Harmon on BPM Paul Harmon

Business Process Conferences

Process conferences have fallen on hard times. Ten years ago there were a lot of exciting process conferences. Today there aren't so many. Conferences are primarily supported by software vendors, and today's dearth of conferences suggests that there are few process software vendors who think it likely they will get enough sales from a conference to bother sponsoring one. The process market has its ups and downs and we are currently in a lull, waiting for some new development to put fresh wind in the process sails.

Meantime, I had a process manager at a company ask for advice as to what conferences he might attend. I did a search, and here's what I came up with, along with my frank comments.

- Sept. 10-15, 2017. **BPM 2017 – The International Conference on BPM**. Barcelona, Spain. bpm-conference.org

This is THE BPM conference for academics and researchers. I'd go to this if I could, and recommend it to a student of BPM. It isn't a conference I'd recommend for business practitioners, however – its way too technical and academic.

- Sept 25-28, 2017. **Brainstorm Process Conferences,** BPM Institute. Washington DC. www.bpminstitute.org/events.

Not really a conference, but a set of tutorials, some good, some not so good. I wouldn't recommend as a conference, though if you see a class that interests you, it might be worthwhile.

- Oct. 2-6, 2017. **APQC Process & Performance Conference.** Houston TX. www.apqc.org/process-conference

A good conference, if you are a member of APQC. Emphasis on benchmarks and process work by APQC members.

- Oct 16-19, 2017 **IRM UK BPM Conference – Europe**. London. irmuk.co.uk/events/business-process-management-conference-europe

This European BPM conference, chaired by Roger Burlton, has been going on for a long time and is still a conference I'd recommend to business practitioners, assuming you live

in the UK, or are willing to travel. It usually has a nice mix of papers and tutorials on new ideas and applications.

- Nov 6-10, 2017 **BBC 2017. Building Business Capability**. Orlando FL. www.buildingbusinesscapability.com

A conference with a mix of business rules, business process, enterprise architecture and more, all dominated by IIBA's approach to business analysis. The good news is that Roger Burlton works to assemble the process speakers. The bad news is that there aren't all that many of them. If you are a business analyst with an interest in process, this is probably a good conference. If you have a special interest in business rules and decision management, you might find it useful. If you are a process manager, I'd give it a pass.

So, unless my friend, the process manager, uses APQC benchmarks or wants to travel to Europe, there isn't anything I'd recommend for this fall.

Spring 2018 is a different story.

bpmNext is an intimate conference in Santa Barbara that is technical, but very exciting. It's attended by senior technical people from leading vendors and tends to focus on where modeling techniques and process automation are trending.

IBM's **Watson World**, in Las Vegas, in the spring, will be mostly about developments in AI, but it will showcase technologies and applications that will represent the future of process work. This one I'll be sure to attend.

In addition, either **ASQ's Lean Six Sigma Conference**, or **AQI's Lean & Six Sigma World Conference** would be worth attending. Both will focus on Lean and Six Sigma rather than on BPM or process automation, but there is a lot of good work going on in Lean and Six Sigma and a process manager would get a lot of good ideas at either conference.

Beyond these events, there are lots of local or more specialized conferences that I know less about. PEX's Lean Six Sigma Conference on Insurance applications is a good example. And there are the process software vendor conferences that are usually worthwhile, if you are already using a specific software tool.

Sorry I can't be more helpful. As I say, conferences have fallen on hard times. Still, if you want to get together with other process practitioners sometime in the course of the next twelve months, there are at least a couple of reasonably good options.

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