
PRODUCTIVITY
ASSOCIATION

CPP Course Syllabus	
CPP	CPP (Retail)
Module 1: Understanding Productivity (Duration: 1 day) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Productivity and Quality Concepts • Factors Affecting Enterprise Productivity • Productivity Movement in Singapore • Productivity Promotion in Businesses • Productivity Challenges 	
Module 2: Productivity Tools, Techniques & Management Systems (Duration: 3 days) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Excellence • Productivity Measurement & Analysis • Process management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost of Quality ▪ Lean Six Sigma ▪ Process Mapping & Analysis • Integrated Management Systems 	Module 2: Productivity Tools, Techniques & Management Systems (Duration: 3 days) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering Service Excellence • Productivity Measurement & Analysis • Process management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost of Quality ▪ Lean Six Sigma ▪ Process Mapping & Analysis
Module 3: Innovation & Service Excellence (Duration: 3 days) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Economy & Innovation • Service Excellence • Team Excellence 	Module 3: Innovation & Service Excellence (Duration: 3 days) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Service Excellence & Sales Productivity • Store Management & the Roles of a Store Manager • Minimising Operational Constraints & Focusing on Sales • Setting Goals & Analysing Statistics • Coaching & Motivating Sales Staff • Service Behaviours that Encourage Business
Module 4: Critical Success Factors (Duration: 1 day) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Commitment • Managing & Sustaining Change • Overcoming Resistance to Change • Training and Education • Planning for Implementation and Control of Productivity Improvement Programme • Briefing on project assignment & Role of Productivity Practitioner 	

As part of the CPP curriculum, participants are required to start a productivity improvement project upon completion of the in-class component. Project guidance will be provided by a professional consultant assigned for this purpose and is for a total of 2 man-days.

Funding & Payment

The course is supported by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA). Funding is available at 70% and 50% of the course fees respectively for SMEs and MNCs/LLEs/Statutory Boards. Please find the prices payable in the net fee table below:

For SMEs:	Net Fee	Nett Fee with GST
SPA Member (S\$3,700)	S\$1,110	S\$1,187.70
Non-Member (S\$3,950)	S\$1,185	S\$1,267.95
For MNCs/LLEs/Statutory Boards	Net Fee	Nett Fee with GST
SPA Member (S\$3,700)	S\$1850	S\$1979.50
Non-Member (S\$3,950)	S\$1975	S\$2113.25

The schedule of our next runs is as follows:

CPP Schedule:

April - May 2012		
Date	Module	Time
Wednesday, 11 April 2012	Module 1	9-5 pm
Friday, 13 April 2012	Module 2	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 18 April 2012		9-5 pm
Friday, 20 April 2012		9-5 pm
Wednesday, 25 April 2012		9-5 pm
Friday, 27 April 2012	Module 3	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 2 May 2012		9-5 pm
Friday, 4 May 2012	Module 4	9-5 pm

May - June 2012		
Date	Module	Time
Wednesday, 30 May 2012	Module 1	9-5 pm
Friday, 1 June 2012	Module 2	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 6 June 2012		9-5 pm
Friday, 8 June 2012		9-5 pm
Wednesday, 13 June 2012	Module 3	9-5 pm
Friday, 15 June 2012		9-5 pm
Wednesday, 20 June 2012		9-5 pm
Friday, 22 June 2012	Module 4	9-5 pm

CPP (Retail) Schedule:

April - May 2012		
Date	Module	Time
Wednesday, 11 April 2012	Module 1	9-5 pm
Friday, 13 April 2012	Module 2	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 18 April 2012		9-5 pm
Friday, 20 April 2012		9-5 pm
Tuesday, 24 April 2012	Module 3	9-5 pm
Thursday, 26 April 2012		9-5 pm
Thursday, 3 May 2012		9-5 pm
Friday, 4 May 2012	Module 4	9-5 pm

May - June 2012		
Date	Module	Time
Wednesday, 30 May 2012	Module 1	9-5 pm
Friday, 1 June 2012	Module 2	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 6 June 2012		9-5 pm
Friday, 8 June 2012		9-5 pm
Tuesday, 12 June 2012	Module 3	9-5 pm
Thursday, 14 June 2012		9-5 pm
Tuesday, 19 June 2012		9-5 pm
Friday, 22 June 2012	Module 4	9-5 pm

Core Faculty Members

MR. LAM CHUN SEE

**B. ENG IN INDUSTRIAL & SYSTEMS ENGINEERING
(UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE)**

Chun see manages his own consultancy practice, Hoshin Consulting and is also an associate consultant/trainer to the PSB Corporation and Singapore Productivity Association. Prior to running his own practice, he has had years of experience as an industrial engineer with Philips, and trainer and consultant with the then National Productivity Board, APG Consulting and Teian Consulting. He was conferred the Triple-A Award in 1989 for helping to transfer Japanese know-how, particularly in the area of 5S, into local programmes and packages. Throughout his years of consultancy experience, Chun See has assisted many businesses in analyzing their productivity and quality objectives and performance; primarily through the application of the PDCA technique and basic QC tools.

MR. LEE KOK SEONG

M.SC. IN CHEMICAL ENGINEERING (IMPERIAL COLLEGE, LONDON UNIVERSITY), B.SC. IN CHEMICAL ENGINEERING (NATIONAL TAIWAN UNIVERSITY)

Kok Seong has accumulated vast experience in the areas of productivity training and management consultancy throughout his 30 years of experience with the Standards, Productivity and Innovation Board (SPRING). He has provided consultancy assistance and training for numerous organisations both within and outside of Singapore in the areas of Productivity Management, Operation and Production Management, total Quality Management, Total Productive Maintenance, Shopfloor Management, Occupational Safety Management, Industrial Engineering Applications and Supervisory Management. He has also been greatly involved in the pinnacle Singapore Quality Award (SQA) initiative since its inception in 1993. His track records include the assessments and site visits of award recipients like Micron Semiconductor (formerly Texas Instruments), Motorola, Baxter Healthcare, Philips Tuner Factory and Teck Wah Industrial Corporation Ltd. Mr. Lee is currently a certified SQA Senior Assessor, as well as a resource person for Basic and Advanced Training Courses for Productivity Practitioners, a position he has taken on since 2007.

MR. LOW CHOO TUCK

M.SC. IN INDUSTRIAL ADMINISTRATION (UNIVERSITY OF ASTON, UK); B.SC. IN PHYSICS (NUS); DIP IN QUALITY CONTROL INSTRUCTORS (INTERNATIONAL QUALITY CENTRE, NETHERLANDS); CERTIFICATE IN PRODUCTIVITY DEVELOPMENT (JAPAN PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE); CERTIFICATE IN ADVANCED MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT (INSEASD)

Choo Tuck currently provides training and advisory services in productivity and quality management to businesses and government in the Asean region and Middle East. He was previously the Executive Director of the Restaurant Association of Singapore as well as the Singapore Productivity Association, and was also the Director for Strategic Planning in SPRING Singapore. During his many years of service with SPRING Singapore, he gained wide experience in productivity training, management consultancy and productivity promotion, and has helped more than a 100 businesses in improving productivity, quality control and business excellence, including organisations such as Cycle & Carriage, Motorola, PUB and DBS. On top of that, he has also served as an Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) expert on Productivity for several APO member countries, and was part of a team of experts engaged by the Singapore cooperation Enterprise to provide productivity expertise to the Government of Bahrain in 2007 and 2008.

MR. QUEK AIK TENG

B.ENG (HON.) IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING (UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD); DIP. IN BUSINESS EFFICIENCY (INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING_ (PSB-ACADEMY); CERTIFIED MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT (CMC); PRACTISING MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT (PMC); MEMBER, INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS (IMC) SINGAPORE

Aik Teng currently manages his own consultancy, AT Consulting Services. One of his most recent projects includes being the LEAD Project Manager for the Singapore Logistics Association. Prior to running his own consultancy, he has been with SPRING Singapore for 20 years, and was the Head of the Organisation Excellence Department from 2004-05. He was also SQA Lead Assessor and Team Leader up till 2008 and has been involved in the SQA initiative since its inception in 1993. tasked to start up the consultancy unit within

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the then Productivity & Standards Board (PSB) to provide training and consultancy services to organisations, his consulting team assisted close to 30 organisations during that period. He was also involved in a project coordinated by the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE) to assist the Bahrain Labour Fund in their Labour Reform strategy, which included helping the Bahrain government to initiate a Productivity Movement as well as develop the productivity of the local enterprises. In addition, he was appointed as Project Manager to assist the Government of Botswana to implement a national Productivity Movement, from 1994 to 2003. Botswana is currently held as a model of Productivity in the Pan-Africa region.

MR. WONG KAI HONG

MBA IN STRATEGIC MARKETING (HULL), BSC (NUS)

Kai Hong is a business consultant, management trainer and company director. He has spent almost 2 decades in the consumer products industry, having worked with retailers like Isetan, Metro, Royal Sporting House, The Athlete's Foot and Sunglass Hut; brands like Reebok and Doc Martens; and technology group Wearnes Technology. He has been involved with various functions including operations, business development, project management, human resource, training, marketing, logistics, budgeting and general management. He has developed businesses in Singapore and many Asian cities such as Seoul and Beijing.

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Mr. Ashton Chionh

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