



Down Under

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Leveraging your Business Process Management Skills!

The current economic climate is forcing many of us to focus on our employability rather than having the luxury of picking and choosing between jobs and our area of interest and expertise. In this column we will explore the options and possibilities available to BPM Professionals, and it is no surprise that the drivers that will make you a good BPM professional are the same drivers that make you a good overall business consultant or manager.

Suggested profile of a BPM Professional

An outstanding BPM professional will be expected to have the following ten characteristics:

- 1) **Results oriented**
BPM is not a goal in itself, but a means to achieve a higher business objective. Good BPM professionals within organizations let the results speak for themselves rather than becoming involved in detailed and often tedious discussions on methodologies or concepts. Remember, it is not how “beautiful” or complete your methodology or process models are, but how well they are suited for a purpose and audience. So, “start with the end in mind.” That is, work from the required business results backwards to deliver needs to be achieved for the business.
- 2) **Customer focus**
Any good BPM professional knows that the best way to overcome factional or political infighting and address functional silos is to view business processes from an end-to-end customer perspective, rather than looking at internal sub-optimization. Remember, the customer should be central to all activities performed by the organization.
- 3) **Employee focus**
A balance needs to be achieved between having customers at the center of our considerations and having employees at the center of our considerations. It is of no use having the very best business processes and outcomes for customers at the expense of employee satisfaction. Unless employees are happy and satisfied they will not be in a frame of mind to deliver a high standard of customer satisfaction and service.
- 4) **Holistic Overview**
It is important as BPM professionals to have a holistic view on any situation. Often, people zoom in on an endless amount of detail and data without addressing the most obvious issues. This is sometimes caused by people who are unable or unwilling to address the complete issue, and feel happy to review only parts of the solution. Remember to have a balanced view and an open opinion, ensuring that you continue to be part of the solution, rather than the problem.
- 5) **System thinking**
Successful BPM professionals embrace a system thinking approach, embodied by the plan-do-check-act cycle of Deming and a systematic analysis of any problems through

- root-cause analysis. Remember, system thinking will help you to identify the key drivers and factors for errors, behavior, and improvements.
- 6) **Visualization**
Good BPM professionals can simplify complex problems through easy to understand visualizations (e.g., a simple value-chain), where aspiring professionals overcomplicate issues by making process models or issues too complex and detailed. Remember that complex issues can be visualized in a simple way so long as you extract the key elements and know where to eliminate unnecessary detail or exceptions.
 - 7) **Creative thinking (thinking outside the box)**
True BPM professionals know how to break away from legacy processes and thinking. They will challenge the status quo and propose seemingly radical and innovative ideas. Without innovation, most improvement projects would be limited to “tweaking” within the margins without producing any significant change. There are many different techniques for creative thinking, such as role plays (“What do I want as a customer?”), or cross-fertilization of ideas from other industry sectors.
 - 8) **Ability to create momentum (It’s about people)**
Good BPM consultants have the ability to motivate and stimulate others to participate and excel. Successful BPM projects are never completed alone. A project will have multiple groups that are inspired by each other. Remember, process improvement is never a single point solution: It is a new way of thinking and working, where business processes are continuously reviewed and improved.
 - 9) **Use facts not just “noise”**
Seasoned BPM professionals will use facts to drive their analysis. It is inadequate to state that “*customer’s are always complaining.*” The questions should be: How many complaints, what type of complaints, what is the profile of the complaints, what is the root cause of the complaints, etc? Fit for purpose reporting is critical to understand what are the key trends, causes, and exceptions.
 - 10) **Everything is a process!**
Remember that any activity within an organization is a process itself, although not all processes are clear, well documented, and managed appropriately. When you identify each process, you will be in a better position to analyze and improve it.

Conclusion

If you are a senior BPM professional, we hope we have inspired you to strengthen your resume and have a wider view on possible engagements within your organization, external clients, or future roles.

If you are new to BPM and have less experience, then we hope we have provided you with suggestions on how to improve your skills and increase your role with BPM projects and your employability.

With BPMers filling more and more diverse roles within organizations, we all need to improve our broader understanding and adaptation of the BPM way of thinking, working, and obtaining results.