

Starting Business Process: A Few Thoughts

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Thursday, June 16, 2011

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Here are a few tips to get you started on creating a solid business process for your organization. Increasingly, popular methodologies share common concepts to create an effective process, but before choosing one of those methods, consider a few general ideas to help you get started.

Taking a Leadership Role

Developing business process is a great leadership opportunity. You can cultivate an atmosphere of curiosity and collaboration, and speak to your vision for a better organization without being a process expert.

When leadership extends only as far as approving the project budget, Business Process Management efforts often fail or lack focus. Be willing to represent your goals and strategies; provide the clarity your teams need to make your goals reality.

Discover Your Current Process

Defining the current process is critical to success.

Your organization holds a wealth of knowledge and bringing it to light makes it available. Capturing your current process can be the training to solidify a business process discipline.

Continual improvement and being flexible to change depends on starting where you are. When capturing the current reality, obvious problems come to light that are easily solved with the right people in the room. Those simple solutions alone could pay for the project.

Documentation, Implementation, and Organizational Involvement

Many expensive process documents sit unread on CEO bookshelves. The first challenge of a great business process is to have it implemented as a working part of your organization. Training, collaboration, and implementation can and should happen at the same time.

A Structure to Act Intelligently

Some process requires precise steps, regulation, and compliance. Surgical procedures and those involving dangerous materials need well defined steps and clear rules that seldom vary.

The same level of detail could prove disastrous for an experienced sales team. Many processes need only a framework that allows for innovation and collaboration. It's important to consider the best level of detail to support talent and creativity. Design for intelligent behavior.

Process is Practice

Business process is like an exercise program or healthy eating. It does little good to know what to do but not do it.

Don't let your process sit on the shelf to become a dead language. Business processes change every day. Process focused organizations keep process alive by continually using it to innovate and manage change.