

## **The Role of a Governance Committee**

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The Governance Committee is an often-discussed but rarely understood component of governance. Your organization has successfully pushed a handful of applications to production, you've got a support structure in place, and everything looks great! You perhaps even have a few BPM experts who act like a Center of Excellence, and keep your processes from running into errors in production. Surely you don't need this extra paperwork/ meeting/ responsibility - you're doing just fine!

No, you aren't. Why? We are all human. *Communication* is the Achilles' heel of even groups with the best of intentions. A Governance Committee is tasked with:

- Resolving conflicts

- Communicating with executives and business areas interested in BPM
- Assisting in securing funding for BPM growth through sharing historical knowledge with new teams

- Ensuring teams are adhering to their outlined roles and responsibilities

From a tactical perspective, this committee is typically staffed with representatives from the other internal teams: CoE, Sustainability Engineering, Program Management, Portfolio Management, as well as representatives from the business areas utilizing BPM.

One final member, sometimes unique to the Governance Committee itself, is a BPM Evangelist. This charismatic individual becomes the "face" of BPM for your organization, advocating its appropriate use within new business areas, as well as spreading awareness of BPM capabilities within the company as a whole.

Depending on the size and speed of growth of the BPM initiative within your organization, this group meets on a monthly or quarterly basis.

Let's take a deeper dive into the responsibilities of this wide range of people, along with a few examples illustrating the importance of the group:

#### **Conflict Resolution**

The strengths of reusability and a single work platform come with a unique set of challenges. The experts within the Governance Committee use their wide-ranging knowledge of the business, user base, and technology to come up with a well-considered response to each challenge.

For instance, I have a client with an integration to SharePoint leveraged by multiple applications that are in various lifecycle states (some with no active development, others with development underway). SharePoint was upgraded and its integration point changed, and the mutually shared BPM component needed to be updated. Who was responsible for making the update? Who was responsible for regression testing everything to make sure no applications broke due to the change? How

should this update pushed to prod, potentially coordinating simultaneous releases of the related applications? What if one of the business/product owners disagreed with the change?

Another example may be an upgrade of the platform itself. One business/product owner was excited about a new feature for their application currently being developed. Meanwhile, another business/product owner considered it too high of a risk against their current project schedule and didn't want to take on the cost burden of regression testing in the current fiscal year. CoE also weighed in with their opinion of the stability of the release. Who wins?

The Governance Committee has the difficult task of determining the resolution to these questions with the benefit of insight into the entire BPM initiative within your company.

### **Communication**

A Governance Committee typically reports to a steering committee and is responsible for providing a concise, cohesive look at all of the separate puzzle pieces that make up the BPM landscape at your company. Likewise, the Governance Committee oversees broader company communications of ROI, typically in the form of newsletters or presentations at company events.

The Evangelist member mentioned earlier often owns this committee item, though with input/review from other members to ensure accuracy and robustness of the message.

### **Funding**

The Governance Committee maintains a library of successful business justification examples for new business areas to leverage, to encourage continued growth of the BPM initiative. The committee also directly works with the steering committee and advocates for funding of the central shared services to ensure quality and longevity of BPM solutions.

### **Oversight**

As the official gathering of all major BPM players within your organization, the governance committee ensures accountability of each team through a mutual retrospective, discussing areas that have worked well or poorly, and determining actions moving forward to improve.

For example, an application may be live in production, but also back in development for a second major release, and there is confusion over who should make a fundamental change – the Sustainability Management team or the new development team. An output of the conversation may be that this responsibility needs to be determined at the onset of each new project for a currently existing application and outlined in the charter template for each project moving forward.

As a mutual voice of authority over the BPM initiative within your organization, the Governance Committee is a key to long-term success with this dynamic, powerful platform.

## Author



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