



Connect the Dots with Extended Process Modeling

An Ever-So-Brief History of Process Modeling

Let's take a little journey back in time, shall we? Hang with me – I promise not to stop off in the 80s. Since the creation of the Gantt chart in 1899, Flowcharts in the 1920s, Functional Flow Block Diagrams and PERT chart in the 1950s, and Data Flow Diagrams and IDEF in the 1970s, a proven set of success factors using process modeling has shaken out over time.

Process modeling has shown itself to be the easiest point of entry for enabling process improvement within organizations, and often there are a bevy of opportunities to show initial ROI. Proven methodologies complement process modeling, and notation standards support a common visual understanding, but the rub here is that it becomes harder to sustain results longer term as process maturity within an organization increases.

A sprinkle of success and a dash of pain

Along with the evolution of process modeling innovations throughout history, there are a set of pain points that go right along with it. The flurry of activity around process improvement is often not aligned with strategies, goals, and objectives, making project prioritization difficult at best. Meanwhile, as improvement initiatives ramp up, the methodologies employed often consume significant resources, heavily impacting the business. Repurposing of previous project work (Service, Process, Organization, Technology, etc.) doesn't happen much, and next thing you know you've got duplication of effort. While you may see some localized improvements, true business transformation is impossible to achieve with this approach.

While process modeling solutions started to address these pain points by evolving their capabilities, many still didn't (and still don't) offer a full meal deal. With inadequate traceability of processes to strategy/goals/objectives, limited analysis and monitoring capabilities, key enterprise objects and relationships missing, standard notation concepts not present thereby reducing the user community, and plain old ease-of-use nowhere to be had, process modeling historically has drastically fallen short on fulfilling the role as the focal point of business Innovation and transformation.

Solution evolution and hello BPMN 2.0

Fast forward to March 2011 and BPMN 2.0 is on the scene. Adopted as a standard process modeling notation methodology, BPMN 2.0 enables even more modeling capability and offers the promise of actually exchanging model data. Process/Collaboration diagrams are the main business user entry points into BPMN, supporting hierarchy, with an active user/vendor community that drives usage and modeling "best practices".

In addition, process modeling solutions have built-in repositories, team collaboration and project workflow along with version control, some common shared “enterprise” objects and alignment of Enterprise Architecture concepts are supported. We’re cooking with gas now! Problem solved, right? Well...

Making Process Modeling the Focal Point of Business Innovation & Transformation

We all know the critical role process modeling has in business innovation and transformation, but for it to be successful, it has to include a much wider community and link all interrelated objects. Is process modeling serving all these constituencies? No... Can process modeling ever be the focal point of business innovation and transformation? YES! But where do you start?

Start with the RIGHT Process Modeling Solution

Your choice needs to support industry-leading enterprise architecture concepts, with a notation that is understood by all levels of users. It needs to be concise at the business level, detailed at the implementation level, with rich task types for Service Modeling, Rule Modeling and report definition, etc., etc., and oh yeah, Business, Information and Data Object abstractions that provide “real-world” conceptualization, interface definition, and data abstraction in support of a layered approach to Object Modeling and visibility are needed. Take a breath. It doesn’t end there...

The right foundation must also use connectable objects to represent all the elements above related to processes to enable impact and gap reporting, must support KPIs (key performance indicators)/PPIs (process performance indicators) in context of flow, must have What-If Analysis (e.g., process simulation), and finally must also include process performance monitoring capability for visibility into the impact of change across multiple PPIs and KPIs.

Helping the Underserved: Enhancing the BPMN 2.0 Standard with Extended Process Modeling

With all of the valuable information above being captured in an enterprise model, the inability for different knowledge workers to make and understand the connections throughout it all leads to the failure of modeling to truly serve a purpose of transformation. To achieve true business transformation, all constituencies creating and consuming models must be able to engage and understand more than just what conventional process modeling allows. There’s a need to extend and enhance process modeling to bridge the gaps between the knowledge experts across the organization.

BPMN 2.0 can indeed address all of the necessary constituencies... *with a modified approach*. Let’s take a couple minutes to talk about just two of the many uber-important practitioners - Business Strategists and Architects, and Information Architects - and walk through how an Extended Process Modeling approach can help with some of the challenges they face.

Business Strategists/Business Architect

Your business has got to solve the age old problem most businesses face, really. Just how do you prioritize allocation of your resources within your organization with so many important initiatives competing for their attention? How do your people even begin to go about supporting the business needs when they have no clear visibility into business strategy and objectives?

Business Strategists and Business Architects help create the vision of how to align resources based on business priorities by exposing competency gaps to achieving business objectives, letting you identify opportunities for resource reuse and eliminating redundancy. Being able to model and roll up PPIs at the process level into KPIs, goals - and ultimately strategies - is central to prioritization of business optimization efforts and weaves the work of strategists and architects into the models for a better understanding of the business. Not tying in this constituency perpetuates misalignment.

Information Architect

It's a plain fact. By not modeling information flow – which follows a very different path than the actual process flow – you're setting yourself up for some big time misunderstandings by not clearly modeling how your business actually works. By applying Extended Process Modeling, you have the ability to easily distinguish between Business, Information and Data Objects, and you increase the potential for success of process improvement initiatives because you are able to root out inefficiencies/understand the impact of change on business requirements, and ensure effective communication and optimization of decisions.

End Result: no more “Whack-a-mole”

If you're not using process analysis and performance monitoring to support your process improvement initiatives, keep your mallet at the ready - you'll think you've got one inefficiency down, and two more will pop up somewhere else. In order to know which improvements to truly go after, it's critical to be able to model how processes are being measured (PPIs), and align them to company KPIs that are measuring strategic goals. By then using the simulation and analysis capabilities of your process modeling solution, improvements can be evaluated, applied and monitored to be sure that expectations are met.

Extended Process Modeling, when leveraging the right process modeling solution, allows you to get your house in order. Get the transparency you need to gain a wider view into key areas of business so you can indeed connect the dots.

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