Business Process Review - Overview

Many companies will look to replace or upgrade their core Business Management Software Solutions such as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) due to several factors - whether it is no longer supported, is too slow or has outgrown the business needs and doesn't support the company growth and expansion plans and the myriad of challenges which this presents – these are all factors which will ultimately drive the Solution exploration journey.

The purpose of a business process review is to take a closer look at every area of the business, every detail of daily tasks and any associated risk factors. By doing this, the real expectations of what the ERP system can do will be set. This will help in the long run to engage end users in realistically using the solution and their user- adoption of it.

You should aspire to find a solution that enables your business to operate at its best potential and achieve the business goals and objectives. To help you achieve this - a **business process review (BPR)** phase of any ERP implementation project is crucial. It is one of the most cited critical success factors across ERP implementation projects. This is because it lays the foundation for several subsequent phases of a typical implementation project, such as system design & scoping, user experience, pilot phase, implementation, go live, user training, user-adoption and much more and all which rely on clearly defined business processes for both the project and business success.

Many Companies totally underestimate the value and ROI of the BPR phase as they believe it is as simple an exercise as just mapping out current business processes to understand how the new Solutions should accommodate them. This narrow vision and approach may well lead to your new ERP Solution just replicating legacy processes and bringing inefficient and weak practices into any new system implementation and rollout.

It is key that you map out your current processes - but so too is it vital that these processes are reviewed and mapped out in conjunction with your ERP implementation partner - as this is where the real value and ROI of a BPR and technology investment lies.

Some Key Business Process Review Benefits:

An Enabler of Change - A BPR will assist your change management efforts enabling your team to start to appreciate that this is more than just an IT project but a Business Project. They will start to see how the everyday processes can be greatly improved, automated, and streamlined within the new Solution project strategy.

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Smooth Transition & Implementation - Engaging key stakeholders at an early stage of the project will expand the base of support for the new ERP Solution and minimise the risk of non-user adoption scenarios prior to go live phase.

Identify Risks & the Unexpected - No matter how detailed an RFP (Request for Proposal) is or how lengthy the pre-sales phase might be, there are always opportunity for the "undiscovered" to become apparent when you move into the actual BPR phase. The BPR allows you to identify the risks and unknowns very early on - and adjust resourcing and timeline implications accordingly. It is often these "risks & Undiscovered" factors which can often deliver a hidden ROI of the project and should be seen as positive.

Manage Expectations & Increase Satisfaction - Mapping and reviewing current business processes will enable the BPR Team to identify all the areas that are within the scope of the project. Doing this at an early stage ensures your team appreciate what the real Solution capabilities are. If your team have realistic expectations, this will greatly enhance the user satisfaction and user-adoption across the business.

Some Top Tips

No Need to Rush - Listen to the advice of your ERP consultant and assign adequate time to the business process review as it will lay the foundation for the future success (or failure!) of the ERP Project and avoid the "rushing deadline scenarios". Dismissing recommended timelines for the BPR phase of the project, just simply to meet a project deadline might well cost you in the long run.

Senior Management Buy-in - This brings us onto the topic of senior management buy-in and support. As we highlighted above, this is not an IT project but rather a Business Project. Your ERP project will or should be aiming to greatly improve or redesign inefficient processes, support faster and accurate data-driven decision making, improve customer satisfaction, increase profit, reduce costs and much more. These deliverables can only be delivered with company-wide Project buy-in across the business.

Embrace Culture Change - As you map out your processes, your ERP Consultant will be there to guide you as to how key processes should be optimised or indeed re-designed to deliver the best ROI for your Business. You and your team need to be prepared to be open to embracing change and a new way of doing business.

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It's often the scenario that many users may be slow to change existing business systems and processes for several reasons. It's the role of the Management team to reassure all users that adequate training will be provided, and any productivity efficiencies gained will enable employees to deploy their skills and talents on other 'value added' activities and help drive a positive user adoption and engagement.

Be Inclusive - Your ERP system should be at the core of your Business and impacting stakeholders across every level of your organisation - both internally and externally. It is important that employees across the business are included in the business process review.

BPR teams should have access to all key departments, roles, and functions to enable them to document the full depth and breadth of the processes and afford the opportunity to understand any external processes impacting the project such as suppliers and customers. The aim here is to build end-to-end process workflows showing the interdependence of tasks, roles, people, departments, and functions required to provide a customer with an end-to-end business product or service. They will give a more holistic understanding of your organisational.

Training - Your new Solution will support your business processes and system changes – but essentially it is your internal team/s that will make these changes possible. In addition to the user training provided by your ERP partner, it is also advisable that companies run some additional internal training before the system is implemented to highlight to employees what business processes are changing, why they are changing and how their job role will be impacted. This will help your employees get the most out of the system training phase as they can fully appreciate the processes it has been configured to accommodate. It will also help the leadership team map out how they can maximise the productivity of their staff from the day the system goes live.