

## Getting business and IT in sync



Once your company has adopted the notion that business process management is a strategic initiative supporting business goals and market competitiveness, the machines are set into motion. Teams are assembled, systems are purchased and goals are set. But have you really identified the right approach that will get you where you need to go?

### Rough waters ahead

IT is chartered with serving up some mean technology to deliver the business with required functionality. This charter often stops where automation ends, which is only a portion of what business processes are about. Business processes are made up of system and human resources, manual and automated processes, and are (or should be!) measured for performance against the strategic goals of the organization. A well-run BPM program is a journey with teams collaborating to increase organizational knowledge of how people, process, and technology work together. What happens when this holistic picture is missing and the focus is only on systems?

To create processes in ERP, CRM and other business systems, documented requirements are a must – but when this documentation effort becomes removed from the business as a whole, its value is limited only to the project at hand. Knowing this, not much effort is made in keeping process documentation updated during the implementation project, and it is outdated by go-live. Whew, we made it through that project, you say - but now, what documentation do we have to use for training? When the next project starts, where is that documentation located? How much confidence do we have that it reflects where we left off?

And there you have it – what starts out as a good intention leaves you with useless documentation scattered across the organization. Although the first implementation project might have gone ok, your power to leverage that work for subsequent projects is largely diminished, affecting your organization's agility in responding to the market and to provide innovative products and services. Oh, and don't forget the cost of re-starting each and every project!

### Not too late to catch the current

What if you had a holistic view of the company processes, including manual and automated steps, in a structure that the business user, process performer and implementation teams can all understand?

With this, you have increased confidence that all the requirements and constraints have been considered and that IT really has a context for systems workflow. This documented view of processes lives and evolves with business needs, is representative of real process knowledge in the company, and is reused from project to project. This documentation endures the design and development phase and is ready to be used as testing and training documentation at go-live.

It sounds great, kind of what you had in mind when you started this journey, right? Now let's go after it. Start by modeling process knowledge in a business tool that is easy enough to use that business and process analysts readily adopt it, yet is powerful enough to connect process flows to technical requirements and system dependencies. Make sure your processes are visual and accessible by all stakeholders to illustrate not only how the business operates but also how systems support operations. Relate the realities of the IT infrastructure and automated support of processes directly into the business model. Make sure that processes, requirements and alignment with systems can be synchronized back as documentation to IT implementation project management tools.

# Journey Towards Process Excellence

Adoption will be much higher when IT uses their own tools, business uses theirs and common objects are synced between the two. With business and IT collaborating to develop a holistic picture of where the organization is today, and where it needs to be, you are on your way towards business agility and process excellence – happy travels!

## Need a helping hand?

iGrafx is a leading provider of process management solutions and technology that help organizations achieve competitive advantage through process excellence. iGrafx provides specific solutions for companies using SAP®, including integration with SAP® Solution Manager.

If the concepts outlined in this article are of interest and you would like to learn more, visit [www.igrafx.com](http://www.igrafx.com) or call 1.503.404.6050.