



Business processes are not your business | The Xpragmatic View



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If we want to make the effort of having a closer look at our customer's processes we might identify huge opportunities for improvement of our own business processes. Business Process Management (BPM) revisited.

In one of their latest newsletters, [BPTrends](#) introduced the idea of modelling your customer's processes as a way to engage senior management in a planned business process change exercise. You can read or download the article [here](#) (PDF file).

As BPTrends writes, "the idea is very simple - instead of starting by modelling your company's processes, begin by modelling your company's customer processes".

Doing so, it is very likely that you will uncover inefficiencies, delays, frustrations... that remain invisible while modelling the business processes of your company. In addition, all these pain points are very human and recognisable and therefore, allow bringing a message to top management that is not clouded by the complexity of flowcharts and other BPM jargon.

We can only fully agree. As we state in our vision statement: "In the new economy, the success of organisations will be determined by the quality of their interactions with internal and external parties and the use of new techniques and methods for the design, the execution and the control of these interactions"

Business interactions are increasingly becoming key.

Business Interaction Management

Talking about interactions, customers represent only one category of the "parties" a company is dealing with. As we already described in [The new market reality](#), companies are increasingly evolving towards highly networked organisational forms as the result of an increasing drive towards partnerships, subcontracting, outsourcing, etc.

Therefore, the interactions with these parties are increasingly becoming a crucial element in a company's business process strategy and, same as for the customer process, companies must understand how these interactions affect the business processes of these other parties. This calls for a new competence or discipline that we might call "Business Interaction Management".

Business Interaction Management (BIM) is a multi-faceted discipline, comprising several dimensions such as partner identification, partner selection, contractual and organisational stuff and many more. However, in this View, we are only focusing on the process interaction aspects of BIM.

While the theme "Business Interaction Management" and its acronym might seem new, the idea is not very novel. Already in 1998, Patricia Seybold introduced the idea of customer-centric strategy development in her bestseller "Customers.com".

Most of the ideas presented in this book still hold true. However, nearly ten years later, the business world has not really become more customer-centric. It has become shareholder-centric.

Shareholder-centric behaviour is not a process. It is a dead alley.

Envisioning the customer experience

Still, assessing the real customer experience will be a revelation to most organisations. Too many boardrooms continue living with the false assumption that all is well in consumer-land. In most cases, the reality is very different.

Only a week ago I experienced once again how company-centric behaviour is the best guarantee for losing potential customers.

My partner and me had a somewhat last-minute decision to have an extended weekend trip to Paris.

In search for a hotel, I visited the website of one of the leading travel agencies. After entering the destination and dates, I was presented a list of available hotels in Paris. Selecting my first choice gave me a message of fully booked. Up to the next one. Fully booked.

Why on earth is this happening? I gave them the dates, so why do they show me a list of fully booked hotels?

At the tenth hotel on the list, I got a message "for reservation, please contact us". I then gave up.

I searched on the Internet for the contact information of my first choice hotel and phoned them. They had one room left. Paris, here we come.

Paris in April is great, be it somewhat expensive.

Discarding your customer's experience is also very expensive. Always.

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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