

## **Assessing and Further Developing your BPM Approach with the 10 Principles of Good Business Process Management**

*In this note we present a tool, which organizations can use in order to assess and systematically further develop their BPM approach. Based on the 10 Principles of Good BPM, the tool presents a set of easy to answer questions and creates a BPM Radar Diagram that provides clear orientation on how to further develop the BPM approach.*

### **Introduction**

Business Process Management (BPM) is a matured management discipline, that has proven largely successful in supporting both efficiency and effectiveness of business processes (van der Aalst, ter Hofstede, & Weske, 2003; vom Brocke et al., 2014a; vom Brocke et al., 2014b). However, the adoption of BPM in practice has shown to be a challenge for many companies, and one of the reasons is the lack of comprehensively scoping BPM (Rosemann & vom Brocke 2015). Many organizations are applying only single components of BPM, such as process modeling and workflow management systems, while managerial components, such as strategic alignment, governance, people and culture, are neglected (vom Brocke et al., 2014b).

There are various research attempts regarding successful adoption of BPM such as critical success factors (CSFs) (e.g. Trkman, 2010, Ravesteyn & Batenburg, 2010, Alibabaei, Badakhshan, & Alibabaei, 2017, and Škrinjar & Trkman, 2013), and BPM maturity models (BPMs) (e.g. De Bruin & Rosemann, 2005, Lee, Lee, & Kang, 2007, Van Looy, 2013, Van Looy, 2014) that could serve as guidance for organizations in the early stages.

Although research on CSFs and BPMs is important to provide generic and specific guidelines to implement BPM, such contributions remain too generic and leave companies with too little guidance on how to approach and implement BPM (vom Brocke et al., 2014b). As a matter of fact, principles of good BPM practices have

been researched and documented for the past decade, and the results are available to be used in practice (vom Brocke et al., 2014a; vom Brocke et al., 2014b).

In this note we present a measurement tool to be used to measure the fitness of an organization regarding the ten principles of good BPM.

We will begin by summarizing the ten principles and then present the measurement tool and, subsequently, discuss how to interpret the results and how to take subsequent action.

## The Ten Principles of Good BPM

According to vom Brocke et al. (2014b), the ten principles of good BPM represent essential capabilities for mastering both contemporary and future challenges in BPM practices. The principles allow BPM experts to scope their initiatives and provide guidance for BPM implementations. These principles are briefly described in the following (comprehensive explanation can be found in the Class notes [October 7th 2014](#)):

### Principle of Purpose

The principle of purpose (PU) refers to the alignment of BPM to the strategic mission and goals of an organization while focusing on the strategic value creation of BPM. This principle is concerned with organizational change and indicates the requirements to align BPM to strategic purposes such as gaining efficiency, networking with partners, increasing agility, and enforcing compliance. Research, for instance, has investigated methods of assessing the value-contribution of BPM initiatives (vom Brocke, Recker, Mendling 2010).

### Principle of Continuity

The principle of continuity (CO) refers to a durable practice that facilitates long-term gains in the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational processes. Although quick wins and solving specific issues are important, organizations should consider that continuous BPM facilitates continuous improvements and increases the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational processes. Establishing cultural values supportive for BPM has been found to be an effective means to contribute to continuity (Schmiedel et al. 2019).

### Principle of Involvement

The principle of involvement (IN) refers to the active integration of all BPM stakeholder groups and their commitment in all stages of BPM. One of the threats to organizational change is resistance from employees. This principle has the goal of overcoming this threat by involving all stakeholders who are affected. The involvement of stakeholders is crucial to the success of process change and business performance.

### Principle of Institutionalization

The principle of institutionalization (INST) refers to the governance of business processes and the roles and responsibilities that are embedded in the organizational

structure. Markus, for example, has discussed different structures of BPM governance (Markus, L, 2015). In order to embed BPM in the structure of an organization, a BPM center of excellence is suggested to support the organization by raising the level of process orientation (Rosemann 2010).

## **Principle of Joint Understanding**

The principle of joint understanding (JU) refers to a shared meaning of BPM and a common language that allows analysis and frames organizational processes. A common understanding of processes is needed to have process thinking be pervasive process thinking within the organizational culture. Stakeholders must have a shared understanding of the different aspects of process, such as process models, strategy, BPM concepts and workflows and the impact of BPM on creating value for organization.

## **Principle of Enablement**

The principle of enablement (EN) refers to the need to develop individual competencies and organizational capabilities that enable effective response to current and future needs of BPM. Organizations should know that before purchasing tools or hiring consultants, that they should invest in their own capabilities to best fulfill their process objectives. It is crucial to be aware that BPM should not be limited to ad hoc solutions from external consultants or providers.

## **Principle of Holism**

The principle of holism (HO) refers to an inclusive scope of BPM that covers the entire organization and comprises all aspects of BPM. In order to have a successful BPM implementation,, organizations should not focus only on one department or a single process. There are two important points that organizations must consider. First, they should run BPM through a value chain and second they should have holistic considerations of strategic, technical, social, and methodological aspects (vom Brocke et al., 2014b). The actions might focus on specific parts but the general approach in executing BPM should be holistic.

## **Principle of Technology Appropriation**

The principle of technology appropriation (TA) refers to the suitable use of IT systems to foster the efficiency and effectiveness of business processes. This principle has an effect on the continuity of process improvements and the growth of the transformational capability of organizations.

## **Principle of Simplicity**

The principle of simplicity (SI) refers to investing an economically reasonable amount of resources (e.g. effort, time, money) regarding strategic, technical, staffing, and other aspects of BPM. It is important to use simple solutions and avoid over-engineering in order to achieve organizational goals and have more efficient and effective business processes.

## Principle of Context-Awareness

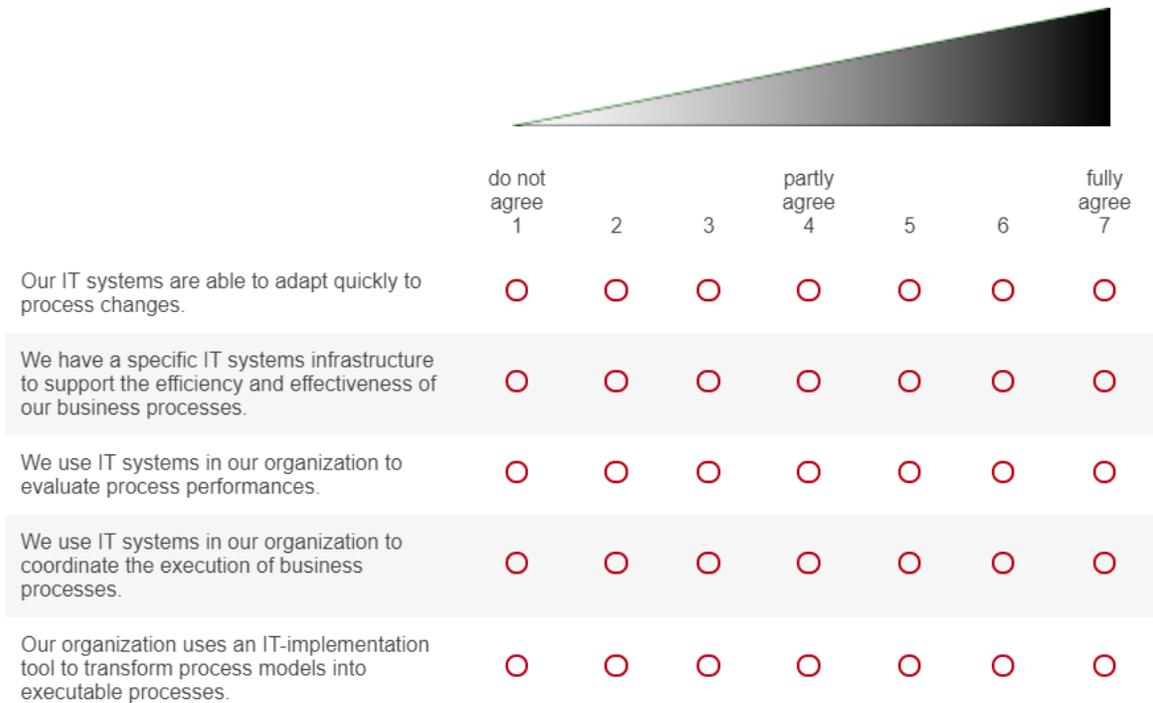
The principle of context awareness (CA) refers to the adaptation on of an organization's BPM to the given organizational settings and general contingency factors in the management of business processes (vom Brocke et al. 2016). Organizations should avoid using a cookbook approach for all processes. In order to have a successful BPM implementation, it must fit the circumstances of the organization, and managing each process should fit the nature of that specific process. Zelt et al. have developed the BPM context framework that helps to analyze the different types of processes are relevant in an organization (Zelt et al. 2018a, Zelt et al. 2018b). For instance, the degree of repetitiveness, creativity, and variability of the process play an important role among the 14 factors differentiated in the framework (vom Brocke et al. 2015).

## The Measurement Tool for the Ten Principles of Good BPM

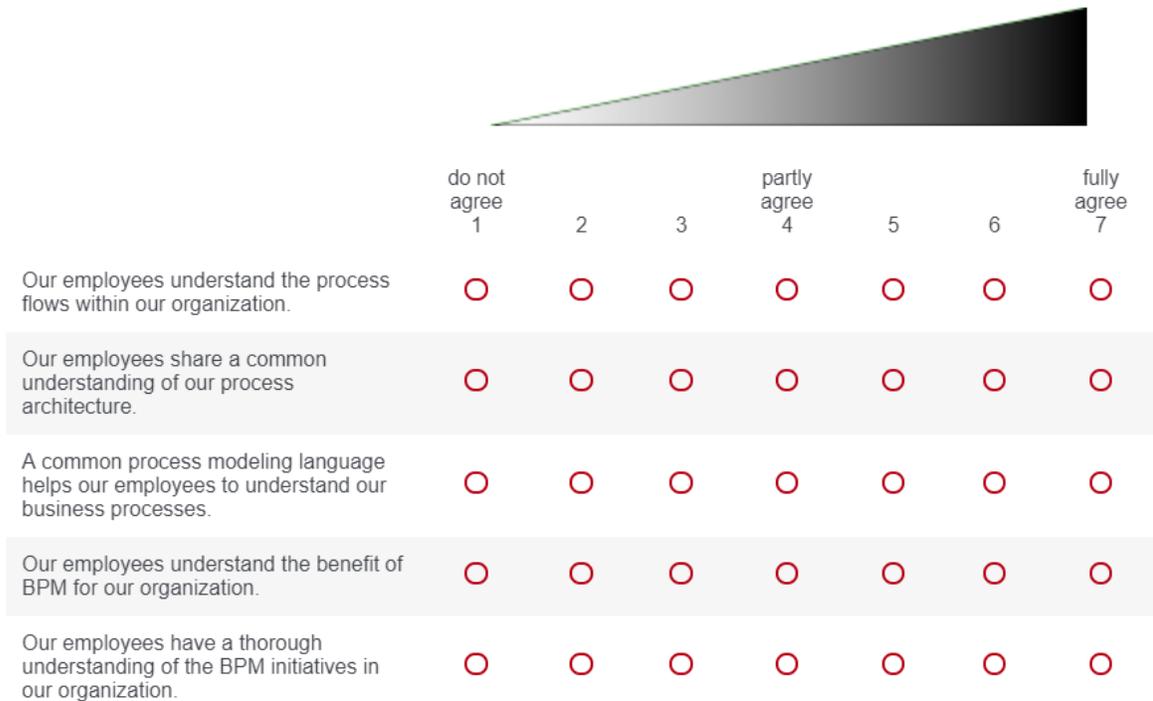
In applying the ten principles of good BPM in practice, we have learned that organizations feel inspired by the principles and that the principles actually serve well in guiding organizations in scoping and managing their BPM approaches. We have also learned that companies applying the ten principles also want to learn to what extent they would actually need each of the principles to more precisely improve their BPM approach.

We have therefore taken our research further to develop a tool that enables the measurement and fitness of an organization relating to the 10 principles. Technically, we have operationalized the ten principles through a validated measurement scale, applying a well-known methodology for scale development adapted from (Schmiedel, vom Brocke, & Recker, 2014). After conducting various rounds of literature review, interviews, surveys, workshops, and statistical analysis, the measurement model (Figure 1) was designed based on formative and reflective relations (MacKenzie et al., 2011) and (Freeze & Raschke, 2007). The measurement model consists of 3-5 easy to understand questions regarding each principle, which – according to the literature and expert opinion – are suited best to measure the degree to which this principle is fulfilled in a certain area of the organization. We have used a free survey tool to make the questions accessible and to be provided with an evaluation.

Below, we give an example of the questions regarding the principle of Technology Appropriation (Figure 1) and the principle of Joint Understanding (Figure 2).

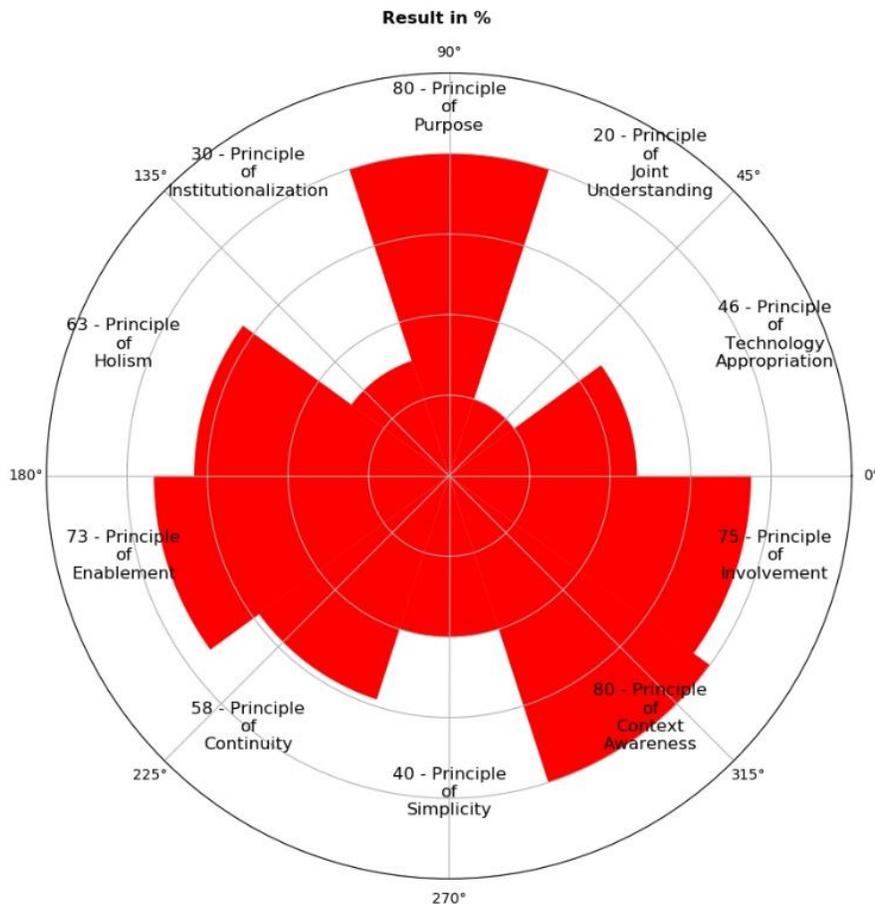


**Figure 1. Questions regarding the principle of Technology Appropriation**



**Figure 2. Questions regarding the principle of Joint Understanding**

For each question, users provide answers based on a scale from 1 to 7, and their answers are based on their subjective opinion and judgement. The value of 1 indicates "Do not agree" and is the lowest level of the scale, the value of 7 indicates "Completely Agree" and is the highest value of the scale. At the end of the survey, there is a set of questions that ask how important each principle for the organization is as well as some process performance related questions. This allows an interesting analysis to be carried out. Figure 3 shows the result of an example assessment of a client organization.



**Figure 3. BPM Radar Diagram– Assessing and Further Developing Your BPM approach**

The tool allows screening an organization's BPM approach and clearly highlights areas for further development. The BPM Radar Diagram displays, to what extent each of the 10 Principles of Good BPM is incorporated in the organization. The performance level in each principle increases from the center to the outside of the graph. A 0% value indicates that the organization has not (yet) implemented that specific principle, while a 100% value indicates very good performance in that

principle. The colored spaces in each principle section indicate the performance in this area. The larger the shaded space, the stronger the organization is regarding that particular principle. Organizations can view the non-shaded parts of each principle as areas for specific improvement.

A free version of the tool is available on <http://bpm-principles.org/assessment>. Readers are invited to try it and be provided an assessment of their own organization's fitness regarding the 10 principles of good BPM.

Many companies appreciate a more detailed analysis of their BPM fitness, particularly focusing on their specific units as well as the demographics of their workforce. Clients, for instance, have used the tool to develop a BPM strategy and roadmap specific to their organization. Others have used it to develop roll-out strategies for BPM initiative to start in areas first where the highest fitness could be measured, so as to create success cases which, then, motivate other areas of the organization as well.

## Stay in Touch

Please feel free to get in touch with us in case you would like to learn more about our latest research or if you would like to try out the tool in your own organization. Contact: [jan.vom.brocke@uni.li](mailto:jan.vom.brocke@uni.li)

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