PRACE NAUKOWE

Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu

RESEARCH PAPERS

of Wrocław University of Economics

Nr 347

Ekonomia

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ISSN 1899-3192 ISBN 978-83-7695-418-9

Wersja pierwotna: publikacja drukowana

Druk i oprawa: EXPOL, P. Rybiński, J. Dąbek, sp.j. ul. Brzeska 4, 87-800 Włocławek

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Ekonomia ISSN 1899-3192

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THE ROLE OF THE PROCESS OWNER IN THE SUCCESSIVE STAGES OF THE PROCESS MANAGEMENT

Summary: The aim of this paper is to identify consecutive stages of process management and to assign desired (from the point of view of effectiveness of realized processes) behaviours of leaders to them. In the following article on the basis of available literature and empirical studies a series of activities from the area of process management was identified. Next, there was an attempt to indicate characteristics of the leader activities, which could significantly influence the success of individual stages of management processes.

Keywords: processes, process organizations, process management procedure, stages of process management, rules of process management, process owner, characteristics of a leader, leader activity.

DOI: 10.15611/pn.2014.347.04

1. Introduction

Orientation on process management influences the successful operations of an organization. Management philosophies reflected in popular nowadays ideas of Lean Management or Six Sigma highlight the meaning of processes in organizations. In the area of the above mentioned concepts there is a wide spectrum of procedures and tools allowing to manage the processes effectively. Here we may include improvement methodologies like DMAIC (acronym for English words: define, measure, analyze, improve, control), or DMADV (acronym for English words: define, measure, analyze, design, verify). In the area of these methodologies there is a wide range of tools available for process owners. It is worth noticing that regardless of the advancement of technological and organizational conditions, the management itself and the leader are the decisive factors in terms of quality of processes realized within the organization. In literature it is also stressed that obviously people responsible for process management should be acquainted with static process analysis tools,

nevertheless the most appreciated are skills connected with shift management and practicing a supporting leadership style [Eckes 2011, p.114].

2. The stages of process management

A process approach is a rapidly developing field, because the solutions used in this idea are simple and based on natural logic, and besides they are highly efficient in terms of improvements in management systems. It is a universal idea, functioning successfully in company operations, because it integrates all key mechanisms in a clear way. Process management itself in an organization is based on the optimization of operational chain, hereinafter referred to as input power, thanks to which there is a transformation effort from the obtained initial value. Next process management is enriched by a value being an effect of process efficiency realized as a part of company operations [Grajewski 2007, p. 107]. Therefore, it may be stated that process management includes: describing and defining of processes, operational process management (constant improvements), implementation of radical changes in processes, designing of new processes and specifying of process models for software designing. Process management in an enterprise should be realized in accordance with the following stages [Grudowski 2004, p. 32]:

- process planning,
- process implementation,
- · process supervision,
- process improvements.

The above mentioned stages of process management reflect the methodology of constant improvements of PDCA (acronym for English words: plan, do, check, act) by William Edwards Deming, for which, being a starting point for a philosophy of effective process management, it does not matter whether it is in accordance with Lean idea or Six Sigma idea. Although the authors of both ideas originating from the same source, being based on the same assumption and directed to achieve similar effects seem to live next to each other, they do not notice their achievements.

Planning a consecutive processes is on two levels: strategic and operational (oriented on the realization of constantly changing goals). It also occurs in accordance with the consecutive phases [Lieker, Meier 2011, p. 126]:

- Building awareness among company management and employees, concerning processes and their participation in process management system;
- Identification of processes and their division;
- Describing relations between processes and their prioritizing;
- Discussing processes on an appropriate executive level, setting goals and processes measures;
- Choosing the method of process supervision.

An activity which starts the implementation of a new management conception is the analysis of a currently used management concept, conducted by a properly qualified person, usually an external consultant. After the analysis, a training for a management staff and other employees should be organized as soon as possible in order to get them acquainted with particular examples and basic terms and definitions, explain the goals and the essence of process approach in a context of complexity and multidimensionality of a model and show the importance and functions of the processes according to the categories of the main processes, being the basis of the enterprises operations. Process identification accelerates the process of understanding the rules of a new system by the employees. In a phase called: "describing relations between processes and their prioritizing" there is an identification of processes according to certain criteria. A list of the main processes, organized according to the given categories, and graphical presentation of relations between identified processes is a kind of a map of enterprise functioning. An example of such a map is presented in Figure 1.

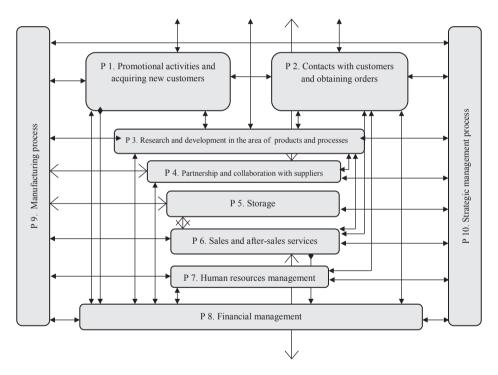


Figure 1. A map of connections between the main processes

Source: own elaboration.

A map in such a form is a very comfortable solution allowing to develop, expand and link the processes, until they reach an executive level. On the basis of the presented map it may be concluded that single arrows show the relations between the overriding processes, and block arrows (the names of processes are placed in them) present the indirect relations between the system and auxiliary processes. A frame

covering operational and auxiliary processes shows a strong relation between them, and also the meaning of auxiliary processes for functioning of the whole system.

When the main processes are identified, further processes creating them should be described (identification of sub-processes). It is a very important step, because as a result a more precise, functional map of a system may be created from a general view formed by the main processes. A useful process hierarchy which consists of at least two or more levels depending on the size of an enterprise and their graphical representation is called a diagram.

The next element of the process management is the preparation of the description of the processes. Process owners are responsible for it, but other employees should have the possibility to submit their amendments, because it upgrades the level of the identification with the process. In practice the most common forms of such descriptions are unified block diagrams made with the use of a computer. The diagram presents a sequence of activities and decisions and a list of people responsible for their realization. Other processes, such as external audits, overseeing the documentation and records are described in a traditional way. An important element of process management is to identify if, and to what extent, the goal is achieved. That is why the goals should be measurable, e.g. increasing the monthly contracts by 5%.

The implementation of the processes is in fact the practical use of the presumptions accepted by the company at the level of planning. The aim of this stage is to verify the effectiveness of the solutions used in a process. The implementation should start in a natural way (it does not start at the same moment), common for all processes. A necessary condition for a successful implementation process is good substantive preparation of the employees and process owners.

At the stage of supervision, initially the identification and prioritizing of the processes take place. The aim of this stage is to organize the competencies in a company and its result is to create a group of people responsible for given processes. They are called the processes' owners and they are responsible for the process effects. Their role is to provide favorable conditions and environment for the process realization. Processes' owners also have the power to coordinate works on the process.

Supervision is a constant process occurring at each level of the process realization. In the phase of planning, it is documentation (especially its procedures) which is overseen. It is assumed that in order to supervise and monitor the processes effectively, there should be available a reliable source of information about the processes. The essence of process supervision is to monitor and influence a given object in a way that it will fully meet the requirements.

Constant process improvement is a kind of an activity based on striving to meet the demands more precisely. It also focuses on the realization of set goals, which change dynamically together with the development of market, technology, customers' awareness, law regulations, etc. This element of process approach includes analysis and constant improvements in a given processes with the use of a system of indicators presenting the realization of goals in individual processes. All processes in a company should be improved, especially the basic processes, thanks to which new products and services are offered. Nevertheless, auxiliary processes, necessary for the proper realization of the basic processes, are also very important. They may be improved with the use of such elements as: audits, research results, data from monitoring the measurements, management review, etc. Process improvement itself may be realized with the use of so called internal benchmarking [Liker, Convins 2012, p. 224]. The most significant role in the process improvement is played by the process owners, because they know the aims that should be reached, have knowledge how the aims are realized, are aware how the process functions are fulfilled and know the environment in which the organization operates.

The next management area is research and the analysis of the identified processes. The procedures in case of process capability analysis follow the schema: prepare a zero batch in a number of N, make measurements of a given feature of a process, check if random variables of a given feature are normally distributed, calculate the parameters of the distribution (average and standard deviation), calculate the process capability index, determine the process capability (incapability) and (optionally) perform some corrective actions [Pająk 2006, p. 96]. The processes may be analyzed in an arbitrary manner. Traditionally, process analysis is based on accepting the established input data of a process and it requires looking inside the process in order to asses and check what happens in it and what should be improved [Durlik 1998, p. 244].

In practice, apart from traditional methods of analysis and systematic, almost constant improvements in the processes (in accordance with Kaizen philosophy), more radical solutions may be used, which are mainly oriented on improvements in already existing processes, based on so called reengineering, reorganization, or transformation. An important element of the process approach is a properly organized process structure showing how the processes have been identified in an enterprise and what kind of relations may be noticed between them. Process structure is dependent on the organization, management style, a range of manufactured products, technological and logistical solutions, the use of resources, etc. [Twaróg 2002, p. 17].

It may be stated that the areas of process approach include:

- Properly identified processes, which are assigned given tasks to, guaranteeing
 achieving the strategic and operational goals of an enterprise. Each process has
 a certain goal, because without knowing goals it is not possible to coordinate
 projects with the identification of priority activities and it is difficult to predict
 the size of resources trying to achieve the planned results.
- Maps and diagrams with the use of which the identified processes are presented, showing the areas of process functioning tasks, resources, input and output information.
- A system of measures and indicators used in order to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of a system of processes [Skrzypek, Hofman 2007, p. 4].

A process owner – a person responsible for proper management and process results. Such people should: hold a managerial position, play a key role in the whole process, manage the largest possible number of people involved in a process realization, understand the logic and current process functioning. The person should be able to assess the influence of the environment on the process and the process on the environment as well as to be able to look holistically on the process.

The essence of each process is the creation of addend value of a product, or service, which is a function of the price and the needs (customers' demands in a given moment). Process approach efficiency depends on the ability to set goals, use appropriate means and measure set objectives. Process managers have to be aware that regardless of the way the process is organized, people are responsible for its functioning. The role of management staff members should be focused on processes' improvements, not on constant reminding the employees that they should work harder and more efficiently. It is proven that the main reasons why it is not possible to meet the customer's expectations are connected with problems with processes and organizational systems, not employees.

3. Roles and responsibilities of the process owner

In the enterprises in which an effort of process management was made, each identified process has its owner, who (as mentioned previously) is responsible for effective and efficient process management, both in planning stage as well as implementation phase. Management, according to the process approach, is not limited to maintaining status quo, but it also requires constant improvements in the identified processes. This approach remains in accordance with the statement by Henry Ford from 1922, who encouraged his workers to act more courageously: *An absence of fear of the future and of veneration for the past. One who fears the future, who fears failure, limits his activities. Failure is only the opportunity more intelligently to begin again* [Ford 2006, p. 308]. In literature, next to the term "process owner" the term "process team leader" can be found. It is also common to list the characteristics the person mentioned above should have and duties the person is expected to deal with. The most important of them are:

- 1. Absolute commitment to the works connected with business process management.
 - 2. Ability to define the limits of the process, its suppliers and customers.
 - 3. Identification of sub-processes in the main processes (Figure 2)
 - 4. Setting the goals of the processes, sub- processes and measures.
- 5. Defining the anticipated process development, identification of necessary human resources, materials and information.
- 6. Systematic knowledge which provides necessary resources and substantive help to the employees realizing the process.
- 7. Ability to identify all documents necessary in the processes realization, keeping the records and monitoring if they meet all the formal requirements.

- 8. Staying in constant contact with the enterprise management and other process owners.
 - 9. Continual process improvements.
- 10. Motivating and supporting the people responsible for process realization (organizing trainings).
- 11. Encouraging personal involvement in diagnosing the cause of resistance and inspiring others, in order to make them actively involved in the process management, in accordance with the self- management concept.

The above mentioned characteristics and abilities are basic features that the process owner should have and they are necessary in the consecutive stages of the process management. It is worth mentioning that the organizational structure of a process-oriented enterprise consists of: the members of top management, the processes owners and the members of the process teams. Taking into account the diversity in this area, a diversity in the perception of presented skills and abilities should be also paid attention to. Different skills are important for the members of top management and different for the members of process teams. Thus, it seems reasonable to say that all features and abilities of the process owners listed above are important, but the assessment of their importance depends on the management stage as well as the position the assessing person occupies in the organizational structure.

4. Evaluation of the importance of the duties of a process owner in the subsequent management stages, according to the members of various working groups

In order to evaluate the importance of the duties of a process owner in the subsequent management stages, in February 2014 an empirical study was conducted in two large enterprises from Częstochowa, operating in automotive industry. Ordinary members of process teams, processes owners and members of the top management took part in the study (Table 1). The research was conducted with the use of a survey technique (a questionnaire study) and next the information was completed with the use of the technique of a free focused interview with people occupying selected positions.

Table 1. Structure of a research sample

Position held	Enterprise					
Position neid	A	В				
Members of the top management	1	3				
Processes owners	12	21				
Ordinary members of the process teams	98	129				
TOTAL	111	153				

Source: own elaboration.

In total 264 people took part in the study, including 4 managers, 33 process owners and 227 members of the process teams. The total number of questionnaires correctly filled in was 264, while there were 350 questionnaires distributed.

The respondents were asked to mark subjectively three skills, which in their opinion were the most important in terms of effective process management.

The survey results are presented and analyzed with the use of the division according to the position held. In Table 2 there are used letters which stand for the positions held by the respondents: M – manager, PO – process owner, PTM – process team member.

While analyzing the results of the study, many conclusions concerning process management in the examined enterprises may be drawn. Taking into account the first management area, i.e. "planning", significant discrepancies may be noticed between the evaluations made by the members of the groups of top management, process owners and members of the process teams. For the representatives of the first two groups at the level of planning the most important characteristics are: ability to define the limits of the process, its suppliers and customers and setting the goals of the processes, sub-processes and measures. Managers chose additionally staying in constant contact with the enterprise management and other process owners whereas, ordinary employees (87% of answers) chose the answer: defining of the anticipated process development, identification of necessary human resources, materials and information, which may suggest that they require to be constantly informed about the scope of the tasks planned. What is more 45% of the respondents from the latter group expressed their need for the process owner's absolute commitment to the works connected with business process management. In the area of process implementation the respondents' answers connected with the importance of given skills and abilities of the process owners were more differential. At the level of implementation all managers fund absolute commitment to the works connected with the most important feature of business process management. Moreover staying in constant contact with the enterprise management and other process owners and social competencies such as motivating and supporting the people responsible for process realization or ability to diagnose the reasons of resistance became also very important, but to a lesser extent.

At the level of implementation the answers given by the process owners are very different, and it is hard to provide one, the most common answer. Process owners admitted that at the level of implementation they focused on systematic providing necessary resources, knowledge and substantive help to the employees realizing the process (66%), setting the goals of the processes, sub-processes and measures (63%), ability to identify all documents necessary in the processes realization, keeping the records and monitoring if they meet all the formal requirements (57%) and defining the anticipated process development, identification of necessary human resources, materials and information (54%). For the ordinary employees at this management stage the most important were: systematic providing the employees

Table 2. Importance of the responsibilities of the process owner in subsequent process management stages

	Stages of process management											
Tasks of the process owner	Planning			Implementation			Supervision			Improvements		
	M	РО	PTM	M	РО	PTM	M	PO	PTM	M	PO	PTM
Absolute commitment to the works connected with business process management	2		102	4		63	4	14		3	33	127
Ability to define the limits of the process, its suppliers and customers	4	30			7				43			
Identification of sub-processes in the main processes					12				11			
Setting the goals of the processes, sub- processes and measures	1	33			21			21	177			
Defining of the anticipated process development, identification of necessary human resources, materials and information			198		18	132			8	2		
Systematic providing necessary resources, knowledge and substantive help to the employees realizing the process					22	182			60			103
Ability to identify all documents necessary in the processes realization, keeping the records and monitoring if they meet all the formal requirements		18	59		19		4	9	28		6	
Staying in constant contact with the enterprise management and other process owners	2			2			3	16	4	4	3	
Continual process improvements										4	32	215
Motivating and supporting people responsible for process realization			72			166		22	169			
Encouraging personal involvement in diagnosing the cause of resistance and inspiring others, in order to make them actively involved in the process management		12	42	4		137	1	11	131		20	182

Source: own elaboration.

realizing the process (80%) with the necessary resources, knowledge and substantive help, motivating and supporting the people responsible for process realization (73%), encouraging personal involvement in diagnosing the cause of resistance and inspiring others, in order to make them actively involved in the process management (60%) and defining the anticipated process development, identification of necessary

human resources, materials and information (58%). It is worth noticing that in case of the answers provided by the serial employees the opinions were quite homogenous. In the area of "supervision" for the managers the most important were: absolute commitment to the works connected with business process management (100%), ability to identify all documents necessary in the processes realization, keeping the records and monitoring if they meet all the formal requirements (100%) and staying in constant contact with the enterprise management and other process owners (75%). Process owners placed emphasis on: motivating and supporting the people responsible for process realization (66%) and setting the goals of the processes, sub-processes and measures (63%). For the ordinary employees the greatest significance had: setting the goals of the processes, sub-processes and measures (80%), motivating and supporting the people responsible for process realization (75%) and encouraging personal involvement in diagnosing the cause of resistance and inspiring others, in order to make them actively involved in the process management (60%). The last area identified in the management process was the stage of "improvements". In this area the most important ability/skill of the process owner was continual process improvements. This answer was marked by almost all respondents (95%). Additionally, managers also emphasized staying in constant contact with the enterprise management and other process owners, process owners focused on absolute commitment to the works connected with business process management, and ordinary employees chose encouraging personal involvement in diagnosing the cause of resistance and inspiring others, in order to make them actively involved in the process management (80%).

5. Conclusion

Process management is a difficult and complex art. Nevertheless, the knowledge of this subject allows to gain competitive advantage of a company. Nowadays organizations build their competitiveness on the basis of high quality and low price of the products offered. Meeting these two requirements, seemingly antagonistic, is possible only in case of successful and effective functioning of the processes. While efficiency and effectiveness of the processes are in some measure a result of proper management, it seems to be reasonable to possess the knowledge in the area of process management. It is also important to be aware of the requirements which the processes' owners have to deal with at each of these levels.

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ZADANIA WŁAŚCICIELA PROCESU W KOLEJNYCH ETAPACH ZARZĄDZNIA PROCESAMI

Streszczenie: Celem artykułu jest identyfikacja kolejnych etapów zarządzania procesami oraz przyporządkowanie im pożądanych (z punktu widzenia efektywności realizowanych procesów) zachowań przywódców. W niniejszym opracowaniu na podstawie dostępnej literatury przedmiotu oraz badań empirycznych określono sekwencję działań z zakresu zarządzania procesami w organizacji, następnie podjęto próbę wskazania właściwych aktywności przywódczych, które istotnie przyczyniają się do powodzenia poszczególnych etapów procesów zarządczych.

Słowa kluczowe: procesy, organizacje procesowe, procedura zarządzania procesami, etapy zarządzania procesami, zasady zarządzania procesami, właściciel procesu, cechy przywódcy, aktywność przywódcy.