



## **BPM Boots on the Ground: How to Implement Strategic Business Process Management**

**Jim Boots**

Meghan-Kiffer Press

\$39.95 291 pages

### **Reviewed by Paul Harmon**

This is the second time I have written about this book. Just after it was initially written, I read it and wrote a Foreword for the book. Now that it has been published, I'm writing a book review to encourage others to give it a read. I'm happy to do this for a couple of reasons. First, I like the author, who was, for many years the head of BPM at Chevron. Second, I think the book very useful since it describes the actual experience of a business executive who struggled to introduce process in one of the largest corporations in the world.

Jim took a degree in Chemical Engineering at MIT and started as an operational manager at Chevron, only gradually coming to focus on process. Hence this is not the story of how IT sought to automate processes, but how a business executive sought to improve the way Chevron worked.

Let's begin with a look at the table of contents to get an idea of the scope of the book:

#### **Part 1. Context**

Chapter 1. Chevron's BPM Story in a Nutshell

Chapter 2. Introduction of BPM

#### **Part 2. Capability**

Chapter 3. BPM Organization and Personnel

Chapter 4. BPT Standards and Methods

Chapter 5. BPM Technologies

Chapter 6. Stakeholder Management and Communications

Chapter 7. Scope of Implementation

Chapter 8. Process Architecture

Chapter 9. Process Governance

Chapter 10. Process Improvement

Chapter 11. Process automation

Chapter 12. BPM Capability Revealed

#### **Part 3. Catalysis**

Chapter 13. The CEOs One-Year Plan

Chapter 14. Putting It All in Motion: A Fictional Case Study

Chapter 15. The Impact of BPM on the Future

Chapter 16. Epilog: Another Personal Perspective

Appendices, References, Index

A glance at the contents will suggest that most of the topics that most process practitioners struggle with are covered in this book. As I suggested earlier, Jim went from being a business executive to being asked to head a BPM program. He studied the field, and then tried one thing and another in an effort to figure out how to have an impact on his company.

The book is written in a pleasant, conversational style, and Jim is honest, describing what was tried, what succeeded and what didn't. Chevron is to be congratulated for letting Jim tell his story in a comprehensive and honest way. Too often large companies exert too much censorship on efforts of this kind. In fact, of course, we all know that some programs succeed and other initiatives fail, and the real value for others who are going to attempt such efforts is to hear exactly what happened and what caused problems and what contributed to success.

Chevron, like any large energy company, has had its share of problems in the past couple of decades. Much of the emphasis of the process group at Chevron has been on safety and risk reduction – on establishing processes that will avoid risks and protect employees.

At the same time, in spite of its size, Chevron did not launch a huge BPM program. This is not the story of how Chevron spent multi-millions to change some specific aspect of the organization. It is, instead, the story of how Chevron spent modest amounts of money to try one thing and then another in an effort to achieve systematic improvements in a cost-effective manner – pretty much like what most process programs attempt. Moreover, most of it was spent on people and not on technology. Throughout the journey, Chevron relied on a maturity model – in their case one provided by the Innovation Value Institute – to track their progress.

The discussion is often very practical – and focused on things like the problems in setting up a BPM support group, staffing problems, job assignments, and issues they faced in working with different operating groups. This is not a theoretical work, but a report from the trenches by someone who worked there – boots in the mud – for several years.

Some BPTrends readers may recall an article that Jim and I authored a few years ago and published on the website. It described a software modeling tool that Chevron used, and how it was used to create job aids that prompted employees in emergency situations. The software application was simply loaded on lots of hardware so that, like a checklist, it would always be available when an employee needed to know how to respond to an emergency. It's a nice example of how practical many of Chevron's process efforts were.

At the same time, the book documents Chevron's efforts to create a Business Process Architecture and process measures that the BPM group and management could use to organize and prioritize company-wide process efforts.

Anyone working in process can benefit from this book. Those new to process work will find lots of practical suggestions about how to start and organize their journey. Those as

experienced as your author will find it an invaluable review of how a large corporation struggles to integrate and coordinate all of the diverse elements that make up process work today. This is a book that everyone needs to have on their process bookshelf.

### **BPTrends LinkedIn Discussion Group**

We created a BPTrends Discussion Group on LinkedIn to allow our members, readers and friends to freely exchange ideas on a wide variety of BPM related topics. We encourage you to initiate a new discussion on this publication, or on other BPM related topics of interest to you, or to contribute to existing discussions. Go to LinkedIn and join the [BPTrends Discussion Group](#).

Paul Harmon is the executive editor of [www.bptrends.com](http://www.bptrends.com)

Ps. After starting on this review I came across a publication of [www.kyotoplanet.com](http://www.kyotoplanet.com), *The Sustainable Enterprise Report*, which I also recommend.