Success Factors for Process Management and Process Improvement

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Abstract - *The aim of this paper is to elaborate the most important critical factors which have impact over the successful Business Process Management (BPM) and business process improvement. Therefore as bases for analyzing the problem has been taken the estimations of different authors and a practical example form selected international producer. Different authors have represented different kind of critical success factors depending on the point of view and the importance they estimate. The factors shown in this short paper show that in order to be able to understand the kind of critical factors which would be reflecting BPM it is necessary firstly to be understood the processes and the people involved in these processes. Thus, the challenge for companies is both to define a strategy for deploying BPM, and to prepare the working environment by estimating critical success factors and finding proper solutions for these factors.*

Keywords - *Business process (BP), Process management (PM), Process improvement, BPM critical success factors, BPM syndromes*

I. INTRODUCTION

The main focus of companies today is process orientation. This means, companies use processes to group and correlate activities to realize products and services. Having a healthy implemented BPM means reaching the SEMIOTIC[1] (Reynolds, 2008) which is not easy as it seems, therefore researching companies have developed different models which evaluate and help process management and improvement. Despite all the preparations for easily BPM implementation and improvement there still are critical success factors which determine the successful implementation and improvement of the processes.

By researching different literature sources and by analyzing a given concrete case this paper will show the different types of critical success factors and their impact in BPM.

II. PROCESS ORIENTATION

In process orientation, business processes are used as instruments to organize project activities and to better understand their correlation. Changing the focus from function orientation to process orientation it also changes on the one side the correlation between the activities and on the other side the roles of people involved.

A BP deals with execution of the tasks assigned to company partial systems and is directed by the business objectives of a company and by the business environment (BPM) (Becker, Kugeler, & Rosemann, 2003). Due to the change of tasks and objectives on the one side and due to impact of business environment on the other side, the processes change. Thus, all the processes need to be managed in order to run efficiently in the new changed environment. Furthermore the processes need also to be improved in order its goals to be compatible with the corporate goals.

Implementing BPM and improving implemented BP is far more complex that it seems. There are many factors which from different authors are evaluated as critical influencers of the successful implementation, improvement and management of processes.

III. SUCCESS FACTORS FOR PROCESS MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Since projects are unique, consequently their processes are unique, the success factors are different and their importance differs from process to process. Different authors have different points of view therefore they represent different factors which have impact in successful BPM. Waske (2007) estimated that BPM is influenced by concepts and technologies from different areas of business administration and computer science. Further will be analyzed just humans and their type of behavior as main critical success factors and as syndromes.

A. Critical success factors

Implementing a BPM has the potential to cut across departments and organization boundaries because clients, vendors and partners become more involved (Jeston &

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[1] SEMIOTIC is acronym for **S**tability, **E**xploitation, **M**anagement & Leadership, **I**nertia, **O**wnership, **T**ransparency, **I**ntegration and **C**hange Management

Nelis, 2006). Based on this involvement, Jeston and Neils consider ten fundamental critical success factors that apply to all BPM projects (Table 1). These factors have one pre acting point of view taking in consideration what should be done in order to prevent the failure of BPM projects.

Table 1: *List of fundamental critical success factors that apply to all BPM projects*

Factor	Short description
1. Leadership	The leadership should have the *attention, support, funding, commitment* and the *time* involved in the BPM projects, and **no** project should start without complete support from the CEO.
2. BPM experienced business project manager	Project manager, coming from business not IT, should have significant skills with regard to the people change management and stakeholder management.
3. Linkage to organization strategy	In a company should/can exist projects which add value to the execution of organization strategy and objectives, and/or projects which add no value, but run as tactical short-term solutions.
4. Process architecture	Agreed guidelines and directives for each process should be set, on the one side define the architecture of the processes and on the other side are reference for any change in the way the organization approaches BPM and BP improvement.
5. A structured approach to BPM implementation	Projects which effect organization strategy carefully should be approached. These projects should have an agreed structured and systematic approach that takes into account the organization strategy.
6. People change management	As much as the processes require more people involvement, the more the project team should spend time and effort on human management.
7. People and empowerment	New projects in BPM change tasks, activities and people role also. This indicates that new roles of the people involved in the BMP projects have to be empowered just after projects have been redesigned or implemented.
8. Project initiation and completion	BPM projects in the company shouldn't be seen as independent entities. Implementa-tion of a specific project and its maintenan-ce besides being compatible with other projects and having objectives and goal which fit with company goal, it should also be a lesson learned which can be used for other projects.
9. Sustainable performance	There should be established process struc-ture that maintains the life of its processes which makes projects understandable and manageable.
10. Realizing value	Project manager and project sponsor need to ensure that there are benefits that come from the project, these should be communi-cated to the other participants to gain support in project implementation or/and improvement.

B. *BPM Syndromes*

Becker et al. as important in defining BPM success factors consider the number of employees, the number and importance of processes, the scope of changes and the defined project time frame (2003). BP orientation has direct impact into jobs, task and employees which need to be assigned differently. This induces uncertainty at employees who ban or slow down changes. Thus, Becker et al. consider the critical success factors as syndromes with similar characteristics (Figure 1).

As we can see in the Figure 1, all the people are grouped into two main groups, the one which block or handicap the process implementation and the one which push forward the projects implementation faster than necessary. All these syndromes, which fit with Jeston and Neils factor "People change management", have their negative impact in successful BPM project implementation therefore Becker et al. (2003) consider that the involved people should be informed about the project, its implementation and benefits.

Furthermore they need to be influenced, thus they will accept the new situation with BPM. Finally, in a prepared positive environment the project participants need to be trained and consulted, and the activities need to be documented (see green arrows Figure 1).

C. *Affect of critical success factors in real situation*

Georg Fischer AG (http://www.georgfischer.com) is an international company with headquartered in Switzerland. GF Automotive, one of its core businesses, is development partner and manufacturer of high-value iron and light alloy cast components for the global automotive industry (Georg Fischer AG, 2011).

Its subsidiary in Rielasingen, based on inner sources, is considering business restructuring therefore has started initiative through which is informing employees about future changes. As a consequence, of the spread new information, employees are afraid losing their positions or

even working places. Thus, in this information phase, different kind of reactions, both direct and indirect; the employees and the management, are to be observer. The syndromes to be observed are: "do it yourself", "I don't care", "not with me" and "let's start immediately".
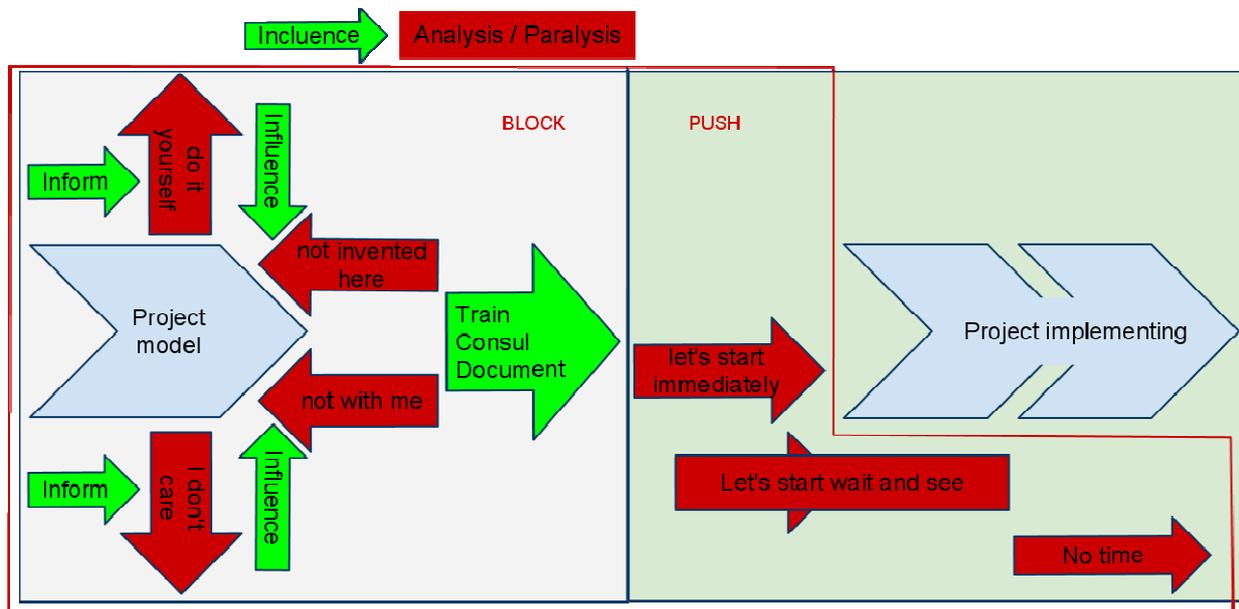

Figure 1: Syndromes of BPM projects

CONCLUSION

The development, administration and maintenance of BPs require lot of manual effort directly from human or/and human supporting technology. Beside all fulfilled requirements, following specified models which help BPM, human behaviour is still most important critical success factor. Therefore, in this paper the focus was mainly in critical success factors which source are humans with their behaviour.

Based on represented factors, we can understand that all employees involved in specific processes should be analyzed alongside analyzing and understanding BPs itself. Furthermore, in order to maximize process efficiency and to avoid low performance, the participants need to be informed, influenced and trained to fit and contribute in the process oriented environment. Finally, the existing generic guidelines cannot be used in each organization of each type of business, the working environments are specific therefore each organization needs own strategy to estimate own critical success factors.

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