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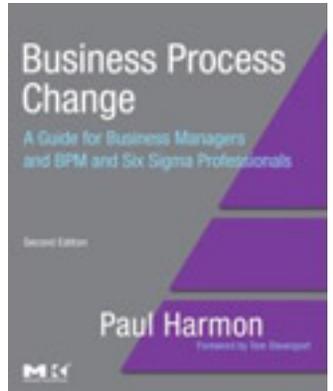


People and Change

When I talk about my career in business process change, I often point out that I began in the late Sixties, when process change had little or nothing to do with IT or software systems. What IT existed in the Sixties and early Seventies was confined to mainframes that ran in special rooms and dealt with punch cards. When people called us in to help them improve the way their processes worked, they were talking about people problems. They were figuring out what people should do, figuring out how to provide people with the skills or the motivation to perform as required, and figuring out how to change the work environments so people would perform more effectively.

Lean and Six Sigma are still largely about people - measuring what gets done and then thinking about how to change the way employees perform. Since the mid-Eighties, however, with the introduction of the PC, and then, in the mid-Nineties, with the widespread adoption of the Internet, process work has increasingly focused on process automation and on using information generated by automated systems to drive better business decisions. Indeed, if you read some of the articles on BPMS you might think that IT invented business process change.

In reality, no matter how much you automate, good performance always comes down to people. It is the employees that ultimately interface with customers when anything goes wrong, or



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when complex decisions need to be made. And it is the human managers who ultimately decide how to use the information that the systems provide.

If anything, as companies become more automated, people become more important. Companies with fewer employees need to cross train their employees and empower them to assure that they can provide a human face to the business when it is needed. This is especially true in service businesses - which now constitute about 75% of the US economy. Service businesses are characterized not by internal processes, but by the interface they offer customers - and that interface is usually provided by a human employee. Smiles and friendly words often make the difference between average and really enjoyable service.

Harvard Business School researcher, James Heskett, has spent the last several years demonstrating the importance of loyal customers to successful businesses. They spend more and cost less to maintain. And the secret to keeping them - employees! Loyal customers are especially responsive to those little courtesies and perks that only motivated employees can provide.

Those involved in IT sometimes complain that their concerns are more formal and predictable, while techniques aimed at improving the human aspects of a process are fuzzy and less precise. This is often true, but it is not necessarily a sign of poor design. It simply reflects the fact that people are more difficult to manage than machines.

One group that is especially focused on the interface of process change and human performance is the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI), an association that draws change professionals from a number of different

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disciplines. If readers don't know about ISPI and are interested in an organization that focuses on defining and studying techniques for human performance improvement, we urge you to check out www.ispi.org.

BPTrends has tried to balance its coverage of business process change, devoting as much attention to people issues as it does to the technological and automation aspects of process change. We've had two columnists who have written extensively on human performance issues - Guy Wallace, a former president of ISPI, and Keith Harrison-Broninski, author of *Human Interactions: The Heart and Soul of BPM*. Here, in no particular order, are a few of the articles we have published in the last few years that readers will find useful when they try to think about the human element in BPM.

[Human Processes: The \\$650 Billion Problem](#) by Keith Harrison-Broninski - July 01, 2008

Keith Harrison-Broninski contends that globalization, reduction in labor demand, and worldwide recession are leading to a sea change in collaborative knowledge work. Read his compelling analysis of the impact these major market forces will inevitably have on knowledge workers and what managers can do to optimize the performance of their staff in this challenging business environment.

[The Future of BPM: An Introduction to Human Interaction Management and RAD](#) by Keith Harrison-Broninski - July 11, 2006

Keith Harrison-Broninski begins a new series on Human Interaction Management and RAD (Role Activity Diagrams) by discussing the future he sees for BPMS and the role that he believes modeling techniques can play in this future.

[Human Processes: Hyper-Productivity](#) by Keith Harrison-Broninski - May 06, 2008
Keith Harrison-Broninski contends that improvement of the way people do collaborative knowledge work is the necessary next step in IT and business management. If you agree, his Column this month is a must read. If you're not sure, read his Column for some substantive advice on how to manage a large software project both efficiently and effectively.

[Improving Performance: Enterprise Process Performance Improvement](#) by Guy Wallace - June 06, 2006
In this Column, Guy Wallace extends his ongoing description of Human Performance Technology to include an enterprise process model for performance improvement.

[Improving Performance: Peak Performance Requires a Balance](#) by Guy Wallace - March 07, 2006
Guy Wallace continues his in-depth discussion of Human Performance Technology. This month, he looks at the interaction between human factors and environmental factors in the design of performance improvement solutions.

[What Is Expertise](#) by Rob Foshay - September 05, 2006
Rob Foshay is a human performance technologist and researcher who has done a lot of work in cognitive task analysis. Various authors have suggested that communication and knowledge work require special approaches. Dr. Foshay examines the current work in cognitive task analysis and suggests some of the techniques needed to capture the knowledge and skill sets of human experts.

[Alternative Approaches to Process Analysis and Modeling](#) by Paul Harmon -

July 19, 2006

There are a number of process analysis models that are designed to focus on more complex human interactions. One example is the RAD approach of Oulds and Harrison-Broninski and another is the Closed-Loop Business Interaction Model of Winograd and Flores. Both are useful in special circumstances, but neither replaces a basic workflow diagram.

[Whither Training? Less in the Classroom, More in the Workflow](#) by Allison Rossett -
March 06, 2007

Allison Rossett discusses the positive aspects of the shift from classroom-based instruction to the broader and more effective arena of blended learning, where the focus is on improving performance while employees remain in the workplace, not in the classroom.

[A Strategist's Perspective: Competing with Process Innovation](#) by Jim Sinur -
March 04, 2008

In his Column this month, Jim Sinur brings a different perspective-a "softer" one-to the conversation about process innovation. He presents seven anecdotes, which he calls "seven symbols of success," that demonstrate how process innovation can be applied to improve human relations and interactions. From avoiding railroad disasters to handling the devastating effects of hurricanes, these stories offer a compelling read.

[Aligning People with Business Processes](#)
by Dennis Rohan - June 03, 2008

How do you achieve the challenging task of creating a team of individuals committed to business process methods and the processes they support? Dennis Rohan shares his years of leadership consulting experience and provides five steps using BPL standards to accomplish a robust alignment of people and process. Read his Article for a method with a proven track record.

[Respect for People](#) by James Womack -
February 04, 2008

James Womack's notion of "respect for people," a core value in most corporations, may surprise you. In this Article, he compares and contrasts the implementation of that value in two distribution centers in the same city. The results are fascinating and well worth the read.

[Human Performance Technology](#) by

Donald Tosti - February 07, 2006

Donald Tosti is one of the leading consultants in Human Performance Technology and the past-president of the International Society for Performance Improvement. In this White Paper he provides an overview of the HPT approach which focuses on improving processes by improving the performance of the people who implement the process.

[BPM - Too Much BP but Not Enough of the M](#) by Derek Miers - November 02, 2004

Derek Miers reviews a case study and concludes that BPM isn't putting enough emphasis on people or on management.

[Managing BP: The Case of the Reluctant Engineer](#) by Joe Francis - October 05, 2004

In this Column, Joe Francis talks about how HP's Process Improvement team approaches different groups within HP. It turns out that it is relatively easy to work with sales people to install a new process and it is rather hard to work with IT and new product engineers.

[Managing BPM: Rethinking Resources](#) by Joe Francis - September 07, 2004

Joe Francis argues that most companies don't manage processes in a very effective manner. He discusses best practices we take for granted in managing people and IT development and points out

that we never seem to get around to applying some of those same principles to managing business processes. Joe makes a good case and urges managers to be more disciplined in the management of their organization's business processes.

[The Process of Working With People: Person-to-Person Business Process Management](#) by Howard Smith and Peter Fingar - September 07, 2004

In this Article, Howard Smith and Peter Fingar discuss the development of processes that involve interactions between people, either employee-to-employee interactions, or interactions between employees and customers or suppliers. In all of these cases, process improvement means structuring these people-to-people interactions so they are more efficient and productive. Smith and Fingar suggest that modeling based on human intentions can help.

[Behavior Matters: Upgrading the People Perspective in Balanced Scorecards](#) by Steve Shoonover - January 06, 2004
Steve Shoonover takes a look at the Balanced Scorecard and considers how the people perspective can be better represented in this important management tool.

Till next time,

Paul Harmon, Executive Editor

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