



Process Mapping, Process Improvement, and Process Management

Dan Madison

Paton Press, 2005, Softback \$26.95, 315 pages



Workflow Modeling

Alec Sharp and Patrick McDermott

Artech House, 2001,
Hardback, \$85.00 345 pages

Reviewed by Paul Harmon

This month I'll briefly review two books together so I can compare and contrast them. One of them, *Workflow Modeling, Tools for Process Improvement and Application Development*, by Alec Sharp and Patrick McDermott, was released in 2001, but has recently been given a new cover. The other, *Process Mapping, Process Improvement, and Process Management: A Practical Guide to Enhancing Work and Information Flow* by Dan Madison was released last year.

Let's start with *Process Mapping, Process Improvement, and Process Management*. The subtitle suggests that it's a practical guide to enhancing work and information flow. The book is well-written and approaches the subject in a systematic manner, introducing each subject carefully. It introduces a standard set of mapping symbols and teaches readers how to draw swimlane-based flowcharts. It offers a number of good ideas about analysis and reproduces the entire APQC Process Classification Framework in an Appendix. It doesn't say much about modeling tools, as such, but has a final chapter on simulation that suggests how a modeling/simulation tool can be used to simulate processes you want to examine. The most interesting chapters are those in which the author discusses Cross-Departmental Management and becoming a process-focused organization. I liked the way to authors approach analysis with four lenses: Frustration, Time, Cost, and Quality – but I would certainly have added Management. (There's a lot of confusion about process management. Suffice to say its one thing to organize managers throughout the company to manage processes in a systematic way and another thing to redesign a process and, in the course of the redesign, determine that changes in a specific manager's activities will improve the effectiveness of the particular process you are trying to improve.)

The chapters in *Process Mapping* are as follows:

1. The Importance of Process
2. Process Mapping
3. Key Stakeholders' Roles and Responsibilities
4. Getting Started on Process Improvement
5. The Ten-Step Redesign Methodology
6. Introduction to Process Improvement and Creating the Process Team
7. The Four Lenses of Analysis
8. Customer Report Card, Benchmarking, and Best Practices
9. Process Redesign Case Study
10. Design Principles for Process Redesign
11. Creating a Clean-Sheet Redesign
12. Barriers to Process Redesign
13. Becoming a Process-Focused Organization

14. Building Cross-Department Process Management
15. Using Dynamic Simulation in Business Process Management

Clearly the author has read the classic authors. He's created a nice synthesis of their ideas, and packaged them in an easy to read book. If you had a group of employees who had never read anything on business process redesign before, this might serve as a gentle introduction to the main ideas in the field.

Workflow Modeling by Alec Sharp and Patrick McDermott puts more emphasis on the fact that process work and information technology have become intertwined. Similarly, the authors have studied Lean and Six Sigma and work many of the ideas from those methodologies into their presentation. This book provides more information, but doesn't flow as smoothly as Madison's book. The basic sections are as follows:

- Part I The Convergence of Process and Systems
- Part II Framing the Process
- Part III Swimlane Diagrams—Nuts and Bolts
- Part IV Understanding the As-Is Process
- Part V The To-Be Process and Transition to System Requirements

The topics introduced under Parts II, III and IV are traditional and well-done, although these authors also seem to overlook the importance of the process manager's role in maintaining on-going processes. Similarly, they offer little help with processes that are primarily performed by employees, especially processes done by more sophisticated knowledge workers. In other words, this book, like *Process Modeling*, focuses on simpler processes that are going to be automated, and slants the analysis and redesign so it flows smoothly into data modeling and use cases. Thus, the book ends with the process analyst ready to hand off the process effort to IT developers. In fact, given the slant, this book is probably best conceptualized as a business process redesign book for IT process analysts.

Workflow Modeling does not spend time explaining workflow software approaches or tools, although the authors often seem to assume that any process to be automated will be automated with a workflow system. Thus, for example, the book, in spite of its slant toward IT, doesn't consider the use of ERP applications or Rule Based systems in any detail, limiting its use as an introduction to the various process automation solutions available from IT. (In essence, the "tools" in the subtitle refer to intellectual tools, in the sense the term is used in Six Sigma, and not software tools in the sense that it is more commonly used in IT.)

The world of business process management is changing very rapidly. There is a new emphasis on business architectures, on enterprise-wide process management, on the use of reference frameworks, like SCOR, to analyze problems, on business rules and knowledge management, and on using BPM software systems. Increasingly, specific process redesign projects will be driven by enterprise models that will pinpoint and prioritize projects based on a company-wide analysis. Similarly, redesign projects will be done in order to lay the groundwork for BPMS projects that will then facilitate the ongoing management and maintenance of the processes. None of these important transition issues are reflected in these books.

Workflow Modeling isn't a bad book, it simply isn't a great book. There are lots of OK books about how to draw process models, and how to go through the steps of redesigning a business process, and this is just one more. When you add the fact that it sells for \$85, it simply isn't a cost-effective addition to your BP library.

Process Mapping, Process Improvement, and Process Management is another OK book. It offers clean explanations, nice examples, and some interesting case studies. In the end though, it's just another book on how to draw process models and how to go through the steps involved in redesigning a business process. Given its more modest price, some firms might find it a good introductory book, but anyone whose read Rummler-Brache and Harrington will already be acquainted with everything on offer here.

Paul Harmon is the Executive Editor of Business Process Trends (www.bptrends.com), a recognized BPM analyst and consultant, and the author of *Business Process Change*.