



## Down Under

### John Jeston & Johan Nelis

Consultants  
TouchPoint – Business Process Services  
Sydney, Australia  
Authors: *Business Process Management  
Practical Guidelines to Successful Implementations*

[John.jeston@managementbyprocess.com](mailto:John.jeston@managementbyprocess.com)  
[Johan.nelis@touchpointbpm.com.au](mailto:Johan.nelis@touchpointbpm.com.au)



## Beyond Business Process Improvement, On To Business Transformation

Once organizations start to succeed with process improvement, they then face the challenge of making it sustainable and moving toward a high-performance organization by training high-performance managers.

There are growing numbers of research projects and case studies reflecting how BPM is being used, or planned to be used, by organizations throughout the world. But BPM is often thought of, or referred to, as a technology or IT system, *which it is not*. Technology is a powerful supporting mechanism. BPM provides the management capabilities needed to improve your business, and it's more important than ever in today's economic times of unexpected change.

Successful BPM and process improvement case studies have demonstrated that an enterprise-wide BPM implementation can be extremely rewarding for an organization, its employees, and its customers. Yet, CEOs around the world have not embraced BPM from an enterprise perspective. So, if BPM is so good, as clearly demonstrated by these case studies, and can make such a significant difference to an organization, why don't CEOs grab it with both arms and embrace it fully?

Is it because they don't understand it? Is it perceived as difficult and too risky? Have they not seen enough results? Do they lack the courage? Are they unable to trust their managers to implement it?

These questions have fascinated me for some time, and have led to my passion to find answers.

Recent research<sup>1</sup> has shown that the most likely and ideal personality traits for successful CEOs are humility, diffidence, and relentlessness: They are a bit unidimensional. The research showed that what mattered were **execution and organizational skills**. The traits that correlated most powerfully with success were attention to detail, persistence, efficiency, analytical thoroughness, and the ability to work long hours. While the markets seem to want CEOs to offer a clear direction for their organizations, there is a tension between being resolute (true to the set or announced direction) and being flexible, which is a challenge in the current economic climate.

As a CEO, or CxO, you know that the world is changing faster than you can keep pace, but you and your organization need to change and grow to try and keep pace. With this hyper-pace comes the knowledge that the way you are currently managing your organization is no longer appropriate and will not provide the organization with the agility it needs for the future. This can be stressful to you and your managers. The typical response is "You mean, the way I have been

managing for the last twenty years is no longer appropriate? How and what do I need to do to change? How do I make this work in my organization?"

Business Process Management (BPM), or having a process-focus, provides the opportunity for you and your managers to meet this challenge.

But this is the case only when BPM is viewed as a management philosophy. Yes, it is about completing business process improvement projects to make your business processes more efficient and effective (thirty to fifty percent is normal). Yes, it is then about continuing to measure and performance-manage the business processes into the future. But, it is much more.

Just making your business processes more efficient and effective does not mean your organization will be managed any better, as process performance advantages will dissipate over time. More is required.

The purpose of my new book, *Beyond Business Process Improvement, On To Business Transformation* (MK Press), to be released in the next month, and that may be pre-ordered on Amazon now, is to explore this "more" and to provide the knowledge to you and your managers on how BPM can assist in providing a new way of managing that will provide the ability to meet the challenge of change, *unexpected change*, while providing the competitive advantage you aspire to.

It's about the process of developing your organization's roadmap for the future, a future that begins today!

### John Jeston

**Johan Nelis** has added his experience in regard to the above:

In my experience, the best way to "sell" BPM is by showing actual results and finding suitable and innovative solutions for long standing problems. Too many BPM practitioners get caught up in conceptual discussions and want to convince managers and executives through death by PowerPoint about "continuous process improvement, (near) zero defects, higher agility, and lower costs promises. Many of these managers and executives have a similar reaction: "We have heard all these promises before, but we have been disappointed in the delivery."

Some of the key reasons why previous approaches have not been delivered are

- **Taking results for granted:** Many projects thought that the funds and executive support would never fade; hence, they established large-scale programs that had long-term benefits, without providing short-term benefits that kept the confidence and provided a positive cash-flow.
- **Stuck in detail:** Other projects focused solely on quick-wins and never addressed the more structural aspects:
  - It is impossible to make significant and sustainable process improvements without management of these processes.
  - BPM efforts have to address fundamental process problems, rather than just quick wins at the fringes.
- **Ignoring role of executives:** Many BPM projects were sold to executives as: "*Just give us money and we will make it happen.*" However, corporate leadership is crucial to actually overcome key change hurdles.

### Johan Nelis

---

<sup>i</sup> S. N. Kaplan, M. M. Klebanov and M. Sorensen, *Which CEO Characteristics and Abilities Matter?*, June 2007