Super Users in Action: Training Process Maturity on Individual Leve

Laila Mara Pesoa

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In previous articles we have defined the Super User role [1] and showed the impact it has on an organization through a case study [2]. It is now time to go into detail into the different dimensions of this role:

- Knowledge Management
- Internal documentation
- Training
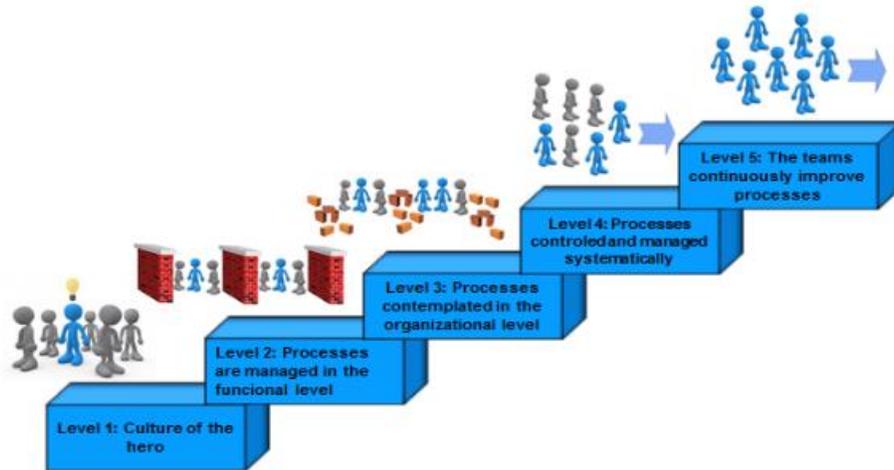- Channel and filter for improvements

This article is about Training, and why the training provided by a Super User is so unique.

Aiming at a higher maturity

When evaluating a company's maturity in Business Process Management, one can measure the maturity of the company as a whole, or of each individual department. For a company to grow in maturity, is it necessary that each department does – especially if you intend to go from level 3 to level 4.

While there are departments that do not see the process end-to-end, it is very difficult to change the reactive attitude of the company to an active attitude towards BPM, where the departments for themselves work together and look for ways of improving the processes they are involved in. A department that is behind will always need to be pushed with the support of the Business Process Office, who assumes the lead on the projects of improvement. This is why even though some of the departments analyzed can be considered ready to enter in level 4, they do not: they are restrained by the less mature departments.

See illustration [1] below for the different levels of maturity.

Level 1: Culture of the hero

Level 2: Processes are managed in the funcional level

Level 3: Processes contemplated in the organizational level

Level 4: Processes controled and managed systematically

Level 5: The teams continuously improve processes

However, there is something much harder to measure: each individual's maturity in Process Management. Why is this important? Because the organization is made up of people, and only when they develop process thinking will the organization be also a "process thinker".

Focus on the individual

This relationship between company and department is also applicable to the department and the individuals. A department that only has one person who is interested in BPM is at the first level of maturity, still in the culture of the Hero. It only grows in maturity if more people start understanding what a process is, see the processes inside of the department, then "break the walls" and see the entire process, and finally understand the need and the benefits of being active in improving the processes. This may sound obvious, but our action plans to implement process management on the organizations rarely include something that deals with the individual level.

One reason for this is that it is just not manageable if all the effort is in the hands of the Business Process Office or a centralized team. Such a team can provide trainings for larger groups of people, be sure everyone in the company has at least "heard about it". But you cannot train each person individually and be sure each one really heard and incorporated it. This is simply impossible – unless you have Super Users.

The Super User as a coach

 Super Users are key to successfully leading each person through the various levels of maturity[2] On the one hand, being responsible for the training in his/her department, the Super User knows his/her team's gaps in knowledge and plans the training accordingly. On the other hand, since he/she is also in direct contact with people each day, he/she is able to identify in which stage each person is, and work so that each one climbs each stair in this evolution. The Super User has the possibility of acting as a coach of BPM for the people of his/her department, helping each one to understand and assimilate the concepts at his/her own pace, and presenting things in a way that may be attractive to each one.

This is not doable if all of the people managing processes are on one centralized team. Such a team does not see the reality of each team and of each person. Also, individuals receive

and incorporate information that comes from a peer or from an external party differently. It is both a matter of trust and of judging how much this person actually knows about the work and "feels my pain". We will talk about the trust aspect on a future article.

Mark Nestle, Global Director of Productivity at Praxair, describes the coaching aspect of the Process professional this way: "More process professionals are starting to see themselves as a facilitator or coach rather than a consultant to the business. That important shift means that it is the role of process professional to coach the business on how to apply the tools to solve their own problems. Similarly, as companies embed the capability for process excellence within business units, there may be less need for resources to be allocated full time to a process excellence deployment." (PEX, 2013) [3]

Coaching is fundamental and, if well done, is much more effective than formal training in BPM. Not everyone needs to know all the techniques of mapping processes and measuring its development, and trainings about this may be seen as something with questionable practical application, heavy and unavoidable. People can go through the training and fulfil all required tasks without developing process thinking. The process thinking is assimilated in each person in a different way. It is a matter of changing mentality, working with values, and turning knowledge and values into attitude. This can only happen with time, and respecting each person's own process.

The Super User will l help each person grow in BPM maturity, and since people make the company, the company will also grow [2].

Author

Laila Māra Pesoa

Laila Māra Pesoa (Pessôa) is a process and knowledge management expert with focus on organizational learning and continuous improvement. Having started as CAPM certified by PMI (Project Management Institute) and graduated in Business Administration in Ibmec Business School, Laila developed for her final Bachelor's project the Model BPM 6x5 (BPM 6 by 5: a self-assessment model to measure and develop action plans for the company to grow in Maturity in Business Process Management (BPM)). However, her focus has gone beyond structuring the company's processes. By combining concepts of BPM, Knowledge Management and Project Management, she works to enable the company's growth in Maturity in Business Process Management by developing on people a knowledge-sharing and process-oriented mindset to enable and strengthen a Continuous Improvement culture. Her Master's studies at the University of Latvia in Strategic management & Leadership concluded with a Master thesis proposing the use of Super User role (both process and knowledge specialist) to enable the company's growth in maturity in Business Process Management. Now Laila is an ambassador of the Super User concept, and part of the Leader Board of SunSource (https://www.sunsource.io/), a community dedicated to Super Users and their leaders. This goes hand-in-hand with her experience in systems development. In Cabot Corporation, Laila had a key role on the upgrade of the company's ERP system by supporting testing, progress follow-up, quality control of testing evidence and improvement of testing scripts master for all company's process areas. Laila has led projects both in non-governmental associations and companies, in Brazil and Latvia, on National, European (Erasmus+ projects) and Global levels. She is fluent in Portuguese, English, Spanish and Latvian.

lailamrvp@gmail.com
Linkedin: https://www.linkedin.com/in/laila-m%C4%81ra-pesoa-pess%C3%B4a-13570625/

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