OPTIMIZING BUSINESS PROCESSES TO ENHANCE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
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Abstract

An organization’s success today lies in the kind of customer experience it offers. Higher the number of customer touch points or interaction, better is the revenue gain for enterprises and greater will be the customer loyalty. Today companies are increasingly focusing on optimizing processes, particularly back-end operations, to bring those more in tune with customer needs. This is helping companies build better ties with customers, acquire new ones while retaining existing ones.

Companies are bringing their back-end processes in sync with customer experience by leveraging more on Business Process Management (BPM). While this trend has picked up in a few industries, it is noticeable only in pockets in others. The potential of optimizing BPM to enhance customer experience is huge. This paper offers insights into how organizations can exploit this potential to become profitable and how BPM needs to be redefined to suit the needs of new-age customers.

Introduction

As more and more organizations start to look at BPM as a way to improve Customer Experience, BPM initiatives need to be looked at differently. At the same time, we need to look at how organizations are trying to boost customer experience through efficiency in their processes and take business advantage to the next level.

Consider an instance where an individual wants to buy an apartment. As a first step, he registers himself with a real estate company. The realty company may have a tie up with a car rental company and can, therefore, offer pick up and drop facilities to customers for site visits. This helps the prospective home buyer dovetail visits to multiple property sites, thereby saving his travel time and eliminating the need for him to arrange his conveyance. This results in a satisfied buyer who may, in turn, bring in more customers for the real estate company.

Traditionally, companies looked at BPM to simply optimize operational efficiency and ensure delivery excellence. BPM was considered for its value only in offering advisory services for project and portfolio management and expediting process transformation. The scope and possibilities offered by BPM have changed considerably today. Organizations are aiming at improved customer service and operational factors such as delivery and processes that are considered as key elements in ensuring enhanced customer experience. Therefore, today BPM is focused on not just improving operations but aligning every aspect of a business with delivering the maximum customer satisfaction.

The example cited above reiterates how valuable customers are to organizations and how critical the end-user experience is to the philosophies of process management. The shift in organizational thinking underlines the fact that considering customers’ convenience and keeping them informed and abreast of events is integral to business process improvement.

At the crux of this shift in BPM lies an important question: How does an organization maneuver this process improvement to align operational efficiency with customer experience!
BPM in Today’s World

BPM in today’s world is all set to face new challenges to help enterprises embrace and adapt to changes at multiple levels – technological, competitive and regulatory.

As seen in Figure 1, BPM today is more focused on developing processes to optimize operational efficiency by ensuring delivery excellence, advisory and process transformation.

Figure 1: BPM in today’s world

Let us consider the case of - a retailer who implements BPM to improve the efficacy of his delivery mechanism from the receipt of an order to the delivery to the customer. When the retailer brings together enterprise mobility and BPM initiatives, he ensures that the product is delivered to the customer at the appointed time and place, and also enables the customer to track the entire journey of the product, from the warehouse, through the transit locations, down to the destination. Unlike earlier, the focus or objective is not just operational efficiency but achieving improved customer satisfaction through improved technology-enabled processes and delivery.

In the banking and finance segment, imagine a customer approaching a bank via Facebook advertisement instead of a face-to-face engagement. The former expects a seamless experience for opening of the account. The bank takes this opportunity to not only provide that seamless experience, but also tries to gauge the customer’s profile, likes and preferences from the channel of approach, and offer the customer products that suit his needs. Thus, the bank leverages available data about the customer and his usability patterns to provide context and device-sensitive support to him.

Each of these instances speaks volumes about how technology has been harnessed to further this transformation in BPM. Not only are the organizational processes now swifter and more geared to delivering concrete results, but also bring to the fore, processes that were earlier functioning at the back-end. This gives customers access to relevant processes and help them stay better informed and connected. This is illustrated in Figure 2 below.
The former expects a seamless experience for opening of the account via Facebook advertisement instead of a face-to-face engagement. In the banking and finance segment, imagine a customer approaching a process and delivery. Improved customer satisfaction through improved technology-enabled focus or objective is not just operational efficiency but achieving through the transit locations, down to the destination. Unlike earlier, the customer to track the entire journey of the product, from the warehouse, to the customer at the appointed time and place, and also enables the mobility and BPM initiatives. He ensures that the product is delivered to the customer. When the retailer brings together enterprise the efficacy of his delivery mechanism from the receipt of an order to the delivery to the customer.

Let us consider the case of— a retailer who implements BPM to improve competitive and regulatory. BPM in today’s world is all set to face new challenges to help enterprises embrace and adapt to changes at multiple levels— technological, management and expediting process transformation. As shown in Figure 1, BPM today is more focused on developing processes and help them stay better informed and connected. This is functioning at the back-end. This gives customers access to relevant concrete results, but also bring to the fore, processes that were earlier

**Fig 2: Transformation in internal processes to meet competitive, regulatory and technological changes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCENARIO 1</th>
<th>SCENARIO 2</th>
<th>SCENARIO 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process restructured to synchronize with enterprise mobility</td>
<td>Swift process induction for internal, mobile workforce</td>
<td>Process culmination at point of engagement</td>
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**CHARACTERISTICS**

**SCENARIO 1**
- Context-sensitive
- Device-sensitive
- Task-based design
- Executive dashboard

**SCENARIO 2**
- Attractive Graphical User Interface (GUI) to display processes related to the legacy packaged app ambience
- Task-based design geared for swift commencement of processes

**SCENARIO 3**
- Synchronizes process and data analytics to offer real-time information
- Presentation of alternative scenarios to mobile workforce engaged in completing the task
- Focus on achieving optimum results

**New Capabilities of a BPM Lifecycle**

The above scenarios, thus, depict the transformation occurring in the BPM space and highlight the need for BPM to adopt new capabilities to optimize business processes while enhancing customer experience.

User experience, collaboration through social channels and interactive learning, and asset utilization are the key elements that BPM initiatives should start integrating in their development processes for enterprises. These new capabilities, illustrated in Figure 3, are geared towards providing assistance based on specific dialogue boxes in a program creating social awareness, and integrating an intuitive business process that can simplify the end-user experience.
Fig 3: New capabilities of BPM

**ROLLOUT MANAGEMENT**
- Multi-lingual Global Rollout
- Change Management
- Enhancement & Migration

**USER EXPERIENCE**
- User Centric Design
- User Interface Design
- Prototype Development

**ASSET UTILIZATION**
- Enterprise Asset Management
- Common Reusable Repository

**COLLABORATION**
- Social Collaboration
- Interactive Learning
- Knowledge Management

• **Changing user experience:** Earlier organizations were in control of customer interactions, but the advent of “consumerization of technology” has effectively put the ball in the consumers’ court. Today’s consumer assigns as much importance to the pre-purchase phase as to the post-purchase. Therefore, developing a holistic experience for the customer is crucial. For example, a customer does a comparative analysis and purchases a printer online, using a credit card. To ensure the process doesn’t just provide functional/operational efficiency but enough effort is put towards enhancing user experience, the customer is offered a rebate coupon which can be redeemed against a printer cartridge. Besides, based on ‘already entered data’ while buying the printer, the retailer makes the process for the next purchase easier.

• **Collaboration with social media:** The social media throws up volumes of data about consumers that can rapidly alter business processes, help organizations understand, identify and manage risks early on; and throw up sales opportunities. For instance, if one approaches an organization through LinkedIn, the organization needs to respond to the customer according to the adopted channel of approach. It should provide collaboration opportunities through chat, help groups, and followers’ feedback to facilitate decision making. This collaborative approach can help both the individual and the organization gain access to details about each other, consider peer and industry feedback and make an informed decision.

• **Integration with digital asset management:** Given the widespread mobility skills, customers today are accessing content in various forms. This necessitates organizations to employ tools used to capture, manage, store, preserve, and deliver content and documents throughout a customer’s purchasing lifecycle. For example, a customer wants to deposit a cheque, which requires him to physically travel to the bank. If the bank, instead, offers him a mobile app integrated with the back-end systems or data, it allows the customer to deposit the cheque at the click of a button. Such optimized processes will also enable the customer to access process details and stay connected.

**Industries Tapping BPM to Enhance Customer Experience**

Few industries, like aviation and e-commerce, are already making use of BPM in enhancing their customer experience, while others such as utilities, healthcare and insurance are optimizing these processes in parts.

For example, a lot of airline companies are partnering with online retailers to provide customers with the ease of buying things on-the-go. Not only that, in case of any cancellations or rescheduling of flights, travelers who booked with these online retailers are getting intimated along with others who made direct bookings with the airline because the retailers have back-end associations with airlines to ensure seamless customer service.

In the banking space, several banks are providing its users the benefits of banking on-the-move. The banking applications allows users to open fixed or recurring deposit, order a cheque book, stop a cheque payment, and upgrade debit card, along with other non-financial activities like viewing account summary and credit card details. Likewise, technology can be used to optimize business processes to improve customer experience in the insurance sector. Say, a person with car insurance has recently shifted to a new neighborhood, where incidents of accidents are high. The insurance company knows this through its effective back-end process and can use it to inform and suggest the person to go for higher premiums to cover his car. Additionally, the company can enable the person to file a claim by sending an image of the damaged car without having to travel to the insurance provider office. This obviously will result in a happy and satisfied customer.
Conclusion

Advantages of implementing BPM in organizations are considerable. These range from the obvious such as greater customer satisfaction and reduced churn, smooth flow of accurate and complete information, to the gradual, such as effective sales by automating inventory and promotions planning, better monitoring of vendors and compliance systems, ensuring timely deliveries of goods, and consolidation of disparate channels of reaching out to customers.

However, the actual long-term success will depend on how well organizations synchronize enterprise-wide social media monetization strategies, with the agility of their internal business processes and human interaction management. The greater the focus on harnessing technology solutions to connect and integrate customers, systems, data, talent, and capabilities, the better the chances of enhancing customer experience.

About Author

Ritesh Jain heads the BPM practice for various products with Wipro. His responsibility includes go-to-market strategy, delivery of projects, competency development across products. His practice provides end-to-end services to customers in the BPM space, right from strategy to post production support with key offerings like BPM COE setup, implementation and support, product evaluation, process analysis and roadmap definition.

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