



Build Processes

Design Processes

Create Teams

Map for Success

Where to Start

5 STEPS TO BPM SUCCESS

**Dos and Don'ts of
Implementing a BPM Project**

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Build BPMN 2.0 Compliant Processes With ProcessMaker

Introduction



Enterprise software projects have a reputation for running over budget and over time or flat out resulting in failure. In fact according to one Gartner statistic, more than 50% of all BPM Software projects fail to deliver the results hoped for. With statistics like these, project implementers really need to look for every possible advantage in order to do a better job guaranteeing success when implementing software. In this particular eBook, we will explore a series of key recommendations and findings to help you ensure success in your next BPM software implementation.

Step 1 – Pick a Place to Start



It sounds obvious to say that you need to pick a place to start. However, this is not as easy as it sounds and there is more hidden in this step than meets the eye.

There are really two types of customers that tend to implement a BPMS:

the Monolith

the Platform Play

The Monolith Customer



The Monolith

Some customers have a singular, easily identifiable core process that they want to automate. This process is generally a strategic cornerstone of their business.

We use the term Monoliths to describe this type of customer. This type of company has no difficulty picking the process to automate, getting internal support for the project, or setting KPIs to define success. In this case, the most difficult decision at the start of the project is usually around whether a Commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) BPMS is the right technology to use or whether the company should build custom software to automate its custom process.



Developing workflows is a process of capturing all relevant information that goes into the process: who is involved, what they're responsible for, how tasks are handed off, which tasks are manual and which are automated.

The Platform Play



The Platform Play

For the second type of client, the question is a little more difficult. We call this type of client the Platform Play. As opposed to the Monoliths, the Platform Play tends to have many processes to automate. This type of organization tends to arrive at the conclusion that they require BPM Software in a more gradual way and without the pinpoint clarity experienced by the Monoliths. In many cases these companies have some processes on paper, others are done through a cumbersome combination of Excel and email, and still others may already be automated with custom code. The processes are generally spread across the organization and the pain is felt in different departments and with differing degrees of urgency. This type of customer will often talk about information Silos when describing the problems of the organization.

Both Need a Place to Start



Although there are significant differences between the Monoliths and the Platform Plays, there is also a similarity. Both need to identify the place to start. The Platform Plays need to identify the one process of many to automate first. Eventually, once a team at the Platform Play has gained proficiency in its BPMS technology of choice then it can begin to automate multiple processes at the same time.

The Monoliths have a much clearer path to automating the first process. However, they still face some challenges in deciding where to begin their automation journey. A complex process cannot and should not be tackled all at once. It is a much better idea to take an agile and iterative approach to implementing and automating even a single process.

The SIR Methodology

At ProcessMaker in order to analyze the starting point for your BPMS project, we have developed a methodology we call SIR. SIR is an acronym for the following:

Success

Impact

Repeat

Success



The first question your organization should ask itself is, “can we be successful automating this process?”

You may have a problem that is certainly worth solving, but if success is not probable, then attempting to automate this process first will ensure that your entire BPM project will fail. There are a number of reasons why a process may be difficult to solve. However, these reasons almost always boil down to a lack of technical resources, time, or political support.

Impact



So now we have found a process that we believe we can successfully automate. Now we must ask, “will anyone care if we are successful?” Does this process affect enough of the organization to be important? Is it aligned with a strategic initiative of importance in the organization?

There is a delicate balance between finding an initial process that is both achievable and will have a significant positive impact on the organization. Failure by irrelevance is almost as bad as failure because of an unsuccessful implementation. Both types of failure will almost certainly ensure that social capital evaporates and that the project will be killed.

When trying to determine impact, we also recommend mapping your process initiative and each process against the organization’s Key Business Objectives (KBOs).

Repeatability



Finally, we want to ask the question, “is this process something that will be repeatable?” In other words, if you have identified numerous processes to automate, does your starting point have enough in common with the other processes to be useful in your next projects? Will you be creating building blocks that you will be able to reutilize? Repeatability means that you will gain leverage for other processes moving forward. This is very important. Your internal and external stakeholders will expect that your process development efforts will begin to accelerate after the first few processes and that the learning curve will decrease as you move forward. Some of the gains will happen without any planning or additional effort. For example, when you implement your first process you will need to consider things such as installation and implementation of the authentication and security model (probably involving Active Directory or some type of LDAP). For the next processes, this integration will already be done.

Step 2: Make a Map for Success

Once the problem and corresponding solution to be implemented have been identified, it is critical to map out what success will look like once the process is automated.

Define how everything will look once the process is automated including all of the following:

What is the exact process to be implemented?

What reports will be needed to control the process?

What hardware, software, and peripherals will be included in the process?

What Integrations will be included in the process?

What improvements do we expect?

Volume

Time

Defect Rates

Satisfaction Rates

How long should it take to automate the process and how many iterations will be needed to make them final? All of these questions should be very specific. It is important not to talk about what success looks like in vague terms. Success needs to be based on very clear and specific objectives.

The SOW & Project Charter



At ProcessMaker we define some of these points in an initial Charter Document while the rest gets described in detail in the Statement of Work (SOW). The charter document is really where the expectations and limitations of what will be done are outlined. The Charter document is the first document that is co-developed with the customer. This document gets signed by both our team and the customer's team. We always insist that all stakeholders read and sign this document.

Step 3: Create the Teams



It is important that the client understand from the beginning that the project cannot and will not be successful without his team's participation.

Furthermore, this participation will almost never come from a single person. Rather, the client will need to involve many people in the client organization from the beginning. At a minimum the client team should involve the following roles:

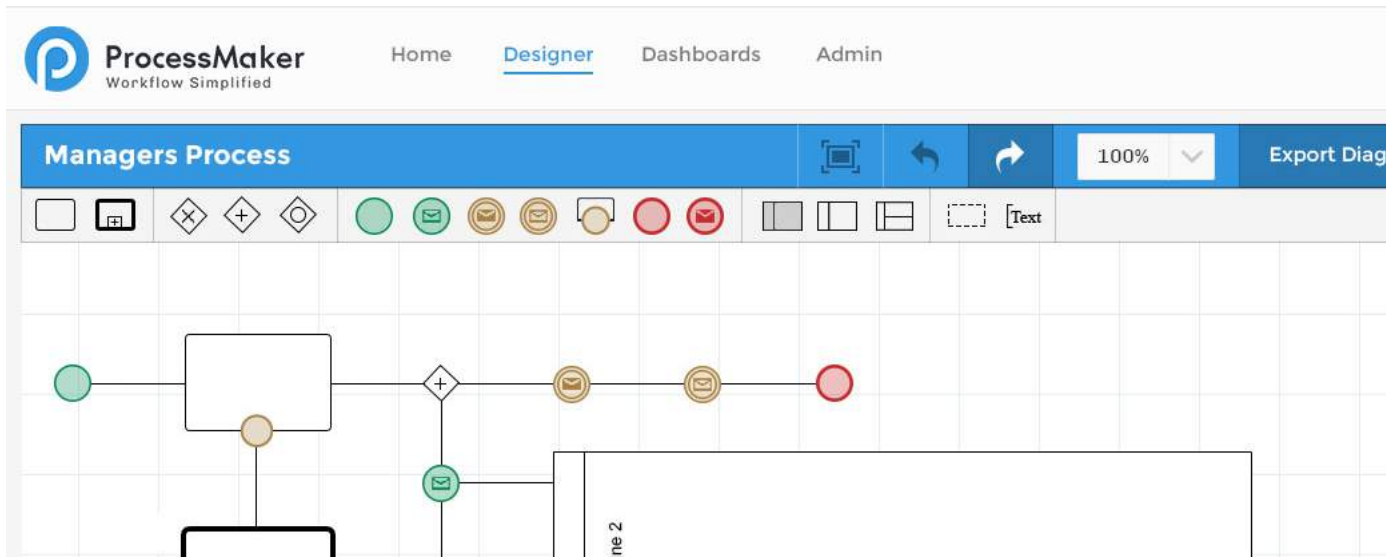
Executive Sponsor – This person should be an executive at the organization (ideally C suite level) whose KBOs are specifically aligned with the project.

Process Owner – This will be the most active role on the project and should have excellent global knowledge of the process.

IT Representative – There needs to be a participant from IT that is capable of directing the interconnections to external systems and understanding the authentication and security models to be used.

End Users – Of course, we also need the participation of end users.

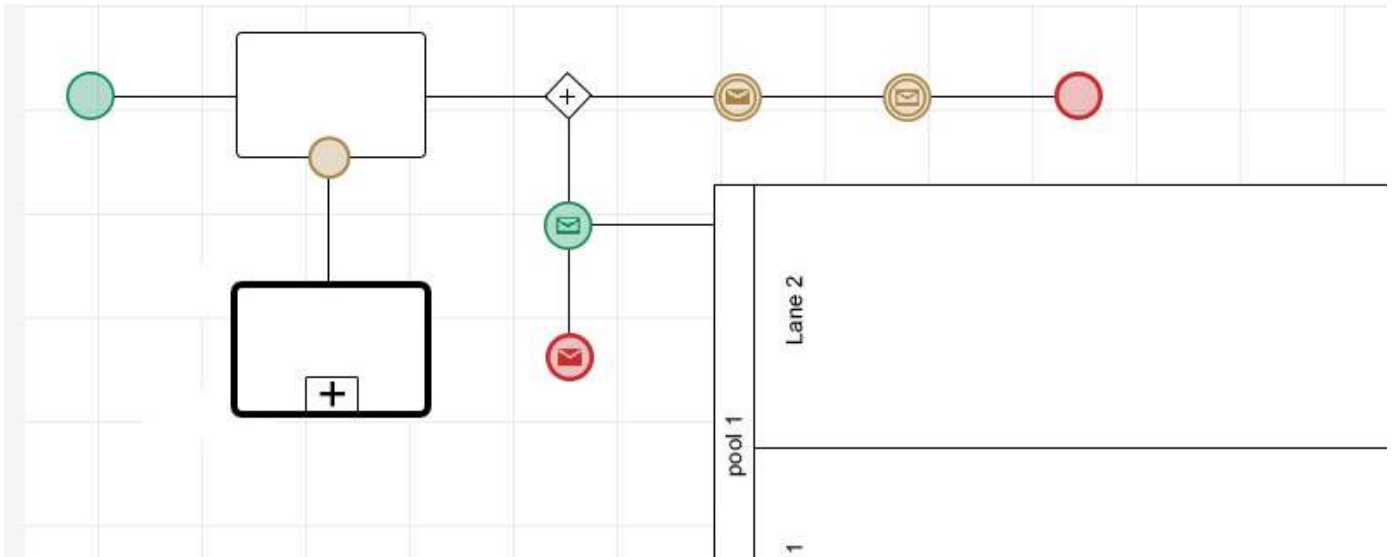
Step 4: Design the First Process



Ok, now we are ready to start designing the process. Each BPM Suite will implement this part slightly differently. For example, in some suites you will need to create a data model before you create user input forms while others do that automatically for the user behind the scenes. Nonetheless, the following steps are generally followed in all suites:

BPMN Designer - I haven't met anyone that doesn't love the idea of dragging and dropping icons onto a web page and watching as their business process materializes before their eyes. Drag and drop process designers are notoriously easy to use. Some designers provide better BPMN 2.0 standard support than others. You should decide how important this is for your project.

Step 4: Designing the Data Model & Forms



Data Model: What data does your process need to capture? This is the next question to ask yourself when starting to model in the BPM Software. In this case we need to think about what our forms will look like, what additional data might need to be captured from other systems, and what documents will be added or created during the process.

Step 4: Designing the Interconnections

Interconnections: When we are creating the data model for the system, you will most likely come across data that is housed in other systems. Or you may realize that your process will output data that you will want to house in another system. This is often the most technical part of process design. These connections to other systems will eventually require you to decide with your IT team how to access the other systems. Will it be via a REST or SOAP web service? Will you connect directly to a database? Will you import or export an Excel spreadsheet?

Step 4: Additional Elements

Additional Elements: Besides the process, the data, and web services (or other connections), your design will probably call for other elements. These elements will be messages, alerts, and documents. Messages and alerts can be as simple as email, twitter, or other types of messages that get generated by the process. Alerts may be similar in nature. Output documents will be any type of printable documents you might need to produce.

Step 4: Designing Interfaces

Interfaces – Most BPM Suites have a standard portal for users to use to access assigned tasks and data. However, many BPM projects require very custom interfaces. How do your customers expect to interact with the system? Will they use standard web and mobile interfaces? Or do they need these interfaces embedded in another software such as email client software (Outlook or Gmail) or their favorite CMS (Drupal or other), or does it need to be part of a kiosk infrastructure?

A Common Language for Business and Technical Workers

Reports and Dashboards: It is very important that you think about what types of dashboards and reports your stakeholders will expect to use BEFORE you start the project. As I discussed previously, you need to understand what success looks like when choosing a BPM project. That decision is directly linked to the determination of what reports and dashboards you will need. This is a very crucial part of your design process to know that you are focusing your efforts on the correct process and the correct parts of the process.

A Common Language for Business and Technical Workers

Custom Functionality- Just like the custom interfaces mentioned above, most large BPM projects will have custom requirements. Despite what BPM vendors will tell you, these requirements will require custom programming. That is simply the nature of the beast. Be prepared for it. Make sure you know what generally fits inside a BPM suite and what other custom parts of a system you require for your project.

Step 5: Agile Implementation



Ok. So now everything has been designed. You have your blueprint for success. Let me just reemphasize - **YOU NEED A BLUEPRINT.** Do not simply skip the steps above and start implementing. You are not alone if you are tempted to do so. BPM Suites seem very simple, and for the most part they are. However, process design and project implementation are never simple. Your stakeholders will have fickle opinions and ideas. If you do not nail all of this down, you will automate a process that your stakeholders won't agree on and later won't use.

However, once you do have your blueprint in hand, then you are ready to begin the work. At ProcessMaker, we generally work in teams of 4-6 members per project. We find that this gives us the right mix of agility, redundancy (people might leave in the middle of projects) and continuity.

Step 5: Agile Implementation



Despite all our best efforts to build a perfect blueprint, it is very difficult to ensure that all stakeholders are in perfect synch. This is another reason why it is very difficult to estimate an entire project with perfect precision. It is also why most will agree that it is better to develop using Agile methodologies. At ProcessMaker our work cycles are based on 2 week sprints. In each Sprint our goal is to produce iterated versions of the final product wherever possible. These 2 week sprints give both our team and the client team the opportunity to react and contribute to what is being done. It becomes much easier to detect which initial ideas were actually erroneous or need to be changed. The client gets to be much closer to the development process in this way, which makes it much more difficult for the stakeholder and designer/developer interpretations to diverge very far.

Step 5: Agile Implementation



It reduces risk because problems can be corrected before too much time has been invested and can be more quickly changed.

User experience can be considered to help find better solutions for users who are introduced later to the process.

You will be able to train end users in a modular fashion and then utilize these early users as trainers or support people.

You will be able to more easily manage the natural aversion to change that exists in every organization by implementing change in a more modular way.

Conclusion

There is an old saying that projects never fail because of bad software; projects fail because of bad project communication. This is absolutely true. Ironically, companies usually spend the vast majority of their time evaluating product features when deciding which BPMS to purchase. This is a common trap. Evaluating project teams and analyzing culture fit between companies for a new project is not nearly as easy to do as starting to do a feature checklist and a price comparison when selecting a product. Sure, this analysis is necessary. But we believe that if companies spent more time analyzing and organizing the implementation teams, understanding their implementation strategy and philosophy, and ensuring culture fit; implementation risk could be greatly reduced. Even if the BPMS vendor and the implementation partner are different companies, the same truths hold. Worry about which product to pick, but pay equal or greater attention to analyzing who will do the implementation and how they plan to do it.



If you would like to learn more about to implement winning BPM Projects or how ProcessMaker projects are implemented using this methodology, please feel free contact us at 617-340-3377, or drop us an email at info@processmaker.com.

[Contact us](#)