



Getting Started with
Business Process Management



The modern enterprise is a vast entity, comprising a myriad of components, process and technologies. Understanding how all these different facets interact is key to harnessing their potential, and business process management (BPM) refers to the discovery, modeling, analysis and optimization efforts for processes. An extensive and growing discipline, it utilizes standardized process modelling and encompasses a variety of standards, frameworks, and increasingly sophisticated technologies.

This paper will introduce the ideas behind Business Process Management, and demonstrate how a firm can begin the process of process management





What is a Business Process?

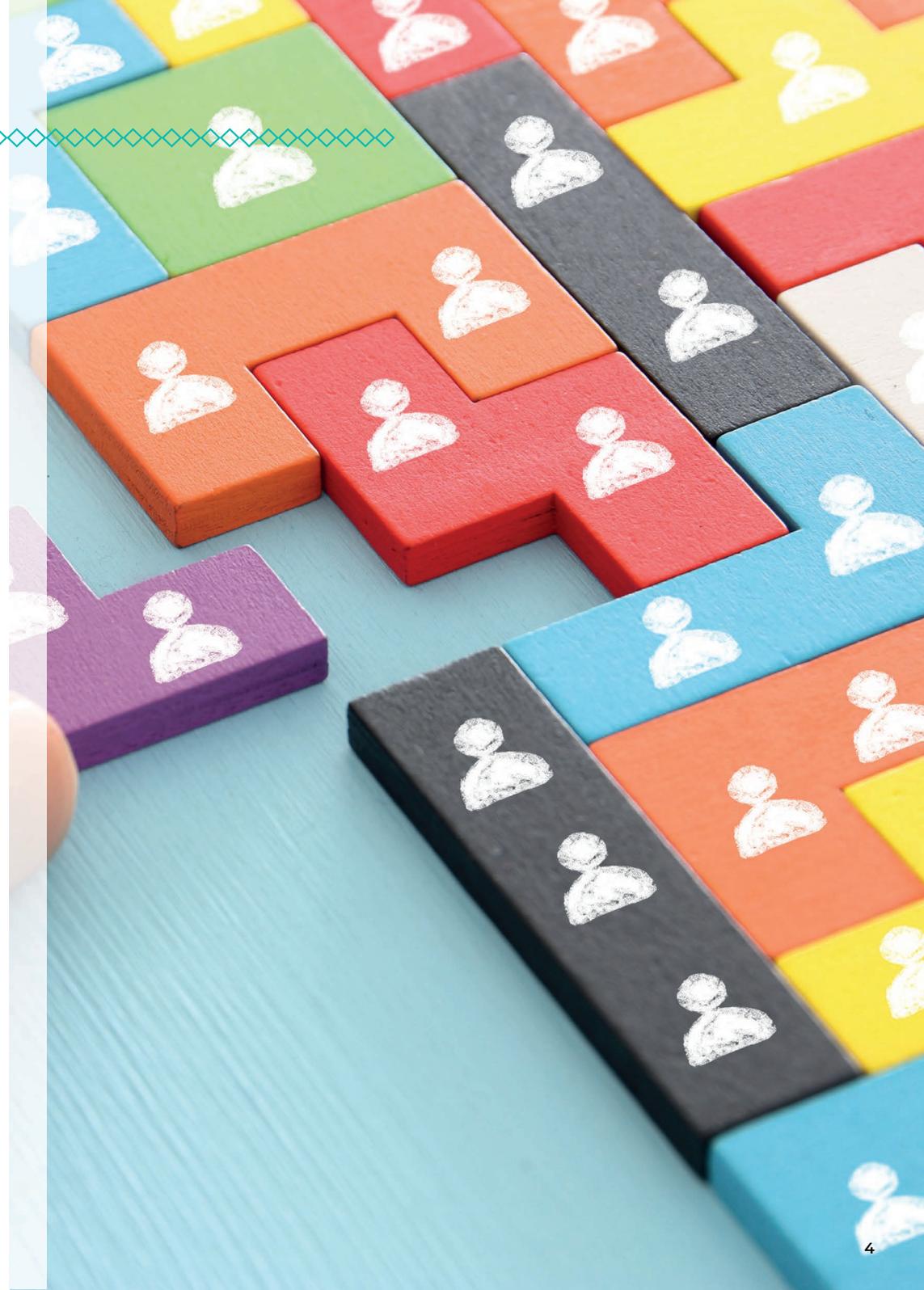
An organization's business processes are essentially what the organization does on a day to day basis. Producing a product, marketing it and distributing it are all business processes, and most likely would be made up of many smaller sub-processes.



Why do Business Processes need Management?

BPM as a discipline is a subset of operations management, and is focused on improving the efficiency of business processes. To an extent that answers the question – businesses will always seek opportunities to improve efficiency or save costs. Nonetheless, we can split certain areas into the realm of BPM.

In the modern business environment, BPM increasingly means automation of business processes, and indeed Gartner now offers extensive analysis of “intelligent Business Process Management suites”, which aim to give no or low code solutions to automating business processes. Of course, there are still going to be a huge range of processes that cannot or should not be automated, which means there is still ample room for efficiency gains that don’t rely on computerization or programming knowledge.





The main focus of BPM is Business Process Analysis (BPA). BPA is a discipline to identify business needs and provide solutions to business problems so organizations can achieve their goals and objectives. BPA aims for several key outcomes:

- ✓ *A fully documented process landscape, including baseline and target states.*
- ✓ *Process reporting and publication to create outputs such as process manuals and work instructions.*
- ✓ *A view of process impact resulting from change initiatives and projects in the business.*
- ✓ *A view of process inefficiencies, highlighting areas for improvement.*
- ✓ *Integration with business transformation initiatives, such as governance, risk and compliance measures.*

Note the use of the terms documentation and reporting; business analysts or enterprise architects cannot reliably document information, or report to others, if there isn't a clear understanding of how information is recorded. Thus, good BPA depends on an implementation of Business Process Model and Notation (BPMN).

Business Process Model and Notation

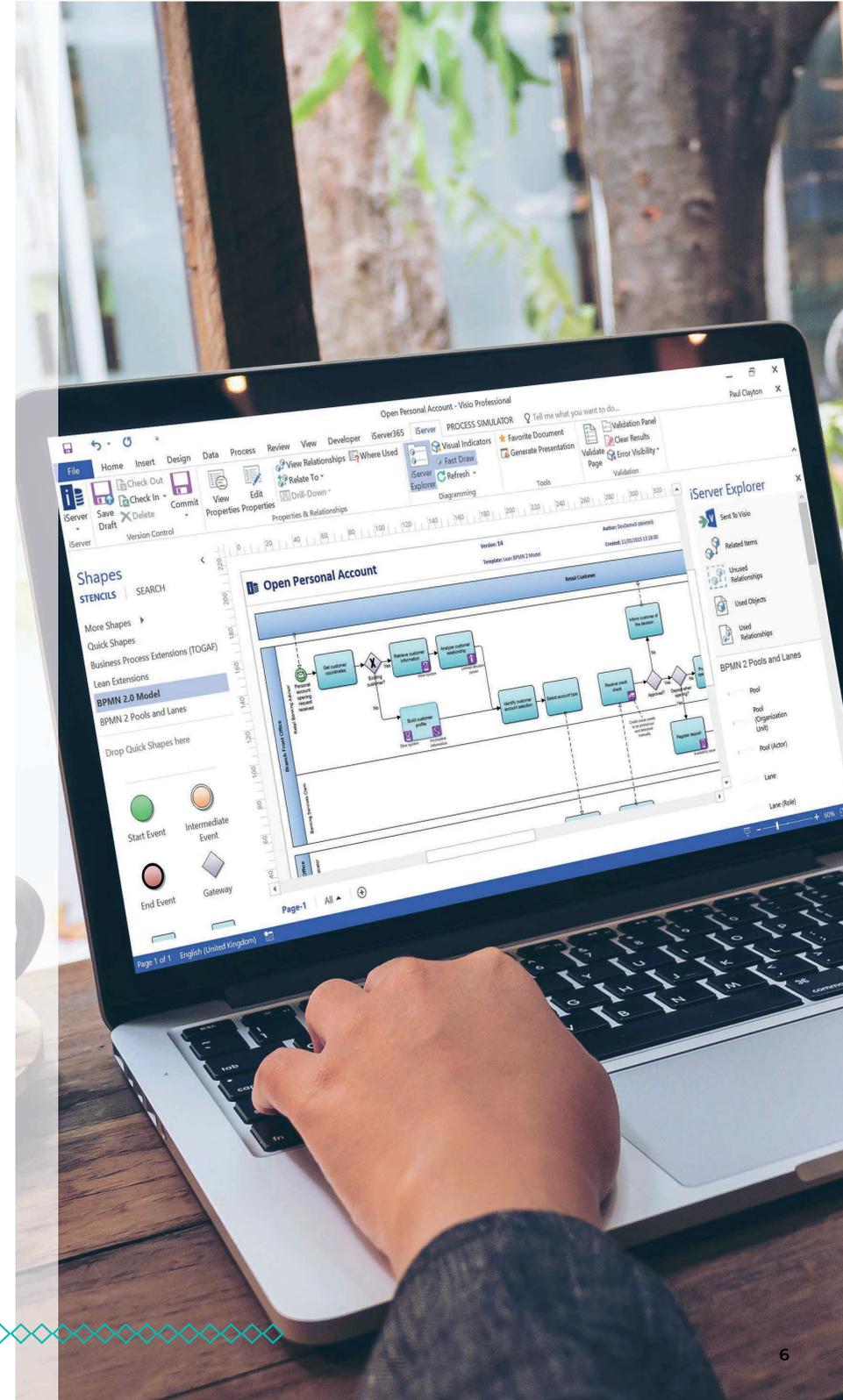
BPMN is documented in a 500+ page ISO specification, and its primary goal is to provide a notation that is readily understandable by all business users. This means that BPMN creates a standardized bridge for communication between different process stakeholders (e.g. process owners, process performers, and process analytics).

The latest BPMN 2.0 notation consists of more than 100 visual elements and corresponding rules, which are used for representing business processes in different types of business process diagrams. These process diagrams serve different purposes in the BPM lifecycle, including process analysis and process improvement, process-based communication and requirement specifications for business IT solutions.

Besides its visual use, BPMN specifies a meta-model which defines the semantics of BPMN visual and non-visual elements and their interrelationships. The resulting semantic BPMN elements are used to specify business process models, which are capable of being executed on business process engines.

A major advantage of BPMN when compared to competitive notations is that business process diagrams, which consist of visual BPMN elements, can be easily transformed into executable business process models through an XML based BPMN format.

Bringing your process modeling and notation together in an understandable format can be given yet another new title, Standardized Process Modeling.





Standardized Process Modeling

Rapidly changing landscapes render the ability to model and communicate business processes in a standardized fashion fundamental to any BPM initiative. This is standardized process modeling. Simply knowing of BPMN is not necessarily going to give an enterprise the ability to model and communicate clearly every time.

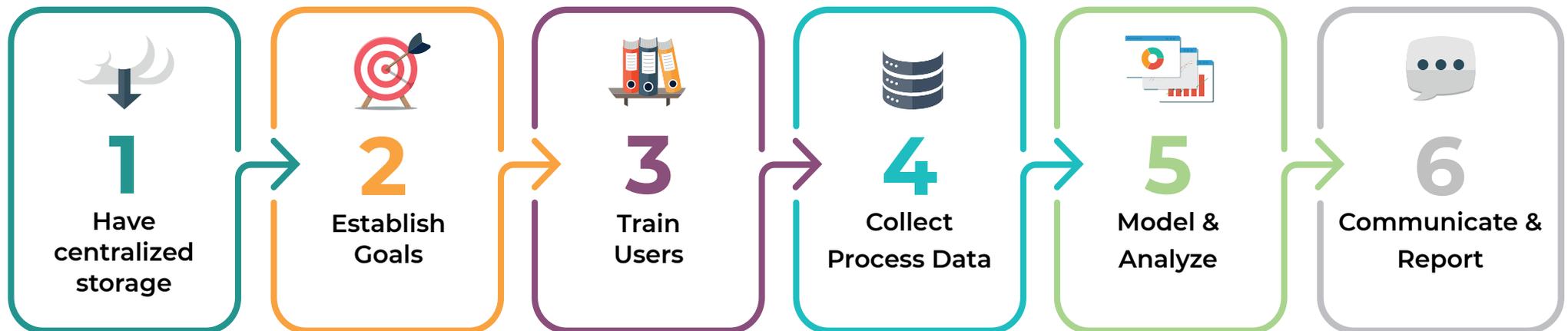
There have been a lot of acronyms and new terms introduced so far, so it's worth summing everything up before we proceed:

- ✓ *Business Process: What a business does day to day.*
- ✓ *Business Process Management (BPM): Uncovering business processes, modeling them, analyzing them and optimizing them.*
- ✓ *Business Process Analysis (BPA): identify and solve business process issues.*
- ✓ *Business Process Model and Notation (BPMN): A specification that aims to provide a common language for the recording and communication of business processes.*
- ✓ *Standardized Process Modeling: the practice of implementing BPMN such that modeling and communication are standardized across the enterprise.*



Getting Started

We've now established what BPM is and what it involves. In order to manage and improve upon business processes, an organization needs to be able to analyze them. Analysis is not possible without a common language for analysts and architects, which requires BPMN. The implementation of BPMN can be termed as standardized process modeling. There is therefore a clear chain of necessary parts in order to successfully get to BPM.



1. Have centralized storage

This might seem somewhat unrelated, but any attempt to standardize at a large organization will require a way to keep all process data in one place. Otherwise, you risk duplication of processes and inconsistencies in how they are recorded.

This is a major reason why enterprise architecture tools, like Orbus's iServer, use their central repository model, which guarantees a centrally managed and governed storage space for process data. Enterprises simply won't be able to have effective & efficient management if analysts and other process owners are duplicating work or have trouble communicating.



2. Establish Goals

As with any business initiative, it is important to know what you're aiming to achieve before you set out. That you'll be aiming to improve the efficiency of business processes is a given, so this step will often be more about curating the scope of the project. Modern enterprises will have so many thousands of potential processes that it isn't feasible to target everything, and more effective business process management is likely to look at specific functions, regions or elements.

It is worth bearing in mind that the best business process management is not a single initiative or project, but will be a continuous improvement process, and so to an extent all goals are achievable in the long run. Again, deciding on scope and priorities is half the battle here.

3. Train Users

Having a standard for modeling means users need to be familiar with every element of the standardization, or risk redundancy. This is another strength of iServer, where end users can be trained in just a few hours, and BPMN courses are available as well.



4. Collect Process Data

In order to actually model anything, an enterprise will need to have access to process data. This may already exist, in which case the major challenge is converting legacy models to the new, BPMN compliant notation.

Process data will include existing process models and process metadata. If there is no existing process data available, this is likely to be one of the most time-consuming tasks in the sequence.

5. Model & Analyze

Perhaps the most important step in the entire process, but also one that takes the least effort (power laws really do pop up everywhere). There is some crossover with the previous step, as the modeling of processes could go in either, but analysis is vital regardless.

Some frameworks exist to help, such as APQC, a process classification framework that is supported in iServer, while there are also a variety of process diagrams such as SIPOC and Ishikawa diagrams that can be deployed. Another option is to utilize the Lean methodology, or make use of iServer's dynamic heatmaps and impact analysis tools. There is even the option for crowdsourcing process improvement ideas through iServer's ideation abilities.



6. Communicate & Report

The final step is to bring other parts of the business into the loop, through communication and reporting. Architects should establish a communication strategy and select key reports or artifacts to socialize with business stakeholders and leadership.

In addition, present the combined benefits and newly formulated approach to process modeling in plan the next steps. The iServer Portal can be used to enhance stakeholder collaboration, providing an easy way to share feedback.



Outcomes & Next Steps

What should you expect to achieve from modeling your business processes, and how can you turn those achievements into concrete business value?

It should go without saying, but one guaranteed outcome is up-to-date, central storage for all of your business processes. With iServer, the central repository ensures that your enterprise's data is always properly managed and governed, with a single source of truth. Another certainty is having a defined approach and modeling capability using BPMN, with key users appropriately trained. An enterprise should also have sets of key visuals and the ability to communicate these to stakeholders.

However, communicating an idea does not mean it will come to pass. The next step is actually implementing changes to improve processes. Unfortunately, there is no simple guide to doing this as each enterprise and each process is going to be unique. iServer users will have a large advantage in implementation as it is a tool designed for enterprise transformation.

There is also not a guarantee that your process analysis will actually identify problems or be able to propose effective solutions. Companies have been trying to improve process efficiency for generations, but it is always easier said than done. Having formal process notation, standard models, and a variety of analysis tools will help, but they cannot transform a business by themselves. The practice of Business Process Management is not a one-off but an ongoing operation partly because it is hard to do and requires constant effort.



Summary

The pursuit of improving business processes is perhaps one of the oldest and simplest methods of gaining competitive advantage, but as enterprises have grown larger and more complex, it has become more difficult to achieve. Business Process Management has arisen as a discipline to help enterprises overcome this difficulty.

At the same time, a variety of tools and frameworks have been designed to help BPM initiatives succeed, and successfully implementing these are the purpose of this guide. In fact, diligent readers will have probably noticed that this guide is incorrectly titled – it would be more accurate to say that this is about getting ready for BPM, not getting started. Centralizing your process data, spreading the knowledge of BPMN, and standardizing all of your process models is what allows BPM to start in an organization.





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