



BETTER DESIGNED BUSINESS PROCESSES

Select The Right Process Modeling Tool

Base)))™

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The Right Modeling Tool To Design Your Processes

Enterprises leverage Business Process Modelling to achieve continuous process improvement and operational efficiency. Modelling combines process/workflow, functional, organizational and data/resource views with key metrics such as cycle time, costs, and responsibilities. This provides a strong foundation for analyzing bottlenecks, inefficiencies, activity-based costs, critical paths and value chains.

Over the years, buyers have invested in process modeling tools, but have ignored some critical factors while evaluating them. According to studies based on past process modeling projects, businesses have identified that process detailing, alignment to business goals, advanced repositories, analysis and reporting are essential needs that cannot be missed out. Businesses must also realize that standardization is not the be-all and end-all solution. Customization is an integral part of process modeling which allows businesses to address organization-specific requirements.

This paper highlights the three key aspects that govern Process Modelling – Process Design, Process Execution and Continuous Improvement. It also serves as a guide for enterprise buyers while selecting the right business process modeling tools for their organization.

The Process Need:

Alignment to Business goals and Visibility

Alignment of processes to business goals is crucial for any business. Non-alignment with goals often leads to failure in execution as overall organizational goals may get missed out in spite of accurate completion of the operational tasks. For ongoing success, the approach to align processes with business goals must be defined at stages where process management maturity is low and competing for project funding. This ensures that the processes are harmonized and can scale as per the business requirements.

Visibility (of processes, resources and business interactions) is another key reason why enterprises look at Business Process Modelling tools. Poor visibility into people and IT requirements, especially while implementing large process transformation projects, leads to inefficiencies that result in high project cost. The approach of management in enterprise is fast changing from 'review-driven' to 'response-driven'. In the world of review, reporting and analysis was used as a means to extrapolate state of operations for future decisions. But, in the dynamic environment of today, management uses on-going visibility to proactively alter the course of operation based on potential trends.

The Dilemma of Detailing:

Standardization Vs. Customization

Another critical dimension that influences process modeling is the balance between 'Standardization' and 'Customization'. Most standard processes (such as order management, procurement) across enterprises follow certain standard flows and guidelines but have minor variations in order to address the organization's specific needs and challenges. Customization is required to accommodate the requirements of organizations. Lessons learnt across customizations feed into the best practices for a given process, and become a part of the standardized framework over time. Any business would want their process modeling tools to be able to address standardization and customization dilemma.

Thus, modeling tools need to be able to handle a blend of customizations and standardization; and combining both helps improve process efficiency and effectiveness.

What Should Buyers Look for in a Process Modeling Tool?

There are three key aspects that govern Process Modelling – Process Design, Process Execution & Continuous Improvement. Each has a particular set of features that buyers need to look for while making their Business Process Modelling decision. They are discussed as follows:

Process Design

In the process design phase, enterprises are looking to design or redesign business processes to suit their ever-changing business goals. This begins with the objective of capturing detailed specifications of business processes. Buyers should look at Process modelers that are able to provide a high-level of detail in capturing processes and integrate elements of data, systems, process and roles in order to execute them. Some of the key aspects of process design are:

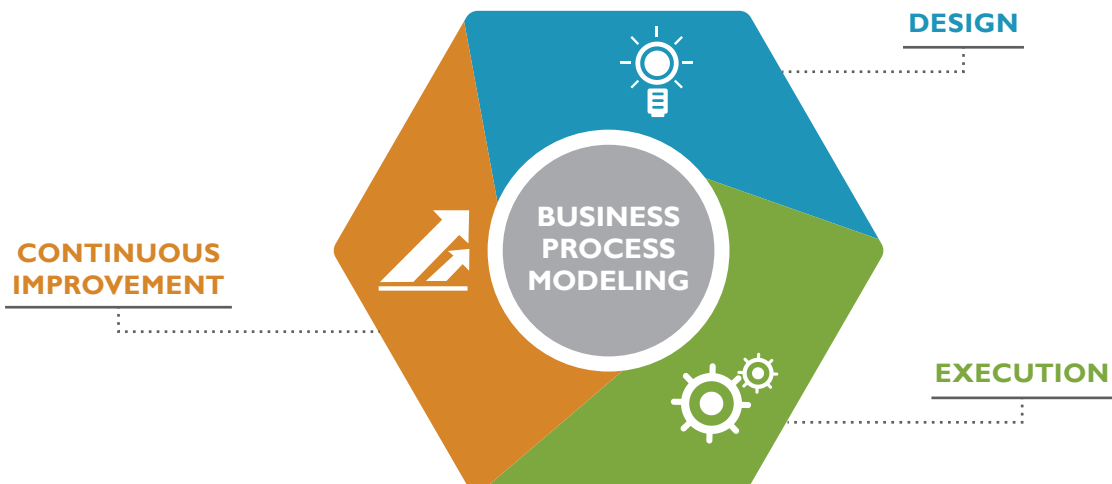
- **Goal Alignment:** The first step towards optimizing processes to meet goals is to gain visibility into details such as time taken for a process/sub-processes, number of resources involved, bottlenecks and so on. Process modelers should be able to capture details pertaining to time, material, personnel and systems or every action, and create reports for the same. Buyers must realize that finer variances in goals can have a larger impact in process design.
- **Standardization:** Buyers want to ensure that their process modeling tool provides standard process templates and guidelines as per their industry best practices. Process templates are prebuilt process design, execution artifacts that accelerate time-to-solution, thereby saving organizations the time and effort to build processes from scratch. This gives the design process a desirable jump-start.
- **Customization:** Business process modeling tools should allow enterprises to enhance or update the standard templates to accommodate minor variations typically practiced in the organization.

- **Confluence of Interaction:** Process modeling involves the ability to document, analyze, design, automate, and measure business activities and the resources supporting them. In process design, involvement of both human and systems is essential as all processes are not automatable; some processes are only executable with a mix of systems, data, processes and people. Business process modelers should be able to showcase the interplay between these elements.
- **Collaboration** is a key theme that should be wired in process modeling tools. The tool should allow for synchronous and asynchronous collaboration between multiple stakeholders with the ability to capture all discussions, comments, notes, annotations, and communication (video, audio, chat, e-mail) on the process under review.
- **Repositories:** Buyers should look for the availability of scalable process template repositories in their Business process modelers. Process templates are a set of pre-defined, reusable process components (process design, execution and management artifacts) that are typically outsourced. They could be either generic or industry-specific, built based on industry best practices and prior implementations.
- **End-user Empowerment:** Process modeling tools today are built in line with the concept of citizen development – empowering business users to quickly design processes from scratch, without necessarily having hardcore coding knowledge. Rather than being viewed as a software/solution, process modeling tools should be designed to provide a professional outlook for process designers. They should not just enable multiple flows but also have the potential to become social.

Process Execution

Process execution is the next key phase in process modeling. In this stage, the 'As-is' processes are mapped against prebuilt, industry standard process templates. Gaps identified are addressed and reviewed with stakeholders based on which the 'To-be' processes are built. Data generated from simulation is used to assess if the expected performance goals of the process are being achieved. The key aspects of process execution are:

- **Non-invasive:** Execution of processes often calls for changes in customer's technology/systems. Process modelers that can execute processes without touching or changing customer technology are the ones that stand out from the rest - saves customers from the hassle of additional time and effort spent. A non-invasive process modeler is an attractive proposition for any buyer since it would not involve cost related to changing current systems.
- **Last mile execution:** The process modeling tool should be comprehensive enough to empower 'last mile users' enabling them to create process models, generate SOPs and even access reusable process assets from the process repositories.
- **Deployment:** Quick deployment and minimum ramp-up time is a basic requirement for all enterprise applications. Buyers should consider Business process modelers that demonstrate quick deployment (say 12-16 weeks) and support scalability and minimal action from the enterprise to set-up and deploy.



Continuous Improvement

Along with early visibility into process improvement opportunities, business process modelers should also be able to highlight opportunities for continuous improvement. After designing the 'to-be' processes they must be test simulated and matched with standard industry process templates.

Data generated from simulation is used to assess if the process is designed to meet the expected performance goals. Else, the process can be examined to identify and resolve the constrains or redesigned to match performance goals. The key aspects of Continuous Improvements are:

- **Project Management:** Process modeling tools should help in setting up appropriate project, control and reporting structures, enforcing a plan of action. This helps organizations monitor the work in progress and escalate any issues, if identified.
- **Dashboards and Reporting:** Business process modeling tools should empower the ultimate end-user/last mile users by allowing them to customize and create their own dashboards and reports. Dashboards provide an integrated view of business processes and improved visibility into what is occurring when the business processes are executed.

Transitions and integration do tend to impact the 'big picture', and seamless transitions could depend on how a firm deploys and uses business process modeling tools. Modern business process modeling tools have evolved over time to become more user-friendly, intuitive and non-invasive with increased functionality levels. They no longer require advanced IT skills to design, execute and continuously improve the processes. Process Modeling tools have thus become an integral part of any transition process and choosing the right one has the potential to make or break any transition.



About The Author

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Nithya Ramkumar currently heads Base)))™, Wipro's Business Platform group. She has spent 23 years at Wipro with experience in rolling-out innovation in IT and BPS solutions, across telecom, healthcare, energy and insurance verticals. Under her leadership, Base)))™ has developed a strong Process management know-how and filed for 15 patents in Business Operations Management space.

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