The A to Z Guide of Business Process Management

The A-Z Guide of Business Process Management was designed to answer frequently asked questions on Business Process Management and improvement from 'What is Business Process Management?' to 'how do I implement a BPM system in my organisation?'

Consider this your personal BPM A-Z handbook. In it we have broken down and catalogued a standard Business Process Management Journey into 5 sub-sections containing 24 articles - designed so you can jump to the information you need whether you are an absolute beginner or further along in your process improvement journey.

The information is presented in the form of short, self-contained articles. If you don't find your specific query contained here, please contact us at: info@triaster.co.uk, explain what your question is and we will happily answer it for you.

Now, in the first section we will start from the very beginning and explain exactly what BPM is, some ofthe confusing terms associated with it and how you can find the system that's best for you.

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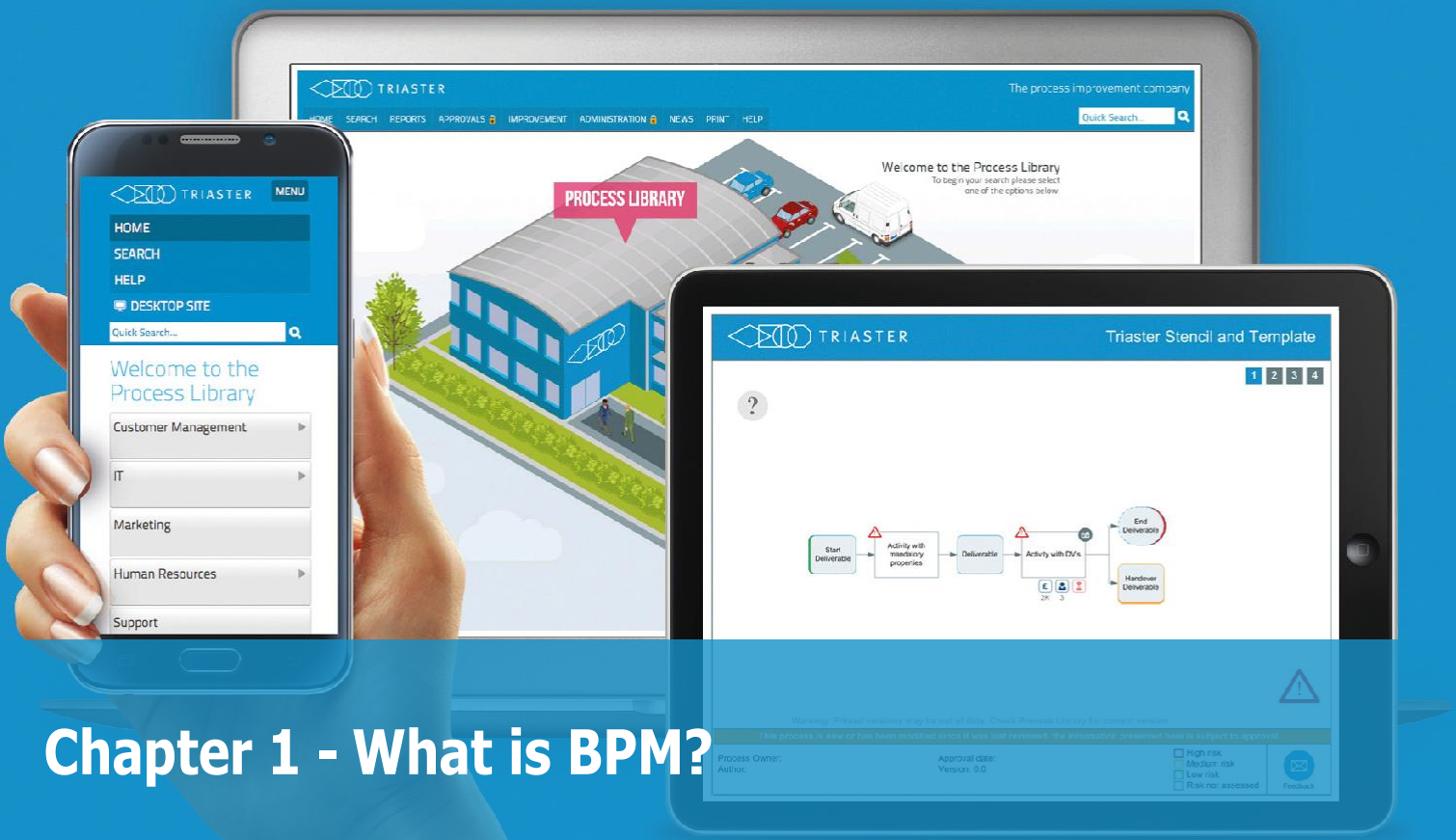


Chapter 1 - What is BPM?

This section will cover

What is Business Process Management (BPM)?

If you Google, "What is Business Process Management?" a variety of definitions are returned; we believe that two of the most useful are:

"Business Process Management (BPM) is a field in operations management that focuses on improving corporate performance by managing and optimising a company's business processes." *Theodore Panagacos (25 September 2012) - The Ultimate Guide to Business Process Management: Everything You Need to Know and How to Apply It to Your Organization.*

and

"The discipline of managing processes (rather than tasks) as the means for improving business performance outcomes and operational agility. Processes span organisational boundaries, linking together people, information flows, systems and other assets to create and deliver value to customers and constituents." *Gartner, "Business process management (BPM)".*

So that explains it all; except not in plain English.

So let's break it down.

What is a Business Process?

The word 'process' is defined by ISO (the International Organisation for Standardisation) as 'a set of interrelated or interacting activities that transforms inputs into outputs.'

Perhaps a simpler way of putting this is to say, a business process is a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end. Certainly in ISO's definition, 'transformation' is the key word.

Processes are most easily recognisable in manufacturing, where it is easy to see raw materials (inputs) being transformed into goods (outputs). For example, metal (the input) being transformed into cars (the output).

What is Management?

'Management' means dealing with or controlling things or people. It is an activity, something that is done.

The Whole is More Than the Sum of the Parts

Putting these three word together into the term Business Process Management also assumes an end objective. Therefore the sum goes:

Business Process + Management = Improvement

Business Process Management in Layman's Terms

So, Business Process Management ***is something that is done to control the actions or steps taken in the course of producing something (either a product or a service), in order to improve the value added by doing those actions.***

Business Process Management is a pretty broad term and herein lies the difficulty in understanding what it means. It is 'something that is done' , a practice, an approach, a discipline perhaps. It is not a prescribed way of doing things.

Two Key Elements of a BPM Approach

To take a BPM approach however, two key elements must be present:

1. The 'things that are done' must deliver improvement to the business or organisation where they are being done.
2. The approach considers the multiple inter-related processes of an organisation and as such takes a holistic look at its business activities. This is a key difference between BPM and other approaches where individual business functions are improved – by automation perhaps.

Delivering Improvement

Improvement must be the key objective and deliverable of any BPM project. Achieving improvement is the sole reason for undertaking a Business Process Management project. However, that improvement can take many forms. For example:

- **Improved Access to Information** - about how to do a process
- **Consistent Delivery of Processes** - throughout the organisation
- **Adherence to Processes** - by those responsible for doing them
- **More Efficient Processes** - with duplicated or unnecessary steps removed
- **Better Quality** - end product (good or service)
- **A Less Risky Process**
- **Better Customer Service**

A Holistic Look at Business Activities

Many of the improvements to be gained in a business are achieved by looking at the handover points between functions. This is where the biggest delays and inefficiencies occur. For example, one department may be producing something for another department but not quite in the format that they need it, or within the optimal time frame. Often once the interconnection between processes is understood, small adjustments can deliver big improvement.

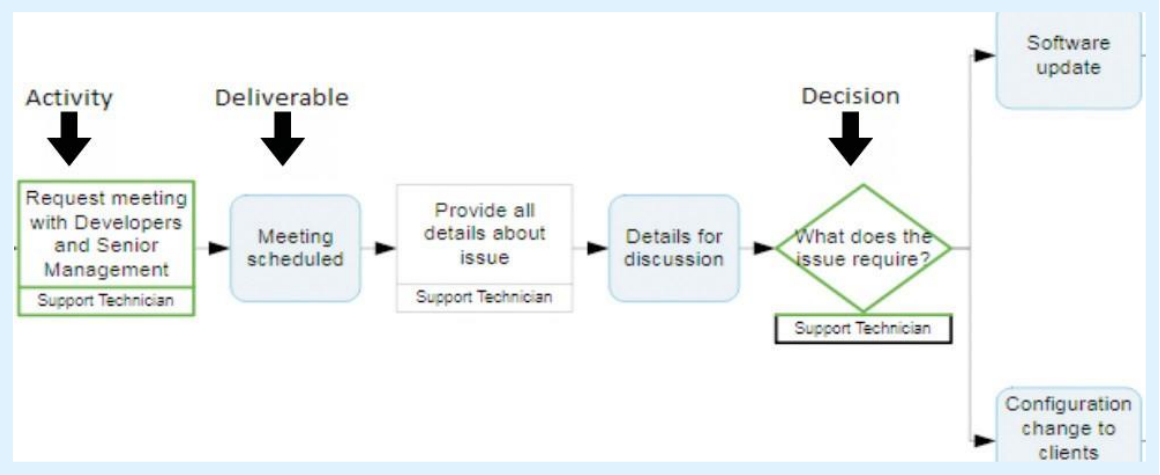
How to do Business Process Management

Well, here is the thing...there is no one way.

However, given that BPM is about process improvement, it is a requirement that the start point is documenting your processes so that you understand what they are, how they are interrelated, who is responsible for doing what …

Process Mapping

Documenting your processes can be done in many ways, but the most common approach is called Process Mapping.



Process mapping is an exercise to identify all the steps and decisions in a process in diagrammatic form which:

- Describes the flow of materials, information and documents
- Shows the various tasks contained within the process
- Clearly shows that the tasks (activity and deliverable) transform inputs into outputs
- Indicates the decisions that need to be made along the chain
- Demonstrates the essential interrelationships and interdependence between the process steps; and reminds us that the strength of a chain depends upon its weakest link

There are multiple process mapping software tools that enable this. It is not essential to use a software tool, but doing so generally makes documenting processes a great deal easier.

BPM Software Systems

As soon as your processes are documented, they can be controlled and improved. There are many ways to approach this and many software systems to support you.

Which one you should choose is a different question entirely that will be looked at a little later on.

Next up, we have provided 39 common BPM terms and what they mean. This will be a great resource to head back to later if you are unsure about some of the terms that are explained in this e-book...

Business Process Management Terminology: 39 Essential Terms Explained

When you're trying to understand the ins and outs of Business Process Management Terminology, a simple definition is not always the answer - however 39 definitions might get the point across. In this article, we will explain 39 of the phrases and associated definitions that are often encountered when either researching a new BPM system or undertaking a Business Process Improvement initiative.

1. Activity

When mapping out a process, there are several different shapes that can be used. An 'Activity' shape is used to describe something you do.

Activities are the steps of the process and are described using verbs. For example: 'Update sales order with customer number'.

2. As-Is Process

An As-Is process is a visual representation of a business process in its current state. As-Is processes must be mapped before changes and improvements can be made.

3. Bottlenecks

A bottleneck is one process in a chain of processes that, if limited in any way, will cause further limitations to subsequent processes in the chain. Bottlenecks can be either short-term or long-term and are most often seen in supply chain and manufacturing industries. Bottlenecks can slow down production or the execution of other processes further down the chain.

4. BPMN

BPMN stands for Business Process Model and Notation and is standard for Business Process Modelling. BPMN is a graphical representation for specifying business processes in a business process model.

The main goal of BPMN is to provide a standard notation that can be easily understood by all business stakeholders.

5. BPMS

BPMS stands for Business Process Management Suite (or system). A BPMS is a software tool that allows processes to be mapped, implemented and analysed. Business Process Management systems are often used to aid continual improvement throughout an organisation, to help them to increase efficiency and reduce costs.

More information on the Triaster BPM Platform
triaster.co.uk/triaster-platform.php

6. Business Process

A business process is a collection of related activities or tasks that produce a specific service or product. Business processes are often visualised in a flowchart or process map, which allows them to be followed easily and shared throughout an organisation.

7. Business Process Improvement

Business Process Improvement is a project undertaken to help an organisation optimise and improve its existing processes. Some key goals of process improvement include improving productivity, increasing efficiency and reducing costs.

8. Business Process Management

Business Process Management, or BPM is a systematic approach to making an organisation's business processes more efficient. Some examples of BPM end goals are:

- Improved productivity
- Reduced costs
- Duplication eliminated

9. Business Process Modelling Tool

See BPMS

10. Continual/Continuous Improvement

Continual Improvement is the ongoing process of improving an organisation's business processes, products or services. This can deliver incremental changes over time or break-through improvement all at once.
The term 'Continuous Improvement' is used interchangeably with 'Continual Improvement'.

11. Decision

Process Mapping 'Decision' shapes are a type of activity where the decision is usually expressed in the form of a question, where only one of the output options is produced.

For example, 'Internal or external customer?' may then branch into two different process pathways depending on which option is selected.

12. Deliverables

A Process Mapping 'Deliverable' shape is used to describe something you produce. Deliverables are the items produced (or 'delivered') as each step of the process is complete and are described using nouns.

Examples include:

- Customer order form
- Purchase order
- Patient discharge form

13. DMAIC

DMAIC is a 5-step method for improving processes. DMAIC is itself a process and is always described simply in terms of the Activities involved. These are:

- Define
- Measure
- Analyse
- Improve
- Control

To learn more about DMAIC, read our article:

DMAIC Process vs Cycle: Why Process Wins Every Time

14. Document Management System

A document management system is a computer or software system used to store, manage and track an organisation's electronic documents. Most systems will include version control and the ability to track changes created by different users as standard.

Document management systems are most often used by organisations looking to achieve certain quality or standards accreditations.

15. End-to-end Process

An end-to-end (E2E) process describes a business process from start to finish and comprises all of the work required to achieve a particular process goal.

16. ERP System

An ERP or Enterprise Resource Planning system is a type of Business Process Management software that allows an organisation to collect, manage, store and interpret data from numerous business activities. ERP systems provide a real-time overview of core business processes, enabling information flow across all business functions or departments.

17. Input

In Process Mapping, an 'Input' shape is the name sometimes used for a 'Deliverable' when it is an input to an activity.

A 'Deliverable' can be both the 'Output' from one 'Activity' and the 'Input' to another Activity.

All Deliverables are described using nouns.

18. IPO Table

IPO or Input Process Outputs tables are a simple mechanism to help determine what is being used and what is being produced in a process. An IPO table will usually have 3 columns to show the following:

- **Input** - The start of the process or the materials required
- **Process** - The key steps involved
- **Output** - What is produced at the end

For example:

Inputs	Process	Output
Fruit Sugar Labour	• Crush fruit • Measure sugar • Mix fruit and sugar and bring to a full boil • Test to see if set • Pour into jars	Jam

Some IPO tables may also include columns for process owner or responsibility, risk and priority.

19. ISO Standards

The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) is an independent, non-governmental organisation, which sets standards to aid the creation of safe, reliable and good quality products and services.

The ISO 9000 family of standards are most commonly used for quality management in organisations looking to ensure that their products and services consistently meet and exceed customer requirements. This includes:

- **ISO 9001:2015** - sets out the requirements of a quality management system
- **ISO 9000:2015** - covers the basic concepts and language
- **ISO 9004:2009** - focuses on how to make a quality management system more efficient and effective
- **ISO 19011:2011** - sets out guidance on internal and external audits of quality management systems.

20. KPIs

KPIs or Key Performance Indicators are business metrics that are used to measure factors that are crucial to the success of an organisation. KPIs are unique to each organisation and even each department within the organisation.

21. Lean

Lean manufacturing (or production) is a systematic method for the elimination of waste within an organisation's processes. Lean drives continual improvement by looking at value adding and eliminating non-value adding activities. Learn more about the Lean Methodology by reading the following article:

What is Lean Six Sigma? Tools for ProcessImprovement
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/lean-six-sigma-process-improvement

22. Map Level

The Map Level is the number assigned to a process map depending on its position in a process hierarchy. The initial maps are mapped at a base level (Level 1). When drilling down on an Activity you move to a deeper level (Level 2) and so on until the process is complete.

23. Node

Within a process modeller such as Microsoft Visio, Nodes are containers or frames for process maps which hold the map title and other properties relating to the process. They are described using verbs. When naming a map, imagine the words 'how to' before your title, if it still works well then you have named it correctly. Some of the Node Properties are visible on the Node and some are invisible.

24. Off-Page Connectors

Off-page connectors are useful for overcoming the practical limitation of page sizes. They allow the process mapper to produce a logical, large 'piece of paper' containing a single end-to-end process map with all the Deliverables (outputs to inputs) linked directly to each other.

25. Output

In Process Mapping, an 'Output' is the name sometimes used for a 'Deliverable' when it is an Output from an 'Activity'.

A 'Deliverable' can be both the 'Output' from one Activity and the 'Input' to another 'Activity'.

26. Process

A process is a set of interrelated or interacting activities, which transforms inputs into outputs. This term is often used interchangeably with an Activity.

27. Process Author

A Process Author (or process mapper) is someone who draws or creates a process. They often have no control over a process or the decision-making powers to change it. To learn what skills are required to be a successful process mapper, read this article:

Process Mapping: 5 Key skills you need to have
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/process-mapping-5-key-skills-you-need-to-have

28. Process Hierarchy

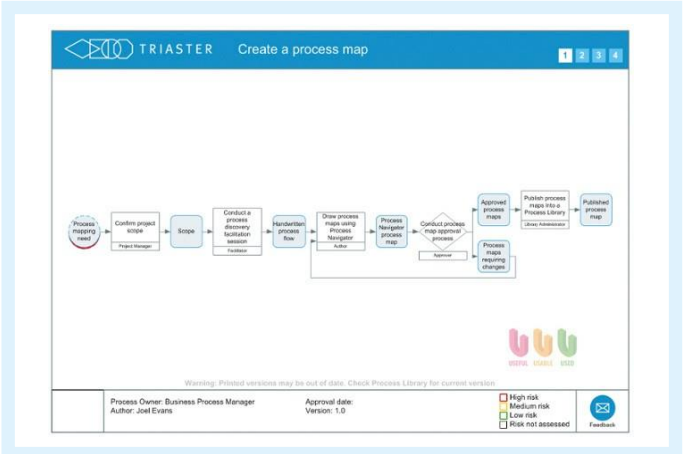
A Process Hierarchy is an overview of the relationship between a group of maps, showing both higher and lower levels (See Map Level).

29. Process Library

A Process Library is an easy to understand, easy to use, secure website intelligently presenting an organisation's processes, policies, forms and guidance documents.

30. Process Map

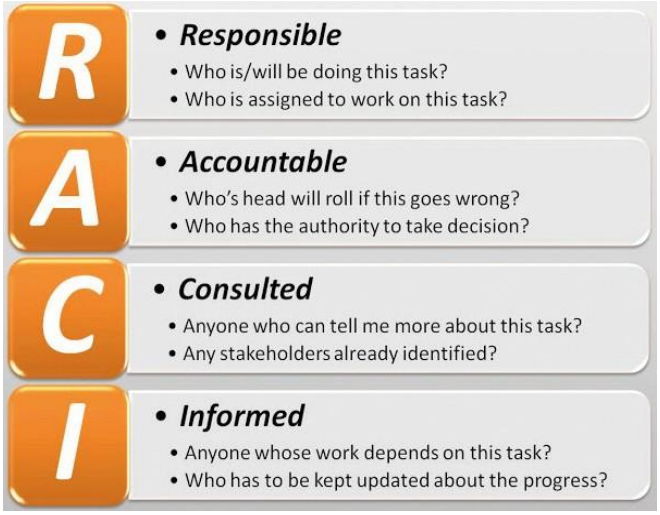
A process map is a diagram that intends to clearly identify the main steps involved in completing a process, with the items used and produced when that process is complete.



31. Process Owner

The Process Owner is the person who has overall control of a process and the decision-making powers to change it.

32. RACI



A RACI Matrix divides tasks into four participatory types assigned to different roles in the project or process.

These make up the acronym RACI:

- **Responsible** - Those who do work to achieve the task.
- **Accountable** – persons ultimately answerable for the correct and thorough completion of the task.
- **Consulted** - Those whose opinions are sought (Two-way communication).
- **Informed** - Those kept up-to-date on progress (One-way communication).

33. SIPOC

A SIPOC table is a form of IPO table that summarises the inputs and outputs of one or a group of processes. SIPOC stands for:

- Suppliers
- Inputs
- Process
- Outputs
- Customers

An example of a SIPOC table is below

Supplier	Input	Process	Output	Customer
• Vehicle owner • Customer service representative • Facility manager • Parts vendor	• Repair inquiry • Vehicle for repair • Permission to proceed with individual recommendations • Open bay • Parts for approved repairs • Observations	• Schedule visit • Diagnose problem • Prepare work order • Source parts • Perform repairs • Notify that service is complete	• Appointment date and time • Repair recommendations and cost estimates • Work order • Parts for approved repairs • Telephone/e-mailed message notification • Repaired vehicle	• Vehicle owner • Mechanic • Customer service representative

34. Six Sigma

Six Sigma is a set of tools and techniques used in process improvement. The principle of Six Sigma is to improve the quality of the output of a process by identifying and eliminating the causes of defects. Six Sigma practices are often combined with the Lean method of manufacturing to become Lean Six Sigma.

35. Stencil and Template

In Microsoft Visio, the Stencil is the area used to store a set of shapes that are used when mapping out a process. The Template is a combination of a Node and the stencil and is also used to control page size and orientation. Both the Stencil and Template can be customised for consistency with corporate branding and colours.

36. Swimlane

A Swimlane is a visual grid applied to a process map to depict what or who is working on a particular subset of a process. Lanes are arranged either horizontally or vertically, and are labelled to show how the chart is organised.

37. To-Be Process

A To-Be process occurs as a result of an analysis of an As-Is process and should show the changes and improvements made to the original process. It may be necessary to create multiple To-Be processes for business analysis and for use in process metrics.

38. Value Stream Mapping

Value Stream Mapping is a Lean method for analysing the As-Is process and designing the To-Be. This approach asks the question, is this Activity value adding, non-value adding or necessary non-value adding? An example of how the value-stream approach can be used is as follows.

- If a typical customer is willing for the costs of an Activity to be added to the price of the product they purchase, the Activity is probably value-adding.
- Non-value adding Activities are those for which the customer would feel it very unfair to add a direct charge to them.
- Necessary non-value adding Activities are those for which the customer would feel costs are in some sense reasonable, but would still feel disgruntled if the costs were passed onto them.

Read more about the Value -Stream approach by reading this article:

Killing Efficiency: How to Identify Your Wasteful Processes
tinyurl.com/tri-killing-efficiency

39. Workflow Management Tool

A workflow management tool is a system or software that contains business processes arranged as a series of workflows. Most commonly used in manufacturing, workflow management systems can also be used to monitor and change the sequence of tasks as part of Business Process Management.

A workflow may be either:

- **Manual** - tasks undertaken by an individual or group of individuals.
- **Automated** - tasks undertaken by a computer programme or machine.

Knowing the terminology is a great start to understanding what Business Process Management is all about, but not so great for helping you to identify the right system for your organisation. The following article offers four quick steps that will help you to identify the right management system.

Business Management Systems: 4 Steps to Finding the Right One for You

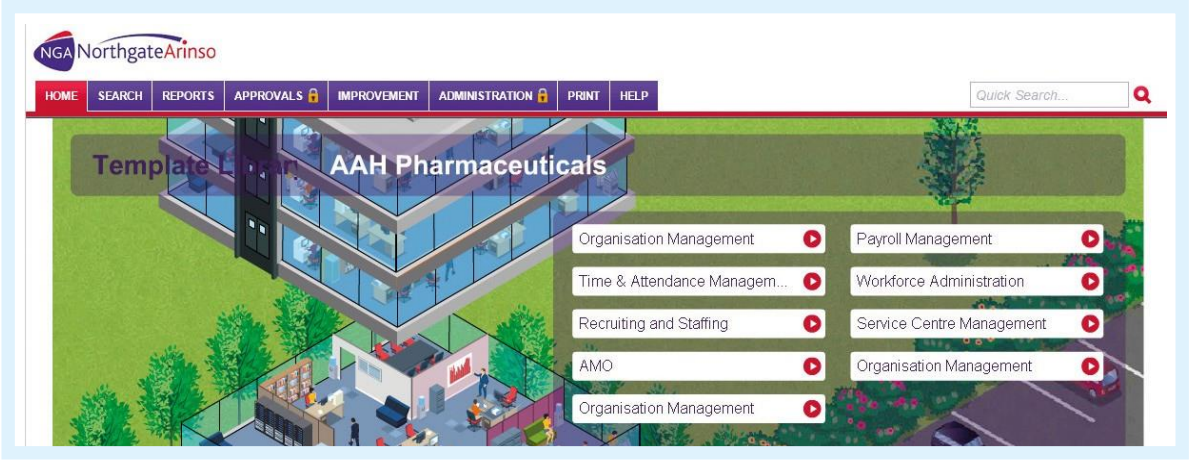
Not all Business Management Systems (BMS) are created equal and although one might be a perfect fit for one company, that doesn't mean it's right for you.

Every organisation has its own particular needs and like a piece of clothing, any solution is not going to be one size fits all. You might be larger or smaller than another business or need different support in different areas - In the world of Business Management Systems there are many factors you need to consider before you even 'step into the shop and start trying things on'.

1. The Price is Right

The first consideration is price. Are you looking for a cheaper option for a small business that can map and house processes but has less functionality? Or are you looking to really get into the intricate process improvement tools that records time, effort and cost data which measures and then models continual improvement going forward? The price you are willing to pay alone will cancel out many options in the market.

Bear in mind that when pricing a BMS, you may not find costs listed on the websites of some suppliers - this is becuase BMS solutions that have greater functionality will be tailored specifically for each customer and as such, it's difficult to provide an accurate quote.



2. What Kind of BMS Are You Looking for?

Today, most Business Management Systems are software based and we believe that, these are the ones that will allow you to achieve the best ROI.

That's because software systems allow you to calculate how efficient your work processes really are. Each task in your organisation has a cost in time and in money. By calculating the cost of the task, you can finally measure the cost of the activity against the actual delivered outcome. If you want to read a more in-depth article on calculating ROI for a Business Process Management software system, click here:

Calculating Return on Investment (ROI) on Business Process Management (BPM)
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/calculating-return-on-investment-bpm-system

If you're still using a paper based management system, some sort of hybrid or you're using an automated system but it's not quite what the doctor ordered, then you should seriously consider the type of impact that a BPM system could have in your organisation.

If you are still working from a paper based Business Management System, this article is for you:

How to move away from a paper-based Business Management System
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/move-paper-business-management-system

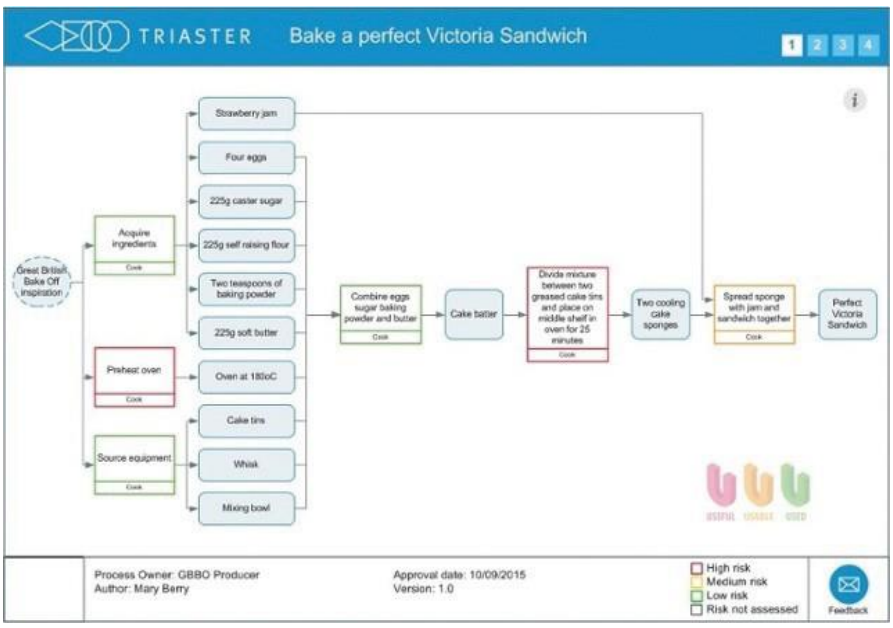
3. The Process Approach:

At Triaster, we use a process approach to business improvement. This includes our own capture, share, use and improve methodology (see triaster.co.uk/capture-share-use-improve.php). By implementing a process management and improvement initiative, your organisation can capture processes through process mapping, create a standardised way of working by sharing processes throughout the organisation with the management system and model continuous improvements for the processes that already exist.

Improvements are identified by equating everything in your organisation to a series of 'Inputs' and 'Outputs' - this simplicity allows your organisation to identify process steps that add value and those that are just wasteful.

Let's take a look at one example of process capture.

Say you want to bake a cake. First you'll need ingredients (Inputs) then, after the baking's done you have a cake (Output) and in order to get to the finished product you'll need a recipe (process). We put this information into a Process Map that looks like this:



This makes it easier for you and your employees to find the right process when you need it and not waste time sifting through a whole manual on the subject. If more information is needed however, you can still find that by going to the supporting procedure, and you could even look up your specific job role in the system and each process that is associated with your specific role.

If you want a more in-depth explanation on Process Mapping and how it could be beneficial for your business, read this article:

Six Major Benefits of Process Mapping
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/six-major-benefits-process-mapping

It all sounds relatively simple doesn't it? That is the point of process improvement, however it's not all smooth sailing because our last point is where the rubber really meets the road…

4. Know What You're Getting Into

Remember how we just said that the Business Process Management is simple and effective? Well the process approach certainly is, but the implementation can be another story.

Most of the implementation involved with Business Process Management can be outsourced, but not everything can. You can hire professionals to come into your business and run Process Mapping workshops (see: https://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/capturing-a-business-process-tips-for-process-discovery-workshops), but you're still going to haveto actually create a team of people who collectively understand the processes of your organisation and can map them out accordingly.

You'll also may have to liaise with the IT team to implement software, unless you go for an online system. The planning stage can take time and you will also need to re-evaluate your processes in order to improve them, **but** the benefits of BPM still far outweigh the negatives.

Improving the processes of an organisation does take time, and you will find that you'll have to make it a major focus of your organisation, but the words 'process Improvement' tend to go hand-in-hand with the words 'increased income' - which is why the BPM is so important to organisations wanting business improvement.

But is Business Process Management even the best type of management system out there for you? There are some that may fit your organisation better depending on what exactly you are looking to do in your organisation.

Business Process Management vs Quality Management vs Enterprise Architecture vs Workflow Management

Business Process Management isn't the only type of Business Management System out there. Because of the large amount of choice, you would be forgiven for wondering which one would be the most suitable for your organisation. This article will explore four different approaches which support a wide range of different business objectives.

When considering any big Business Management System purchase, it is important to outline what you are planning to achieve and be clear of what your organisation will be using the system for. It is paramount that the system you choose will support your organisation to achieve its business objectives rather than the business needing to adjust to the system - as can happen.

What is Business Process Management (BPM)?

Business Process Management is an approach that focuses predominantly on capturing and improving business processes to help an organisation work more efficiently. This is achieved through capturing and documenting an organisation's current-state end-to-end processes.

Once a department's processes (or even the organisation as a whole) have been documented in a process map, you can begin to identify where the inefficiencies and bottlenecks lie. This will allow you to make data driven changes to each process to help reduce costs and improve efficiency or eliminate waste for example.

What is a Quality Management System (QMS)?

A Quality Management System houses the processes, policies and procedures that are required to help an organisation achieve one or a number of quality standards. These standards are put in place to ensure that a level of quality is consistently achieved or that customer requirements are met.

The majority of Quality Management systems are geared to support achieving ISO accreditations (see: https://www.triaster.co.uk/white-paper-achieve-iso-9001-2015).

You can read about some of the different ISO standards here:

Achieving ISO 9001:2015 with Business Process Management (BPM)
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/achieving-iso-90012015-business-process-management-bpm

As covered in this article, in most instances, quality management can be achieved with a BPM system, although there are software systems available that focus solely on Total Quality Management. The following article sets out what a QMS should deliver:

The Top 10 things your Quality Management System (QMS) must deliver
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/the-top-10-things-your-quality-management-system-qms-must-deliver

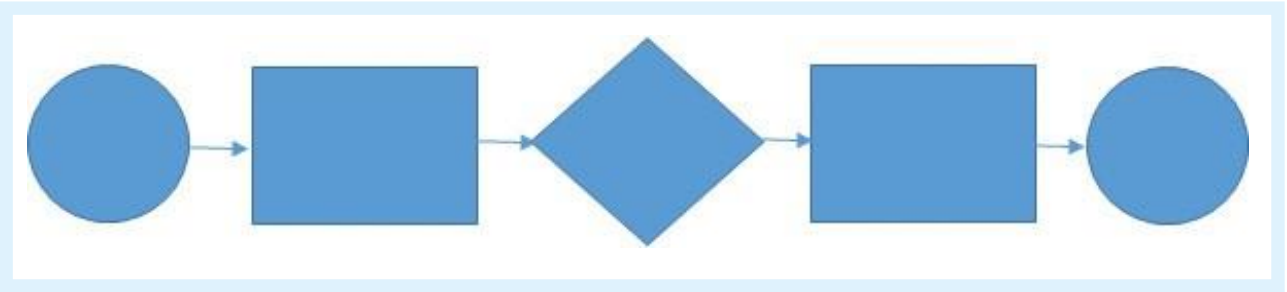
The key thing about quality is that to be effective it must sit at the heart of your organisation and this is something that a BPM system can really help you with.

A common issue with implementing a quality initiative to achieve a certification, is that the focus shifts from running your business to achieving the certification. There are some helpful tips on how to avoid this in the following article:

How to stop ISO Certification running your business
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/stop-iso-certification-running-business

What is Enterprise Architecture (EA)?

Enterprise Architecture is a detailed overview of a business' processes and their interactions and relationship with the core IT infrastructure. An EA system houses and manages everything a business does, how it does it and the systems it uses. These are very complex systems, which ultimately allow an organisation to plan and execute new strategies effectively and with little impact on the rest of the business.



To help you understand the differences between EA and BPM software, we've put together this useful comparison including some of the pros and cons of each system:

Business Process Management vs Enterprise Architecture: Pros, Cons & Comparisons
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/bpm-vs-ea-pros-cons-benefits-drawbacks

What is a Workflow Management System? (WFMS)

A Workflow Management System is a tool that allows an organisation to create and monitor a set sequence of tasks - usually in the form of a flow diagram. These diagrams are not usually detailed but give enough information for someone to follow the instructions and perform the task correctly.

Workflow management is an excellent entry point to start looking at and capturing what your business does; however, it does tend to be more focused on the people carrying out the tasks than your business processes. To help you decide if workflow management software is suitable for your business, we've written a clear comparison with BPM software, showing the similarities and differences, which you can read here:

Workflow Management vs Business Process Management: Which one is for You?
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/wfms-vs-bpm-similarities-differences

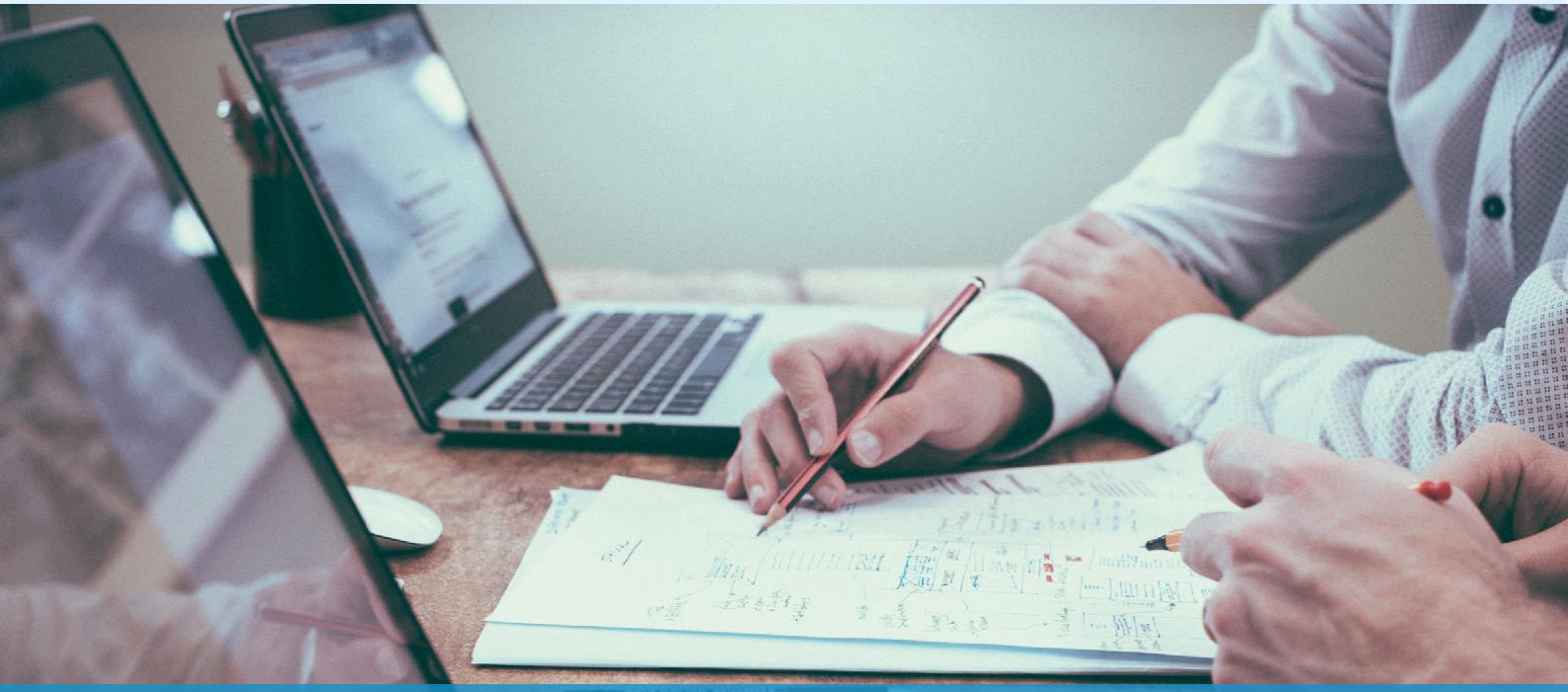
BPM, QMS, EA or WFMS, Which One Should I be Using?

When it comes to making a decision on what system you should be using, any Business Management System is going to cost time and money. We understand that you won't want to take this decision lightly. Furthermore, implementing such a system will require serious commitment and a cultural shift, and this needs to come from the top down.

Whichever system you choose – success will not happen overnight, and this is something that you will need to keep at the forefront of your decision making process.

Understanding that the success of the system ultimately depends on how much you put in, will help you to stay focused, not only during that initial decision phase, but also throughout the implementation of your new system.

Here ends section 1. Section 2 gets more specific. It explains what Business Process Management can offer your organisation, by analysing Triaster's method of continuous improvement and how it can help you save time, effort and cost in your business processes...



Chapter 2 - What Can BPM do for You and Your Business?

This section will cover

How Business Process Management Can Break Down Silos in Your Business

How do we start to connect the various areas of our organisation, so that they work together rather than in silos? How do we get a holistic view of our end-to-end processes, but show the handoffs between different areas/departments? These are both very important questions that have been asked of Triaster over the years and although they are very different questions, there is largely one answer to both…

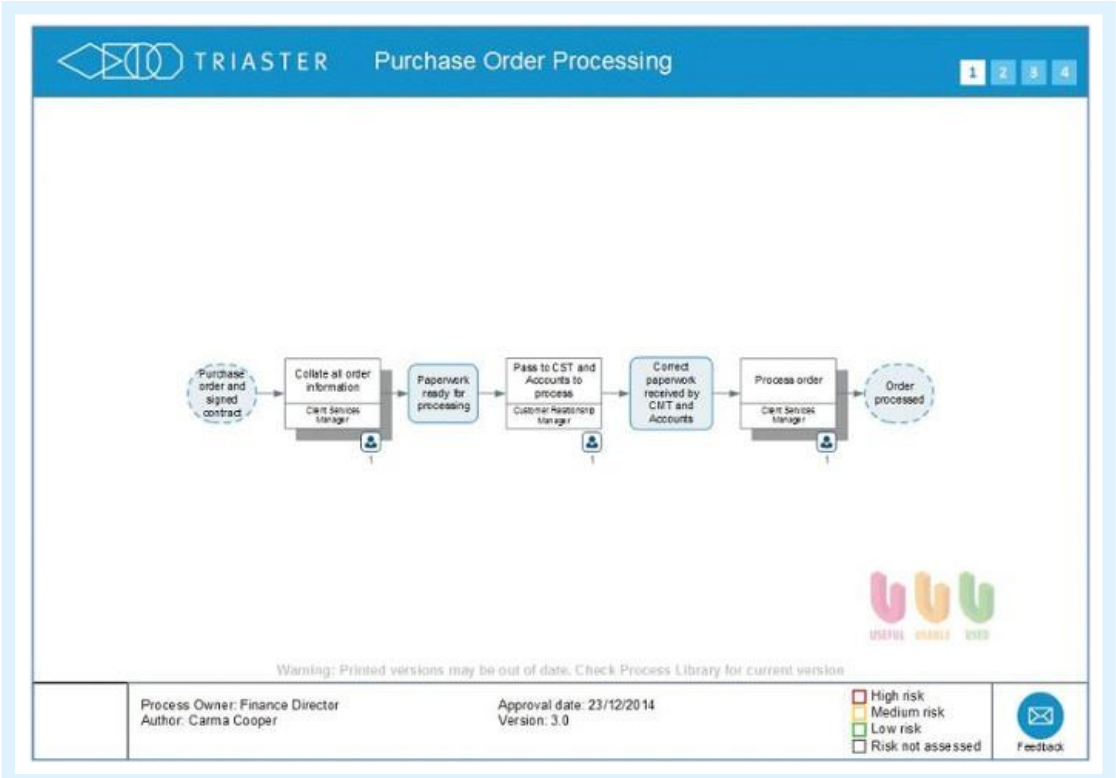
One System at the Heart of the Organisation

The starting point for addressing both of the questions above, is for the whole organisation to agree to use one Business Management System. Your organisation may call it a Business Management System (BMS) Quality Management System (QMS) or Information Management System (IMS), but the key thing is that the whole organisation agrees to use one system for capturing and understanding what the organisation does.

How Process Mapping Can Unify Your Departments

Taking a BPM approach starts with capturing your organisation's end-to-end processes as a process map.

A process is a transformation. It transforms inputs into outputs. So a process map shows the steps taken by your organisation to deliver to its customers. Because it is set out in diagrammatic form, it sets out the steps very clearly and without too much detail.



It is important that the whole organisation uses one consistent set of process mapping shapes and one process mapping methodology. Without this, different department's process maps will be presented differently and won't be easily joined together or understood by the rest of the organisation.

To enable this consistency, Triaster restricts the process mapping shapes available in our process mapping toolset to the key shapes required: Inputs, Outputs, Activities and Decisions.

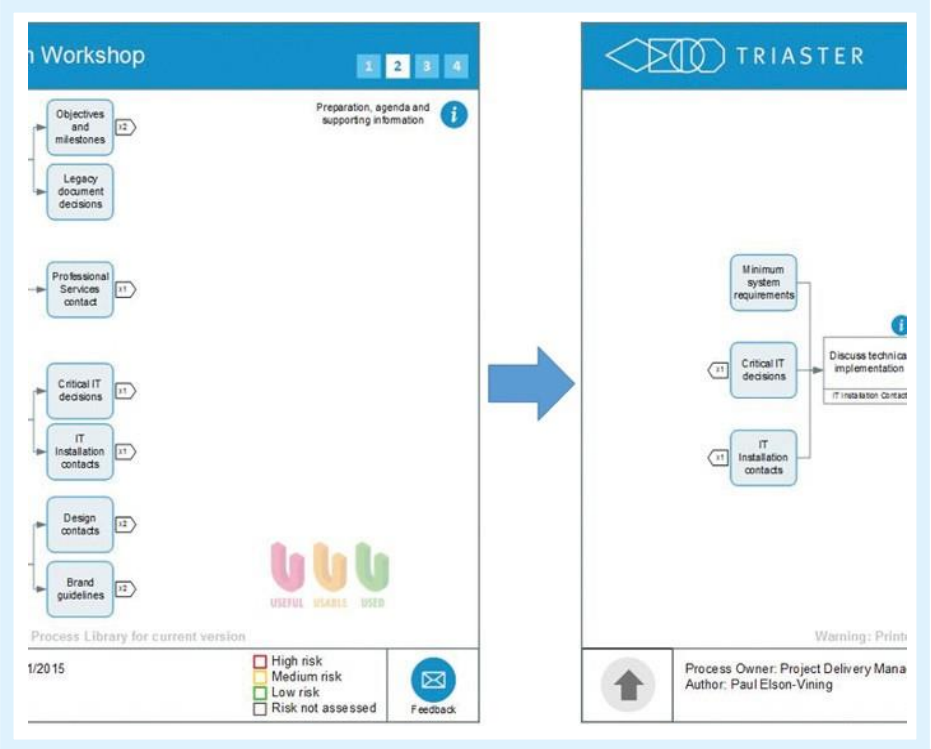
Triaster also promotes a process mapping methodology – Noun-Verb process mapping (see: http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/what-is-the-noun-verb-methodology-of-process-mapping) – which an organisation can easily adopt without extensive process mapping training.

Other process mapping systems have their own ways of approaching this.

To read more about process mapping shapes, please have a look at:

Common Process Mapping shapes and their Definitions
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/common-process-mapping-shapes-and-their-definitions

It is also important that the process maps link together to show the end-to-end processes – likely to be many A4 pages long. This should be easy to do and easy to follow.



Placing Your BPM System at the Heart of Your Organisation

Once captured, the process maps must be shared by the whole organisation.

This is where the 'one system at the heart of the organisation' comes in.

To give a holistic view of your organisation, the process maps capturing the end-to-end processes must

be accessible by the whole organisation. If intelligently housed and presented in one centralised BPM system, this view (or model) - will start to transform the culture of your organisation.

How BPM Systems Can Break Down Silos

Being able to access a model of your organisation, which is focused on what is delivered to the customer will really help to break down silos in an organisation. It reminds each department that they are part of a larger whole and also gives clarity to what the rest of the organisation is doing. In mapping the end-to-end processes, departments will need to speak to each other, particularly as the maps are linked together. This starts to break down barriers between departments and creates a holistic view of the organisation's end-to-end processes.

BPM System Functionality

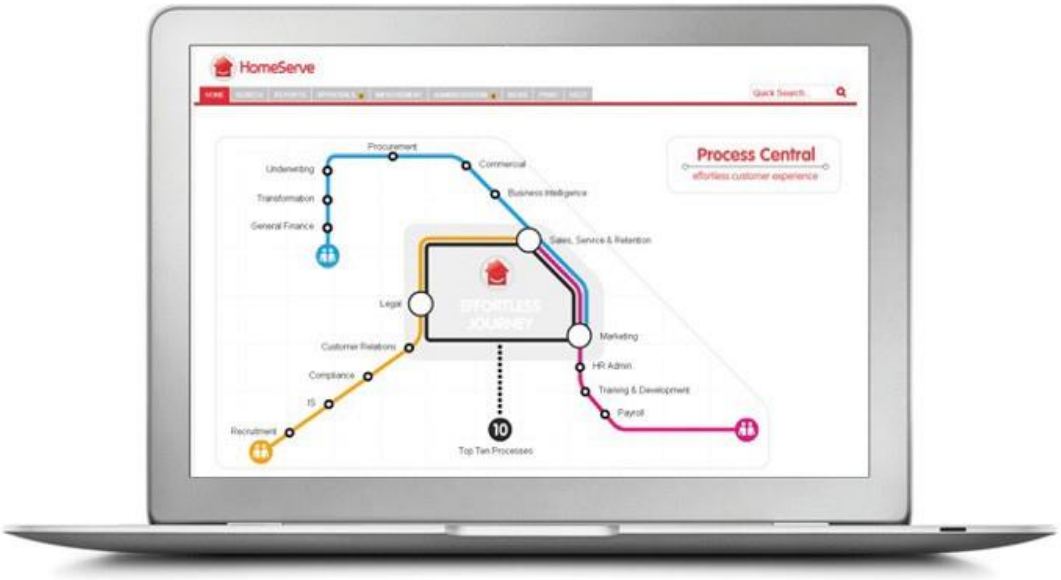
It is important that as well as being easily accessible – from the intranet for example- the system is easy to use. Really good Search functionality is crucial as well as good navigation.

Good Navigation

Good navigation will enable the end user to follow the flow of the process through, from one department to another, without feeling that they have strayed into 'someone else's territory'. It will also encourage cross departmental use. This is key to breaking down silos.

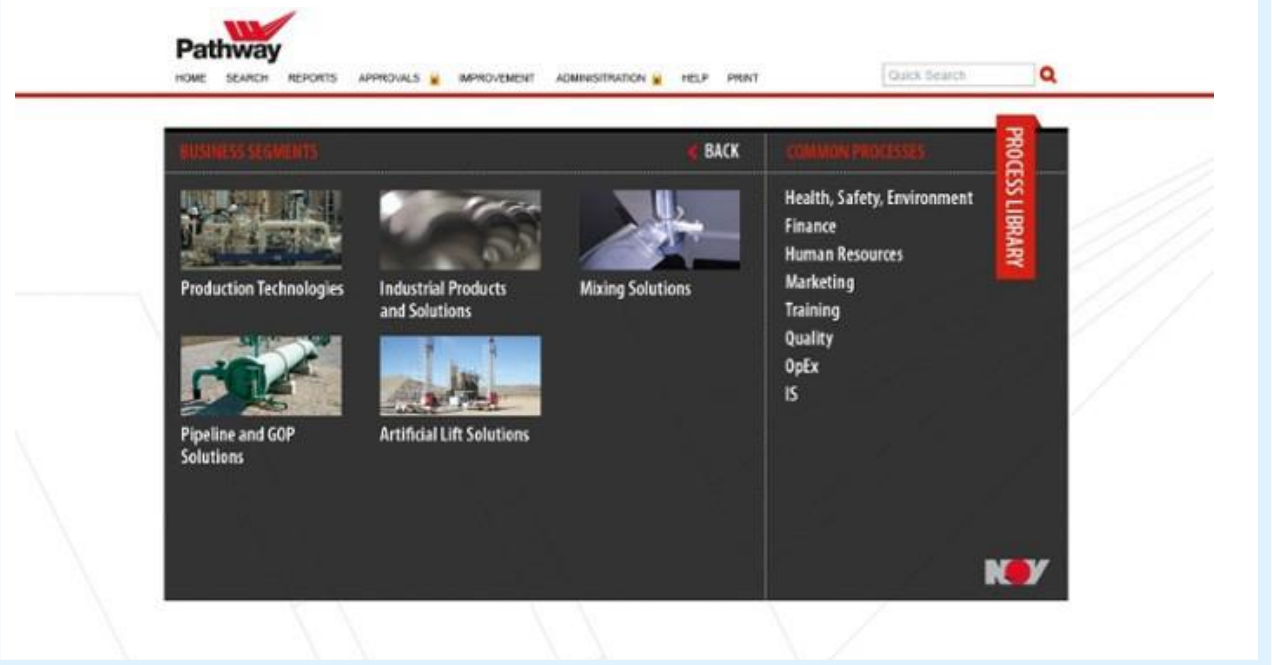
BPM Structure

It is really tempting to structure the menu options according to departments, but to break down silos it is important to structure it according to products or services delivered to the customer - as with the systems shown below:



It also helps to show common processes – i.e. not affiliated to any one department or unit. For more information on this please read:

Business Process Management (BPM) system structure: Core vs business unit processes
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/bpm-system-structure-core-processes



It's Not All About the System

This is where the answer to the two original questions starts to diverge.

Implementing a centralised BPM system does indeed deliver a holistic view of your end-to-end processes and show the handoffs between different areas/departments.

However, on its own it won't result in your business working together rather than in silos. It is however a key component to achieving this. With this in place, a cultural change can gradually be implemented and supported by the system.

Cultural changes need on-going communication and above all vocal senior support and there is no short cutting this. But with a great BPM system to back it up, you will, in time, be able to break down silos and leverage the whole business working together.

Breaking down silos in your organisation plays an extremely important role in achieving your continuous improvement objectives. Make this a priority during the planning stage and you'll already have taken a massive step towards the next topic we are going to address, namely…

How Can a BPM System Help me to Achieve Continuous Improvement?

Companies implement Business Process Management (BPM) systems for many reasons. Whether the sole purpose is to demonstrate compliance to regulation and standardisation authorities (such as ISO9001, ISO14001, Sarbanes Oxley…) or to completely overhaul the business's quality manual - there is no doubt that your business will improve by completing these objectives.

This section will focus on how a BPM system will enable you to achieve continuous improvement in a consistent, incremental manner.

Using Data (or Properties) to Achieve Continuous Improvement

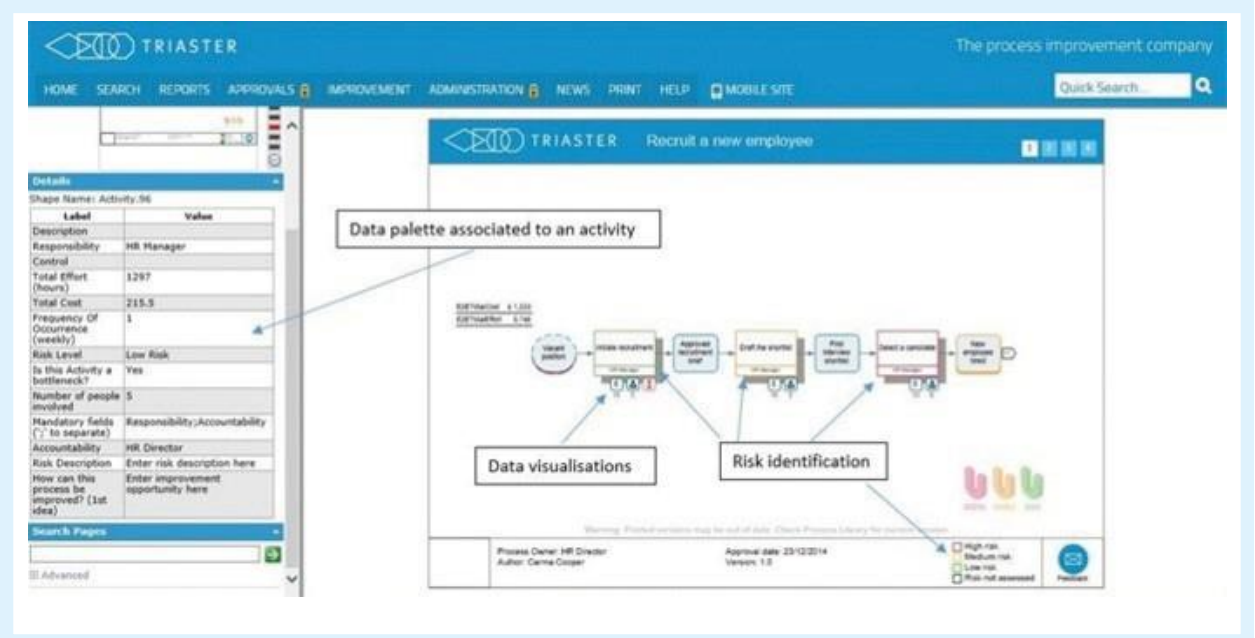
One way in which a BPM system can enable you to achieve continuous improvement is in the collection and use of process related data.

A BPM System Should Not Only be a Place to Store and Share Business Process Maps

ISO's definition of a process is 'a set of interrelated or interacting activities that transforms inputs into outputs'. If you process map according to this definition, you will use shapes for each of the activities taking place throughout your organisation, but why stop there?

Triaster highly advocates storing data behind each of these shapes, to add value to the process maps.

Your BPM system should allow for easy capture of data behind the shapes, and quick reporting to retrieve the data. The capturing, sharing and reporting on this data can really accelerate continuous improvement. Below is an example showing how:



Reporting on Time, Effort and Cost to Achieve Continuous Improvement

A Triaster BPM system enables you to quickly and easily calculate:

- how much a process costs to execute
- how long it takes to carry out the process
- the process cycle efficiency
- as well as a whole host of other data

With the ability to quickly and easily cost a process, you can start looking at where in the process there is excess cost and the ways to improve the process to reduce cost.

An example report can be viewed here.

	AsIs	ToBe1	ToBe2
Cost (per process execution)	£1,085.94	£686.73	£614.02
Annual Cost	£16,289.10	£10,300.95	£9,210.30
Total Cost Of Non-conformances	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Total Annual Cost	£16,289.10	£10,300.95	£9,210.30

	AsIs	ToBe1	ToBe2
Cost	£1,085.94	£686.73	£614.02
Cost Of Non-conformances	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Cycle Time	378.00	254.34	227.44
Total Effort	78.00	57.93	51.80
Resources	0.00	0.00	0.00

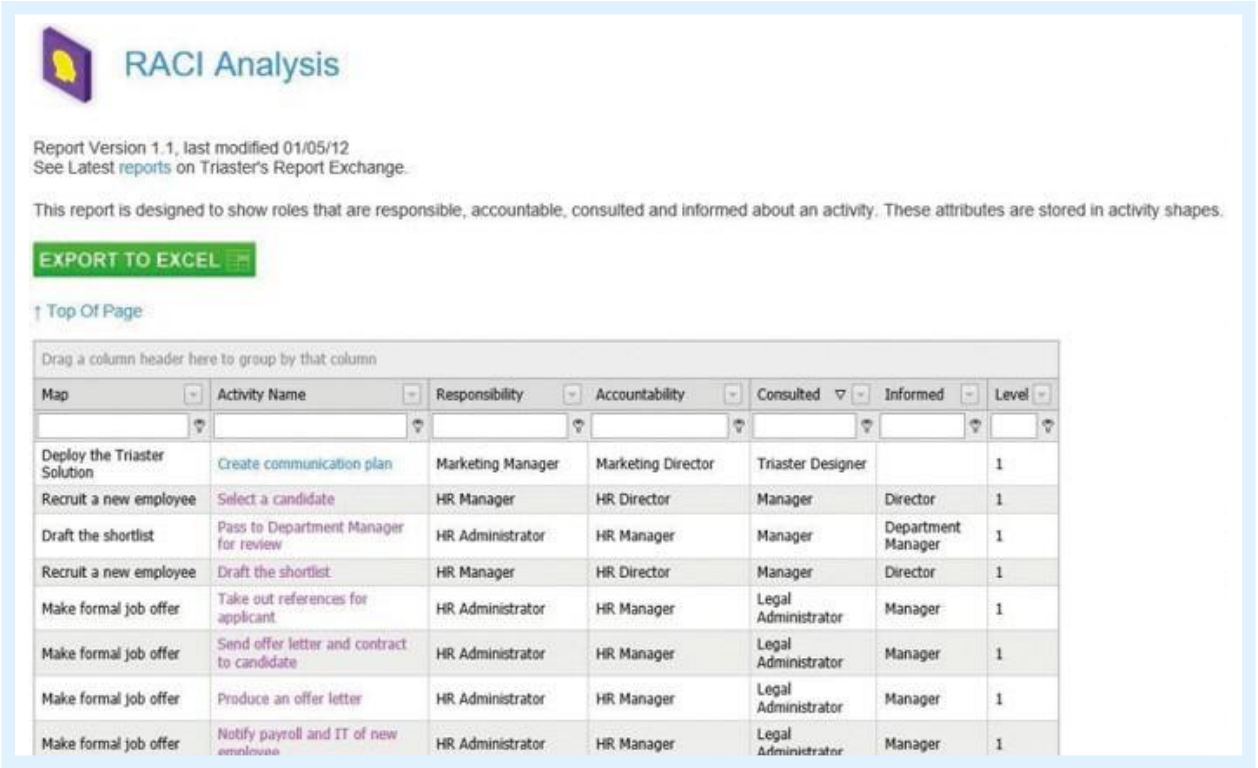
	AsIs	ToBe1	ToBe2
Cycle Time	378.00	254.34	227.44
Value Added	40.00	24.00	21.16
Non-Value Added	80.00	75.69	66.66
Necessary Non-Value Added	258.00	112.67	102.71
Process Cycle Efficiency	10.58%	9.43%	9.30%

Reporting on RACI to Achieve Continuous Improvement

Most BPM systems also allow for easy capturing and sharing of RACI data (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed).

It is then clear who throughout the business should be carrying out what task, who should be held accountable in the event of a process failure and anybody who needs to be consulted or informed. This is very useful for new starters, as well as current employees.

The RACI Matrix behind your process maps can be built into your induction process. This will set beginners on the way to getting things right first time.



RACI Analysis

Report Version 1.1, last modified 01/05/12
See Latest reports on Triaster's Report Exchange.

This report is designed to show roles that are responsible, accountable, consulted and informed about an activity. These attributes are stored in activity shapes.

EXPORT TO EXCEL

↑ Top Of Page

Drag a column header here to group by that column

Map	Activity Name	Responsibility	Accountability	Consulted	Informed	Level
Deploy the Triaster Solution	Create communication plan	Marketing Manager	Marketing Director	Triaster Designer		1
Recruit a new employee	Select a candidate	HR Manager	HR Director	Manager	Director	1
Draft the shortlist	Pass to Department Manager for review	HR Administrator	HR Manager	Manager	Department Manager	1
Recruit a new employee	Draft the shortlist	HR Manager	HR Director	Manager	Director	1
Make formal job offer	Take out references for applicant	HR Administrator	HR Manager	Legal Administrator	Manager	1
Make formal job offer	Send offer letter and contract to candidate	HR Administrator	HR Manager	Legal Administrator	Manager	1
Make formal job offer	Produce an offer letter	HR Administrator	HR Manager	Legal Administrator	Manager	1
Make formal job offer	Notify payroll and IT of new employee	HR Administrator	HR Manager	Legal Administrator	Manager	1

Reporting on Risk to Achieve Continuous Improvement

Identifying risks throughout your business's end-to-end processes is extremely important, not only for Continuous Improvement, but for the survival of your business.

Therefore, recording and reporting on where those risks exist at an activity level is key.
Furthermore, visually representing risk in your process maps alerts your end users to the risks of deviating from the agreed process.

Triaster's BPM platform enables users to report on all risks within the business and sort them according to severity. The highest risk is a great start point for continuous improvement around risk mitigation and business continuity.

Drag a column header here to group by that column

Map	Activity Name	Risk Level	Risk Description	Level
Execute project analysis	Analyse requirements	High Risk	Could impact the entire life cycle if not correct.	1
Manage credit card transactions	Make a credit card transaction	High Risk	Risk of credit card fraud	1
Identify connection type and make connection	Request username and password from customer	High Risk	Allows access to secure information	1
Identify connection type and make connection	Retrieve token from secure location	High Risk	Allows access to secure information	1
Recruit a new employee	Select a candidate	High Risk	Enter risk description here	1
Perform closure tasks	Update support site	High Risk	Should be no secure information in Support Site	1
Record a support enquiry	Capture issue details and update support database	Low Risk	Limited resource	1
Draw petty cash	Cash cheque at bank and place cash in tin	Low Risk	Money handling - risk of error	1

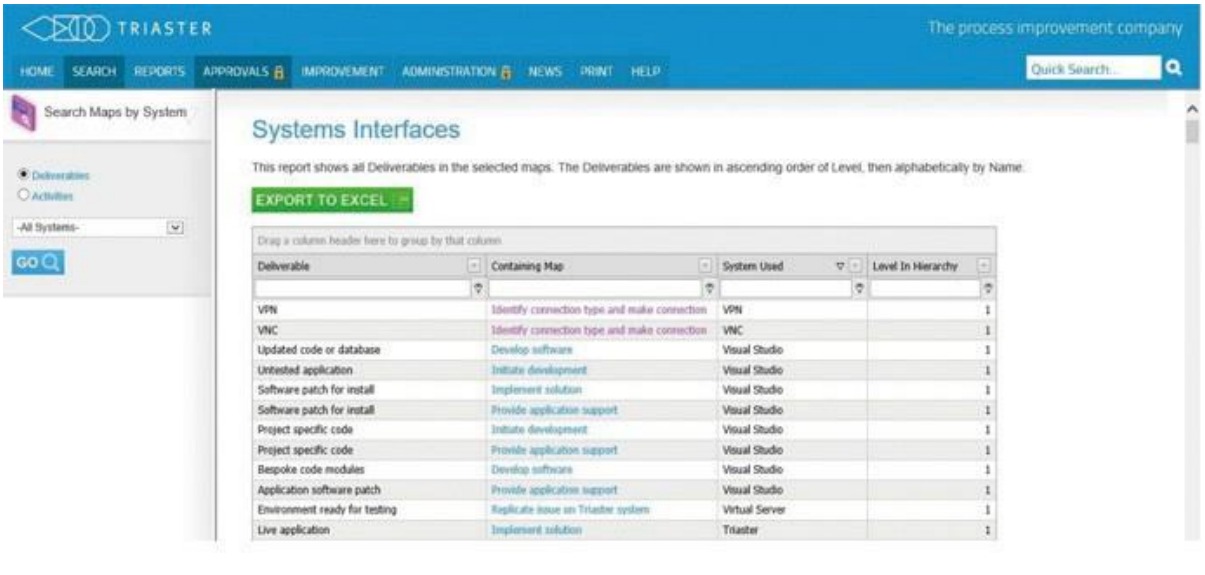
Reporting on Systems Interfaces to Achieve Continuous Improvement

Understanding the systems used throughout a business is key to business improvement.

Your BPM system should show as standard which systems are used or updated throughout any end-to-end process. This is useful information for:

- **Anyone Doing the Process** – it shows the system(s) they need to be updating at specific points
- **Understanding Any Different Systems the Business is Using** - and at which point and for what purpose

This is really helpful for continuous improvement as it highlights any duplications, so that you can start to think about the potential for combining systems, eliminate redundant systems or if there is a requirement for a new system, and shows the processes that will be impacted if a system is updated, replaced or scrapped.



Knowledge Sharing to Achieve Continuous Improvement

Engineer, statistician, professor, author, lecturer, and management consultant W. Edwards Deming famously said, “It is not enough to do your best, you must know what to do, and then do your best.”

At Triaster, we are all about sharing accurate knowledge, which enables an entire organisation to get things done right first time. We believe that within a few clicks of a mouse an employee should be embedded within a process along with all the supporting information they need to correctly and accurately carry out their job.

The ideal situation for any business is to be constantly evolving towards improvement. It’s easy to think of a destination and say ‘I want to go there’, what’s less certain is the best way to actually get there. Let’s take a look at 10 separate ways a BPM System can save you time, money and effort while transporting you to the destination of continual improvement...

10 Ways Business Process Management Software Can Improve Your Business

Business Process Management vendors often have a problem communicating exactly why you should care about BPM - even though one of the big benefits is return on investment.

In fact, according to a Gartner survey, 80% of organisations conducting Business Process Management (BPM) projects will experiencean internal rate of return better than 15%

The problem is that although many organisations are in need of a Business Management System, few are aware of the improvement capabilities that a good system can deliver.

So, next follows ten reasons why a BPM system is necessary to any contemporary organisation:

1. Business Process Management Improves Efficiency

Here's a question for you; when a process is broken or wasteful in your organisation, do you know how to identify it?

There are certainly processes in your organisation that could be improved, some may be wasteful and others may be completely broken - but how will you know if you don't have the tools to define and measure a process?

The first step is to capture your processes through process mapping, find the wasteful or broken processes and work backwards from there.

2. BPM Supports Employee Succession Planning and Knowledge Capture

Although you'd probably love to retain all your staff, people move on for different reasons and when they do, you'll want as smooth a transition as possible. BPM offers a clear method to capture and store important information.

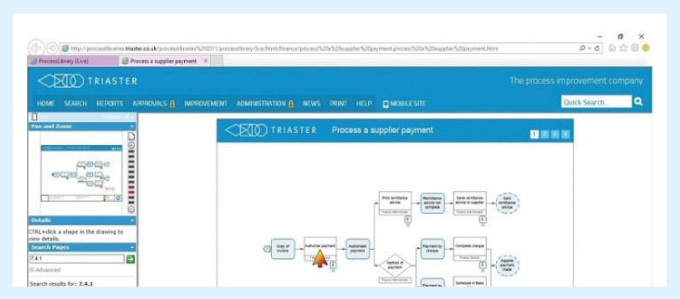
With process mapping, you can capture every area of the organisation and the tasks that are carried out so the knowledge transfer is as smooth as possible.

Documenting information in this way allows you to easily share processes, policies and guidance documents among your workforce, which is the best way to make sure that business knowledge remains in your organisation.

3. It Provides a Framework for Continuous Improvement

Here's another question for you, are you able to easily define the core tasks you need to perform daily in your company for others? The harder question is can you define the tasks performed by other employees?

When you can't identify what you do, you can't identify the problems and when you can't do that, you cannot achieve your improvement objectives. A good BPM system will provide organisation-wide oversight, bring clarity to your job role and other roles that were previously isolated.



4. You Can Retire Your Paper-based System

Many organisations are still using paper-based systems to manage their documents, forms, manuals and processes.

The problem with this is that when your business starts to grow, you will eventually need to file and manage thousands of documents. How user friendly is that? How easy is it for employees to find the right process for health and safety? How easy is it to find step-by-step guides for specific processes? This situation can quickly become a management nightmare.

BPM can transfer all your paper-based documentation into process maps available on one searchable system and makes finding it as simple as typing in a query to bring up the appropriate captured process - this saves your employees time and makes sure crucial guidelines and standards are upheld.

5. BPM Supports the Implementation of Other IT Systems

The implementation of a new software system can cause problems between IT and the rest of the business, especially if communication surrounding the implementation is poor. BPM can support other systems such as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) - as it allows you to have a complete overview of everything your business does.

It is crucial that any BPM system you purchase will support the specific needs of the business beforehand - there's nothing worse than purchasing a management system that doesn't have the flexibility to cover all your business needs.

6. It Will Help Your Organisation to Eliminate Silos

Most employees in an organisation won't know the specifics of their colleagues' job roles from a bar of soap. When a process from one area overlaps into another, employees will certainly need to identify the other department responsible instead of living in a land of continual confusion.

The great thing about BPM is that it creates linkages between departments. By identifying the key processes in the key areas, capturing them via process maps and sharing them in a usable way so that all staff can know what they need to and who they need to talk to in order to perform their tasks (thus saving time and money).

7. It Will Help You to Establish an Effective Quality Strategy

Quality is becoming more and more important for contemporary businesses. Customers want it, employees want it and your marketing department is probably quietly praying for it.

The risk of quality failure includes:

- **Loss of Trust and Brand Loyality**
- **Costly Penalties** - from regulatory bodies
- **Wasteful Processes** - that suck time and money from your organisation.
- **A Sub-standard Product or Service**

8. Your Change Initiatives Will be Supported

The ability to model change before you implement it is reason enough to have a BPM system. Modelling change allows you to measure the possible outcomes of any improvement project. Beingable to eliminate failure before it happens is the goldengoose that keeps on giving.

9. Business Processes Management Systems Increase Employee Engagement

BPM provides an excellent framework and support structure to help employees adjust to, and engage with, a new way of working.

In order for your Business Process Management system to be successful, you need employee buy-in from the start - you can't map out your organisation's processes without listening to how those processes are performed by those who actually perform them.

The upside to this necessary first step is that you have employee engagement from day one. An employee who is involved with the implementation of the new process, is more likely to use it and more likely to want to see it succeed.

10. It supports and Underpins a Consistent Working Culture

Inconsistent working can result in inefficiencies and an inconsistency of outcome in business. BPM systems ensure that your business processes are made accessible to the whole organisation.

From there, it's important to document what you want your employees to do; make it easy for them to access it (on a daily basis if necessary) and follow it.

However, for this to be effective, you must ensure that there is a change in culture (see: http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/inconsistent-working-how-can-i-get-people-to-work-consistently) to support this, otherwise, you may risk impacting the long-term sustainability of such a project.

Essential Elements to the Success of Your BPM System Before You Even Start

A BPM system will only be successful in your business if:

- Senior stakeholders support the project from the start.
- Your system is user-friendly and used by your employees consistently.

Improving efficiency is key for any organisation that is attempting to save time and money. For any organisation looking to standardise their business processes and make sure that those processes are used throughout the organisation, they will need a process library. The next article looks at how you can achieve business efficiency by implementing a single way of working for your organisation...

How a Process Library Can Solve Business Efficiency Problems

If your organisation is having business efficiency problems or you just want to improve what you already have, you need to consider getting a process library. Having a Process Library ensures that employees are performing the same process using the same process methods.

A great misconception in business today is that efficiency problems are largely due to a lack of employee engagement, but if you don't have a standard way of working, the same task will be perfomed in ten different ways by ten different people.

It is a necessity for any organisation wanting to improve efficiency to achieve process standardisation. If you don't have this, you can and will get different results from employees carrying out the same process. In this article, we take a look at what a process library is, how a process library can store documents, help you standardise your way of working and dramatically enhance your business efficiency (using an interactive Process Library example).

What is a Process Library?

A process library is a Business Management System. However it is far more than just a place to store documents. Process Libraries contain process maps that describe:

- **The Tasks to be Performed** - in the form of policies, guides or process maps
- **The Deliverables Produced** - the outputs captured using templates provided
- **The Process Workflow** - the inherent dependencies
- **How the Work is to be Performed** - techniques used
- **The tools** - that will be used to perform the work
- **Employee Roles and Responsibilities**
- **Metrics** - used for improving the process

Process libraries can be easily searched and report on the information that they hold in ways that support business efficiency, for example with RACI reports and reports on how much each process costs.

What Problems Can be Solved With a Process Library?

Many organisations don't understand how much they need a document management system - a process library. Of the frequently asked questions I receive most at Triaster, the 15 most common ones are:

"How can we get our employees engaged with our improvement initiatives?"

"We need to work out how to comply with the HEFCE revised operating model of quality assessment."

"The departments in our company all work in silos. We need to fix this."

"How do we reconcile Sarbanes Oxley Compliance and Process Improvement?"

"How do we get new business processes to live past the change initiative?"

"We need to ensure that when key people leave the business, their knowledge doesn't go with them."

"How can I structure my BPM system to share core processes with everyone, but give each business unit their own specific information?"

"Our ISO certification seems to be running our business!"

"How do we get everyone engaged with Process Mapping?"

"We are wasting too much money through inefficiency. How can we stop this?"

"I need help with establishing an effective Quality Strategy."

"How do I get people to take ownership of their processes?"

"How can I manage risk and avoid Quality failure?"

"How do we create a culture of Continuous Improvement?"

"We need to get people working consistently."

All these problems can all be solved by implementing a process library and making sure that the process library is useful, usable and used in an organisation.

Put it another way, think about your own organisation. How many problems could be solved by creating a single way of working for all processes? How many business efficiency problems could be solved by making processes easily accessible to the staff that need them throughout the organisation? Process Libraries don't just store documents, they change organisational culture.

If you would like to see how New Charter managed to save £350K per annum with their process library, take a look at:

New Charter case study
https://info.triaster.co.uk/case-study-new-charter-group

How Can a Process Library Help an Organisation?

Implementing a process library could help any organisation to:

- Break down silos
- Keep knowledge in the organisation, not in the person - when key people leave their knowledge should stay in the organisation
- Grant access to specific employees to documents that impact their process areas
- Support culture change and business efficiency
- Create greater employee responsibility and ownership of processes as a result
- Document processes within a library to capture a current process as it is so you can identify improvement opportunities
- Ensure your business management system is useful and used.
- Make sure process changes are useful and deliver improvement

It is especially important to cater to the last two points because if your process library doesn't look great and feel easy to use then it won't get used.

Process Libraries > Cultural Change > Continual Improvement = Business Efficiency

Process Libraries
If you take a look at some of the organisations we have worked with, each one collaborated with our designers to produce a unique management system structured in such a way that it would be useful to their employees.

- **Skanska UK** implemented Our Way of Working to adopt a single interface for nine operating companies
- **New Charter** wanted a design that had broad appeal and offered a simple, clean and quality feel - as their library is their sole reference for their way of working
- **Equifax UK** implemented their Process Library HUB so that staff could find key information in as few clicks as possible
- **Lockheed Martin's** QMS design on their Touchstone process library separates core processes from supporting functions with a library resources section on the right of the page.
- **The University of Winchester** used their student centre building as the main focal point for their library and the functionality is designed around the question 'How do I?' as in 'how do I register for a new course?'
- **Interserve FM's** process library, PRISM, serves as the gateway to four sub-libraries, developed by each of Interserve's business units (Defence, Industrial Services, Civil Government and commercial)

To see all of the process library designs that we have created for many different organisations, take a look at the Triaster process library showcase (see: triaster.co.uk/showcase.php); and to see how the organisations above implemented business efficiency in greater detail, download the Business Improvement E-book (see: https://www.triaster.co.uk/white-paper-business-improvement-ebookwhich chronicles the improvementjourney of 8 organisations and how they went from business problem to business improvement.

Cultural Change
To deliver the benefits explained above, a process library must sit at the heart of the organisation because if it is seen as an optional add-on then they won't get used and they won't create any sort of change.

This is why our customers work with our designers to create a process library that presents their organisation's unique business management structure in a library that will have broad appeal and usability throughout their organisation.

Simplicity, structure and layout are key for employees to work efficiently and adopt a management system as a standard way of working.

Continual Improvement
You cannot improve processes before:

- **You know What They Are** - if you don't know how a process is broken or inefficient then you won't be able to fix it.
- **You Have a Standard Way of Working** - you can create the most efficient and least wasteful process on the planet but unless it's being used by employees who actually carry out the process then it's just a big waste of time and energy.

Continual improvement only exists where the process is captured, shared, used and improved - this is known as the 4 pillars of continual improvement. For more on this:

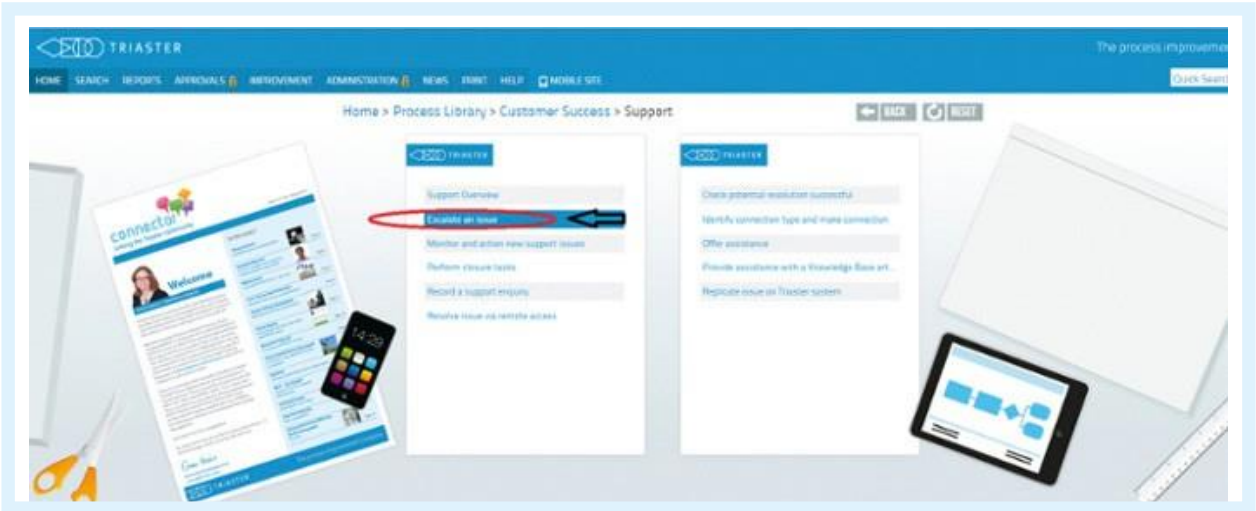
Read our article on the 4 pillars
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/4-pillars-of-continual-improvement

Interactive Process Library Example

Take a look at the interactive process library example (see: https://www.triaster.co.uk/demo-process-library) in the imageabove. When we click on 'Process Library', it takes us to...

the process library page displaying different processes for different departments. If we click on the 'Customer Success' department it takes us to...

the Customer Success page displaying the process types for the customer success team. If we then click on 'Support'...

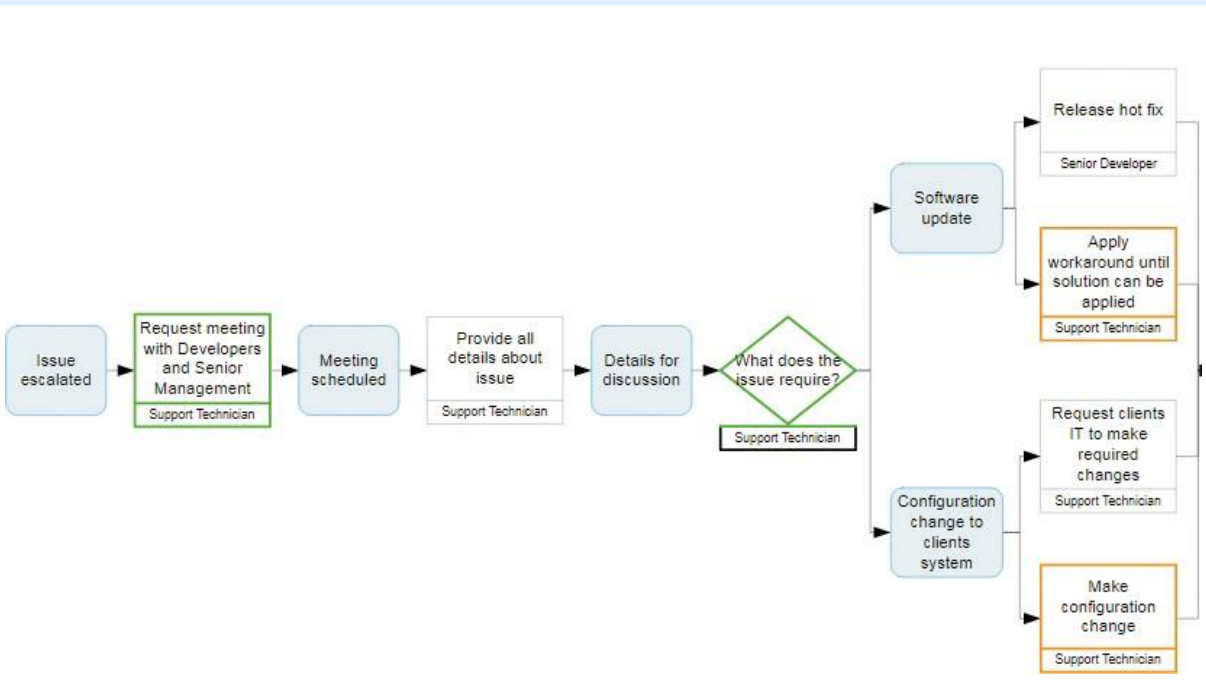


We are taken to the Support page which houses all the processes that exist in the Support folder.

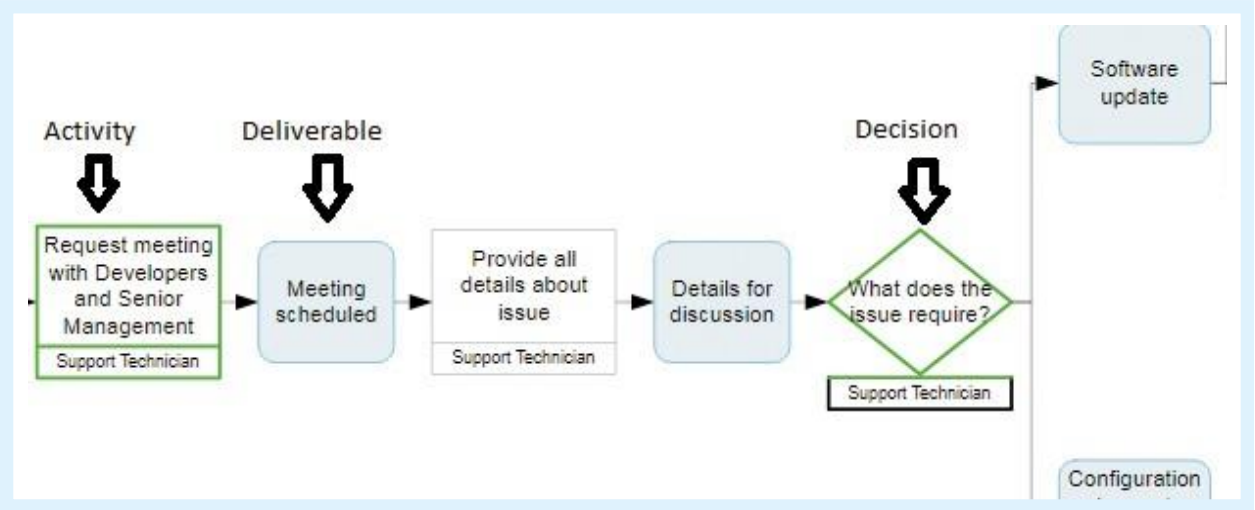
The structure of the process library exists so that employees can easily and quickly find what they are looking for in a structured, interactive and engaging way.

If we then click on 'Escalate an Issue' it will take us to the corresponding process map.

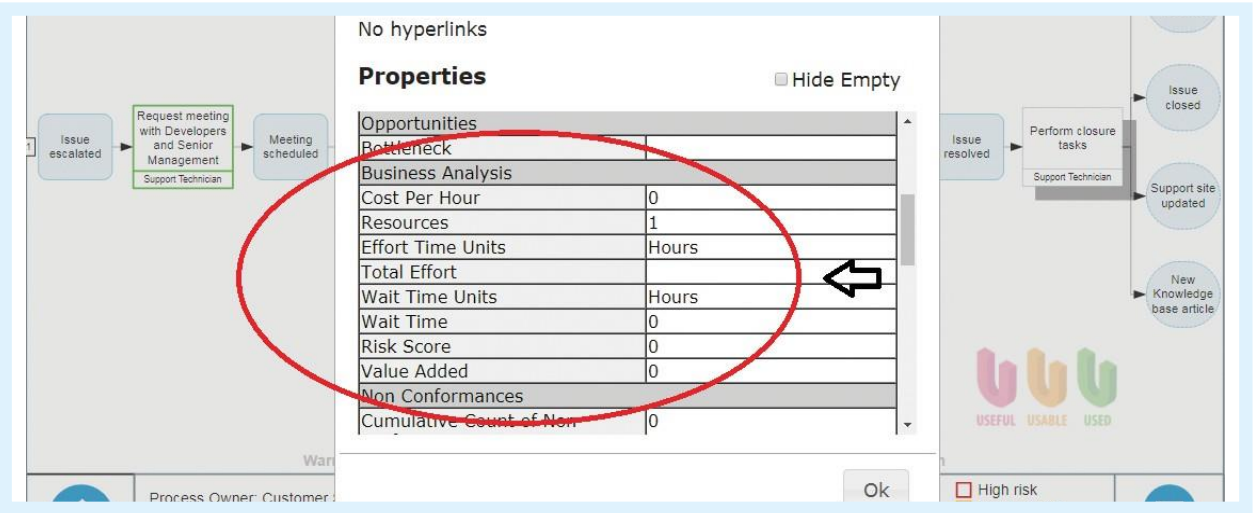
Each process has a process map displaying how the employee should perform that specific process. In this case, the process is 'Escalate an Issue'. If we zoom in a little closer...



you can see how a process is captured (using the Triaster Noun-Verb methodology - see: https://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/what-is-the-noun-verb-methodology-of-process-mapping) and how a process should be performed. The shapes within the process map are different for a reason. Each shape represents eitheran activity, deliverable or a decision (all three are shown in the picture below).



This makes it easy to understand which steps in the process add value and which do not. You can calculate the value within the process steps (shown as shapes above) by clicking on the specific shape required and recording cost,effort, frequency of occurrence, risk, queue time and the value stream status of each activity which is shown in the image below.



This recording will allow you to understand the value adding, non value adding and necessary non value adding steps in the process chain.

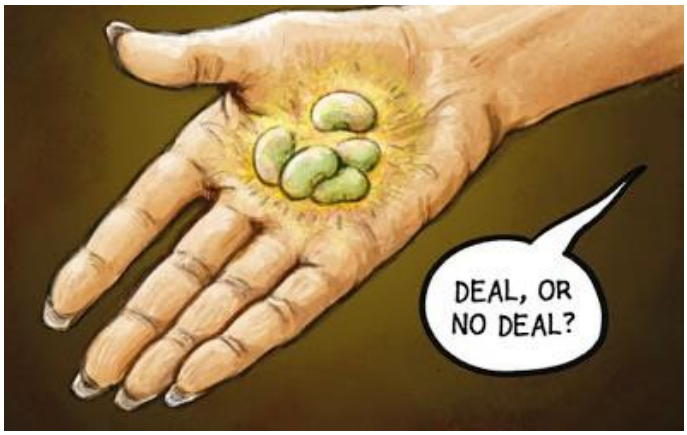
Take a look at this interactive process library example (see: https://www.triaster.co.uk/demo-process-library) to get the full scope of what process libraries can do. This is the same library we have taken all of the above imagesfrom. You can either follow the steps we have just described above or have a play around and look at other areas (which contain other processes, policies and forms).

One thing that has been mentioned, but not examined, is the potential return on investment from employing a BPM system. In the next article, we look at why purchasing a BPM Software System offers great return on investment...

Return on Investment: Why BPM is the Gift That Keeps on Giving

There are perhaps no three words sweeter to a business improvement professional's ears than, 'return on investment'.

Many budding entrepreneurs hope to find the 'magic beans' that will turn a small investment into a much larger one. In their pursuit of that magical ROI however, they may have neglected the measurable results of the ever-producing cow for the unrealised potential of the magic beans.



If you are pursuing ROI on business improvement projects then the process approach needs to be your focus. This is because the approach to measuring process value within your organisation will help you to create a Continuous Improvement cycle that will produce future ROI benefits.

What Can the Process Approach do for my Return on Investment?

Let's start with an overview of how the process approach can help your ROI.

A process approach effectively targets each process in your organisation and then proceeds to measure it based on factors such as time, money and effort spent on that process. Then, by also measuring the returns, you'll be able to see if that process is offering you the best ROI.

All the processes in your company are effectively a series of 'Inputs' turned into 'Outputs' by 'Activities'. The sooner you start analysing them that way and measuring the 'cost' of each business process, the sooner you can begin to improve them and achieve a better ROI.

If you are thinking about jumping into the giant BPM pool, just remember that everyone learns to swim in different ways. There is no single formula or model that will map BPM related ROI. That's because not only are the benefits multi-dimensional, but calculating ROI is also dependent on a case-by-case, business-by-business basis where judgement plays a big part.

Business Process Management - Direct and Indirect Benefits

If you're going to try and estimate ROI, then you'll need to focus on calculating both the direct and indirect benefits. The benefits are as follows:

Direct Benefits

- Improvement of organisational structure
- Reduction in failed or malfunctioning systems
- A more productive workforce
- Cost savings
- Increases in profit
- Increase in efficiency

Indirect Benefits

- Regulatory and compliance benefits
- One location for your documents and procedures
- Reducing risk and avoiding quality failure
- Quality improvement

Now if you are struggling to convince the higher-ups at your business that Business Process Management is worth their time and money, you should run a calculation for potential cost savings.

Some benefits to ROI from BPM that you may not have thought of are:

- Reduction in auditing costs
- Quality
- Efficiency
- Compliance
- Auditing

An easy way to justify spending on a BPM system right off the bat is in the reduction of auditing costs. Skanska UK is one of our customers and they have saved £40K in annual audit fees since 2012 just from their ISO assessment.

Quality

Then we come to the undervalued but highly important returns that quality bring to your business. A lot of businesses see quality as a needless cost but there is no substitute for being seen as a brand that produces quality products and services. The trust of your customers is hard to achieve and can be lost in an instant; that's why it's so important to run quality processes.

Efficiency

Efficiency is also a key, direct result of BPM and will help you save. Analysing your processes and making them more efficient is all about cutting out the waste, driving down cost and by extension, increasing your ROI.

Compliance

Achieving regulatory compliance for your industry is extremely important. Customers want to do business with companies that are viewed as safe, trustworthy and are producers of quality products/ services. The moment you fail to achieve regulatory compliance is the moment you will fail to attract new customers and find it difficult to keep your existing ones.

The bigger the organisation, the harder it is to cut out business waste. But whether you're big or small, there are ways available to stop waste from emptying the business coffers...

How to Stop Wasting Money in Your Business: 10 Actions to Take

So, how do we stop wasting money in business? This is literally the million-dollar question often asked by the leadership team in both lean and goods times.

All too often though, the action most organisations take to answer this question is to cut back on something that looks wasteful without really understanding the impact. This can mean that something is cut that results in additional costs elsewhere - which far outweigh the initial saving.

So, let's get the answers on how to stop wasting money in your business:

1. Really Understand How Your Business Works

Businesses and organisations are complex. It is this complexity that leads to businesses wasting money. Inefficiency can creep in, in so many ways:

- Inconsistent working
- Inaccurate working
- Duplication
- Production of redundant outputs

And these are just a few examples. If only a small amount of money is wasted each time, as this is repeated, the costs mount up.

The only way to identify these inefficiencies is to really understand what is done in your business or how it works.

It is not a quick job to capture all the end-to-end processes in a business, so it is best to start with an area of the business which is believed to be inefficient and process map that in the first instance.

Alternatively, start with a process that is repeatedly performed – small efficiency gains in these processes quickly result in a lot of money saved.

2. Focus on the Outputs

As we have seen, a process is a transformation, it transforms Inputs into Outputs. And it is the Outputs that really count.

It is very easy for all of us to spend every day busy doing things, but if we aren't producing anything – there is no Output – it is very likely that what we are doing is wasteful.

This is very quickly picked up when actually doing the process mapping; keep asking the question - what is produced?

3. Ask the Person Who Does the Job

Whilst the person who does the process mapping doesn't need to be the person who does the job, their input is really important. They, more than anyone, will know where the inefficiencies are and often are just waiting to be asked about them. They are also likely to have some pretty good ideas about what should be changed to make the process more efficient – and save money.

4. Look at the Handover Points

This is often where the most waste arises. One department produces something and it is not quite in the format that the receiving department needs it, so it needs to be reworked to make it useful.

Alternatively, the receiving department no longer use it at all! Inefficiencies are quickly picked up at the process handover points, and once addressed, immediately start to save money.

5. Look for the Bottlenecks

If something is waiting to be dealt with at a pinch point or bottleneck, then it's not delivering any value during all that time. Ask where the bottlenecks are so that they can be tackled first.

6. Involve the Person Who Owns the Process

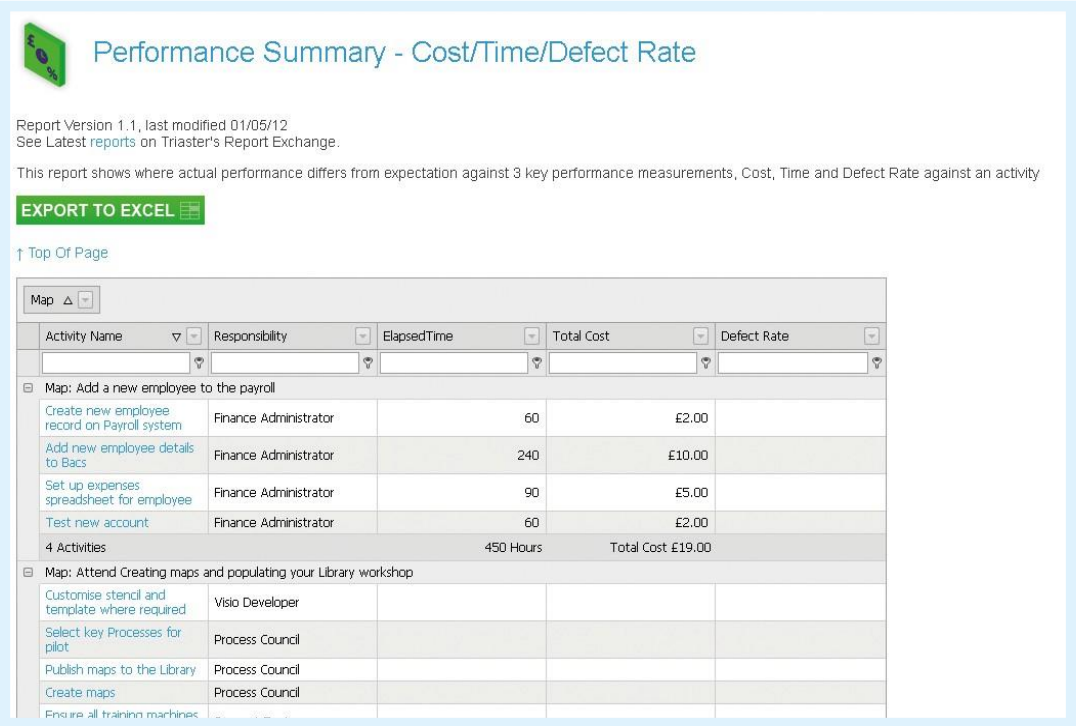
The Process Owner is the person who has the authority to change a process. Involve them in the process mapping and then if a change is to be made, they can say then and there that it is approved.

7. Implement Best Practice

Very often the same process is delivered in different ways in different parts of the business. Once this is captured, the best practice process (the one which is most efficient) can be identified and adopted throughout.

8. Capture Key Data at the Process Level

Using a BPM system which allows you to capture and report on key data at the process level – i.e. attach data to the shapes in the process maps. This allows less obvious inefficiencies to be identified and addressed. It also enables you to quantify just how much money has been saved.



Performance Summary - Cost/Time/Defect Rate

Report Version 1.1, last modified 01/05/12
See Latest reports on Triaster's Report Exchange.

This report shows where actual performance differs from expectation against 3 key performance measurements, Cost, Time and Defect Rate against an activity

EXPORT TO EXCEL

↑ Top Of Page

Map

Activity Name	Responsibility	ElapsedTime	Total Cost	Defect Rate
Map: Add a new employee to the payroll				
Create new employee record on Payroll system	Finance Administrator	60	£2.00	
Add new employee details to Bacs	Finance Administrator	240	£10.00	
Set up expenses spreadsheet for employee	Finance Administrator	90	£5.00	
Test new account	Finance Administrator	60	£2.00	
4 Activities		450 Hours	Total Cost £19.00	
Map: Attend Creating maps and populating your Library workshop				
Customise stencil and template where required	Visio Developer			
Select key Processes for pilot	Process Council			
Publish maps to the Library	Process Council			
Create maps	Process Council			
Ensure all training machines				

9. Model Potential Improvements

Once you have a process model of how your organisation currently works, this will be the start point for modelling future options. Your BPM system should allow you the capability to model different scenarios for improvement, enabling you to understand the impacts before they are made, which avoids a great deal of upheaval and avoids contributing to process inefficiency.

10. Continually Look for Ways to be More Efficient

Identifying inefficiencies should not be a one-off exercise, but a continual exercise of looking at what you currently do and improving it.

Let's switch gears now and take a look at waste itself (specifically in the manufacturing industry) with the 7 wastes, discuss what they are exactly and why they could be killing your business...

What Are the 7 Wastes That Are Killing Business Efficiency?

The 7 wastes are activities identified (mostly in manufacturing industries) that do not add value but cost money. It is estimated that only 5% of our time actually adds value to the customer; if this indeed is true, it means that every company can learn from the 7 wastes to cut out wasteful processes and increase the percentage of value adding processes.

The 7 Wastes

The 7 wastes in Lean manufacturing can best be remembered through the acronym TIMWOOD. They are:

1. **Transport**
2. **Inventory**
3. **Motion**
4. **Waiting**
5. **Overproduction**
6. **Overprocessing**
7. **Defects**

The 7 Wastes of Lean Manufacturing

From a process improvement perspective, these 7 types of waste are an invaluable tool because simply by reducing them, one is invariably able to improve process efficiency and display waste within a process. The problem of improvement therefore becomes not one of ingenuity and creativity to identify new and better ways of doing things, rather, it is more one of accurate identification of wasteful activities and identifying the ways they are killing business efficiency.

The reduction of wasteful activities inevitably leads also to a corresponding increase in the proportion of value-adding activities, and the more visible the value-adding activities become, the easier it is to then keep improving the process. (The proportion of value-adding activities in a process is referred to as the Process Cycle Efficiency, a key metric in Lean thinking (see: http://leanmanufacturingtools.org/7-wastes/) to help understand if a process change is a process improvement.)

The Seven Types of Waste Explained:

Transportation

Each time a product is moved, it stands the risk of being damaged, lost, delayed, etc. as well as being a cost for no added value. Transportation does not create any transformation to the product that the consumer is willing to pay for.

Inventory

Inventory, be it in the form of raw materials, work-in-progress (WIP), or finished goods, represents a capital outlay that has not yet produced an income either by the producer or for the consumer. Any of these three items not being actively processed to add value is waste.

Motion

In contrast to transportation, which refers to damage to products and transaction costs associated with moving them, motion refers to the damage that the production process inflicts on the entity that creates the product, either over time (wear and tear for equipment and repetitive strain injuries for workers) or during discrete events (accidents that damage equipment and/or injure workers).

Waiting

Whenever goods are not in transport or being processed, they are waiting. In traditional processes, a large part of an individual product's life is spent waiting to be worked on.

Overprocessing

Overprocessing occurs any time more work is done on a piece other than what is required by the customer. This also includes using components that are more precise, complex, higher quality or expensive than absolutely required.

Overproduction

Overproduction occurs when more product is produced than is required at that time by your customers. One common practice that leads to this muda is the production of large batches, as often the consumer needs change over the long waiting time large batches require.

Overproduction is considered by some to be the worst muda because it hides and/or generates all the others. Overproduction leads to excess inventory, which then requires the expenditure of resources on storage space and preservation - activities that do not benefit the customer.

Defects

Whenever defects occur, extra costs are incurred such as reworking the part, rescheduling production, etc. This results in labour costs and more time in the "Work-in-progress". Defects in practice can sometimes double the cost of one single product. This should not be passed on to the consumer and should be taken as a loss.

Those are the 7 manufacturing wastes. If you'd also like to read our article on the 7 wastes of service then please click here:

The 7 wastes of service
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/the-7-wastes-of-service-killing-efficiency

Here ends section 2. Section 3 will cover choosing the right system for your organisation by working through the key questions that you will need answered before implementing BPM, how long an implementation will take, the pros and cons of the process approach...

Chapter 3 - What You Need to Know Before You Buy

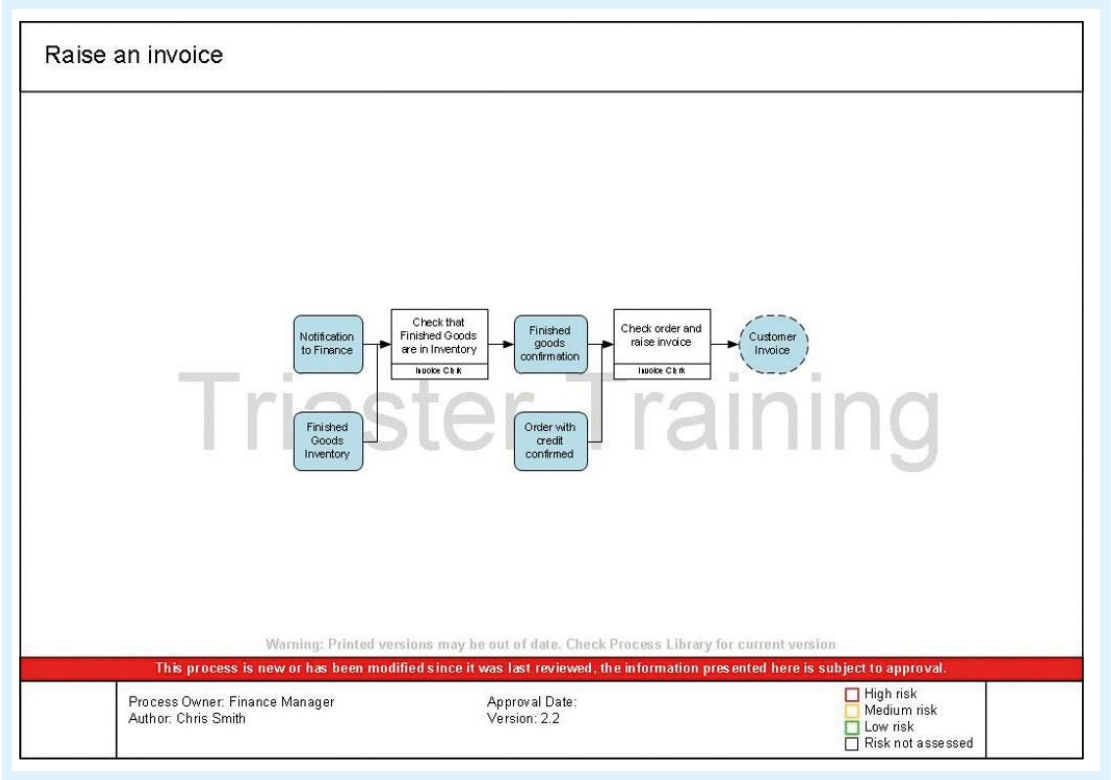
This section will cover

Before You Buy Business Process Management Software: 7 Key Questions

Choosing to implement and integrate a Business Process Management system will be one of the biggest projects many organisations ever undertake. That's why having the correct information close to hand is such an important part of making the decision about which system is the right fit for you. Because we know all about the importance of this stage of the BPM decision making process we have provided you with the most important questions you need to ask before buying and integrating any BPM software system.

1. What Are the Main Goals You Want Your Business Process Management Software System to Accomplish?

Before you start looking for your new BPM system you need to establish what you want to achieve. Do you want to streamline your business processes to reduce costs and increase efficiency for example? or will your system be used to help you gain Quality Standards Compliance? Your BPM System should deliver on your objectives. It should not drive your objectives in any way.



2. What Information Should You Gather About Potential BPM Vendors?

Opting for a system that isn't suitable is only going to waste your time and money and your project is unlikely to get off the ground. Lots of the main BPM systems have a 'one size fits all' approach and come with all sorts of bells and whistles as standard and as optional extras, but if this functionality isn't going to help you achieve your goals, it isn't something you should be paying for.

3. What's Your Budget?

There are a variety of Business Process Management software systems available that cater to different needs and as such, costs can vary considerably. You'll need to think about whether you want an out-of-the-box solution that you can just plug in your data and go, or if you'd like something that is completely bespoke to your organisation's requirements. Don't forget that any bespoke system is likely to be more expensive, but the ROI you will gain from using a fully integrated system will be substantial.

Before you approach a vendor, make sure that you have thought about the other costs apart from the system itself. Will there be additional costs for on-boarding or design customisations? Is training charged separately? Do they have an expenses policy and will you need to pay for a trial of the system? You'll also need to consider how much internal time and resource will be needed to support the implementation of a new system. It is important to note that if you plan to use your BPM system to improve your business processes, a good system will likely pay for itself.

4. What's Your Potential ROI?

Business Process Management software is a big investment, but if implemented and used correctly it has the potential to generate a very high ROI (See: https://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/calculating-return-on-investment-bpm-system on-investment-bpm-system). When discussing a solution with your chosen provider, don't forget to ask
about the potential ROI you could gain with the system and also about the ROI that current clients have achieved. Most suppliers will have a variety of customer case studies that they would be more than happy to share with you. Arming yourself with real experiences from existing customers will definitely help you to get buy-in from your senior management team.

5. What Are Your Implementation Options?

When looking for a new BPM solution, you'll need to decide whether you want a cloud-based solution or if you'd prefer for the software to be installed on your company's servers. Another option would be to look at hosted servers - but there is likely to be an additional cost. It is also worth discussing the price differences between cloud-based software or going in-house with your chosen providers. You should always choose an implementation option that your organisation is comfortable with. If you have always used your own servers and have the IT resource to support an implementation, you will most likely be able to save money by going in-house.

6. How User Friendly is the System?

This is one of the most important questions you need to be asking when comparing different BPM systems. You will need to make sure that any system you choose will be useful and usable not only by your end users, but also by the people who will be maintaining the system on a daily basis. Make sure to discuss the amount of training required to get the system up and running and how this will be provided by the supplier. If you have a few solution preferences, why not ask your end users which one they would be more comfortable using. You could even include them in the trial period to get their insights on the usability and usefulness of different BPM systems.

7. How Can You Get the Most Out of Your System Across the Organisation?

To really get the most out of your BPM system, you'll want to look at scaling the solution to cover the processes across all areas of the organisation. This is going to take a lot of time and effort and it is unlikely that any changes will be seen overnight. The best way to tackle companywide adoption of a new system is to start in one department and spread out slowly until all business processes have been mapped and analysed thoroughly. It's likely that you may want to use your new system for just one area of the business, so it is worth discussing this with your chosen providers as this will ultimately affect the cost.

These questions cover the most important things you need to be thinking about when looking for a Business Process Management software system; but one of the most effective ways of discovering how good a BPM system is, will be when you discuss the system with existing customers...

Evaluating Business Process Management Systems: Meeting Customers

Whenever we are asked by anyone evaluating Triaster's platform if they can meet or speak with one of our current customers, the answer is: absolutely!

At Triaster we are delighted to make such introductions, because:

- Our customers are achieving great things with the Triaster platform. They are frequently recognised with formal Awards such as the British Quality Foundation (BQF) Excellence Awards and IT Services Management (itSMF UK) Awards.
- Triaster customers are achieving a variety of benefits from their systems - from new Quality Management Systems to thousands of pounds of cost savings identified - but often face very similar implementation challenges.
- We have a great relationship with our customers and therefore are very confident for anyone to speak and meet with any of our customers to hear directly their opinion of the Triaster platform, the Triaster team and how we support them.
- Our customers are very honest and open and happy to talk about the lessons they have learned along the way and share best practice.
- Our customers are simply the best! They are part of the very friendly Triaster Community which contributes to our User Group, Customer Focus Days, Connector newsletter and many business process industry events.
- Our customers have agreed on numerous occasions to be a Triaster reference through a myriad of ways - demonstration of their systems, onsite visits, telephone conversations, email correspondence, LinkedIn and at events.

Evaluating Triaster

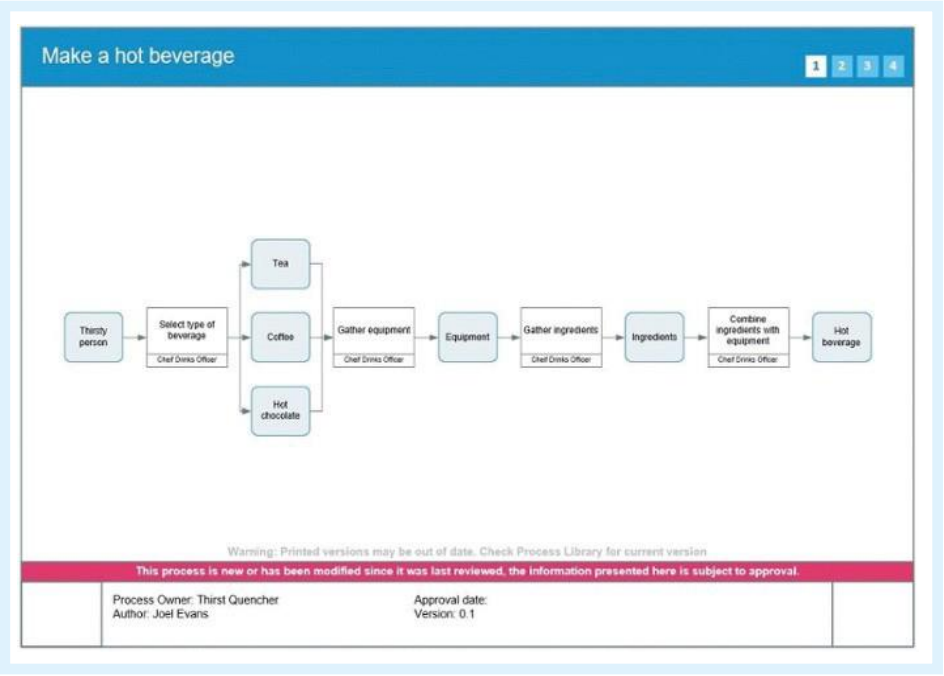
So, yes, we are very happy for you to meet and speak with our customers if you are considering our solution. However, we do ask in the interest of our customers' time that Triaster is at the preferred vendor status prior to doing so.

If you're at the stage where you are evaluating BPM systems, but aren't yet at the preferred vendor stage, you can find out how 8 of our customers are using the Triaster platform by reading our comprehensive case study (See: http://info.triaster.co.uk/white-paper-problems-we-solve-ebook) of customer success stories.

Meeting customers is one way of finding out all the pros and cons of a company and generating as much transparency as possible, but it's also important to learn about the pros and cons of any overall approach to business improvement, which is why we have laid all the benefits and the drawbacks of process improvement in the next article...

Business Improvement: Pros and Cons of a Process Approach

There are many different approaches to business improvement; Business Process Management takes a process approach. In this article we look at the pros and cons of a process approach.



Limitations/Cons of a Process Approach

BPM Projects are Time Consuming

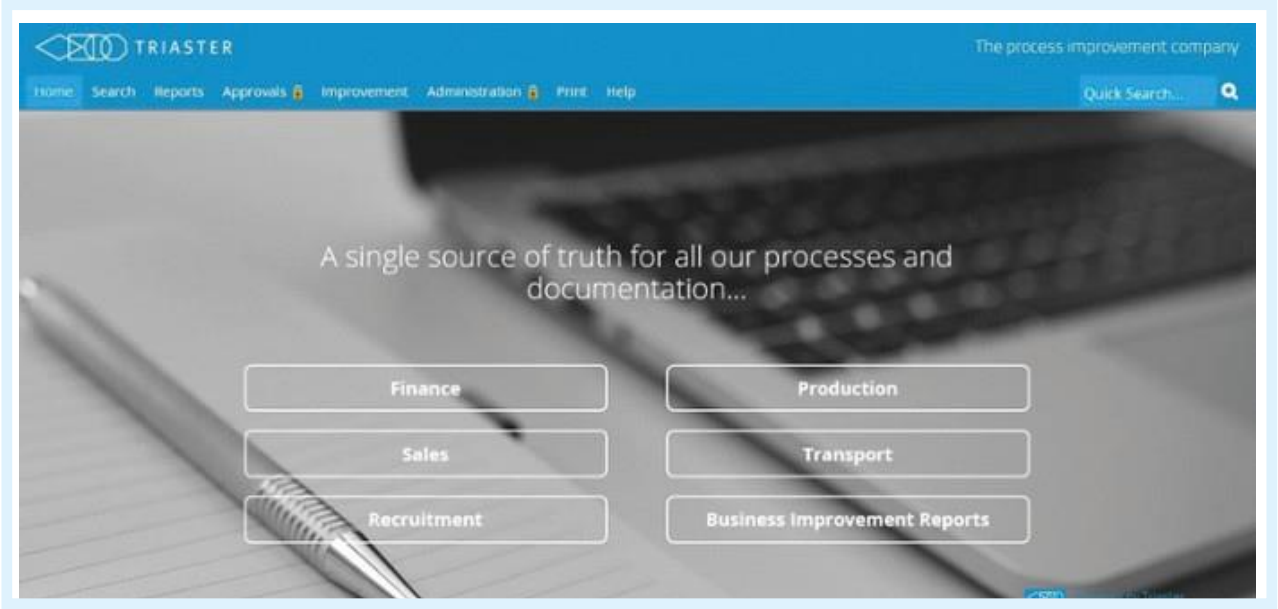
If you take a look at the market, there are plenty of tools out there to help create, manage, improve and share process maps - although there is no quick way of doing this work. We are asked frequently for tips on how to make process mapping easier (of which there are many) but ultimately the task will still take some time. Here is a list of some of the tasks that will need to be carried out:

- You'll need to conduct process discovery sessions, which involve many brains (and a significant amount of time) - Take a look at:

Tips on running successful process discovery sessions
https://triaster.co.uk/07-15-best-practice-process-mapping.php

- You'll then need someone to transform your brain vomit (constructed of sticky notes) into logical, ordered, digital process maps.
- After that, these process maps will need reviewing, amending and officially approving.
- And then they will need to be shared somehow with the whole organisation.

Off the back of this work, you'll need to ensure you have processes in place to continuously review and improve the processes.



Current State vs. Future State

The 'current state vs. future state' issue is one that comes up all the time when carrying out process discovery. If you're not careful and don't have your eyes on the prize, it's easy to get carried away with designing how the process should happen rather than mapping what actually takes place. You can ensure that this doesn't happen however by focusing on the Deliverables.

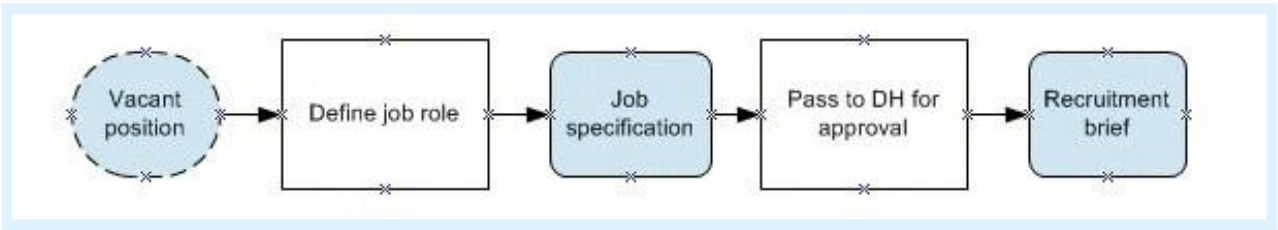
Deliverables

As mentioned above you can be pulled off course relatively quickly by people trying to design a 'future state' process map, rather than concentrating on how things currently happen - the use of Deliverables in your process maps should help with this.

Including Deliverables after each Activity will help the subject matter experts concentrate on what is produced as a result of carrying out each Activity in the 'current state' process maps.

A Deliverable shape is used to describe something you produce. Activities are the steps of the process and are described using verbs. Deliverables are the items produced (or 'delivered') when each step of the process is complete and are described using nouns.

Sticking to a rigid methodology such as Noun-Verb (See: https://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/what-is-the-noun-verb-methodology-of-process-mapping) should help you to stay focused on what is currently happening, rather than what should be happening, or could be happening in the future.



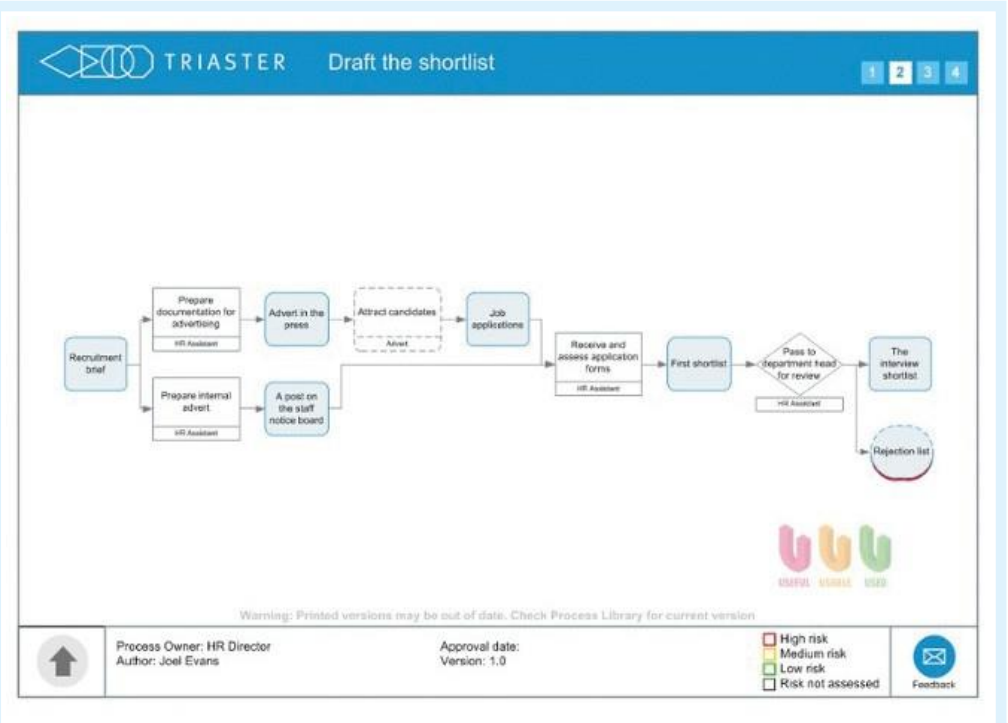
Level of Detail

Targeting a specific level of detail is always a good plan when carrying out a process mapping project. And getting this right is easier said than done. If you get this wrong, it can set you back or even scupper the whole project.

Every time you create a process map, think to yourself, "who is the intended audience of this map?" Asking yourself this is crucial as it helps to ensure that the intended user of the map can interpret the information it contains. A senior manager is unlikely to want to know how to carry out specific tasks but would much rather see high level steps outlining what is needed to transform the initial input into a desired output.

Restructuring your process maps into a hierarchy can help with this, ensuring that "doers" within the organisation can see the in-detail steps within the processes, whereas a member of the management team can choose to take a higher level view of the processes. Take a look at this article:

How to identify what level of detail you should be mapping your processes to
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/mapping-business-processes-what-level-should-i-map-to



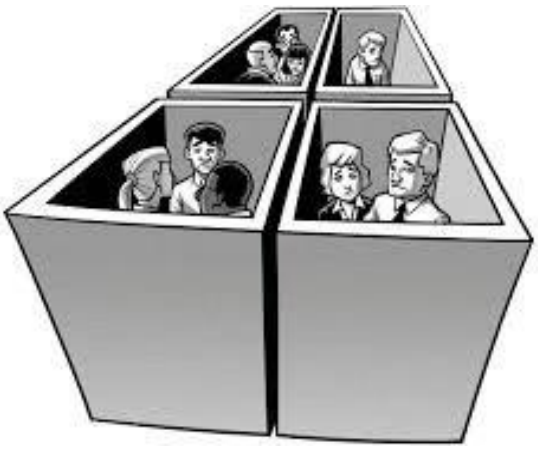
Benefits/Pros of a Process Approach

Process Improvement

Taking the time to carry out a process mapping project will produce improvement ideas straight away. Having an open mind and creating a culture where people are able to easily suggest improvement ideas for their processes will encourage them to come out of the woodwork and suggest improvements that could save time, money and precious resources.

Sticky notes, Sharpies and brown paper should be your weapons, and your team should be your army.

The End of Working in Silos?



'Breaking down the silos' is a term we hear time and time again whilst helping businesses with their process mapping projects. A Silo is essentially groups working on their own little islands not connecting with each other. Wouldn't it be better if all of your teams worked together and communicated more effectively?

It's important that you have members from all teams interacting with the specific processes you are mapping to clarify and confirm handover points. You'd be surprised how many times departments and teams get confused about what they are supposed to be handing over to each other.

Engaging the teams in process discovery sessions is a great way of getting everybody working together, all pulling in the same direction.

Knowledge Sharing

Demonstrating Compliance to Regulations

When companies need to demonstrate compliance with standards and regulations, they come to us and we provide them with a tailored Business Process Management approach.

Mapping out your processes makes this much easier. Triaster's process mapping tool (Process Navigator) allows users to add meta-data to each shape on the process map. This enables authors to tie specific clauses from standards and regulations to activities within their process maps. This can then be pulled out in the form of a report, which makes auditing the processes much more efficient.

Granted, it is quite time consuming attributing clauses to every activity on your process maps, but it is well worth it in the long run. One of our customers commented that:

"We can now perform small productive audits within an hour rather than 2 days".

Training

Each time you take on a new starter, wouldn't it be great if you could send them to a system that gives them all the information they need to carry out their day-to-day tasks, with links taking them through end-to-end processes showing how their work affects colleagues up and down stream?

Access to this information would greatly speed up your induction process, and mapping out your processes and publishing them to a Triaster BPM system allows this with great ease. You can assign roles to activities and create a full RACI matrix, then search the maps by job title. Many of our customers have used this feature as a training tool within their induction process.

Making a pros and cons list is one way to find out the failings of a Business Management System, but how about a real life case study of failure? That might be worth taking a look at...

The Dangers of Implementing Process Management Systems: An Analysis

Recently having spotted an article from BBC News on Hampshire police's problematic management system we thought this news story might make a great cautionary tale for other organisations looking to implement their own management systems.

The news item outlined Hampshire police's intent to drive needless cost and drive up efficiency. These two things are obviously important to any business/organisation looking to improve their ROI, but especially to the public services.

By changing their process management system and implementing "a centralised approach" called H3 (which also included Hampshire County Council, and Hampshire Fire and Rescue), Hampshire police inadvertently ran the gauntlet of 'dangerous organisational change' and got tangled in a very complicated web of process problems.

Image sourced from: hampshirepolfed.org.uk

In 2014, an integrated business centre in Winchester was tasked to, "deliver back office efficiencies through the use of new technology and business processes", for 80,000 employees - saving £4 million between the organisations per year.

Finance, procurement and payroll services for the three bodies was handled jointly from 2014 and there were problems right from the start as the number of delayed invoice payments of more than 30 days rose by 15%

As no business or organisation aims to have poor processes, the following analysis attempts to identify what went wrong, why it went wrong and how you can avoid it in future.

The Intent of Hampshire Police

A report from December 2016 noted that, "since 2014, the constabulary [police] has centralised more of its operation away from a more geographically managed model".

This centralised approach refers to Hampshire Constabulary merging their management system with a system that covered several local government organisations in order to cut costs.

The Constabulary were attempting to save £1.59 million over three years.

The intent was good, but let's take a look at what went wrong.

The Failures of H3

- 41,322 invoices were paid 30 days late or more - a 15% increase
- Difficulties in resolving personal issues and ordering stock
- A long time taken to perform tasks that were previously performed rapidly
- Widespread issues with payroll and expenses
- Misunderstandings of failures in the process as 'teething'.
- 1,300 police officers receive wrong pay in February 2016
- In 2016, Hampshire Constabulary spend £1 million to fix a "shambolic system".
- Systematic problems with organising recruitment, and weighing down police with back office processes led to increased staff sickness.
- ROI did not meet expectations - H3 only saved the Constabulary half of the predicted £1.59 million over three years (and this probably didn't take into consideration all of the time and manpower that was diverted to improve the problems with the system).

Not identifying the Right Management System

Alot of businesses fail at the first hurdle which and do not identify the right process management system for their organisation. Not all management systems are made equal and not all systems will be flexible enough to accommodate problems or changes to your organisational structure in the future.

So How do You Avoid this Problem?

Do your research and find out the non-negotiables that a management system must provide for your organisation, before you create a web of systems that will be extremely difficult to untangle.

It's also very problematic to describe failing process management as 'teething'.

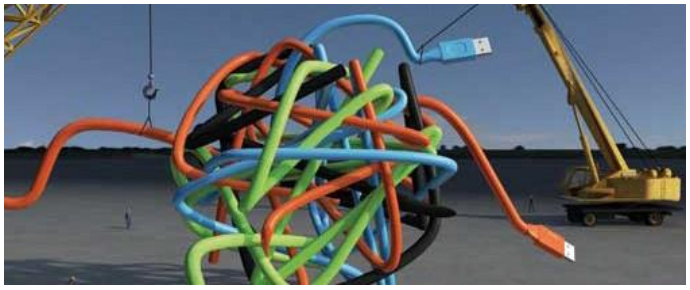


Image sourced from: ibmsystemsmag.com

Adopting the approach that things will eventually work themselves out with time is to ignore a very important warning sign that:

A: Your management system hasn't been implemented properly
B: You haven't mapped out your processes effectively
C: You haven't assembled the right team of people to map out your processes effectively

Processes Don't Improve After You Buy a Management System

Purchasing and installation is only the beginning. A management system is only as good as the people you've got involved with its implementation; as John Apter, Hampshire Police Federation Chairman realised when he stated with hindsight that "On paper it looked great but in reality it was shambolic and... the fall-out... has been nothing short of a disgrace."

You need professionals who understand the process areas being mapped and more importantly, you need the stakeholders and decision makers supporting the initiative from the beginning.

Former Hampshire PCC Simon Hayes also said that there were problems with the, "IT systems which don't talk to each other."

The breakdown here is obviously due to communication. Your management systems can only do what you program them to do and if your IT systems aren't talking to each other, that's probably because the organisations involved weren't either.

Get it Right From the Start

In our experience with improvement projects and working with organisations that have used our Business Management System, the organisations that really benefit are the ones that take it seriously from the beginning.

John Apter stated that the system used by Hampshire Police had been, "poorly conceived, implemented and delivered". He's basically saying it failed at the start, it failed at the middle and it failed at the end. Do you know which part of the journey is most important? The beginning.

Everything else is impacted by the way you approach your implementation.

We are not on the inside of the H3 project, but we can deduce that the most likely cause of failure is a lack of communication, lack of agreement on a consistent way of working and a lack of buy-in organisation wide.

Approach Failure Like Poison: Treat it Before it Spreads

If you're running an improvement project or thinking about it, involve the right people from the start. Changing large organisations is extremely problematic because there are so many moving parts, so there should be no attempt at change without placing your system at the heart of your organisation.

Now don't get us wrong. We are not trying to put the boot into Hampshire Police, because the truth is these kind of failures happen every day and that's why it's important to understand that unless you prepare well by understanding your implementation, identify those who are responsible and have employee buy in with a clear RACI Matrix (See:https://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/raci-matrix-template-for-business-process-improvement)discover-how-to-identify-the-process) then you may befall the same problems.

Efficiency is the key and if the changes you have made are causing less efficiency and a less effective ROI, than you need to seriously re-examine the process (which is why process maps are necessary) - to diagnose where something is breaking down.

So I've now made you aware of the potential BPM problems but it's also important to know how long it will take to implement a system before you jump into the deep end with both feet and your water wings...

How Much Time Does it Take to Implement a Business Process Management Software System?

A common question we get asked at Triaster is: “how long will it take to implement a Business Process Management (BPM) system?”

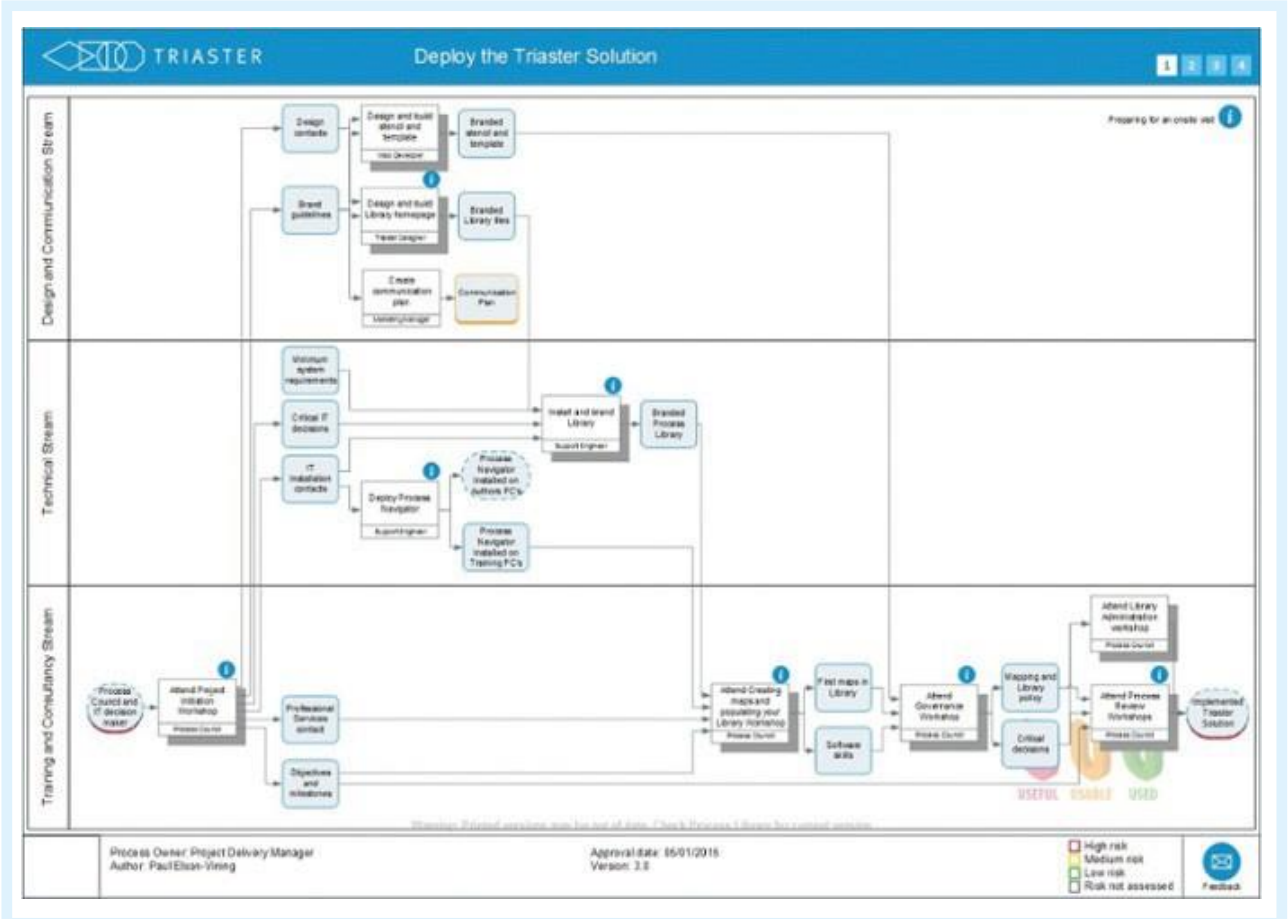
Of course the answer generally is “it depends”, however, we will aim to give you a more considered answer in this article.

There are three main streams involved in implementing a BPM software system:

- Technical
- Design
- Training

And they can all be delivered in parallel.

The Triaster deployment process is set out in the process map below.



Technical Implementation of Your BPM Software System

How long the technical implementation takes depends a great deal on the specific system being implemented.

If the system is cloud hosted, the time will be significantly reduced. However, it is extremely likely that some liaison between your BPM supplier and your internal IT will be required in any event.
At Triaster, we find that how long it takes to set up this liaison varies significantly between internal IT departments. So whilst the actual technical implementation is likely to take no more than a day, even for on-premises installations, the time delay is usually in the technical due diligence and co-ordination. This can take several months if your internal IT don't prioritise your project.

Design Implementation for Your BPM System

How long implementation of the design of your BPM system takes depends on the type of design adopted.

If a standard design is adopted, this can obviously be quite quickly 'dropped' into the system. It might even be that your chosen BPM system is deployed as is and without the option to choose the design.
At Triaster, we offer a bespoke design for our BPM systems and find that adoption of these helps significantly to increase usage of the system.

Implementing a bespoke design can take a little time – but it is more than worth it.

The time needed is for liaison with our designer who, amongst other things, will want to explore:

- **Your Target Audience:**
  - Who the system needs to appeal to
  - What visual approach will work for that audience
  - How you want the users to interact with the system
- **Tone of Voice** – the style you want to adopt, the key messages that you want to communicate
- **Themes** – any internal themes that you want to draw upon

The process of developing and delivering a bespoke design takes a couple of weeks. However, the time frame over which this is delivered usually takes longer than this – because agreeing on a design is a very subjective business.

If you want to keep the time to a minimum, consult as few people as possible! However, it is important to get feedback from the intended users, so that you are confident the final design will appeal to them.

Training for BPM Systems

How long this takes depends on the training services that you purchase with your BPM system. It also depends on whether the training purchased is delivered on-site or by webinar, conference call or e-learning package.

Generally it takes longer to arrange on-site delivery of services, but some customers much prefer this. At Triaster, our basic training services can be delivered in under a week, but we know that it is important to match the knowledge transferred with the customer's readiness to receive that information – either in terms of the other streams of implementation or their level of understanding.

So in summary, it is possible to have a BPM software system designed and implemented within a couple of weeks – although in practice this usually take much longer.

However, following implementation, two main components of your BPM system will still be outstanding:

- The content
- Communications

Creating the Content for Your BPM System

The content is ultimately the key aspect of the system. However well designed the system is, it will only be used if it contains accurate, useful information.

There are several ways of creating the content for your BPM system as follows:

- Employ consultants
- Use a specialist process mapping team within your organisation
- Train your employees to process map

At Triaster, we enable all three methods. However, in each case we ensure that the person doing the job is fully involved in the capture of the processes they deliver. This has several benefits both in terms of engaging them in the project and ensuring that the process captured is accurate.

How long capturing your system's content takes really does depend on a number of factors. It is key, however, not to try and process map your entire organisation all in one go.

Break it down. Set key milestones. Have a plan.

So to answer this question in a nutshell, successful implementation of a BPM system will be a long-term goal with many stakeholders. If you are trying to make a business case for BPM, we have come to the most important part; cost...

How Much Does Business Process Management (BPM) Software Cost?

If you are reviewing the marketplace for a Business Process Management (BPM) software system, one of the key questions that you will want answered is: How much does it cost? However, because any BPM software system is an extremely flexible package, it can and should be tailored to your organisation's individual requirements - to meet a set of specific objectives. Accordingly the answer to the question, 'how much does it cost?' is almost always, 'well, it depends on what you want.'

This, of course, does not help when you just want a ballpark figure of what the BPM software cost will be so that you can determine if an approach is within budget. It also doesn't help to give you an idea of the budget needed before you start spending time evaluating the detail of the different systems available.

In this article, we will set out what you might need to think about in order to cost a standard Business Process Management software system and give you a link to Triaster Process Library pricing.

Triaster system pricing
https://www.triaster.co.uk/process-pricing

A BPM software system is made up of:

- Software
- Support and maintenance
- Services

In determining what you want – and therefore how much it will cost - you need to think about your requirements for all three.

Software

Before you decide on any of the software features, you will need to decide whether you want an online system (hosted in the cloud) or an on-premises solution which is hosted on a server and managed by your organisation. At Triaster, we offer both of these options but recommend going for the online approach.

Support and Maintenance

Support is help desk support – support available when you have a query with the software, either regarding how to use it or when it isn't working. Often vendors separate e-mail from telephone help desk and charge different costs for each.

On-Premises

If you are looking for an on-premise option then maintenance is required to keep your software current and compatible with other software. For example, the minimum system requirements for Triaster's software include Windows Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8 or Windows 10. These are updated frequently.

Maintenance releases are therefore needed to stay compatible with an on-premise software system. Maintenance releases also address any software issues.

Maintenance is essential for on-premises Support, but Support is optional – although generally recommended.

Online

If you are looking at an online option hosted in the cloud this will be updated as standard, without the need to purchase maintenance. In addition with online Software the implementation is standard and uniform, which results in a much reduced need for your I.T. team to spend time with the software support team, when compared with an on-premises implementation.

So for online systems, maintenance is not required and support is optional - although generally recommended.

BPM Training and Services

This is where the options really start to ramp up and in order to decide what you need, you have to think both about what you are wanting to achieve and the resources that you have available to enable you to do so.

It may be that you are purely looking for a software platform, but even so, on-boarding services are often obligatory or if not, highly recommended.

Most people looking to implement a BPM system are looking for help, not just with installing and using the software, but with achieving their specific end objectives. These could be perhaps consistent processes (See: https://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/how-to-employees-follow-procedure) or implementation of best practice processes across their organisation.

They are looking for expert advice on how to achieve this – one of the very common questions we are asked at Triaster is, "how do we ensure that the BPM system will be used, once it is implemented?" (See: http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/ensure-bpm-system-used)

Many Business Process Management software providers offer services to directly address this challenge, which

very many customers purchase - not all however. Another area where customers often require additional support is process mapping. A key component of any successful BPM system is the content. Do you have sufficient resource in-house to capture accurate, useful content? If not, you will need process mapping services and need to factor in the cost of these.

Some of the most common services you might find offered by BPM software companies - which normally require additional add-on costs include:

BPM System Design:

- Bespoke Front-end (Home page) Design
- Process Map Stencil and Template Customisation
- Data Visualisations

Bespoke Home Page design for the AA

Professional Services:

- Facilitated Discovery Workshops
- Process Mapping Services
- Conversion Mapping Services
- Communications Package

Training:

- Additional Process Mapping Training

Technical:

- Technical and Integration Consultancy Services
- Report Creation and Customisation
- Analytics Enablement
- Search Customisations and SharePoint Integration

Triaster system pricing
https://www.triaster.co.uk/process-pricing

A Business Process Management system (if done right) will take time, effort and money to implement but it will also provide the opportunity for any organisation to save much more time, effort and money in the longrun. Take a look at the New Charter case study below to see how their process improvement initiatives savedthem £350k per annum...

Costs You Too Can Save With Business Process Management? [A Customer Case Study]

When looking at purchasing a BPM System, it can be hard to justify the investment when you aren't sure of the real potential benefits of Business Process Management software.

Recently, the New Charter Group (one of Triaster's customers) provided us with their thorough cost savings analysis - which is why we are now able to show you what a potential organisational cost saving could look like and demonstrate why Business Process management is important.

Three Initial Problems New Charter Faced

In early 2016, the New Charter Group was confronted with three major challenges...

- After summer 2015 the housing associations were prohibited from raising the rents on their properties by the rate of inflation plus one percent. Regarding the fact that inflation continues to exist, New Charter calculated that they had to reach a 15% reduction in revenue by 2019/2020.
- This translated into a general reshuffling and restructuring procedure, meaning that the company was lacking resources to stick with the prior, paper-based tenancy process.
- The Service Improvement team wanted to improve client satisfaction and develop an easily accessible customer training guide.

Clearly, these three problems required urgent action and smart problem solving skills. Until then, New Charter had only used BPM on an ad-hoc basis, and the team was lacking significant process mapping experience. Emma Woodrow recites that what gave them the push they so urgently required was the BPM trial with Triaster, after which they decided to purchase the software.

Next thing they knew, the team found themselves back at the drawing board, process mapping the entire tenancy procedure from 'keys-to-keys'.

The Business Process Mapping Journey

Rather than just mapping out individual processes, New Charter's Service Improvement Team wanted to map the entire process, broken down in manageable sections.

After holding an initial workshop, they recalled from prior experience that high-end process maps could suffer from a lack of real-world application. Overlooking the Law of Unintended Consequences (See: https://www.huffingtonpost.com/pam-ferderbar/the-law-of-unintended-con_4_b_13897396.html) could have been a severe mistake – what if there were secondary inputs and outputs not yet included in the primary process maps?

Thus, they invited all the key stakeholders of the Keys-to-Keys process to a process capture workshop and the team went on job-shadowing excursions to ensure that the processes as mapped were what actually happened in reality.

Looking at it from a process improvement perspective, they were able to determine the data behind every activity, including properties such as:

- Duration
- Frequency
- Required Resources
- Pay Band

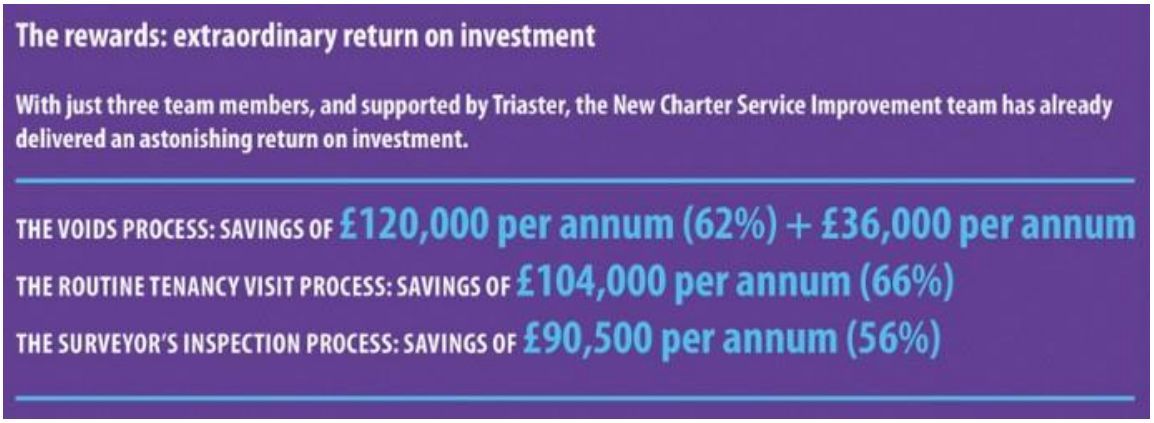
Using a bespoke properties file developed by Triaster, they were able to automatically calculate the cost of every activity.

Having mapped the AS-IS of the entire Keys-to-Keys process in about 280 process maps, many process improvement opportunities became visible. There were a great many handoffs and complexities in the process, giving rise for potential inefficiencies.

Starting to model the TO-BE, the Service Improvement team looked at ways of replacing paper-based processes with mobile applications, which they designed and specified to address the Trust's key challenges and deliver reduced cost, reduced time and improved service.

The Benefits of Business Process Management

To date, three processes have been re-engineered, supported by new mobile applications and the results measured...



While the first two processes were mapped using both Microsoft Visio and the Triaster software, with the Visio maps imported into Triaster, the surveyor's inspection process was mapped exclusively using the Triaster software. This enabled the team to calculate on every single activity exactly what had been saved.

This constitituted a total saving of...£350k per annum

If you're interested in following the steps of New Charter and saving your organisation money through business improvement, you can fill out our BPM Challenge Survey (See: http://info.triaster.co.uk/bpm-challenges) which will help us to provide answers to your specific business problems and perhaps reach the kind of incredible results that New Charter achieved. The road to Business Improvement isn't easy - it takes hard work and long hours to achieve.

It is clearly visible that New Charter devoted themselves to this type of effort and that all the hard work and long hours were worth it in the end. "It's been a steep learning curve", Emma Woodrow recalls, "which is why we bought Triaster E-learning at the beginning of 2017 – we just wanted to make sure that we could get as much help as we needed."

Continuing Continuous Improvement

In light of such fantastic savings, it might have been easy to stop right then and there. Fortunately, the New Charter Service Improvement team have not. They have revisited the voids process and identified another £36,000 of savings per annum.

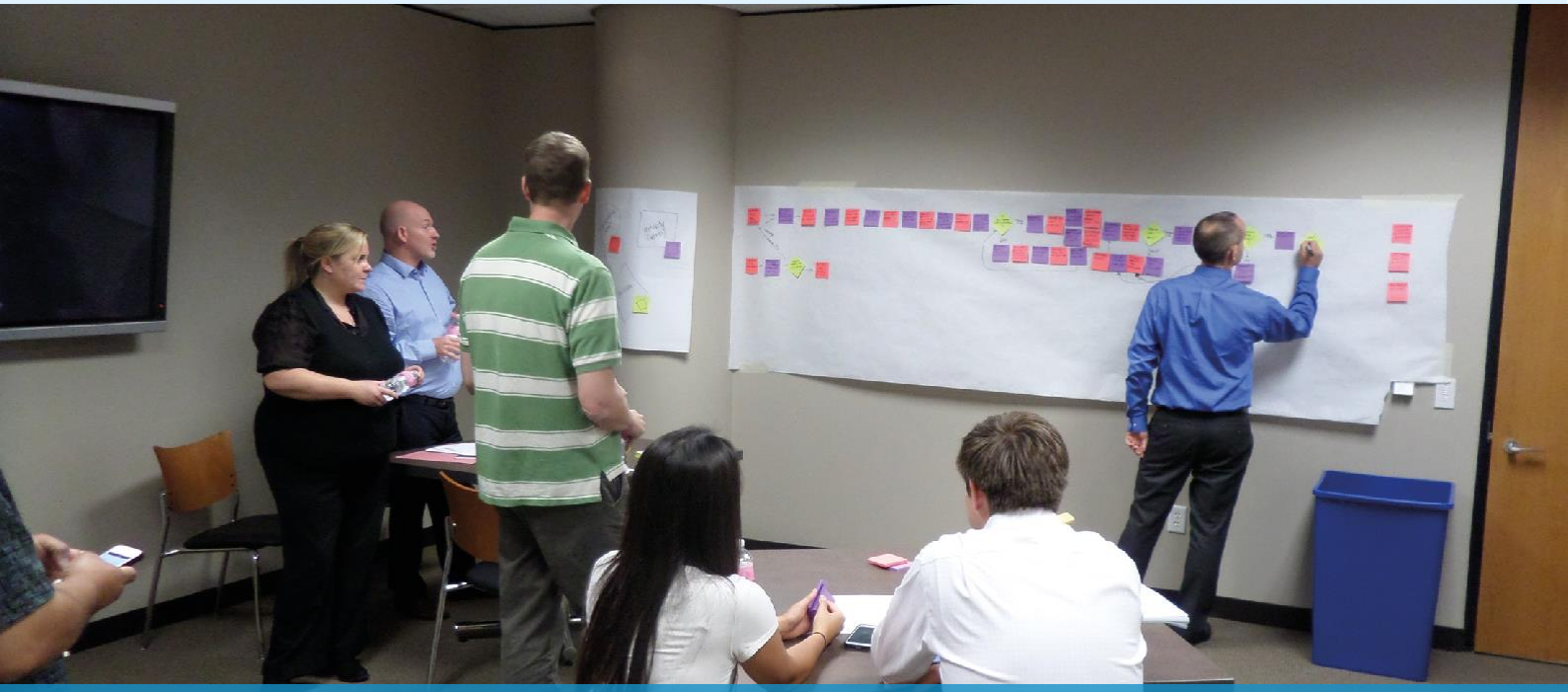
In addition, another six mobile applications are being developed to enable another six re-engineered processes to be rolled out, meaning that significant additional savings per annum are in the pipeline.

It is fair to say that this was one of the best decisions they have ever made: the New Charter Group identified the advantages of Business Process Management and after only 18 months in the saddle of quality and business improvement, New Charter was not only rewarded with astonishing return on investment but also the Digital Technological Leaders Award 2017 for 'Digital Team of the Year'.

computing Digital Technology Leaders Awards 2017

We are delighted that Emma Woodrow, the manager of the New Charter's Service Improvement team, took the time to provide an honest and detailed account of New Charter Group's success story.

Here ends section 3. Section 4 will cover the implementation stage of Business Process Management and what you need to know to make it as successful as possible...



Chapter 4 - How to Manage a Successful BPM Implementation

This section will cover

How to Prepare for Your BPM System Implementation: Tips for Success

There are six key steps to take when preparing for a BPM implementation - in order to best ensure its success. These are as follows:

1. Set Clear Objectives and Outcomes for Each Stage of the BPM Implementation

Usually when the decision is made to implement a BPM system, the overall objective is clear such as:

- Needing one source of accurate information
- Requiring support for a quality or industry accreditation
- To help with the implementation of a new quality or HSE system
- Needing to achieve cost savings

It is important however, to break this overall objective down into prioritised stages.

Not everything can be achieved at once, so a key preparation step is to break the objective into smaller chunks and set realistic targets for when each one is going to be achieved.

This is important for several reasons:

- A BPM implementation is a significant undertaking and can only be achieved in stages.
- Once into the detail of a BPM implementation it is easy to lose sight of the endgame. A structured plan, with clear targets will keep you on track.
- A BPM implementation can support many objectives; it is important to define what a successful implementation will look like for your organisation.
- Celebrating successes as staging posts are reached will keep everyone involved motivated and on-board.

2. Secure Senior Stakeholder Buy-in to the BPM Implementation

As with any project, stakeholder support for a BPM implementation is crucial.

The stakeholders are those who are either inside or outside of your organisation with an interest in the outcome of the implementation. Over the lifetime of the project the stakeholders will be…

- Senior Executives
- IT
- Project Team

- Process Experts
- Process Mappers
- End Users

An important part of any BPM implementation will be to secure the buy-in of all of the stakeholders – but it is **key to start with your senior executive**.

A successful BPM system implementation has a major impact on an organisation and this can only be achieved with core senior support.

This is best achieved by linking the objectives for your BPM system implementation with the strategic corporate objectives for your organisation.

Start with the language that is familiar to your senior executives – the language of your corporate strategy - and keep focused on the targets and goals that are important to them. Explain how the BPM implementation is going to help achieve these – and of course, make sure that this really is the case. If not, re-examine your objectives.

3. Choose Your BPM System Wisely

Having established your BPM objectives, keep these firmly in mind when choosing your BPM software system. Don't get distracted by the bells and whistles of any BPM system; they aren't useful if they don't help you to achieve your objectives.

Also, if you involve others in the decision – which is a good way of getting stakeholders on board – ensure that they too make their appraisal according to the agreed objectives. Don't let their personal agendas steer you off-course.

Consider trialling the system - a really good way of ensuring that it will deliver what you need.

4. Get IT On-board With Your Chosen BPM System

When buying any software system, it is important to have IT on board as early as possible. This is becoming less crucial as more and more software is cloud hosted, but it is still very important. Some organisations have a blanket policy of denying the purchase of cloud hosted software and even where this is not the case, IT will almost certainly have to authorise the purchase.

This can take time, so it is important to start the process early. Then when IT approvals are in place, you are ready to move forward any IT support that you need, will be available when you need it.

5. Check Out Your Purchasing Processes

Depending on the purchasing processes at your organisation, buying a BPM system could involve your purchasing department, the formal set up of the vendor on your purchasing system and a formal legal review of the vendor's terms and conditions - all of which can take quite a bit of time.

The key thing is to be clear on what the purchasing process is and how long it will take so that it is started in good time.

6. Assemble a Great BPM Team

As with any project, having the right team in place to implement a BPM system is crucial.
At Triaster, we recommend establishing a Process Council which should include:

- Your senior sponsor
- IT support
- Project manager
- Process mappers
- BPM system administrator
- Business analysts

Obviously, the senior sponsor and IT support will not be full-time members of the team. However, it is helpful to identify them as members of the team and it formalises their support for the BPM implementation. Also if they leave the organisation, the project manager is alerted to replace them as team members at that point - rather than only thinking about this when you need their support.

The Project Manager is often the BPM system administrator, but not always. The BPM system administrator is often a process mapper too, but again not always. Not all process mappers are always included in the team – particularly if the process mapping involves a lot of people – but there are usually a couple of full time process mappers.

Business Analysts may or may not be included on the team, depending on the objectives for the BPM implementation.

The first task for the team will be to agree some ground rules for your working approach – these will very much depend on the objectives for your BPM implementation, but they will absolutely save you a great deal of time later.

An important part of implementation is also in making sure that the system will be used once it's implemented. The preparation for this begins before the implementation has started and is crucial to run in parallel with your BPM implementation, creating awareness and getting buy-in...

How to Ensure That Your Business Process Management (BPM) System Will be Used: 10 Key Steps

All organisations and teams investing a great deal of time and money in their Business Process Management system want to know that it will be used by its intended end users.

We have set out 10 key steps to take during implementation, to help ensure that it will be.

1. Be Clear on the Purpose of Your Business Process Management System

In order to achieve your objective for your BPM system, you need to be clear on what it is.

This is the foundation stone for all else.

You, your team and your senior sponsors must all be able to answer the questions:

- "What is the purpose of our BPM system?"
- "What objective do we want it to achieve?"
- "What problem(s) is it going to solve?"

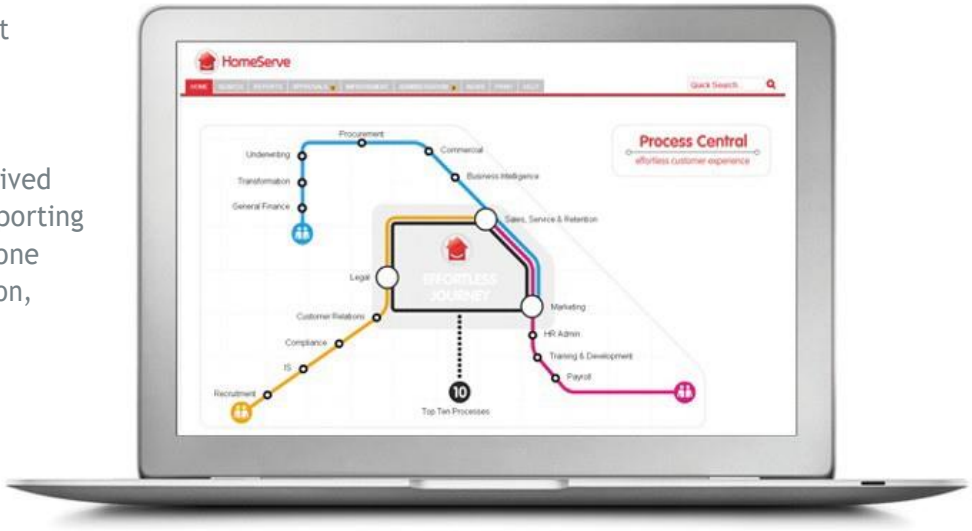
This has already been mentioned previously, but we can't overstate the importance of this step to the implementation process.

2. Get the BPM System Structure Right

The structure of the system must support the agreed end objective.

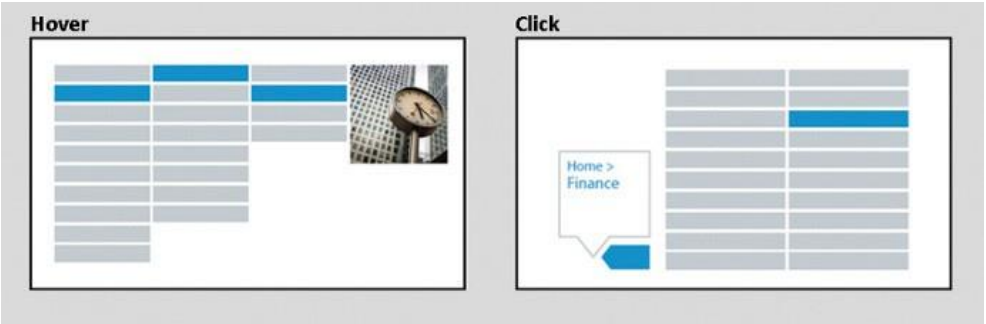
Will the system support just one part of your organisation? Or the whole organisation?

The most common benefits are derived from one common BPM system supporting the whole organisation. This gives one central source of accurate information, accessible to the whole organisation.



With a full company BPM system, it may seem as if the obvious way to structure it is department by department. But when thinking a bit more about the end objective, it may well in fact be by product or service. The more that you can structure your BPM system to support an end-to-end process view (the customer view) the better - as this will best promote whole company thinking.

In any event, the BPM should certainly be structured to show common processes such as HR and Finance separately from the departments or business units that they support.



Most importantly, the structure must support the core purpose of your BPM system and make sense to its end users.

3. Think About the Target Audience of Your BPM System

There will be certain things that are common to everyone working in your organisation. They will be familiar with:

- Your corporate branding
- Your website
- Other core systems

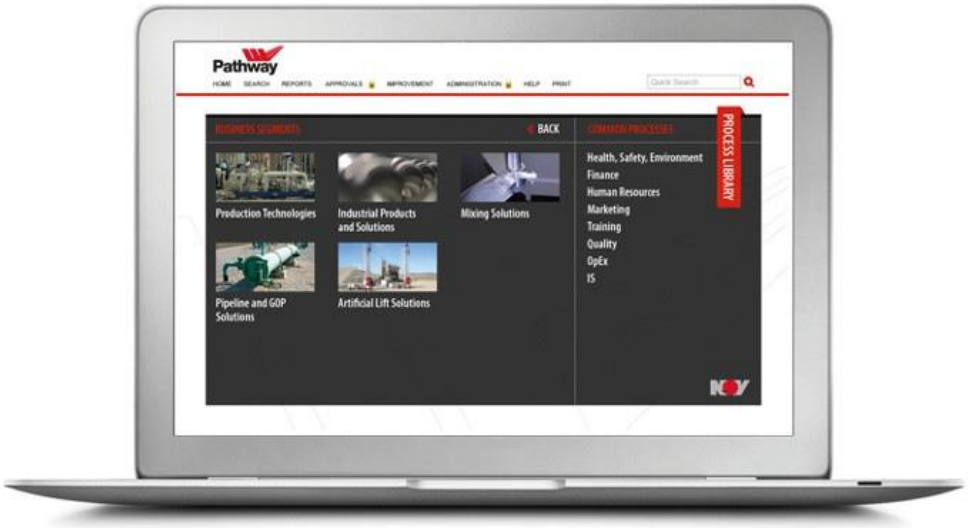
This knowledge should be used to design an interface for your BPM system that will be recognisable and appealing to its end users.

Adherence to corporate branding guidelines is particularly key – not least in obtaining sign off on your BPM system designs!

4. Use an Intuitive Navigation

At Triaster, we offer our customers two types of homepage architecture for their BPM systems: Click and Hover.

- **The Hover Interface** - is a traditional web menu hierarchical structure, which is controlled by moving your mouse over the navigation options. Top level options can be accompanied by an image
- **The Click Interface** - is a scene-by-scene based architecture. Users move through the (typically 3 level) hierarchy by clicking through a storyboarded customised environment.



We find that customers in industries such as engineering, construction and defence generally adopt the Hover interface, whilst customers in education, the public sector and customer service industries tend to prefer the Click interface.

We also find that generally if users like the Hover type for example, they will hate the Click interface and vice versa! Choosing the right approach for your end users is key to their use of your BPM system. To see other Triaster customer homepage designs please click here:

Triaster customer homepage designs
http://www.triaster.co.uk/showcase.php

5. Get the 'Tone of Voice' Correct

Whilst developing the design of your chosen homepage, be that Click or Hover, think about the key messages that you want to communicate. Although subtle, getting this correct (or not) can have a marked effect on BPM system usage.

The message to be conveyed will depend on the objective for the system. It will also depend on how heavily you want to replicate the design of another system or resource - such as your intranet. If your intranet is well designed, used and liked, replicating its approach may promote usage of your BPM system.

Triaster's customer Interserve FM designed their system 'PRISM' in line with their intranet, 'IRIS'. Both now have a strong brand and image which end users like. Click here to see the PRISM design:

PRISM Design
https://www.triaster.co.uk/showcase-interservefm.php

6. Agree a Theme That Will Appeal

Sometimes agreeing a theme that will appeal is hard. Sometimes it is obvious. The place to start is with the system name and logo.

Sungard Availability Services call their Triaster system Ask PAT. PAT stands for Process Application Tool and is also the first name of the well known Director, who has ultimate responsibility for the system. With the name in place the development of a strong logo and theme was fairly straight forward.

A strong theme best enables development of an identity for the system.

7. Develop an Identity for Your BPM System

To best ensure usage of your BPM system, its identity should extend well beyond the system itself. Spread the word about it by using the name, logo and theme as widely as possible. If budget permits, promote the system with useful giveaways.

Even with limited budget, the system's identity can be promoted by leveraging the theme with 'opportunities to see'.

It is also important to explain the reasons for the system's implementation and how employees will benefit from using it.

8. Involve End Users

It is natural to be suspicious of new things. All of the steps set out so far have been to make something new, seem as familiar and intuitive as possible.

Alongside this, involve as many people as possible in the capture of the content for the system. When involved in its development, people will be much happier to use it.

9. Ensure the Content is Accurate

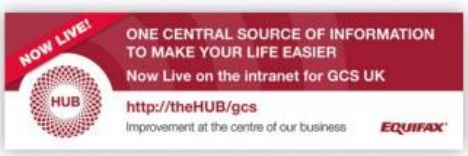
Of course even the best structured system, with a well-loved theme won't be used if the information it contains is out of date or inaccurate. Ensure that all content published to your BPM system has been reviewed and signed off as accurate.

Where there are gaps in content, make it clear when it is intended that these will be filled.

10. Communication, Communication, Communication

Generally, people won't use a system unless they both know about it and understand how using it will benefit them.

So tell them.



Leverage your theme, the system's identity and tell them about it. Use all your organisation's usual communication channels to get the word out there. For example:

- Newsletters
- Bulletins
- E-mails
- Electronic notice boards
- Meetings…

Get your senior sponsors as involved as possible. Ask them to cascade the message, explain their objectives for the system and how these align with the corporate strategy.

Before you even think about implementing a Business Process Management system, you're going to want to think about establishing a business improvement team, which will speed up any implementation and ensure that the captured processes are accurate...

Establishing a Business Improvement Team: 4 Must Do Actions Steps

When establishing any new team there is a lot to do and it is sometimes hard to decide what the priority actions should be. Having worked with hundreds of business improvement teams, Triaster have learnt that there are 4 key activities that should be at the top of the list for any newly formed Business Improvement team as they will:

1. Save masses of time later on
2. Ensure successful results

Let's examine each in turn.

1. Agree the Business Improvement Team's Objectives

This activity may seem a little superfluous for a Business Improvement team – the objective is improvement right?

Well yes, but improvement is a wide remit. It will need narrowing down a little. Ideally the team's objectives should align with the overall corporate objectives and hence the focus of the team will align with the corporate strategy.

However, whilst corporate strategy is usually quite broad, the objectives for the improvement team should be broken down into realistic and achievable targets over a defined time period.

This is important for a couple of reasons:

1. The team should be aiming at success from the start. Success is much more likely if you both know what it looks like and that it is in fact actually achievable.

2. Senior Executive support is key to achieving business improvement and much more forthcoming if senior management can see how your team is contributing to achieving the corporate strategy.

A couple of illustrations to explain what we mean:

If your company is in a high growth phase, establish the objectives for the Business Improvement team to show how they will support this high growth. Then break these down into achievable targets - such as a system to support and improve new customer on-boarding.

If the organisation is well established, with a large customer base, an excellent reputation and its strategic objective is to modernise; the objective of the business improvement team may well be to maintain quality (and that excellent reputation) whilst new systems are being implemented. Targets should be time based and linked to this objective.

2. Agree the Business Improvement Approach

Having established their objectives, the team needs to agree on the approach they intend to take to achieve these – over the long term.

Keep firmly in mind what you want to do and choose the approach that will best enable you to do this. Don't let the tail wag the dog – either in choosing a business improvement methodology or a software system.

Most teams will look for a software system to help them achieve their objectives.

There are many different software systems offering many different approaches to business improvement.

Some offer Workflow Management, some offer Enterprise Architecture; others offer Enterprise Resource Planning. Triaster offers a Business Process Management (BPM) platform.

Which one is right for your team will depend on your objectives.

Always start with your objectives and requirements and see which system delivers what you need (rather than the other way round).

Think long term; this is not a decision that you will want to revisit every few years – on either a time or cost basis.

3. Establish a Governance Framework

Having established the approach that you are going to take to business improvement and the system that you plan to implement - set out some ground rules.

These ground rules should set out how everyone is going to work on a day-to-day basis in order to work towards the team's objectives. They are commonly called a Governance Framework.

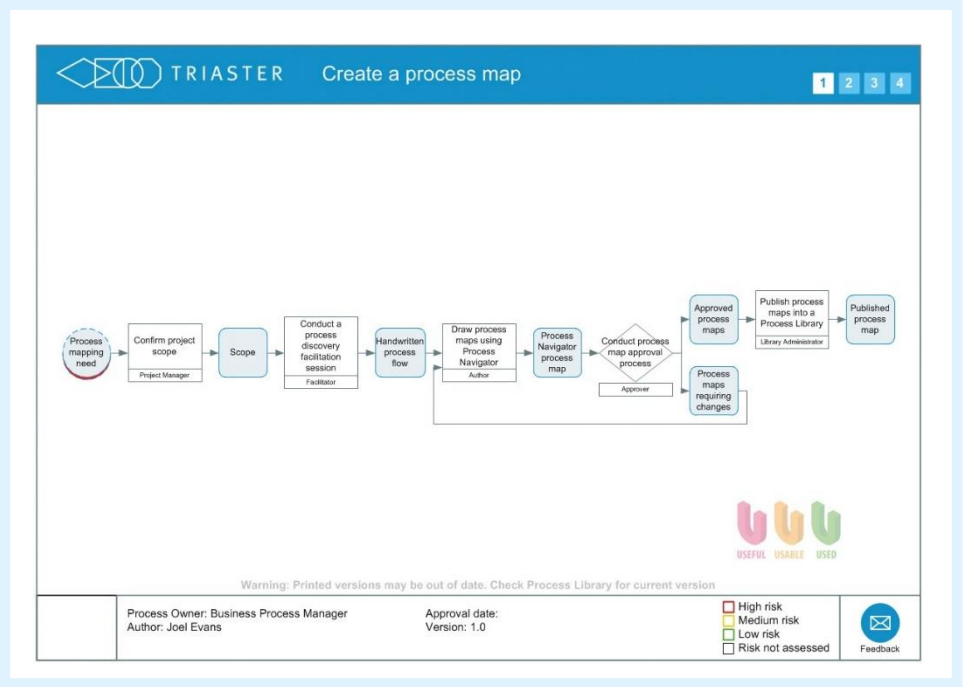
Establishing a Governance Framework can seem rather hard work, but if properly thought through and adopted, a Governance Framework is invaluable.

The ground rules needed when implementing a BPM system need to cover the following as a minimum:

1. The Process Mapping methodology
2. A Review and Approvals process
3. Data Capture

The Process Mapping Methodology

Implementing a Business Process Management (BPM) system starts with creating process maps of business processes.



For information on process mapping, please read the following articles:

Process Mapping: Who does it and why?
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/process-mapping-who-does-it-and-why

Six Major Benefits of Process Mapping
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/six-major-benefits-process-mapping

However, Process mapping can be done in lots of different ways, using lots of different shapes. Without some ground rules, the end result can easily be very inconsistent and unhelpful. Especially where several people are doing the process mapping.

It is therefore important to establish a common approach to process mapping at the outset - that everyone adopts. If this is done, all the benefits of process mapping will be achieved. Without it, a lot of rework is needed and masses of time can be wasted. For information on Triaster's approach to consistent process mapping, please read this article:

What is the Noun-verb methodology of Process Mapping?
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/what-is-the-noun-verb-methodology-of-process-mapping

Review and Approvals Process

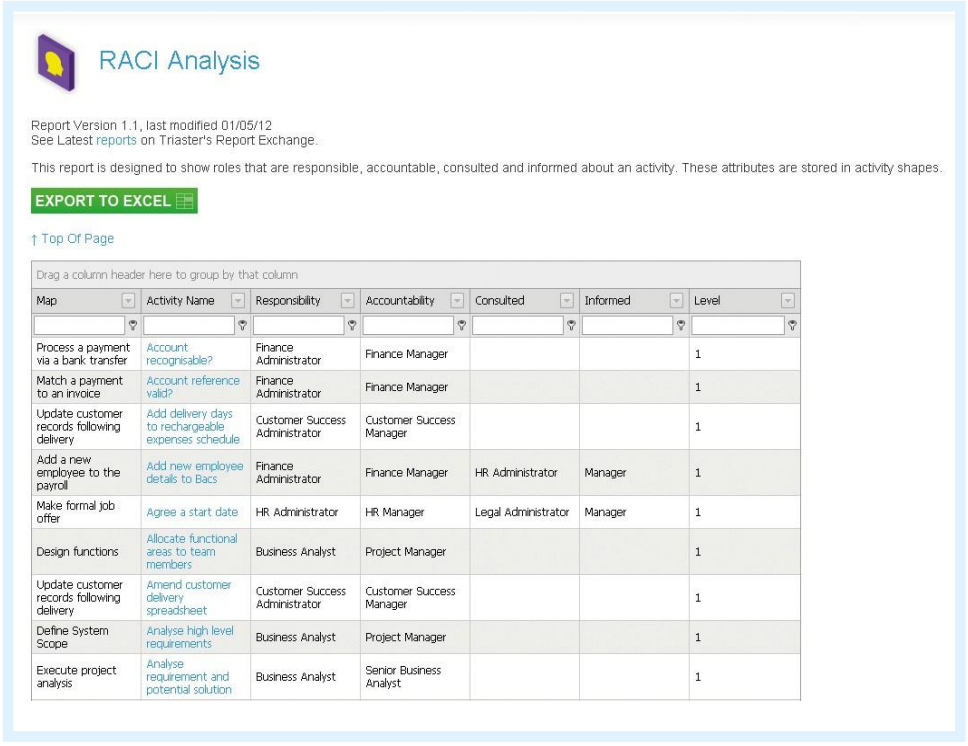
Process maps are only useful if they are accurate.

Process Mapping enables Business Improvement by capturing the current business processes. If the process maps are inaccurate, determining where improvements can and should be made becomes very difficult. Accordingly, a review and approvals process for all process maps is essential.

Many BPM software systems support a process map review and approvals process. Key decisions such as who will be doing the review should be taken as early as possible to best ensure that all process maps are as accurate as possible.

Data Capture

Any team looking to make business improvements will need to capture data about the business. The data that needs to be captured will depend on team objectives. For example, if a team objective is to achieve corporate visibility of who is responsible for certain processes, capturing that data is essential.



RACI Analysis

Report Version 1.1, last modified 01/05/12
See Latest reports on Triaster's Report Exchange.

This report is designed to show roles that are responsible, accountable, consulted and informed about an activity. These attributes are stored in activity shapes.

EXPORT TO EXCEL

↑ Top Of Page

Drag a column header here to group by that column

Map	Activity Name	Responsibility	Accountability	Consulted	Informed	Level
Process a payment via a bank transfer	Account recognisable?	Finance Administrator	Finance Manager			1
Match a payment to an invoice	Account reference valid?	Finance Administrator	Finance Manager			1
Update customer records following delivery	Add delivery days to rechargeable expenses schedule	Customer Success Administrator	Customer Success Manager			1
Add a new employee to the payroll	Add new employee details to Bacs	Finance Administrator	Finance Manager	HR Administrator	Manager	1
Make formal job offer	Agree a start date	HR Administrator	HR Manager	Legal Administrator	Manager	1
Design functions	Allocate functional areas to team members	Business Analyst	Project Manager			1
Update customer records following delivery	Amend customer delivery spreadsheet	Customer Success Administrator	Customer Success Manager			1
Define System Scope	Analyse high level requirements	Business Analyst	Project Manager			1
Execute project analysis	Analyse requirement and potential solution	Business Analyst	Senior Business Analyst			1

The key thing is to decide what data will be needed to achieve your objectives and capture it - as part of the process mapping exercise.

So often, teams decide to come back later and capture the data, or don't think about what data they will need, so don't collect it. However, any time saved at the outset is spent doubly later on. For information on data capture, please read the following article:

How can a BPM system enable me to achieve Continuous Improvement? Methods and Examples
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/bpm-system-enable-continuous-improvement

4. Plan to Implement Cultural Change

This activity is absolutely essential to any Business Improvement team and the one that is most overlooked.

It is likely that at some stage, in order to achieve your objectives as a team, you will be implementing change to the organisation.

People dislike change. So implementing change is hard.

However, it will be a great deal easier to implement if it's part of an ongoing dialogue. So start the dialogue right at the outset. Introduce your team; explain what you are planning to do and why - get people involved.

And keep doing so.

Remember, your success as a team will depend on your ability to persuade the rest of the organisation to change. For information on implementing cultural change, please read the following article:

Problems with Business Process Management (BPM): Getting employees to follow the process
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/problems-with-business-process-management-employees-follow-process

After you've got your business improvement team all aboard, you'll want to set up your process library. Rome wasn't built in a day and it took more than one Roman so you're going to need your crack team to accomplish the lofty goal of organisational change...

The Process Library Checklist: Integrate Your Team With Your Process Software

Triaster customers find our Process Library Go Live checklists (See: https://www.triaster.co.uk/white-paper-getting-to-go-live-checklist) very useful. They know that for their Business Management System (BMS) to deliver themost value it must have what we call the 3 'U's (Useful, Usable and Used).

This article explores the 3'U's concept and how it supports a process culture.

To find out more on the 3 'U's download the white paper explaining it in further detail:

The 3Us of Great Process Libraries
http://info.triaster.co.uk/white-paper-3us-great-process-libraries

A Usable, Workable Philosophy for Managing Processes

- **Useful** - Your Library must contain accurate and complete information that actually helps your staff to perform their tasks better - a process library should meet your requirements before you purchase it.
- **Usable** - The information must be easily understood, easily accessed (ideally quicker than the usual practice) with an interface requiring very little or no training to use. Everyone in your organisation needs to be able to gain access to the process library and find the information they need within 3 clicks.
- **Used** - Staff must use their process library as part of business as usual with core processes stored there and referred to often. Management must regularly review processes in the library together with the staff responsible for carrying those tasks out and ensure the information remains up-to-date and accurate.

When your process library is ticking the boxes with all three of these terms then you will have made a significant step towards adopting a process culture in your organisation. There is obviously still more to do, but this is the key foundation step.

The above and below pictures are both examples of Triaster Process Library designs. We tailor these to the needs of each individual customer; both in the look, feel and capability of the Process Library.

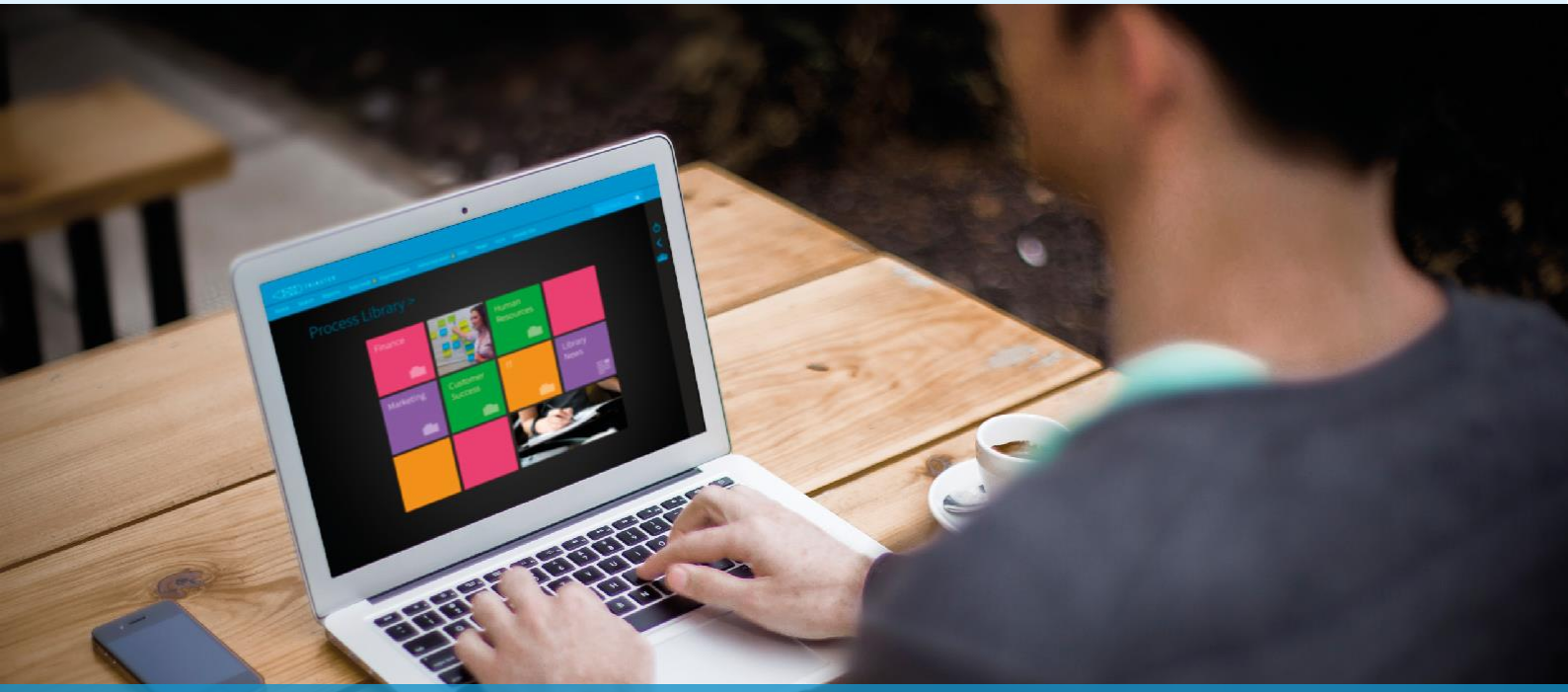
If you are interested in taking a tour through the different Process Library designs we have created for our customers please click here.

Process Library Designs
http://www.triaster.co.uk/showcase.php

Is it Useful, Useable and Used? The Checklist

If you are thinking about getting a Triaster system, this Go Live checklist (See: http://info.triaster.co.uk/getting-to-go-live-checklist) is a perfect step-by-step guide to making sure that your Triaster Process Library is Useful, Usable and Used. There are three lists, each has one of the 3 'U's as a heading to make sure your system will be as integrated into your organisation as possible on the day you go live with it.

Here ends section 4. Section 5 will take you through some tutorials on how to use your BPM software after you have successfully implemented your BPM system...



Chapter 5 - Using Your BPM Software to Deliver Improvement - 5 Useful Tutorials

This section will cover

How to Calculate Return on Investment With Business Process Management

A recent Gartner research note states that 80% of organisations conducting Business Process Management (BPM) projects will experience an internal rate of return better than 15%.

Of the 20 companies who responded to their survey, 55% had returns in the $100,000 to $500,000 range per BPM project.

You may be thinking that 20 companies is not a very large number of respondents. To be fair those 20 companies had completed 154 BPM projects between them, which is of course a far larger sample.

However, we suspect that one of the reasons that the number of respondents was quite small is due to the difficulty of calculating return on investment on Business Process Management projects.

Why is Calculating ROI on BPM Projects Difficult?

Return on investment in a BPM project can arise in two ways: Directly and Indirectly.

Direct ROI is reasonably straightforward to calculate, but still requires a judgement to be made on what can be directly attributed to a BPM project.

Indirect ROI is much harder to quantify.

This means that often the ROI on BPM projects just isn't quantified. This is a real shame because, as Gartner reported, the returns are generally excellent.

Calculating Direct ROI From BPM

To calculate the direct ROI on any given BPM project, the cost of the BPM project is compared with any cost savings made or increases in profit.

Determining the Cost of a BPM Project

Firstly, the cost of the project needs to be calculated. This is pretty straightforward.

It includes the external costs for the BPM software system (both initial and ongoing) and the cost of external consultancy and training services purchased to support the project.

It also includes the cost of any internal resource used on the project. This will mostly be the time people need to spend on the project, not only those in the BPM or process improvement teams, but the subject matter experts' time and the time of anyone else connected with the project (such as the leadership team and marketing).

Calculating the cost of time requires a judgement to be made on how any given employee's time is costed. Most organisations have already agreed hourly charging rates for differing bands of employees - taking into account gross salary and an overhead charge.

If yours hasn't, don't make this too complicated. Just calculate three cost bands for junior, senior and middle salaried employees, based on average gross (including employers NI) salary and a sensible overhead charge for each band.

Determining Cost Savings Made or Increases in Profit

Generally, calculating direct cost saving and increases in profit is reasonably straightforward to calculate. A difficulty that sometimes arises however, is how to agree how much of an increase in profits say is attributable to a BPM project, rather than to other factors.

Increases In Profit

If, for example, you have used your BPM system to support your bid processes, you will be able to attribute any increased profit to BPM; how much is a matter of judgement.

Taking a BPM approach, using the Triaster platform, Interserve have developed a mobilisation tool specifically to ensure that new business can be won and delivered to a reliable margin, whilst delivering a better service to Interserve's customers. For more on this please read this case study:

Interserve - Winning more business, reducing costs and delivering more value
https://www.triaster.co.uk/07-15-interserve-winning-more-business.php

For Interserve, calculating the increased profits attributable to BPM is a matter of calculating the positive impact of their mobilisation tool on cost containment and the time taken to mobilise. This is possible, but certainly needed discussion, judgement and general agreement with the bid and mobilisation teams.

Other Triaster customers have set up specific 'bid BPM systems' to support large tenders. These demonstrate most effectively that they have the processes in place to support their bids and ensures that their BPM systems are ready to go as soon as they win the projects. This is particularly key for joint ventures.

Which is exactly what Balfour Beatty found some years ago when they were awarded a £ 414 million contract by Bord Gais Networks in the Republic of Ireland, in a joint venture with CLG Developments Ltd. Calculating the ROI here was a matter of deciding how much of the profit from this project was attributable to their bid BPM system.

Cost Savings

When it comes to direct cost reductions, these are most obviously seen by Triaster customers in a reduction in audit costs. Since 2012, Skanska UK has saved £40K in annual audit fees, for their ISO assessment. This is an easy ROI to calculate.

Then we come onto how a BPM system drives efficiency. Every time a process is improved to cut out a wasteful step, costs are saved. Every time duplication is removed from a process, costs are saved. These can be quite difficult to calculate - unless your BPM system enables you to capture and report on time, effort, resources etc and reports on these.

This is key in fact, not just for calculating ROI but also to enable you to model the savings if various potential changes are made and thereby determine the optimal root forward - before making the changes.

Often a small saving repeated many time results in a cost saving much bigger than expected. Have a look at an example of this by clicking here:

How can Triaster save your organisation money?
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/cost-savings-benefits-of-business-process-management

One cost saving that it is very difficult to calculate, but which is likely to add up to many hundreds of thousands of pounds for large organisations, is the cost saving every time an employee is able to quickly and efficiently find documentation or how to do something just by going to the BPM system.

It is worth at least trying to make an assessment on this based on every employee saving 15 minutes time a day. See how much that adds up to in cost savings over a year; over five years.

Calculating Indirect ROI From BPM

Indirect ROI from BPM is much harder to calculate, but the benefits should not be ignored.

ROI From Reducing Risk

Reducing risk so that a quality failure is avoided and the reputation of the brand is protected could be said to be priceless.

Unfortunately, the cost of a quality failure is usually not measured unless a quality failure has already taken place. Then the figures are eye watering.

A BBC news report in December 2015 entitled, 'Volkswagen: The scandal explained' stated that:
'With VW recalling millions of cars worldwide from early next year, it has set aside €6.7bn (£4.8bn)to cover costs. That resulted in the company posting its first quarterly loss for 15 years of €2.5bn in late October.

But that's unlikely to be the end of the financial impact. The EPA has the power to fine a company up to $37,500 for each vehicle that breaches standards – a maximum fine of about $18bn.'

For more on this please read this article:

Managing Risk in Business: How can I manage risk and avoid quality failure?
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/managing-risk-in-business-how-can-i-manage-risk-and-avoid-quality-failure

The ROI on any BPM project which avoided this would have been huge, but very unlikely ever to have been calculated or attributed. Which is a shame, as I am sure that if it had been, the project would have immediately got budget.

ROI From Regulatory Compliance

Achieving regulatory compliance with ISO, Sarbanes Oxley , the FCA, HEFCE or whoever regulates your industry sector, obviously delivers a great deal of value - particularly if it is a statutory requirement. Even if it isn't, it will be a quality mark that your customers and potential customers will look out for.

Again this is one where the ROI is hardly ever calculated. But particularly if you are trying to get budget for a BPM project to support this, make a rough calculation of what the results would be if key compliances aren't achieved next year. Make some assumptions and state these clearly and base your calculations on these. For example, reductions in profit attributable to x customers lost and x new customers not won. The ROI is likely to surprise you.

ROI From Quality

Just as with addressing risk and achieving regulatory compliance, quality improvements are usually classified by organisations as a cost.

However, ROI can be calculated if you set out issues that might arise if quality is not improved or deteriorates. For example, inconstant working in a customer services team will deliver an inconsistent quality of service, which can damage trust and ultimately lose customers.

Set out some working assumptions about the realistic damage that could be done/has been averted and attribute some figures against these. You will be amazed at the results, especially when calculated for the expected lifetime of any customer.

Next up, let's take a look at Business Process Modelling. This is incredibly valuable for showing projected changes in an organisation before you actually make them and can help you to model improvements to inefficient processes which cost a great deal of time, effort and cost to an organisation…

Business Process Modelling: How to Capture Cost, Effort and Time

Business Process Modelling is a surprisingly complex topic in Business Process Management(BPM) with many different approaches. In this step-by-step, easy-to-follow guide we will try to remove the complexity and also explore one approach that many Triaster customers have found useful.

The potential application areas of this approach and the nature of the business challenges that can be addressed are wide. Do you want to reduce costs? Strip out waste? Improve quality? Do you need to increase efficiency to compete? Or maybe staff are tired of ineffective processes and you need to improve morale...

Many of these challenges can be addressed with Business Process Modelling tools and analysis; let's start with looking at Time and Effort...

Capturing Time and Effort in Process Maps

Suppose John says at 10am on Monday, "that report will take me a couple of hours to finish."

What does he mean? When will he finish the report? Noon on Monday?

He then goes on to say, "but I'm a bit tied up at the moment and can't get to it until 2pm on Thursday."

OK, so he will finish by 4pm on Thursday?

"Don't forget though", he says, "we have that team building exercise on Thursday at 3 which will take the rest of the day, and I'm in late on Friday around 10am."

OK, so 11am on Friday?

"And the other thing is, I'll need to get a sign-off on section A of the report from Mary before I can complete section B. Looks like Mary goes on leave for a couple of weeks on Friday..."

OK, so the report won't be finished for at least 3 weeks, even though John starts with the truthful, but highly misleading statement: "that'll take me a couple of hours."

What do we Mean by Time, Effort and Resources?

We need to separate out elements of time and effort and define them in the process if we are to be accurate.

A typical model will identify at least 3 time metrics as follows:

- **Effort** - the actual time spent doing the work; also called Processing Time. This is John's 2 hours.

- **Queuing Time** - the time delay before work begins; also called Buffer Time. This is John's "I'm tied up until Thursday."
- **Interruption Time** - the time between starting a task and finishing it during which no Effort is performed; also called Delay Time or Wait Time. This is John's break for the team building and waiting on Mary's sign-off.

Resources are the number of people that can perform the work.

A simplifying assumption, but one that is commonly made in modelling, is that the actual clock time to complete a task is the Effort divided by the number of Resources.

In John's case, there is 1 resource writing the report, so it takes 2 hours of clock time. If there were 6 resources, the same 2 hours of effort would only take 20 minutes of clock time.

The total time taken from beginning to end is often called the Cycle Time, End-to-End Process Time or Elapsed Time. It is: (Effort/Resources) + Queuing Time + Interruption Time.

Clearly, Queuing Time and Interruption Time are always non-value adding.

There are other aspects of Time measurement that are commonly included. For example, Transit Time is often modelled, this being the time taken for John's report (once finished) to find its way back to the requester. If the report were hard copy and had to be couriered or posted, it adds days to the Cycle Time.

Specifying Time Units in Business Process Modelling

"That'll take 4 days" says John.

What does he mean?

Is it 96 hours of effort? Or is it 30 hours of effort?

Does he mean to include Saturday and Sunday, or working days only?

It is important to be clear on what units are being used whenever a time period or an amount of effort is being specified.

Typical units of time in process maps are Seconds, Minutes, Hours, Working Day (7.5 Hours), Calendar Day (24 Hours) and so on. Whenever a time is specified, so should the units.

Specifying Cost Units in Process Modelling

Costs are generally labour costs (those associated with effort) and Other Costs.

Labour costs are often converted to an hourly cost according to some multiple of annual salaries. The specific method of doing this matters less than its consistent application.

For example, it could be modelled on the basis of 260 working days per annum and 7.5 hours per working day. So, annual salary is divided by 260*7.5=1950 to give an hourly rate.

Another model can be based on the 52 weeks per annum and 40 hours per week, giving a divisor of 2080. Each organisation views these things differently, so each organisation needs to be able to define the precise Business Process Model to meet its needs.

Other Costs can arise from a whole host of considerations. For example, suppose you are modelling a University Enrolment process that sends letters to all enrolled students, and you are trying to identify cost savings from going down an email only route. In this case you will need to model postage and printing costs.

By and large, any cost line should have a unit cost field and a quantity field - for example 12,000 letters at a unit cost of 8p to print and 78p to post.

Flexibility in Data Definition is the Key

The important thing is to be able to model whatever metrics you need in order to find the answers you are looking for - and to be able to refine the model when the business analysis needs to become clearer.

Atomic Data and Calculated Fields

Atomic data are the indivisible data fields, i.e. those that cannot be inferred from other data.
Clearly then, non-atomic data can always be computed.

For example, Labour Cost = Wage Cost per Hour * Hours of Effort. Labour Cost is a computed field, and the other 2 fields are the atomic data.

In a modelling environment, one should always seek to only store the atomic data, and let the system compute the calculated fields. In the above example, Labour Cost should never be entered directly.

Taking this example a little further, Wage Cost per Hour could also be a computed field as follows:
Wage Cost per Hour = Pay Band Median / 1950.

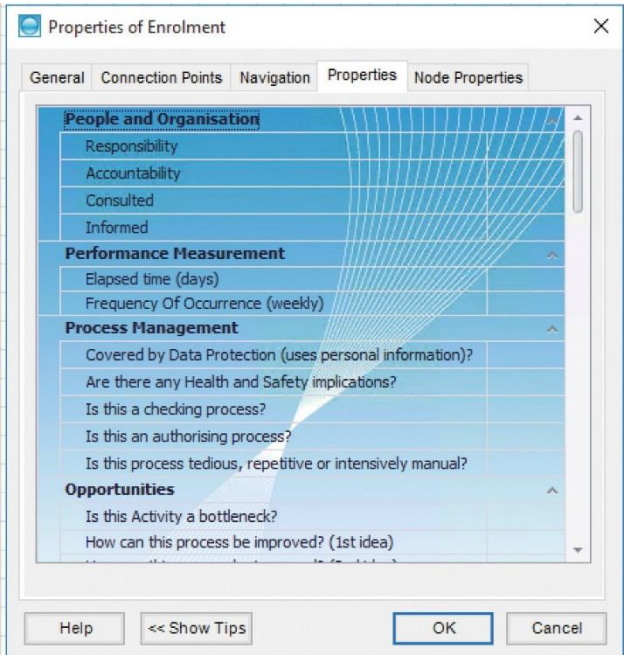
In other words, the Pay Band is the atomic data and the salary is inferred from the pay band information and not entered directly.

The more you can break your data down into the atomic data fields, the easier it will be to maintain and update your model.

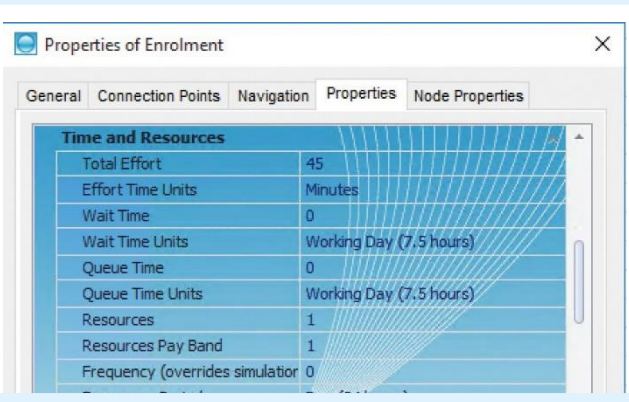
Modelling Business Processes: How Can Triaster Help?

Triaster have a completely flexible data modelling environment; literally every field you want can be added. Calculated fields can be defined (and re-defined as needed).

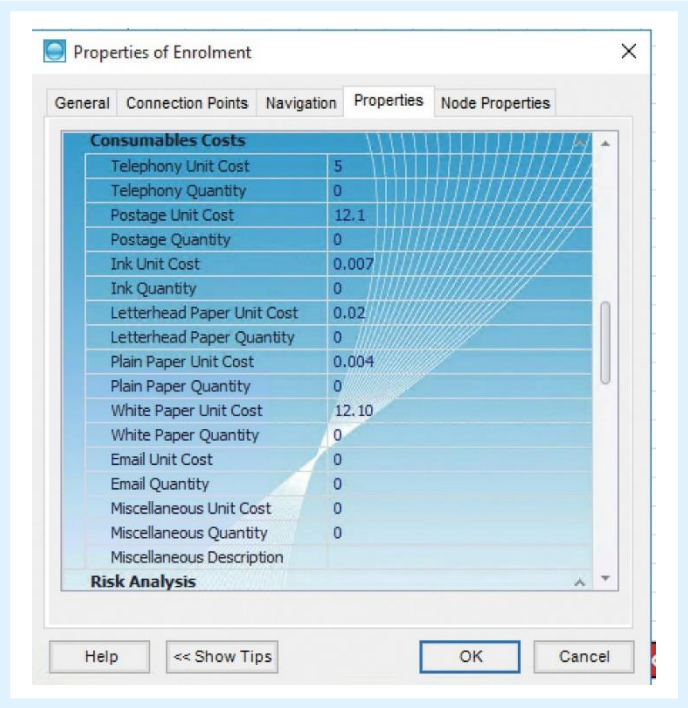
For example, in the image below there are a variety of basic properties most customers capture routinely.



For Time and Resources, Triaster has been configured to model Effort, Wait Time and Queue Time. Note the Pay Band field which is used instead of a cost per unit of effort.



There is a section devoted to the cost of consumables…



Having entered the atomic data shown above, the system can then start to calculate the various lines of cost and cycle time…

Triaster can then also compute end-to-end costings and total process cycle time through its dynamic simulation engine.

Visit this PDF for a more in-depth explanation on the subject as a whole.

An Introduction to Business Process Modelling
http://cs.ulb.ac.be/conferences/ebiss2012/files/vaisman_ebiss2012.pdf

Process Costing: A Simple Method to Find How Much Your Processes Cost

In virtually every organization, one of the key aims is to save your business money through process costing and the identification of more efficient processes.

Cost is one example of a quantitative metric and the advice outlined in this article applies equally to any quantitative metric. For example, one could just as easily focus on the amount of effort involved, the number of people, elapsed time from start to finish, the amount of defects introduced, the amount of customer complaints received and so on...

What we really need is a simple method for working out how much this process is costing us, and to then compare it with the alternatives."

To work with quantitative metrics is straightforward, but it has to be rigorous. In this article I'll cover the ground on some of the underlying theory and definitions, and also look at what is process costing with examples. First though, we need to understand several concepts:

1. The Noun-Verb method and how it relates to metrics
2. Atomic and non-atomic data
3. End-to-end processes
4. The process hierarchy seabed

Make sure you also download the Business Analysis white paper for an in-depth explanation as to how you can model time, effort and cost-data in your business.

Business Analysis White Paper
http://info.triaster.co.uk/white-paper-business-analysis-report

Quantitative Metrics and the Noun-Verb Method

In the Noun-Verb process mapping method, Activities are described using a verb, and Deliverables (the outcome of performing an Activity) are described using Nouns.

When working out process costs in an attempt to save your company money, the costs should always be exclusively associated with the Activities. Activities represent work performed and genuinely reflect where costs are incurred in a process. Deliverables on the other hand represent the benefit of performing work - they are in some sense the opposite of a cost. They are the return on investment of the cost of the producing Activity.

As shall be explained in the next section, cost need not be a fixed value; it can be a formula referencing other more basic information. This is good practice wherever possible.

Only attach cost values to Activities (or Decisions), never to Deliverables.

Atomic and Non-Atomic Data

Atomic Data are values that cannot be broken down or derived from other atomic values (hence atomic or atom-like meaning indivisible). As an aside, this is an unfortunate historical use of the term from the days when it was believed an atom could not be subdivided - how wrong we were!

My age, for example, might appear to be atomic, but on closer inspection my age can be derived from my date of birth. My date of birth is therefore atomic; my age is non-atomic. My weight on the other hand is atomic - it is not possible to work out my weight from any other values.

When dealing with process costs, it is important to understand when to simply attach costs to a process as if cost were an atomic value, and when to derive the cost from other data. More often than not, it is desirable to derive cost.

For example, suppose I am trying to calculate the labour cost of a process that involves 3 people working for 6 hours at a rate of £8 per hour and a supervisor's time of 1 hour at a rate of £16 per hour. The atomic data in this example are the number of hours worked and the rate per hour. The cost can be derived from these values and therefore, cost should not be recorded as an atomic data value in this process, but as a derived value from other data.

On the other hand, suppose I am trying to work out the labour cost of a process where the number of hours worked is not known (nor the rate per hour) but a contract is in place with an outsourced business to perform the process at a cost of £800 per day. In this instance, cost is an atomic data value and it should therefore be recorded as a data value in the process.

Wherever possible, use atomic data and then derive costs rather than enter a fixed cost.

End-to-End Process Costing

Anyone familiar with a Process Library will know it is possible to view a process as a sequence of Activities beginning with an Input and ending with an Output. The end-to-end process cost is simply the average cost of performing the end-to-end process many times over. It does sound simple but please note the use of the word 'average' in that sentence.

It is necessary to consider the concept of an average because processes sometimes have branch points in them. On one execution of the process the branch will go one way and on another it will go the other way. Sometimes there are exceptional circumstances that require an exception process to be performed.

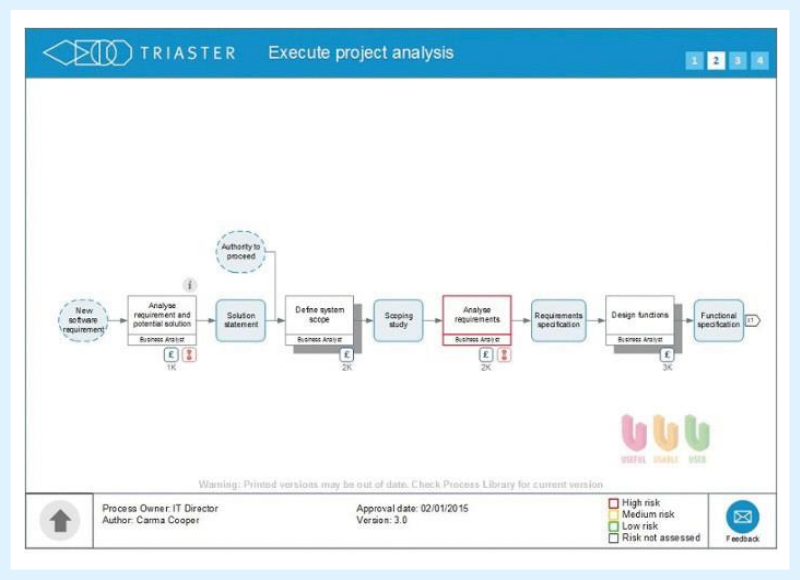
Not only are there branch points, sometimes there are loopbacks and on a single run of a process the same process element can be executed many times over - each of which adds to actual cost.

An end-to-end process cost therefore isn't simply the sum of the cost of each Activity in the process, it is defined more precisely as:

The end-to-end process cost is the sum of the cost of each process element multiplied by the expected number of times that process element is executed. The Expected number of times can be any number from 0 upwards, and fractions are allowed.

Let's take a few simple examples.

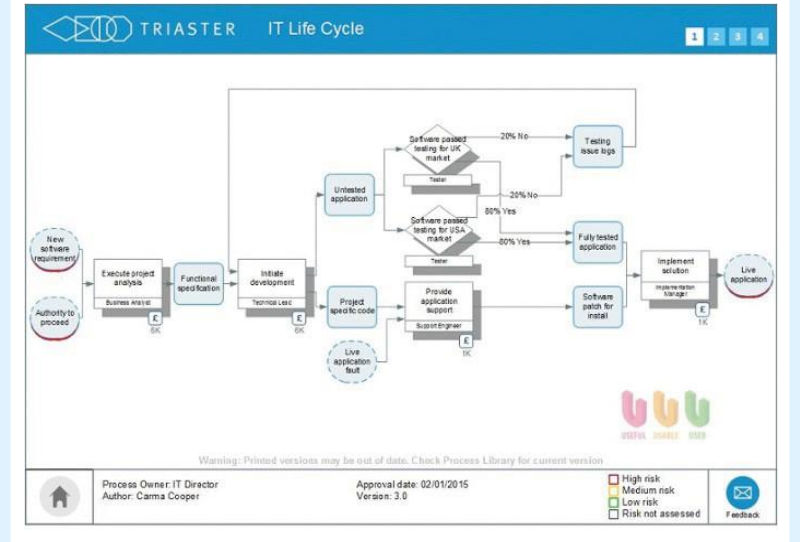
We shall start with a simple end-to-end process with no branches or loopbacks. An example can be found here in the Execute Project Analysis process.



Because each execution of the process must use every Activity, and does so only once, then the end-to-end process cost is simply the sum of the four Activity costs (in the interactive version control-click to see the cost of each Activity).

At the time of writing, that gives an end-to-end process cost of £72,850. In the interactive version, control-click on the text 'Execute Project Analysis' to see the Aggregate Cost of the whole process.

As a second example, please refer to the IT Life Cycle process shown below:



The end-to-end process branch contains 2 decision points, both of which are also loopbacks. So in this process we need to take into account the branch likelihood when calculating the cost because re-work will happen from time to time.

In the case of a loop back, the relationship between the probability of a branch being executed and the number of times the loop executes (N) is given by:

$N = p/(1-p)$

where p is the branch probability. So, in the IT Life Cycle, the loopback occurs 20% of the time, N is therefore 0.2/0.8 = 0.25, i.e. the loop occurs on average 1 in 4 instances of the process. If the probability were say 95%, then N is 0.95/0.05 = 19, i.e. the loop executes on average 19 times.

The cost of the end-to-end process therefore should contain an additional N * loop cost whenever there is a loopback.

In the example, the repeated step is Initiate Development which costs £121,700. A quarter of this is £30,425, but as both decisions loop to it the contribution to cost is taken from both loops and we therefore double the contribution to £60,850. The total cost of this process is therefore the total cost of the Activities in the process plus a further £60,850 - a grand total in this instance of £278,025.

Process Hierarchy and Process Seabed Costs

It will be understood that end-to-end is the sense of running from left to right from a set of Inputs to a set of Outputs. Any end-to-end process can therefore be modelled as a single Activity with the initial set of Inputs and final set of Outputs - even if the Activity itself is representing tens or even hundreds of more detailed Activities found in the end-to-end process.

This grouping is generally modelled across several vertical levels so that on any given level the Activities represent a sensible grouping of Activities on the level beneath - one can then 'drill-down' and 'drill-up' between higher level summaries and their lower level more detailed expansions.

The cost of an Activity that is itself a summary of Activities on more detailed levels is therefore non-atomic and is always derived and must be equal to the cost of the end-to-end process it summarises or drills-down to. Of course, any given level in a process hierarchy itself also can be considered as a set of end-to-end processes; so in the computation of costs at a higher level, one simply applies the rules outlined in the previous section regarding how to compute the end-to-end process costing.

Only enter cost information into the seabed layer of the process, i.e. on Activities that have no drill-down. For every map, store the Aggregate Cost in the Node of the Map - this can then be used automatically as the Activity cost on higher levels.

Automation and Data Managers

Most business process modelling tools will have the ability to automate all of these considerations to some degree or other. With the Triaster solution, to ensure complete customer control over costing and ease of use, we have produced Excel-based Data Manager files that provide automated computation of costs (end-to-end and hierarchical) and the ability to fine tune the calculations.

Now that your head is positively buckling under the weight of all that improvement knowledge, we will finish with an article that deals with how to build your own process improvement project plan using an example of techniques used by one of our own customers to achieve process excellence...

How to Build Your Own Process Improvement Project Plan - An Analysis

So, you want to improve your business processes but you're in need of a process improvement project plan? Having a plan is very important for understanding the tools you need, the steps to take and the changes to make. Luckily, we have laid these out for you to follow.

For your benefit, I have included a process improvement analysis from many customer surveys and industry best practices in order to provide you with the best way to build your own successful process improvement project.

What is BPM Most Often Used For?

Recently, we conducted a survey where we asked customers to tell us the number one reason they purchased a Business Process Management Software:

- 45% of customers purchased a BPM software in order to create a single process library that standardised processes across the company.
- 30% purchased BPM so they could easily capture their business processes or because they needed a tool that could identify those processes in the first place.
- 15% purchased the product in order to achieve organisation-wide buy-in from staff into the management system.
- 10% wanted a tool for creating process maps and sharing them with others in the company.

In order to build your own successful improvement project, you'll ideally want a management system that can do all of those things listed above. For more on the current trends in BPM click here:

Current trends in BPM
https://www.softwareadvice.com/resources/business-management-trends/

Laying the Foundation of Your Process Improvement Project Plan

Stakeholder Involvement and Support

Getting organisation-wide buy-in and input is the most important part of this whole process. Without this, any future improvement project will be incomplete and any process mapping ineffective.

When Lockheed Martin decided to move from a paper-based business management approach to a more structured Business Management System, they needed to get the rest of the team on-board and as it was a big cultural change for the company, they needed a process library that would be modern and easy to use. They also needed a campaign that would communicate the benefits of change to come later that would outweigh any change pains now.

Implement an Internal Management System

This needs to be capable of mapping, modelling and sharing processes throughout your entire organisation to create a standardised foundation for any future improvement projects.

To help you navigate the potentially dangerous waters of process improvement, we've included 5 steps that you really should adhere to in order to ensure a successful organisational improvement plan...

5 Steps You Should Build Any Improvement Project Plan Around

1. Map Your Processes

Once you have a system that is capable of capturing, sharing, using and improving your processes (a dedicated Business Process Management System for instance), you will need to map your processes.

You can create a process mapping team (See: http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/how-to-run-a-process-mapping-workshop), assign one person to run process mapping workshops (See: http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/capturing-a-business-process-tips-for-process-discovery-workshops) or conduct one-on-one interviews. May I suggest that you look at our extensive process mapping blogs and our videos (See: http://www.triaster.co.uk/triaster-video.php) before you attempt this method - as getting it wrong could cost you considerable time, resources and block employee engagement on future projects.

2. Understand Your AS-IS

An AS-IS process is a visual representation of a business process in its current state. AS-IS processes must be mapped, and the current state of the business understood, before changes and improvements can be made. Use a process mapping tool to capture your AS-IS processes so that you can identify...

3. Bottlenecks and Opportunities

A bottleneck is one process in a chain of processes that if limited in any way, will cause further limitations to subsequent processes in the chain. Bottlenecks can be either short-term or long-term and are most often seen in supply chain and manufacturing industries.

A short-term bottleneck is temporary and will usually not cause any significant problems. An example would be a skilled employee taking a few days off. Long-term bottlenecks occur more frequently and can slow down production or the execution of other processes further down the chain. An example of a long-term bottleneck would be a machine that is not working efficiently and is therefore causing long production queues.
However, it is not only bottlenecks that you should look for, but also opportunities to make processes more efficient - although you should always...

4. Start With the Big Issues and Work Your Way Down

If one of your children is ill, you're not going to take another one for a check-up first are you? In life, priorities are everything and your priority for any improvement initiative will be to diagnose the key problem points first and move on from there.

Once you've dealt with the most problematic processes, then you can start dealing with other improvement opportunities and if these are handled correctly, it will eventually lead to operational excellence.

5. Model the Potential Options For Improvement

This one is about analysing the risk of any potential change. If you are able to model any potential improvement, you can analyse the risk of a potential change before you implement that change. This way, you minimise the risk involved with any improvement project - to understand process modelling in more detail visit this article:

Visit our process modelling article
http://blog.triaster.co.uk/blog/business-process-modelling-cost-effort-time

University of Winchester's Process Improvement Project Plan Example

The University of Winchester's Process Improvement Team approach the task of process improvement as follows:

Always beginning with a clear objective

- The current process (AS-IS) is captured using the Triaster process mapping tool
- The mapped process is published to their Process Library where it is reviewed and approved
- Bottlenecks are highlighted
- Options for alternative processes are identified and analysed and the future (To-Be) process is modelled - this may incorporate, for example, the use of new technology or perhaps just a few small changes
- An action plan for implementation is formulated
- The project team presents the proposed process to management and colleagues
- The new process is agreed and implemented
- Short follow-up events are typically held at 15, 30, 60, 90 days and at one year to embed the new process as business as usual and review the return on investment.

If you would like to contact Triaster about any questions you have or for further information on, wewould love to hear from you. Send us an email to info@triaster.co.uk or call us on +44 (0) 207 770 8053.