



## Direction is a consequence, not a choice



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While discussing the pros and the cons of different methodologies, we often tend to forget that the methodology will only be a minor part of the whole solution. Therefore, in most cases, the choice of a certain methodology will not be a real choice but merely the logical consequence of an existing context.

When you are following multiple trends in the industry, it is interesting to see how the same issues emerge at the same time, in slightly different forms, in completely different disciplines.

Over the past weeks, we have discussed here some of our ideas regarding the slow adoption of Enterprise 2.0 solutions. The problem is already well known. While there is sufficient evidence that some companies have reaped major benefits by using these tools, adoption still is slow.

Accidentally (or not), yesterday, we participated in a discussion regarding the slow adoption of Outside-In practices in the BPM space. We have already touched this subject in [Is BPM doomed?](#) or you can read this post by Dick Lee: [Understanding Outside-In Process](#).

In the case of BPM, the context is somewhat more complex since the "new" Outside-In approach has to compete with the more established Inside-Out BPM approaches such as Six Sigma and Lean. Therefore, not all evangelists speak the same language here.

However, the rest of the story is quite similar. Both for Enterprise 2.0 and for Outside-In there are some real examples of companies having achieved major success by adopting these tools or approaches. In both cases, evangelists are continuously recharging their batteries to get the message out. Still, adoption is slow and frustration is growing.

Unfortunately, this situation is very normal.

While discussing the pros and the cons of different tools or methodologies, we often tend to forget that these "solutions" will only be a minor part of a larger "whole". Therefore, in most situations, it will not be the tool or the methodology that will determine the outcome. In reality, the choice of a certain tool or methodology will not even be a real choice but merely the logical consequence of an existing context.

Both Enterprise 2.0 and Outside-In, when done well, cannot deliver their potential advantages without touching the "core" of the organisation. Adopting Enterprise 2.0 or Outside-In mandates that the company is willing to reconsider the present status quo of its organisation, its way of operating and the existing interactions between employees at all levels.

And this means change.

Change that already for decades has been a major burden for most organisations. Change that has given birth to this other major management consulting discipline: change management.

Unfortunately, as described by Shoshana Zuboff<sup>1</sup> in [The Old Solutions Have Become the New Problems](#), this management discipline largely excels in moving organisations rapidly from one stable state to another, but adds little to the change-ability of the enterprise.

So, in reality, the success stories of Enterprise 2.0 and Outside-In are essentially the outcome of a process initiated by companies with the right mindset for change. For them, the choice for Enterprise 2.0 or Outside-In is a non-issue. Even without the existence of these types of solutions, they would have taken such direction.

Direction is the logical consequence of a mindset, not a choice.

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<sup>1</sup> Shoshana Zuboff is the author of The Support Economy: Why Corporations Are Failing Individuals and the Next Episode of Capitalism. She was the Charles Edward Wilson Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School.

## About the author



Marc Buyens is analyst, management consultant and owner of Xpragma. Marc started Xpragma in 1999 after a 20+ years career in the IT sector. Today, he provides advice, training and mentoring services focusing on the intersection of technological evolution, organisational change and business strategy: a messy world of unfulfilled promises.


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