

Survey BPM - Open Answers

Could you please inform which of the following best describes your role in a BPM project? (IT Manager, please specify)

Response

1. Project Manager
2. Support Department
3. Architecture Cell

Could you please inform which of the following best describes your role in a BPM project? (Other, please specify)

Response

1. Business Processes Analyst

Which method you prefer to check and align Business and IT models? (Other (please specify))

Response

1. Look at analog elements and fragments and check whether the fulfillment of their objectives are satisfied (desired requirement x realized) and assigning a degree of alignment.

Please, indicate how feasible the IT role is able to assess changes in the model as being "Business Relevant" or "Not Business Relevant". In case you answered "Sometimes feasible" or "Not feasible at all" in the previous question, could you please give some examples to support your answer?

Response

1. I believe this is possible when the IT role works in close collaboration with the business unit. But I think that this might be complicated with outsourced professionals.
2. Proximity and close contact among systems and business analysts should allow a good assessment of 'business relevance'. For architects and developers this is prejudiced due to the relative 'distance'.
3. Sometimes the IT analyst knows the business process even better than the business analyst, and in such cases there might be some noise in their communication.
4. IT roles in general do not have a comprehensive view of the business and may not be able to understand what is relevant or not.
5. I think this is viable when the scope of the change can be clearly mapped to a business request.
6. In principle the systems analyst can do it, but I think this process will require a confirmation from a responsible for the business anyway.
7. Nowadays in our development process the system analyst performs a technical modeling task that completes the business model and assures that all requirements are understood. Thus the systems analyst grows an understanding of the border between 'pure business' and IT-specific aspects.
8. Developers and testers seem to implement orders but not to change models nor to assess changes. Architects plan future systems and thus should know whether model changes are business relevant.
9. Considering that the normal flow of requests is from business to IT, it should be possible to make this assessment. But the development process would need to enforce that the understanding of the IT is correct by requiring an approval/confirmation from business.
10. In our environment only the system analyst could make this assessment, since the other roles (except the architect in exceptional cases) do not directly interact with the business analyst.
11. I think it should be possible but not always, since it depends on the size of the change.
12. The changes are usually made to meet business requests, so in principle this should be always possible, since any change is associated with a business request (although today we do not know exactly which model elements have been changed to meet a particular request, we have tried to add notes and textual descriptions but that does not work well). However, if you are referring to informal/urgent changes, without a business request, it might not be possible to assess without talking to a business analyst.

Please, indicate how feasible the Business role is able to assess changes in the model as being "IT Relevant" or "Not IT Relevant". In case you answered "Sometimes feasible" or "Not feasible at all" in the previous question, could you please give some examples to support your answer?

Response

1. A business user may not have enough knowledge to assess the technical relevance of a change. I say that this would not be reliable or possible.
2. There is a distance between the business and the IT idioms what makes difficult this assessment for business people.
3. Business analysts have limited (or no) understanding about IT technicalities, thus they cannot assess whether a change will or not bring impact on the IT side.
4. I do not believe that business users can evaluate whether some change is IT relevant or not.
5. This is not responsibility of business. Even if one or another could they should not.
6. The other side of the coin I do not think it is possible, from my experience the business analysts do not want to perform this kind of evaluation.
7. Business managers maybe do not have any idea about IT so their change assessment could be not very relevant/decisive. Analysts create a bridge between models and implementation and thus should be able to make assessments for changes to be IT relevant.
8. I think that this assessment could not be done by business people.
9. This may be undesirable in terms of the development celerity, since the business analysts are not aware of the technical side, they may become reluctant of doing something unnecessary or wrong.

Could you please provide more cases when it turns out that the Business model should be updated in the course of an IT implementation?

Response

1. Change of scope caused by the long duration of a project, business modeling without assistance from an IT professional, incomplete model caused by tight schedules.

If you would like to make any comments or suggestions, please use the following space

Response

1. I sympathise with the idea of having a single process model, and thus we eliminate this burden of synchronizing business and IT processes. However, I still have some unclear points in my mind on how this would work: 1 – if the language is the same, most probably the mechanism of having modeling perspectives is critical, since the business roles should stick with their basic building blocks, while on the IT side we have full access. How this would work in practice? By hiding/showing things, like model elements? Is it really possible to do this? What if by adding transaction scopes and controls we need to split the original process and thus change drastically the business view? It is not clear for me whether you can just hide or show things. 2 – It seems you expect improving the collaboration between business and IT, but what exactly do you expect that tools would do for improving collaboration? For me the collaboration today is already good with the current tools, although there is a lack of automated support for change propagation and synchronization. However, I do think that the tools also lack a better integration with the development process, such as iteration planning and fine grained change traceability.
2. I believe in a single model only if we can still have specialized views for business and IT – I do not know how this would differ from having different models, since in practice we may implement the business model only partially, or split it into several pieces. On the other hand, if the tool enforces a unique model for both business and IT and does not give any freedom of changing it in parallel for particular users, I am afraid that people would create two different models anyway.
3. You could have explored more requirements with respect to the collaboration among the roles, integrated to the development process. For example: how to associate change requests with actual elements changed? (we do not have this granularity level of control today, and it is important sometimes, especially when there is team turnover). How to know which changes are part of each development iteration? This is a burden for the project manager and it is done informally.

4. For me a single model is viable and ideal when you have a highly mature IT service infrastructure, with several business services already available and aligned with the business objectives. In case you need to implement many things from scratch is almost inevitable having the business model only as a reference and the executable model more similar to the reality of existing systems.
5. For me the ideal solution is having only the business model, because it is in the end the consumable asset of the company. With a single model the alignment will be enforced by the technology, which is good. In the case of technical issues preventing the enactment of the pure business it should be possible to solve that by other means instead of changing the model itself.
6. You could provide more examples to explain questions. The time estimation (15 minutes) was too short to answer this questionnaire. I spent almost 1h!
7. It was not clear for me what you meant by approve/reject changes made by IT/Business. How this would work in practice? Today this is 'somehow' done by meetings, but sometimes this is an endless cycle and managers are required to settle the scope. I do not think a simple approve/reject thing would work in practice.
8. I think that one of the main reasons for the lack of alignment between business and IT is not related to how we create business and IT models or related to what contents they should have or not. I believe that the development process plays an important role on this: today we try to minimize the lack of alignment by enforcing a close relationship between the technical modeller and the business analyst. This is good for new projects but it often fails in day-to-day for several reasons: in practice many changes are minor, what leads to accumulate some inconsistencies not considered critical until a big change is necessary. Usually most of the change requests made by business are described only textually and the business model is not even touched – the problem here is that the business analyst believes that only the production process should be updated and its documentation does not need. It is hard to enforce a policy requiring the business analyst always updating the business model, because who knows when the documentation should be updated is the business analyst anyway. There are long periods of maintenance that affect primarily the executable model, so during the life cycles of small projects you accumulate several small 'waterfalls' of textual requirements in the sense that the business model (as it should also be part of the requirements) is 'forgotten'.