

**HARMON on BPM PAUL HARMON JULY 4, 2019**

This Spring I published the fourth edition of *Business Process Change*. I wrote the first edition of this book in 2002 and published it in early 2003, at the same time that I launched the [www.bptrends.com](http://www.bptrends.com) website. The website was originally intended to be an extension of the book, providing a way for me to update the book and provide additional information to those who read the book. As often happens, the website took on a life of its own and became a more general place for people to publish and exchange information on process work, and I've been happy to see it grow and prosper over the past decades.

When I sat down to write the first book, I was impressed that no process books seemed to cover the whole range of options. There were books on the problems of automating business processes, there were books on Six Sigma, and there were books on how to improve human performance in processes, but nothing that seemed to pull together all the options and suggest when a specific approach might be most productive. I tried to write such a book – a book that could serve as a handbook for a business process practitioner and provide the practitioner with information about all the options and what worked best when. The book was received with quite a bit of enthusiasm.

Just after my book came out, however, Howard Smith and Peter Finger published *Business Process Management: The Third Wave*. Their book focused on the use of the Internet and associated software techniques to model business processes and then automate them. There were already many software tools on the market to do process modeling or workflow, but a new class of BPM software tools attracted a lot of new attention and a period of active business process enthusiasm ensued. A new set of conferences sprang up to cater to people who wanted to learn about Business Process Management Software. The interest encouraged the growth of the BPTrends website and the sale of my book, as well as Smith and Finger's book.

In the course of the next few years, the interest in process change grew rapidly and we expanded the website and began to offer training courses that taught the process development methodology that I'd introduced in the book.

I prepared a second edition of *Business Process Change* in 2007. In the second edition I rearranged the content to better reflect the courses we were offering. In developing and teaching the courses I'd learned a lot about how to order the analysis of business problems and how to choose among intervention options and I tried to capture that information. I'd worked with Roger Burlton on the training courses and learned the value of a variety of new techniques that Burlton had developed. We'd also learned a lot about the difference between working with companies on process improvement and working on higher-level process architecture issues and tried to capture that as well. In addition, of course, the field was developing rapidly and I tried to keep the book comprehensive by adding more options and techniques.

Things proceed as they had and I prepared a third edition of Business Process Change in 2014. The third edition was primarily focused on adding lots of specific new techniques. I also worked to add an elaborate new case study to show how all the techniques might be integrated in actually dealing with a complex process problem.

I began preparing a fourth edition a couple of years ago and published it in the Spring of 2019. The fourth edition recognized that the book was increasingly being used by college students, that it required lots of corrections about specifics, and new references, etc. By 2019 the interest in BPM software had died down and companies were more interested in other aspects of process work – specifically the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques and “dynamic” techniques that made it easier to modify processes during execution – and I tried to add an introduction to those topics.

I tried to eliminate some information from each edition, but, in fact, each has grown larger, making it a better handbook, but a bit harder to simply read as an introduction to the field of process change.

Business Process Change records almost 20 years of change in the process environment. In essence, process has evolved from a field dominated by the practices used by a variety of consultants hired by companies when faced with specific problems to a profession, taught in college, and managed by professionals at companies. An increasing number of those professionals are found in IT departments, but others are scattered in operations, human resources and in corporate and divisional BPM groups in large organizations.

## AUTHOR

### Paul Harmon

Executive Editor and Founder, Business Process Trends In addition to his role as Executive Editor and Founder of Business Process Trends, Paul Harmon is Chief Consultant and Founder of BPTrends Associates, a professional services company providing educational and consulting services to managers interested in understanding and implementing business process change. Paul is a noted consultant, author and analyst concerned with applying new technologies to real-world business problems. He is the author of *Business Process Change: A Manager's Guide to Improving, Redesigning, and Automating Processes* (2003). He has previously co-authored *Developing E-business Systems and Architectures*(2001), *Understanding UML* (1998), and *Intelligent Software Systems Development* (1993). Mr. Harmon has served as a senior consultant and head of Cutter Consortium's Distributed Architecture practice. Between 1985 and 2000 Mr. Harmon wrote Cutter newsletters, including *Expert Systems Strategies*, *CASE Strategies*, and *Component Development Strategies*. Paul has worked on major process redesign projects with Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Security Pacific, Prudential, and Citibank, among others. He is a member of ISPI and a Certified Performance Technologist. Paul is a widely respected keynote speaker and has developed and delivered workshops and seminars on a wide variety of topics to conferences and major corporations through out the world. Paul lives in Las Vegas. Paul can be reached at [pharmon@bptrends.com](mailto:pharmon@bptrends.com) [Facebook](#)[Twitter](#)

