

Fostering the usage of process models for supporting departments in organizations

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Abstract. Modeling business processes in organizations tends to be cost-, time and resource-intensive. Therefore, it is surprising that the achieved models are mostly used in a limited way. Although, the supporting departments such as Knowledge Management, Quality Management and Change Management have access to the models, the rate of use is low. The reason might be that existing approaches in practice focus primarily on the requirements of process owners and do not address managers of the departments mentioned above. To overcome this, a method is offered in this paper that implies not only questioning the process owners but also the other managers. The results of the questionnaire will help to reveal the untapped potentials of the process models and facilitate to adapt the process models for both target groups.

Introduction

Nowadays, graphical representations of business process models exist in many large organizations and the number is increasing (Hill et al., 2009). Usually, these process models are used for process improvement, quality control and the supporting information technology (Fettke, 2009). In most cases, however, the process owner determines which knowledge should be archived with process models. Other departments, such as Knowledge and Quality Management are usually not involved. These departments often cannot use the models since

necessary information for them is missing. This poses an interesting research question: How can the usage of the existing process models be increased? This paper proposes a method in which the Delphi approach is applied in order to find out how the needs of every party can be met and their individual interests included. Thus, the knowledge of different experts will be disclosed, related contents merged, evaluated and modified over a defined number of rounds (Linstone and Turoff, 2002).

Existing Approaches

In literature, various approaches concerning the usage of process models can be found. Kesari et al. (2003) examined advantages and disadvantages of business process modeling, asking eleven experienced consultants. Sedera et al. (2004) built a process modeling success model based on three case studies. Davis et al. (2006) used a web-based survey to analyze the usage of conceptual modeling in Australia (Fettke, 2009, in Germany). With the focus on process models as knowledge imparting artifacts, Prilla (2009) conducted qualitative expert interviews with six professionals from different sectors. Overall it can be stated that approaches so far have been limited to focusing on the managers of the business processes and respective modelers. The participation of stakeholders in the (collaborative) modeling process is taken up for example by Niehaves and Plattfaut (2011). However, the work focuses on the usage of existing models by different stakeholders (Weske, 2007), including the supporting departments.

Conceptualization

The proposed method consists of three steps due to the usage of the Delphi approach (see Figure 1).

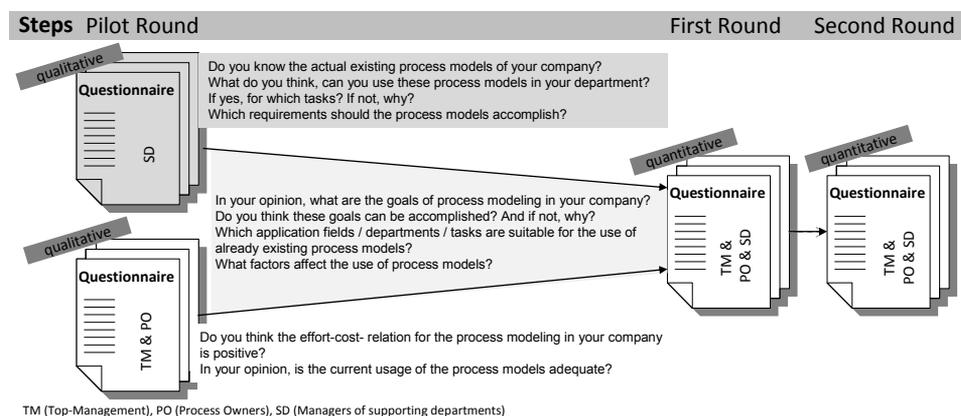


Figure 1. Procedure of the method.

The aim of this method is to incorporate the views of the Top-Management and Process Owners as well as the managers of the supporting departments. The figure also contains the most important aspect, i.e., the questions which should be asked. To ensure a shared understanding of both stakeholders, the results of the pilot round will be united and evaluated. The resulting extracted items will be combined, clarified and used for developing a structured questionnaire for the first round. Now, all participants should answer the same questions with the intention of consensus finding. After a quantitative analysis, results will be used to revise items for the second round or a third one; then the results should be concordant.

Conclusion

The use of existing process models can be increased, if a wider range of users is involved from the very beginning. To ensure this, the method addresses how to gather the relevant data to identify potentials for an extended usage. Next steps will concentrate on identifying appropriate experts and conducting the interviews.

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