UNIVERSITÄT LIECHTENSTEIN

This is the author's version of a work that was published in the following source:

Schmiedel, T., vom Brocke, J., & Recker, J. (2012). Is your organizational culture fit for business process management? BPTrends(May 2012), 1-5.

The final publication is available at

http://www.bptrends.com/bpt/wp-content/publicationfiles/05%2D01%2D2012%2DART%2DIs%20your%20organizational%20Culture%20fit%20for%20BPM%2Dvom%20Brocke%5Ffinal%2Epdf

www.uni.li

Is your Organizational Culture Fit for Business Process Management?

Theresa Schmiedel, Jan vom Brocke, Jan Recker

www.bpm-culture.org

All processes are modeled, all process metrics defined, all process support systems are set up; yet still, processes are not running smoothly and departmental silos are more present than ever. Both practitioners and academics tell the same story. A successful business process management (BPM) implementation goes beyond using the right methods and putting the right systems in place. In fact, an important success factor for BPM is establishing the right *organizational culture*, that is, a culture that supports the achievement and maintenance of efficient and effective business processes.

While research and practice used to focus on technological and methodological aspects of BPM, there is a growing awareness that BPM requires a more holistic understanding. In recent years, a broad range of studies have presented a comprehensive grasp of BPM, one of the most prominent examples being the BPM maturity model of Rosemann and de Bruin, which identifies – apart from methods and IT – strategic alignment, governance, people, and *culture* as core factors for BPM (Rosemann & de Bruin, 2005). Especially, culture is more and more recognized as a highly relevant factor in BPM.

Depending on the context of a specific BPM initiative, culture – the shared values of a group that become visible in actions and structures – can both be a source of failure and a reason for success of BPM. For example, cultural resistance to change influences the success of BPM initiatives negatively, while BPM can also lead to cultural change supporting the initiative. On the one hand, culture is recognized to influence BPM and on the other hand, BPM is recognized to influence culture.

This article provides insights about our research into the facets of BPM culture. We provide an overview of the role of culture in BPM and introduce the BPM-Culture-Model, which we developed to structure the different notions of culture in a BPM context (vom Brocke & Sinnl, 2011). Based on this model, we take a closer look at the cultural compatibility of an organization with a BPM approach, that is, we examine how we can determine the supportiveness of an organizational culture to a BPM approach. To that end, we introduce a tool that has been developed to individually examine the cultural fitness of organizations for business process management.

The BPM-Culture-Model

By means of the BPM-Culture-Model we intend to contribute to a better understanding of the notion of culture in BPM. The model is based on a comprehensive review of the literature on Business Process Management (vom Brocke & Sinnl, 2011). This review shows that (1) specific values are considered as being supportive for reaching BPM objectives, that (2) specific BPM initiatives, however, face different organizational values according to their context and that (3) BPM approaches suggest to develop those organizational values that are supportive of BPM in order to have BPM initiatives running smoothly. The BPM-Culture-Model therefore distinguishes between three major elements: (1) BPM culture, (2) cultural context and (3) cultural fit, which are illustrated in Figure 1.
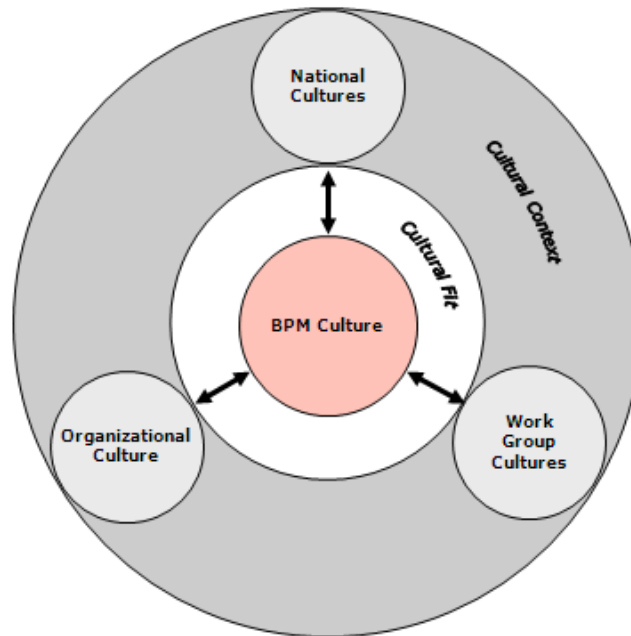
Figure 1, BPM-Culture-Model (cf. vom Brocke & Sinnl, 2011)

We give a brief description of each element:

- **BPM Culture** represents those values that come along with a BPM approach and which need to be adopted by an organization, such as customer orientation, continuous improvement, or responsibility (vom Brocke & Schmiedel, 2011). It refers to a culture that is supportive of achieving BPM objectives, i.e. efficient and effective business processes.
- **Cultural Context** refers to the complex cultural environment that a BPM initiative faces at its start. It consists of various intertwined group cultures, such as national, organizational and work group cultures.
- **Cultural Fit** refers to the basic congruence between BPM culture and cultural context that is required for a BPM approach to be successful.

BPM comes along with a couple of underlying values that are inherent in the management approach, such as customer orientation, continuous improvement, or responsibility (Zairi, 1997; Hammer, 2010; Kemsley, 2010; Jesus et al., 2010; vom Brocke & Schmiedel, 2011). The BPM literature suggests that if such values are core elements of an organizational culture, BPM implementations will run smoothly. If these values are not being lived in the context of a BPM initiative, the following situations can occur:

(1) Cultural resistances can arise, which shows how the organizational cultural context influences the BPM approach. These resistances can be accompanied by one of the following two alternatives during the implementation.
(2a) Growing understanding of the BPM approach in the organization can lead to cultural change in that the organization embraces BPM-supportive values, i.e. it broadens its canon of cultural values and develops a culture that is supportive of achieving BPM objectives. Alternatively,
(2b) The existing cultural context is inflexible and does not adapt to the cultural requirements of a BPM approach, i.e. the organizational culture does not embrace BPM-supportive values.

It is important to notice that culture as such and the cultural context in particular is a very multifaceted phenomenon. Though some organizations even have explicit corporate values and respective campaigns to develop their culture (vom Brocke et al., 2010), a homogeneous organizational culture does not exist. In fact, each employee comes with a personal cultural background formed by his or her very individual journey of life. In this context, work-group culture

and national culture are typically referred to. For example, resistance towards a BPM approach can differ from department to department due to diverse value orientations within these groups. The adoption of BPM-supportive values is not intended to erase all differences between the involved cultural groups, yet it is intended to provide a common canon of values on an organizational level which enables the successful realization of a BPM approach.

The three main elements of the BPM-Culture-Model represent core elements to explain the role of culture in BPM. In the following, we take a closer look at how an organization can evaluate the extent to which its organizational culture is already supportive of achieving BPM objectives, i.e. how fit the organization is for BPM.

Culture-Assessment-Tool

Based on the understanding of BPM culture described above, we developed an assessment tool to measure the cultural fitness of an organization for business process management. The tool was developed on the basis of several studies that we conducted over a period of two years, involving major thought leaders in the field of BPM from both academia and practice.

Figure 2, Screenshot of the Culture-Assessment-Tool, sample questions to be filled out

The tool is implemented as an online survey that allows representatives of organizations to do a self-assessment of their organizational culture (see Figure 2). It can be accessed via the following link: **www.bpm-culture.org**. As it is part of our ongoing studies on the BPM culture topic, the tool can be used free of charge during our research. Participants of the survey are provided with an immediate analysis of their personal results (see Figure 3). If you are interested in a more detailed analysis of your organizational culture, you have the option of requesting a detailed personalized report at the end of the survey.

At this stage, we would like to invite all readers that are involved in process work in their organizations to use the tool to examine the cultural fitness of their organization for business process management.
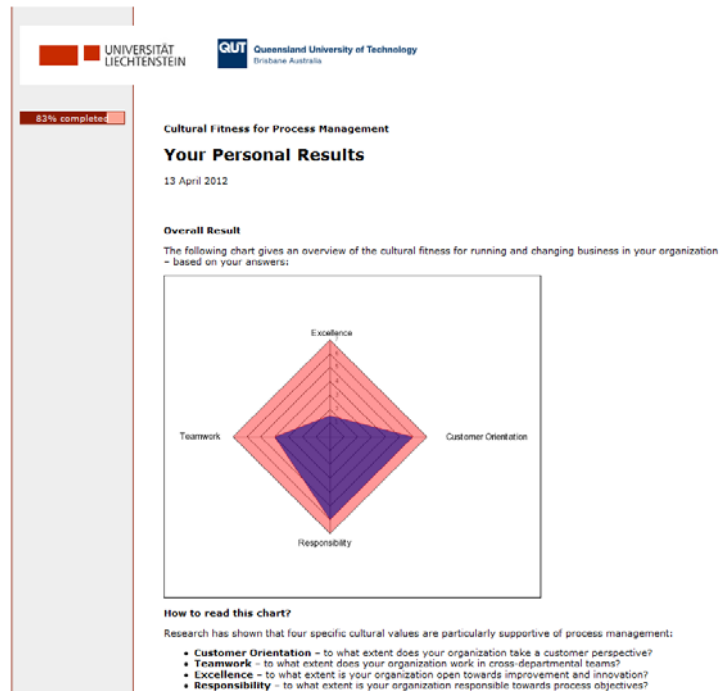
Figure 3, Screenshot of the Culture-Assessment-Tool, individual result report

References

Hammer, M. (2010). What is business process management? In *Handbook on business process management. Introduction, methods and information systems* (vom Brocke, J. and Rosemann, M., Eds.), Vol. 1, p. 3–16, Springer, Berlin.

Jesus, L., Macieira, A., Karrer, D., & Caulliraux, H. (2010). BPM center of excellence. The case of a Brazilian company. In *Handbook on business process management. Strategic alignment, governance, people and culture* (vom Brocke, J. and Rosemann, M., Eds.), Vol. 2, p. 283–303, Springer, Berlin.

Kemsley, S. (2010). Enterprise 2.0 meets business process management. In *Handbook on business process management. Introduction, methods and information systems* (vom Brocke, J. and Rosemann, M., Eds.), Vol. 1, p. 567–576, Springer, Berlin.

Rosemann, M., & de Bruin, T. (2005). Towards a business process management maturity model. In *ECIS 2005 Proceedings. 13th European Conference on Information Systems, Regensburg, Germany*.

vom Brocke, J., Petry, M., Sinnl, T., Kristensen, B., & Sonnenberg, C. (2010). Global processes and data. The culture journey at Hilti corporation. In *Handbook on business process management. Strategic alignment, governance, people and culture* (vom Brocke, J. and Rosemann, M., Eds.), Vol. 2, p. 537–556, Springer, Berlin.

vom Brocke, J., & Schmiedel, T. (2011). Towards a conceptualisation of BPM culture: Results from a literature review. In *PACIS 2011 Proceedings. 15th Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems, Brisbane, Australia*.

vom Brocke, J., & Sinnl, T. (2011). Culture in business process management: A literature review. *Business Process Management Journal, 17(2)*, 357-377.

Zairi, M. (1997). Business process management. A boundaryless approach to modern competitiveness. *Business Process Management Journal, 3(1)*, 64–80.

www.bptrends.com   4

Authors

Theresa Schmiedel is Research Assistant at the Hilti Chair of Business Process Management at the University of Liechtenstein. She holds a Diploma in economics from the University of Hohenheim, Stuttgart, Germany, and conducted her studies focused on sociology partially at York University, Toronto, Canada. She worked as a Research Assistant at the Department for Sociology and Empirical Social Research, University of Hohenheim, and at the Centre for Cultural and General Studies, Universität Karlsruhe, Germany. Her research focuses on the interconnection of culture and business process management. Her work has been published in the Business Process Management Journal, respective books and academic conferences. You can contact her at theresa.schmiedel@uni.li.

Jan vom Brocke is the Hilti Chair of Business Process Management at the University of Liechtenstein, Director of the Institute of Information Systems and President of the Liechtenstein Chapter of the AIS. Jan has more than ten years of experience in BPM projects and has published more than 170 refereed papers in the proceedings of internationally perceived conferences and established IS journals, including the Business Process Management Journal (BPMJ) and MIS Quarterly (MISQ). He is author and co-editor of 16 books, including Springer's International Handbook on Business Process Management and the recently published Springer book Green BPM - Towards the Sustainable Enterprise. He is an invited speaker and trusted advisor on BPM around the globe. His research and publications can be accessed at http://www.uni.li/bpm. You can contact Jan via mail (jan.vom.brocke@uni.li) or LinkedIn or subscribe to his tweets (www.twitter.com/janvombrocke).

Jan Recker is Associate Professor for Information Systems at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia. Jan's research interests focus on the use of process design in organizational practice, the quality of process designs, and the development of innovative and sustainable process (re-) designs. He is globally recognized for his research on the industry adoption of the BPMN process design standard. Jan has authored and edited several books, including one on BPMN and one on Green BPM, co-authored over 100 academic papers in journals and conferences and presented his research all over the globe. He holds a PhD in Information Systems from Queensland University of Technology and a MS in Information Systems from the University of Muenster, Germany. His research and publications can be accessed at http://www.janrecker.com/. The best way to contact Jan is via email (j.recker@qut.edu.au). You can subscribe to his tweets at http://www.twitter.com/janrecker.

BPTrends Linkedin Discussion Group

We created a BPTrends Discussion Group on Linkedin to allow our members, readers and friends to freely exchange ideas on a wide variety of BPM related topics. We encourage you to initiate a new discussion on this publication, or on other BPM related topics of interest to you, or to contribute to existing discussions. Go to Linkedin and join the **BPTrends Discussion Group.**