

Working with Business Processes

Discovery, Assessment, Mapping, Analysis & Design

Alec Sharp

8-9 October 2012,
London

Fee £1095 + VAT

Group Booking & Multiple
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Overview

Business processes matter, because business processes are how value is delivered. Understanding how to work with business processes is now a core skill for business analysts, process and application architects, functional area managers, and even corporate executives. But too often, material on the topic either floats around in generalities and familiar case studies, or descends rapidly into technical details and incomprehensible models. This workshop is different – in a practical way, it shows how to discover and scope a business process, clarify its context, model its workflow with progressive detail, assess it, and transition to the design of a new process by determining, verifying, and documenting its essential characteristics. Everything is backed up with real-world examples, and clear, repeatable guidelines.

Learning Objectives

- Identify a “true” business process, and specify its boundaries and goals
- Describe the key factors that differentiate process and functional approaches
- Employ a variety of techniques to keep stakeholders involved, and promote “process orientation”
- Establish the scope, issues, and goals for a business process
- Model process workflow at progressive levels of detail using Swimlane Diagrams
- Stop process modeling at the appropriate point, and move on to other techniques or phases
- Conduct a structured assessment of a business process
- Transition to the design of a new process while avoiding common (and serious!) pitfalls

Seminar & Workshop Outline

Business processes – what they are, and how to discover them

- Variations on what is meant by “process”
- Guidelines for well-formed processes and business processes
- Impacts of incorrectly identifying business processes
- Example – using this method in identifying “true” business processes
- Summary – six rules for business processes

Working with business processes – frameworks, difficulties, and methods

- Two perspectives: functional (skills and resources) and business process (results and value)
- Reconciling the two – philosophies and methods for helping functions and processes get along
- Impact of business processes for application and process architects
- Introduction to process modeling techniques – decomposition, flow, and other techniques
- Progressive detail – working through the scope, concept, and specification levels
- Understanding the six enablers of a business process – a critical framework
- Methodology overview – a three-phase approach to completing a process-oriented project

Discovering your enterprise’s business processes

- Depicting “process areas” with an “overall process map” or “process landscape”
- Using “off the shelf” frameworks
- Contrasting top-down and bottom-up methods for process discovery
- When to use one-on-one interviews, when to use group sessions
- Beginning your analysis by clarifying terminology – a structured approach
- Process patterns and inter-process relationships that will emerge
- Case study: hands-on practice with process discovery, team work and group debrief

Framing the process – determining scope, issues, and goals

- Separating the “what” from the “who and how”
- Defining “what” (the essence) and “who and how” (the current implementation)
- Case study – defining process scope
- Initial assessment of the “as-is” process and goal-setting for the “to-be” process
- Clarifying strategic direction – the process “differentiator”
- Issues and opportunities in applying the differentiator framework to a business process
- Case study – process assessment, goals, and differentiator

Workflow models – the essentials

- The philosophy behind workflow models (“swimlane diagrams”) – why we really do it
- The three most common errors in workflow modeling, and three keys to success
- Real examples of effective and ineffective process flow models

Audience

Business Analysts who are responsible for requirements specification or are involved in business process re-design or improvement

Business and Process Architects responsible for establishing frameworks and direction for enterprise processes

Business Managers and Content Experts who will participate in process re-design or process-oriented application development efforts.

- Getting started – three questions to drive your initial swimlane diagram
- The three questions in practice – a real example
- Knowing when to stop – controlling the detail of your models
- Real example – what happens when detail gets out of control
- Three levels of workflow model (“handoff,” “service,” and “task”) with examples and guidelines
- A warning sign that you’ve crossed the line and aren’t modeling workflow anymore
- Making the transition to use cases, procedures, work instructions, and other job aids

Workflow models – the finer points

- Guidelines for actors – who or what can or cannot be an actor on a swimlane diagram
- Special cases – depicting systems or machines, holding areas, and other processes as actors
- Guidelines for steps – naming, multi-actor, and sequential, parallel, and collaborative steps
- A translation guide – correcting unclear or misleading step names
- Guidelines for flow – what that arrow really means, common errors, parallel vs. exclusive flows
- Ensuring clarity with parallel vs. collaborative steps
- Additional symbols, keeping it simple, transition to BPMN

Techniques for facilitating an as-is workflow modeling session

- A reminder – why we really model the as-is process (to enable a holistic, fact-based assessment)
- The basics – participants, resources, and tools
- Facilitated session ground rules – specifics for “process” sessions
- How to actually finish a flow diagram – one process, case, scenario, and path at a time
- Recap – the three questions to drive your initial “handoff level” workflow model
- Case study – hands on practice with developing the initial workflow model
- Five more questions to validate and extend the initial model
- Case study – hands on practice with refining the initial workflow model

Transition to process design

- Three common redesign problems, three techniques to avoid them
- (1) Enabler-based assessment of the as-is process – a proven framework and its role in redesign
- A decision point – five options for going forward
- (2) Challenging process assumptions – a practical technique for generating creative improvements
- (3) Uncovering unanticipated consequences – an enabler-based assessment of characteristics
- Finalising to-be process characteristics in a “process requirements document”
- Case study – assessing the as-is and characterizing the to-be process
- The to-be workflow – from characteristics to workflow model
- A reminder – factors to make the new process sustainable

Prerequisites:

There are no prerequisites in this course. However, Business Analysts who expect to do extensive process analysis will find that some understanding of information systems concepts may be helpful in establishing context.

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