



Human Processes

Keith Harrison-Broninski

CTO Role Modellers (www.rolemodellers.com)

khb@rolemodellers.com

The first step for BPM is HIM

I've given keynotes on HIM and the associated method, GOOD, in several countries over the last few months. So awareness and acceptance of the ideas is growing. However, listening to other speakers, and talking to conference attendees, I've started to wonder if I'm going about things the right way.

At one conference, for example, another keynote speaker described the BPM work carried out by his company over several years. They now have thousands of process models. His speech was glowing, yet questions from the audience revealed that:

- They have no idea how much the work has cost so far, or what the ongoing maintenance costs are;
- Different areas of the company are now starting to create their own process repositories – even their own guidance portals;
- There is no integration with the value chain – for example, it is not possible to obtain a unified view of all activity for a specific customer;
- They cannot monitor operational compliance with the enterprise-standard process models;
- Their process maps do not include cross-boundary partnerships, so cannot help them manage external risks;
- They recognize that 75% of processes are not routine yet are currently trying to model them using flowchart techniques.

To this company, and many others, the sole justification for BPM is that they have a compliance obligation. By preparing process models (at huge cost), they avoid legal problems. Further, this is not by any means an exceptional case. My informal market research, and observations made during consultancy engagements, suggest that it is the norm wherever and whoever you are.

To those, like me, who believe in the potential of BPM this is a sad situation. My own talk is usually titled something like, "The Future of BPM" (see the HIM Web site, <http://human-interaction-management.info>, for typical slides), but I have come to think I'm letting everyone down by suggesting that they start HIM only after they've got somewhere with BPM.

Do you want to get value for money, motivate your staff, and stay afloat in the Internet Age? Then do HIM before you start doing anything at all with BPM.

A Business Case for HIM

Given the disappointment expressed by many people at these conferences regarding their organization's approach to BPM, I will defer continuing to describe the GOOD method for HIM, which I started in my last column, until next time. Instead, here is a brief business case for taking human interactions seriously.

The rise of "Asia, Automation and Abundance" has flattened the world and brought new challenges, all of which are to do with **building effectiveness through empowerment**:

- Empowering effective processes by supporting workers without putting them in straightjackets that prevent them working properly (and force workarounds);
- Empowering people to be effective by making organizational goals transparent and rewarding them for using their brains;
- Empowering managers to be effective by giving them visibility and the means to put resources where they are needed;
- Empowering the organization to be effective by building an organizational memory and helping people use it;
- Empowering IT to be effective by leveraging existing infrastructure rather than trying to replace it;
- Empowering partnering to be effective by enabling cross-boundary connect-and-collaborate business models (shared services, the fifth economic offering, etc).

All these challenges are really about the same thing: collaboration, whether it is across a team, across levels of management, or across organizational boundaries. However, at present the business and (in particular) IT worlds are confusing **collaboration** with **communication**.

The IT world is busy creating new and improved tools for communication, but these can be highly counter-productive. Knowledge workers are already swamped with unstructured interactions, leading to what I call "network overload". Basex research in 2007 showed that such unstructured interaction consumes, on average, 28% of knowledge worker time, with an average cost of \$840/person/month!

The rise of yet more sophisticated communication tools - such as Google Wave - will only exacerbate this damaging trend. Organizations simply cannot afford better communication, unless they first put in place a framework for better collaboration.

A framework for better collaboration

At present the only choice for collaboration framework is HIM. No alternatives exist. Like it or not, HIM is the only game in town for enterprise collaboration.

HIM has become a buzzword - to many people it simply means "somehow managing human interactions". However, this definition won't get you anywhere but more expense on management consultants and more staff time lost on playing with dinky Web gadgets.

Rather, HIM is a paradigm shift, requiring you to take on board the 5 principles that define work itself:

1. **Manage Commitments** - the offer, acceptance, decline and transfer of responsibility
2. **Structure Messaging** - the exchange of information via purposeful interactions
3. **Control Documents** - the creation, flow, update and management of knowledge
4. **Deliver Value** - the visibility, execution and tracking of strategic objectives
5. **Negotiate Next Steps** - the agreement, sharing and implementation of a way forward

It doesn't take much thought to see that these principles cannot be dealt with by any method or tools based on a flowchart approach. For example, my previous columns for BPTrends have discussed at length the deficiencies of a notation such as BPMN in this respect.

Rather, it is necessary to build processes as *object models*, using a framework incorporating the following concepts:

<u>How to Work</u> R – Research E – Evaluate A – Analyze C – Constrain T – Task		<u>How to Learn (Research)</u> A – Access I – Identify M – Memorize		<u>Work and Workers</u> Human Driven Work or Mechanistic Work Interaction Worker or Independent Worker		<u>Conversations</u> For Possibility <i>Do we want to work together?</i> For Disclosure <i>On what basis?</i> For Action <i>Request/Promise</i> <i>Offer/Accept</i> <i>Report/Acknowledge</i>		<u>Levels of Control</u> Strategic <i>External to work process</i> <i>Overall sponsor</i> <i>Defines key deliverables/metrics</i> Executive <i>External to work process</i> <i>Accountable/informed /consulted</i> <i>Refines deliverables</i> <i>Defines key Roles/Interactions /Activities</i> Management <i>Internal to work process</i> <i>Responsible</i> <i>Refines initial process</i> <i>Facilitates/monitors process and its evolution</i>			
<u>Users</u> Identity Physical Location Virtual Location Relationships User Type Capabilities <i>(knowledge and experience)</i> Organizational Authority Characteristics		<u>User Characteristics</u> Action <i>Shaper</i> <i>Implementer</i> <i>Finisher</i> People <i>Coordinator</i> <i>Teamworker</i> <i>Investigator</i> Cerebral <i>Plant</i> <i>Evaluator</i> <i>Specialist</i> Leader <i>Manager</i> <i>Executive</i> <i>Strategist</i>		<u>Activities</u> Units of work Include one or more Tasks Atomic Transactional: <i>Failure of any Task =></i> <i>undo of all Tasks</i>		<u>Roles</u> Goals Responsibilities Interests and Agreements Information (private) References to other Roles Capabilities (powers and permissions) Process Authority		<u>Speech Acts</u> Intended Manner <i>(aka Illocutionary Force)</i> Assertive Directive Commissive (Promise, Intention) Expressive Declarative Intended Effect <i>(aka Perlocutionary)</i>			
		<u>States (Rules)</u> Pre-Condition Post-Condition		<u>Interactions</u> Asynchronous Exchange of Information Exchange of Intent (Speech Acts)		<u>Resources</u> Offline / online Information within Role Atomic – digital Shared by Role					
				<u>Interaction Patterns</u> For deciding on next steps Agreement For doing work Collaborative Transaction							

Figure 1: Core concepts in Human Interaction Management (HIM)

A framework for better change

Where should you start with HIM? The key realization is that “BPM” and “Business Change” are joined at the hip. Unless you plan to make change, there is no point doing BPM – it is a cost with no benefit. Conversely, if you are thinking about business change, it would be foolish not to base it to some extent on process re-definition.

However, organizations are not doing change well. Although large-scale research indicates that 82% of all organizations are currently undertaking some form of change initiative Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 70% of change initiatives fail (Harvard), and 68% of organizations don't even bother evaluating to what extent their change initiatives succeeded (SHRM).^{1, 2}

Organizational leaders thus have a new question to answer, one that takes priority over pure BPM concerns: how can fundamental, ongoing, wide-ranging changes be made safely? In other words, how can an organization engineer change so as to guarantee and co-ordinate delivery of the associated benefits?

Some organizations are turning to Agile management techniques in search of a way forward. However, Agile techniques provide only part of the answer. It is necessary also to ensure that low-level operational planning is integrated with both high-level strategic vision and basic cultural values. Further, a key aspect of 21st century business is the breakdown of boundaries between customers, suppliers and partners – this shift to a new connect-and-collaborate culture must be tackled head-on, in a structured way, if chaotic relationships and security problems are to be prevented.

The way through the minefield is to appreciate that the success of a change program depends on a single key organizational capability: to structure the activities of knowledge workers. Human interactions are the bedrock and lynchpin of successful change activity. In other words, the basis for successful change is definition and execution of HIM processes – and their integration with management practice at all levels.

To do this, use the method Goal-Oriented Organization Design (GOOD) that accompanies HIM. GOOD starts by defining generic “Change Aims” (that apply to any project, initiative or venture), and shows how to implement them using a small number of key Roles and Interactions:

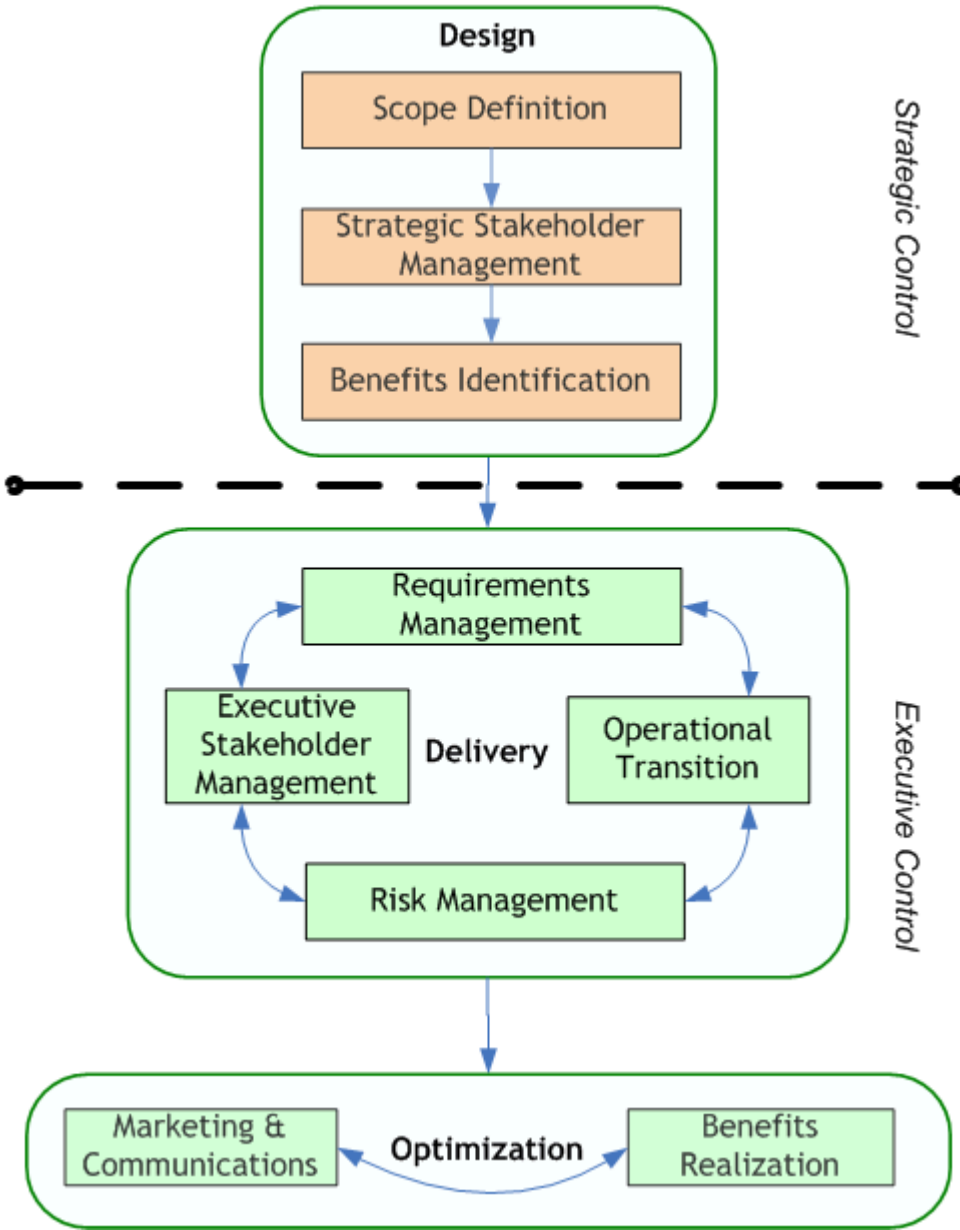


Figure 2: High-Level Roles in Goal-Oriented Organization Design (GOOD)

IT investment is not necessary to implement HIM via GOOD, but HIM software tools also solve the growing integration problems caused by the recent explosion in Web technology:

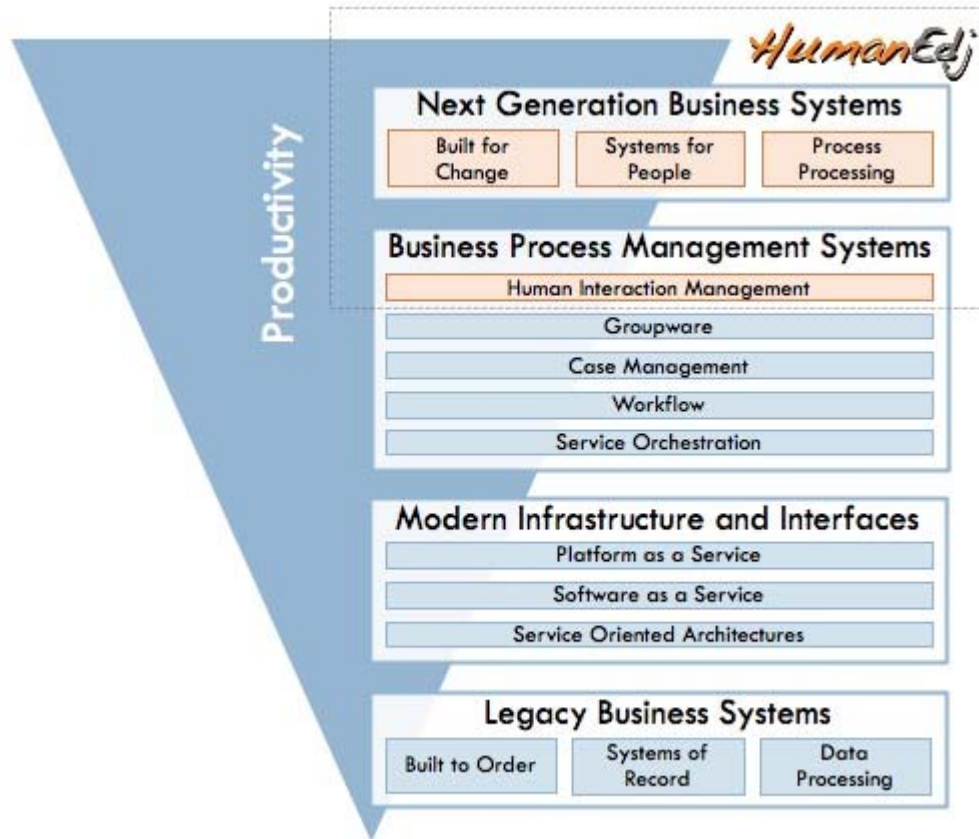


Figure 3: Enterprise IT Architecture with a Human Interaction Management System (HIMS)

Conclusion

Flowchart BPM – i.e., BPM without collaboration – addresses the 80% of routine processes, including “human-centric” processes, that consume 20% of costs and generate 20% of value.

To address the 20% of processes that consume 80% of costs and generate 80% of value, you need to build effectiveness through empowerment. This means getting a handle on collaboration, which means Human Interaction Management (HIM).

HIM also provides a firm basis for business change of any kind, since the accompanying GOOD method provides the governance mechanisms necessary to deliver return on investment. Following a recent large IT transformation project at Deutsche Bank, the board member responsible for the project said:

“We underestimated how large a transformation this could be; that is, going from vertically-aligned IT operations environment to something that's trying to make much greater use of shared assets. It's not just about teaching developers how to use web services. It's changing how the funding is done for shared services. It's putting governance structures in place. It's defining engineering and process standards. It's creating new roles where you have actual process analysts; roles that just don't exist today.”³

BPM, with or without SOA and BPMS technology - and more generally, business change of any kind – becomes a black hole consuming resources unless you start by structuring your human interactions at enterprise level.

In other words, the necessary first step for BPM is HIM.

Author

Keith Harrison-Broninski has been regarded as an IT and business thought leader since publication of his book "Human Interactions: The Heart And Soul Of Business Process Management" (Meghan-Kiffer Press, 2005 - "a must read for Process Professionals and Systems Analysts alike", BPM Group).

Building on 20 years of research and insights from varied disciplines, his theory of Human Interaction Management (HIM) provides a new way to describe and support collaborative human work. HIM has been described as:

- "the next logical step in process-based technology" (Chair of the Workflow Management Coalition);
- "set to produce the first fundamental advances in personal productivity since the arrival of the spreadsheet" (Information Age);
- "the breakthrough that changes the rules of business" (Peter Fingar, author of "Business Process Management: The Third Wave", "Extreme Competition", etc);
- "the overarching framework for 21st century business technology" (BP Trends).

HIM is now widely taught in MBA and Computer Science courses, and is the subject of books, theses and articles in several languages. In recognition of the importance of his ideas, conference organizers around the world regularly invite Keith to give keynote lectures to business, IT and academic audiences at national conferences, most recently in Poland, India, the Netherlands, the UK, Finland and Portugal.

Keith is CTO of Role Modellers, whose mission is to develop understanding and support of human-driven processes - the field that Keith has pioneered. Role Modellers' software product, HumanEdj, leads the industry in computerized support for innovative, collaborative human work. Keith stays active as a business consultant and software architect, via which activities he continues to refine and extend HIM theory.

More information about Keith and his work is available online.⁴

References

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⁴ keith.harrison-broninski.info