

# Processes, process management - Why?

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*Problems can never  
be solved with the  
same mindset that  
created them.*

*(Albert Einstein)*

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Each of us is basically a "process manager", but we don't always realise this, as we are far too seldom aware that our entire lives are made up of processes.

I would like to illustrate this, perhaps somewhat provocative, thesis using an everyday example, admittedly far removed from the general definition of a process:

"A process extending over a certain period of time in which something is created or takes place." (Example of a chemical process)

or the definition of process management according to ReFa:

"Process management comprises the planning, implementation, controlling and optimisation of interrelated tasks, ...".

In the following, I will take up the theoretical cycle of BPM (Business Process Management) in order to reflect on the simple everyday example.

You will realise that the key elements that play a role in process management are also effective in everyday situations.

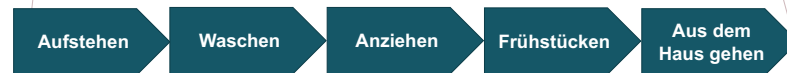
Why am I doing this? My aim is to make a plea for our everyday understanding based on theory.

The background to this is the quote used from Albert Einstein, freely interpreted to allow paths that deviate from the known.

## The example

Using the example of a daily recurring process that is as banal as it is complex, I will illustrate the basic ideas of BPM.

## BEISPIELPROZESS MORGENAKTIVITÄT



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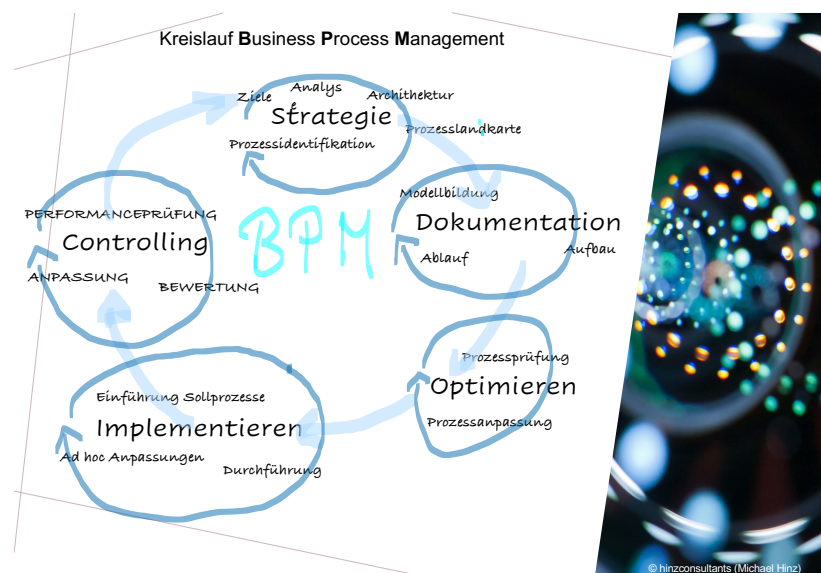
You're probably thinking, what does this have to do with processes, process chains and process management in a business environment?

Probably much more than you currently expect.

The chain of activities fulfils the process definition (process, time, something is created and there is a sequence).

It also meets the ReFa definition of process management (planned process, implementation, optimisation potential and controlling (audit aspects)) in a more abstract way.

I have chosen this short example to illustrate the basic building blocks of BPM (Business Process Management) and to mirror the process chain we are all familiar with.



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## The strategy

BPM traditionally begins with an analysis of the (corporate) strategy and its objectives.

Based on this, a process architecture is derived and documented (process map).

On this basis, the processes are identified and outlined, including sub-processes if necessary.

The process objectives are also defined.

Inherent in the everyday example is also a strategy, but usually an intuitively based strategy of having achieved a goal (leaving the house) at a certain point in time.

## The documentation

For successful operational process visualisation, it is essential to document this, i.e. to build models and create an image of the processes. A distinction is made here between the actual process mapping (if existing processes are to be adapted) and the target process mapping (desired process).

This is where our example falls short; there will probably never be any documentation of our everyday process in a written form suitable for third parties. From an individual perspective, however, there is certainly a mental documentation of the actual world and the target world.

As an analogy to everyday operations, this mental documentation can often be found in small and medium-sized companies. Here, processes are often only rudimentarily documented. This makes it difficult to carry out the necessary analyses, particularly in the context of future process adjustments.

The demands placed on process management and the employees responsible for it therefore require monitoring and recording of current processes through observation.

## The optimisation

The aim of the processes is to ensure that they run error-free, quickly and cost-effectively. This is achieved through a strong focus on the corporate strategy, the target/actual comparison and the formulation of optimisation measures. In business terms, we often use terms such as GAP analysis, feasibility study, LEAN concepts and others.

Even in our simple example, optimisation usually takes place. The aim is often to delay "getting up" and to optimise the time of leaving the house.

Companies use the methodologies to obtain a toolbox for the respective task, with which the set goals are to be achieved in a manner appropriate to the task. However, despite all the enthusiasm for methods, it is always important to critically reflect on whether the tool used serves as an alibi for answering unpleasant questions or actually promotes optimisation.

The terms "evolution" and "revolution" are often used in this context. Evolution involves changing existing processes without calling them into question. Revolution represents the complete departure from the existing process in favour of a new one.

## The implementation

From a BPM perspective, implementation means the use of "change" processes or the realisation of target processes in the operational environment.

All affected employees are involved in order to increase acceptance of the adapted or new processes. The focus here is on the daily implementation of the processes. Small corrections are intuitively adapted and documented in the process.

Frequently used terms in this context are also process implementation, change management and process marketing as a method of increasing acceptance.

Our example is similar.

Here, implementation usually takes place through trial and error. Intuitive customisation or the reduction of intermediate activities (e.g. breakfast) takes place immediately. A certain analogy to the implementation of operational processes.

## Controlling

From a BPM perspective, controlling is the evaluation and monitoring of the performance of business processes. This is done through regular data collection and measurement. The

aggregated and processed data is used to check whether the ideas of the strategy and its target values are being fulfilled. The findings are fed back into the BPM cycle so that new strategies can be developed. The continuous improvement process or KAIZEN approach is often used as an aid.

In our everyday example, we also learn less scientifically through measurement and improvement. If we notice that the strategy repeatedly fails to achieve the desired success (leaving the house on time), we intuitively adjust the parameters of the process chain here too.

## Why this form of presentation?

Many important framework conditions required for the respective analysis scenarios are described in the literature.

In addition to the tools that the people involved in designing, optimising and changing processes need to master, process management always includes an intuitive component.

This intuitive component, which experienced process managers utilise, is based on pragmatism, the ability to abstract and the ability to structure clearly without emotion, but without forgetting the social impact of action. As a rule, operational processes and their adjustments always have an impact on people and their behaviour.

In our everyday process environment, we use this intuitive component, usually with the term "gut feeling".

Processes in day-to-day operations are characterised by a wealth of components that have to meet scientific, sociological, ethical and economic standards.

Process management combines the terms "process (organisational and operational structure)" and "management (leadership)". This combines an analytical, technical perspective with an appropriate human, social perspective, which should make it possible to achieve results within a given time frame.

Any one-sided interpretation of the task of "process management" therefore leads to resistance in day-to-day operations. For this reason, the use of agile processes in the execution of tasks is an essential building block for the success of measures.

Successful process managers are aware of this and know about the influence of processes on organisational development.

Process management and focussing on analytical, technical derivatives (process explanation based on software models) is currently very popular as a means of overcoming crises, particularly as a result of the experiences of recent months. It is to be hoped that the resulting adjustments will always be seen in the context of agile processes (self-learning observation models) and the influence of process changes on organisational development.

Organisational development, simplified as the sum of structure, process and behaviour, also includes the individual.

The human factor is one of, if not the most important element for the success of process changes.

Anyone who deals with processes and their management (process management) should, in the context of dealing with the multitude of underlying requirements, questions and options, always retain the openness to outline new paths and to take them with the inclusion of the most important success factor "people".

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