

Business Process Management The SAP Roadmap

**Jim Hagemann Snabe, Ann Rosenberg, Charles
Moller and Mark Scavillo**

Galileo Press, 2009

\$69.95 411 pages

Reviewed by Paul Harmon

This book is a collection of readings. The listed authors are both authors and editors, and there are an additional 24 authors who aren't listed on the cover. Of the lead authors, Snabe is a member of the SAP Executive Board, Rosenberg is a consultant with SAP's Business Transformation Consulting group (with particular responsibility for how BPM and SOA can be blended), Moller is a professor of Business Process Production at Aalborg University, and Scavillo is the head of Process Governance at SAP. The other authors are mostly consultants at SAP.

The book offers to do four things: to provide readers with an overview of Business Process Management, to explain how SAP suggests companies approach BPM, to consider what SAP offers for BPM work, and to provide case studies. Each of these concerns defines a part of the book and each part includes multiple chapters.

I approached this book with rather low expectations. I figured SAP would define BPM to suit their own purposes, and talk about how ERP and NetWeaver supported BPM. I was very surprised and pleased by what I found. This book is about how a company should approach transitioning from a less mature to a more mature company. In other words it tells readers how to move from being a CMM Level 2 company to a CMM Level 5 company.

In spite of being a book of readings, this book is also very good introduction to the basic concepts of BPM and includes discussions of wide range of BPM concerns. The Introductory chapters by professor Moller are thoughtful and comprehensive and provide a good introduction to BPM. He is careful to distinguish between BPM – a business management concern – and BPMS – which focuses on supporting the implementation of selected BPM processes.

The heart of the book is the roadmap, which is, in fact, a BPM transition strategy and a methodology. The various authors present the SAP transition strategy and methodology and then explain it in considerable detail. They discuss how the transition strategy is being used at SAP, which they say is committed to being a Process Driven company by 2010, and to other "case study" companies.

The SAP roadmap is based loosely on a process lifecycle. In essence, the SAP BPM Roadmap is what I would call an enterprise methodology: It describes how an organization would go about transitioning itself from CMM Level 2 to CMM Level 5. Figure 1 illustrates an overview of SAP's BPM Roadmap.

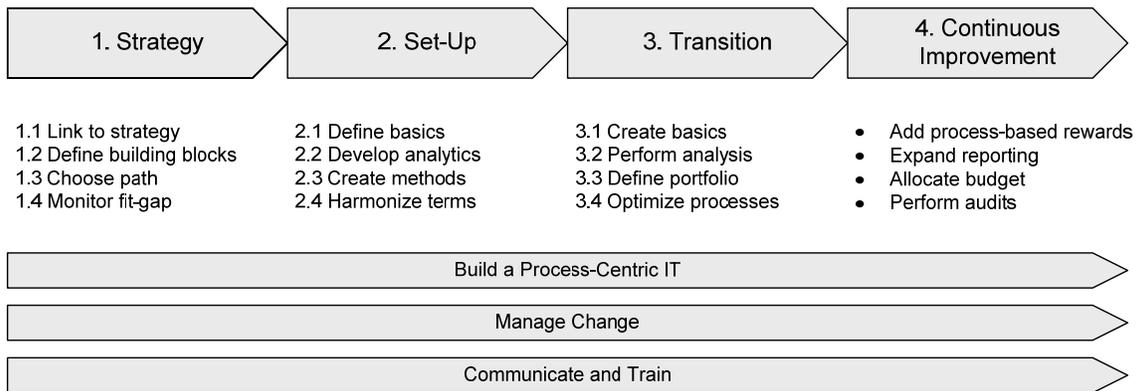


Figure 1. The SAP BPM Roadmap (After Snabe, et al)

The various authors work their way through every element of the Roadmap. They explain that it incorporates a Process Lifecycle Methodology, which is pictured in Figure 2. In this case we are looking at a systematic approach for improving a specific process.

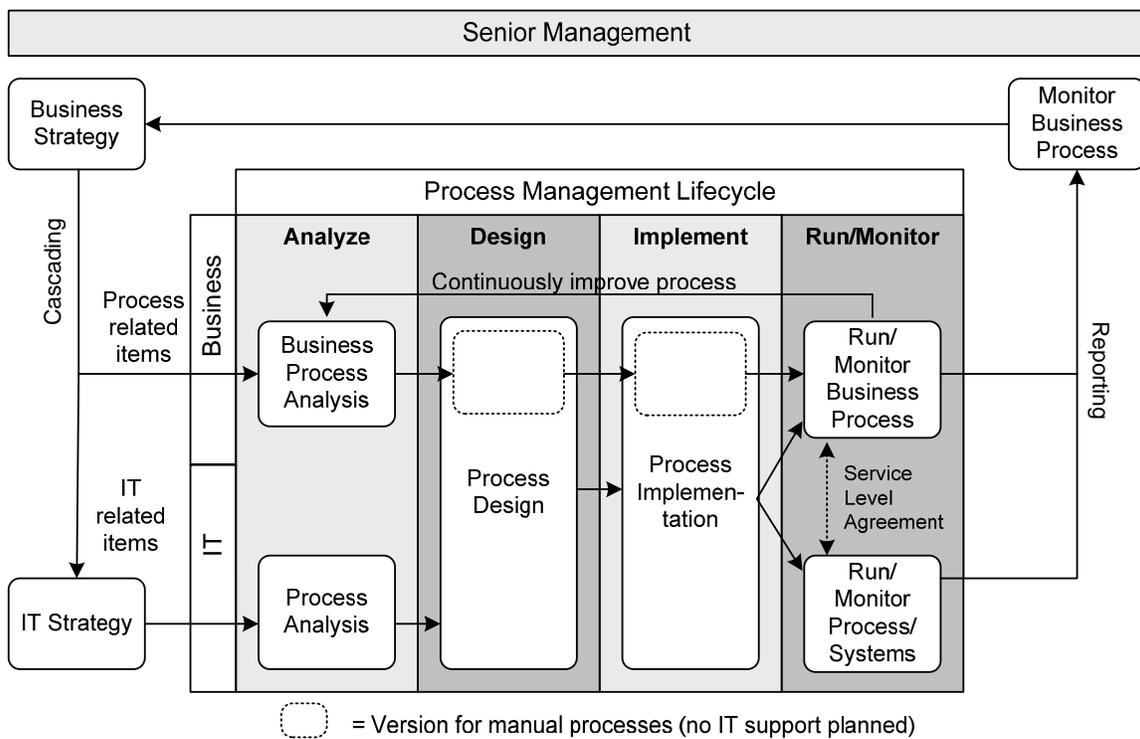


Figure 2. Interaction View of SAP PML methodology (After Snabe, et al)

I was impressed by the many interesting suggestions for how to establish process measurement systems and for ideas of how to best implement business process management. As I said, this is not just a book for technical practitioners but for business managers interested in how they might make their companies more process centric.

There is, of course, a part of the book given over to a discussion of ERP, NetWeaver, BPMS and SOA, and the discussion is balanced and reasonably informative. I'd certainly recommend that any organization that used SAP and was considering transitioning to BPMS read this book.

One very nice feature is the appendix in the back that compares the two case studies with a series of questions and the steps in the roadmap. The case studies themselves are good – one on Grundfos, a manufacturing company, and one on Wyeth, a New Jersey pharmaceutical company. In both cases the emphasis is on the transition and not on the specific processes that were being changed.

My complaints about this book are the complaints typical of books made up of many different articles. It needed a little more coordination. Early on Moller provided a diagram that shows the stages companies go through during a transition: functional, functional and process, process-centered, and then process oriented. Then, in a subsequent chapter we are assured that SAP is committed to be a “process-driven” company by 2010. A bit more awkward, most of the book focuses on the transition roadmap and the SAP PML model. But in a chapter late in the book, entitled “SAP's View on Business Process Management” the authors announce SAP's New BPM Methodology. The model shown there in no way resembles the earlier discussion. (It's a different approach to process redesign.) and it's labeled “The SAP Consulting BPM Methodology Spans from Business Process Analysis to Solution Transformation.” A reader could very well become confused at this point about who at SAP is supporting what. Has anyone told consulting that SAP has a roadmap and a Process Management Lifecycle methodology?

But these are quibbles, and, as I say, typical of books written by large groups of people. The main point remains. This is a book about how SAP and other companies seek to change themselves into more process centric organizations. It provides a roadmap and a wealth of information about the issues surrounding that process and suggests a variety of useful strategies. Anyone working on a process transition at their own organization would benefit from reading this book, and I highly recommend it.

Paul Harmon is the executive editor of Business Process Trends website and the author of *Process Change* (2nd Ed).