There are many reasons an organization might choose to adopt a standardized modeling approach such as BPMN.

It might be as part of a wider Business Process Management initiative, or perhaps it is as part of an enterprisewide process improvement initiative. It might simply be to ensure that different teams across the organization have a common ‘language’ that they can use to talk to each other about processes. Whatever the reason, it’s crucial to put careful thought into how adoption of the approach is driven. Whilst there may be many supportive stakeholders, there may well be some who are skeptical, as well as some who will actively block the adoption of the approach. Every context will be different, but there are some common considerations that we should keep in mind. The following tips may help!

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HOW TO DRIVE THE **ADOPTION OF BPMN**

Be Clear on the “why”

When aiming for adoption of any new approach, it’s important that we are crystal clear on why it is necessary and beneficial.

Adoption of BPMN is likely to be part of a wider initiative with its own benefits - and it’s important that these benefits are clearly communicated to those who are involved. It’s also important to show what’s in it for them. An operational team manager that currently juggles a range of static process models in different notations might start to see the benefit when they realize the effort they will save maintaining those process artefacts, for example.

Provide Support & Training

BPMN provides us with a comprehensive notation, allowing us to model processes in rich detail. In order to allow this richness, BPMN uses a wide range of symbols, conventions and nuances that aren’t completely intuitive to those that are unfamiliar with it. If a stakeholder is used to reading informal process models that consist of ‘boxes, lines and arrows’, it will be somewhat of a departure to see a fully-fledged BPMN model!

It’s important to provide support and training so that people have the information and knowledge they need to read and use the models. For those undertaking the modeling itself, more detailed training and support will be required. Luckily, there are many options - from classroom based training right through to practical self-paced e-learning options.

Tailor to the Audience

Modeling approaches such as BPMN allow us to create multiple ‘views’ on the same process. This allows us to ‘zoom out’ and provide a high level view, or ‘zoom in’ and show a detailed (and potentially executable) view.

Clearly these different views have different audiences - an executive stakeholder is much more likely to be interested in a ‘zoomed out’ end-to-end view; whereas someone involved with the work is likely to be interested in a more detailed ‘zoomed in’ view. Keeping our audience in mind, and showing them the types of diagram that will engage them, is a crucial way of getting - and keeping - people engaged.

Enable with Technology

Although it is not strictly a pre-requisite, many organizations will have chosen a particular tool in which to model and manage their BPMN models. It is important that those modeling, using and referring to the models have access to the tool.

You may find that your user-base is wider than you first thought - and it’s important that those with a need to access the models can get to them. This avoids situations occurring where there are multiple ‘versions’ of the process developed in different notations/ tools, simply because there weren’t enough licences to go around!

In summary

there can be many benefits to adopting and using a rich modeling approach such as BPMN, but it’s likely to need some careful planning in order to gain wide adoption within an organization.

Being open about the reasons, providing support in terms of training and technology, and ensuring we tailor diagrams to our audience will help us to achieve this. Once adoption is achieved, we’ll be able to assess and show the benefits - which will help to reinforce this too!

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