From Silos to Synergy: Embedding BPM at Sri Lanka Telecom to Drive Strategic Alignment

Jayasuriya D. R. Naleen[1,*], Rajapaksha Dinusha[1,*], Mirispelakotuwa Ishadi[2,*], Wimalasuriya Bandula[1], Bandara Wasana[2] and Syed Rehan[2]

[1]*Sri Lanka Telecom, Lotus Road, Colombo 01, Sri Lanka*

[2]*Queensland University of Technology, School of Information Systems, 2 George Street, Brisbane, Australia*

Abstract

This case study details the internally led transformation of Sri Lanka Telecom (SLT) from a legacy, siloed telco into a process-oriented, digitally enabled enterprise. Confronted by deregulation, increasing customer expectations, and fragmented operations, SLT lacked both business process management (BPM) maturity and external consultancy support. In response, the organisation initiated a 'learning-by-doing' journey that gradually institutionalised BPM as a strategic capability. Anchored by the TM Forum's enhanced Telecom Operations Map (eTOM) process framework and catalysed by pressing operational pain points, SLT's business process re-engineering team evolved from a small task force into a center of excellence. BPM practices were progressively embedded into major IT initiatives, including customer relationship management, enterprise resource planning, service-oriented architecture, and robotic process automation, enabling greater agility, transparency, and service responsiveness. SLT's experience offers compelling insights into how process capability can be built from within, by empowering internal champions, aligning with global reference models, and embracing iterative stakeholder-driven design. The case shows how BPM can move beyond efficiency, serving as an enabler of digital transformation, strategic alignment, and cultural renewal. It provides a transferable roadmap for organisations seeking sustainable transformation under resource constraints, specially in emerging markets.

Keywords

Business Process Management (BPM), Process Capability Development, Telecom Transformation, BPM Maturity, Emerging Markets, Internal BPM Enablement

1. Introduction

Sri Lanka Telecom (SLT), the national telecommunications provider, has a legacy spanning over 165 years and a workforce of 7,000+ employees [1]. Headquartered in Colombo with operations across the island, SLT offers a range of services as a strategic digital solutions partner. It offers ultra-fast broadband, IPTV, cybersecurity, data center, and multi-cloud solutions, and SaaS applications for both consumer and enterprise segments, serving over 10 million subscribers [2] across fixed, mobile, and enterprise services. For the financial year 2023/24, SLT reported consolidated group revenues over LKR 100 billion [1]. Despite its scale and heritage, by the 2000s, SLT was facing significant threats from market liberalisation, fast-moving digital competitors, and demanding customer expectations.

In 2002, a pivotal moment reshaped SLT's future. A senior manager challenged a small internal team to reduce the delivery time of a residential phone line from 4 weeks to just 1 day. This bold goal ignited what would become a two-decade-long transformation. SLT became a process-oriented enterprise, not via costly consultants or top-down mandates, but through the ingenuity and persistence of its people.

At the time, SLT operated as a typical legacy telco characterised by functional silos, slow execution, and a lack of transparency. Without internal business process management (BPM) expertise or standardised methodologies, the organisation instead embarked on a learning-by-doing journey: iteratively improving processes, building internal capabilities, and progressively embedding process thinking across the enterprise. This bottom-up approach aligns with what BPM literature identifies as capability-led transformation [3, 4], where maturity emerges iteratively from within [5, 6].

Guided by the TM Forum[1]'s enhanced Telecom Operations Map (eTOM) process framework [3], and catalysed by pressing operational pain points, SLT's BPM efforts gradually expanded from isolated fixes to enterprise-scale integration. From 2010 onward, BPM was woven into major IT modernisation programs including customer relationship management (CRM), enterprise resource planning (ERP), service-oriented architecture (SOA), and robotic process automation (RPA). Over time, BPM evolved from a technical initiative to a catalyst for cultural renewal, shifting organisational mindsets, aligning strategy with execution, and enabling end-to-end service accountability.

Today, SLT's BPM journey stands as a rare and compelling example of enterprise transformation achieved from within. This case study offers practical insights for organisations, particularly in emerging markets, on how to scale BPM capabilities under resource constraints, navigate internal resistance, and convert process orientation into a strategic enabler of innovation and performance. This case study illustrates how SLT institutionalised BPM without prior experience or consultancy support, instead building internal capabilities through structured experimentation and stakeholder engagement. It provides transferable lessons on how organisations can embed BPM into enterprise-wide transformation initiatives, not just as a tool for efficiency but as a lever for strategic alignment and cultural change. By doing so, it seeks to inspire similarly constrained organisations to adopt BPM as a catalyst for technological advancement, operational renewal, and sustainable innovation.

The paper unfolds as follows. Section 2 presents the problem statement. Section 3 discusses the approach and actions taken. Section 4 presents the key findings. Section 5 discusses the significance and relevance. Section 6 outlines the scope and limitations of the study. Section 7 concludes the paper.

2. Problem Statement

SLT, the national telecommunications provider of Sri Lanka, has operated within a complex and evolving environment shaped by deregulation, intensifying competition, and rising customer expectations. Despite a long-standing market presence, by the early 2000s, SLT faced mounting operational and structural pressures. Internally, processes were fragmented, undocumented, and manually executed across siloed departments, with little collaboration or shared accountability. Basic service requests, such as residential landline installations, often took weeks. These inefficiencies stemmed from the absence of standardised process models, performance metrics, and centralised governance mechanisms.

At the time, SLT had no formal BPM capability and limited exposure to reference models such as eTOM. This constrained its ability to respond to increasing industry demands for agility, integration, and digital responsiveness. Cultural resistance, particularly within regional teams, further impeded improvement efforts. A siloed mindset discouraged collaboration and transparency, and scepticism towards digital tools slowed adoption.

As transformation efforts advanced, process limitations became more visible. Between 2002 and 2010, SLT implemented operations support system (OSS) and billing support system (BSS) without defined processes, resulting in integration failures and limited visibility. Workflows remained paper-based, with domain knowledge dominating execution. Post the introduction of a formal investment governance framework in 2010, execution still remained manual, leading to approval delays and project oversight.

From 2013 to 2016, overlapping ERP and CRM deployments exposed further issues: vendor roles were unclear, BPM artefacts were inconsistently applied, and stakeholders lacked a common language for ownership and performance. Fragmented execution persisted despite increasing IT investments.

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[1]TM Forum is a global industry association for service providers and their suppliers in the telecommunications and digital services sectors that develops frameworks and standards.

By 2018, these issues began to manifest in new forms. Customer premises equipment (CPE) lifecycle challenges revealed process gaps in ERP–OSS coordination. Manually governed investment decisions, despite covering over 300 concurrent projects, lacked transparency and speed. RPA deployments, though impactful, surfaced sustainability risks due to missing governance and reuse standards. While SLT's BPM-aligned automation efforts gained national recognition, they remained disconnected from broader enterprise transformation.

By 2019, SLT's adoption of low-code automation tools like RPA exposed critical gaps in governance, standardization, and alignment with enterprise processes. These challenges intensified during the early COVID-19 period, which required rapid digitization of customer-facing services such as provisioning and order activation. Fragmented system ownership in SLT's modular IT architecture hindered coordination, often leaving the SOA team to manage complex service flows. Simultaneously, economic pressures created urgency to automate revenue recovery functions like bulk credit control, while workforce turnover highlighted the need for sustainable automation.

Compounding these issues, SLT's business process architecture, developed in 2010, had not been updated and no longer aligned with TM Forum's latest open digital architecture (ODA)[2] and process framework (formerly known as eTOM). This limited visibility and hindered scalability constrained integration across functions. As SLT aimed to evolve into a TechCo[3] around 2023, it became clear that transformation required not just technology upgrades, but also the modernization of core business processes to support agility and enterprise-wide alignment.

Taken together, these conditions underscore a systemic problem: SLT must overcome a legacy of fragmented operations, minimal BPM exposure, and resource constraints while meeting evolving strategic priorities. The challenge is not merely technical; it concerns the organisation's ability to align people, systems, and processes through an internally led, context-sensitive approach. Without sustained external consultancy, SLT's transformation hinges on its capacity to build BPM maturity from within, empower internal champions, and adapt global frameworks to local operational realities.

3. Approach and Actions Taken

SLT's BPM journey did not begin with a roadmap or a grand transformation strategy. Confronted by urgent operational bottlenecks and a lack of formal process expertise, SLT adopted a pragmatic, learn-by-doing approach, grounded in experimentation, stakeholder engagement, and context-specific adaptation. The company's journey reflects what the academic BPM literature describes as capability-led transformation [3, 4], where organisations develop BPM maturity iteratively from within, rather than through externally imposed blueprints [5, 6].

3.1. Initiation Phase (2000–2006): Responding to Fragmentation and Absence of Process Visibility

SLT's transformation began in 2002, when leadership tasked a newly formed internal team, later formalised as the Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) unit, with reducing landline installation times. This challenge revealed deeper issues: siloed, undocumented operations and inconsistencies across regions. Around the same time, SLT implemented its first-generation OSS without defined processes, leading to BSS integration failures, data inconsistencies, and coordination gaps.

In response, the BPR team was empowered to address underlying process flaws. Without formal BPM training, they adopted a learning-by-doing approach, conducting grass-roots workshops to map workflows and resolve system misalignments. These participatory efforts reflect vom Brocke et al.'s [5] emphasis on stakeholder-driven, adaptive improvement and laid the foundation for SLT's BPM capability development.

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[2]The open digital architecture (ODA) is an industry-standard blueprint developed by TM Forum to support the modular, cloud-native transformation of communications service providers.

[3]TechCo refers to a telecommunications operator undergoing a strategic transformation from a traditional telco into a technology-focused organisation.
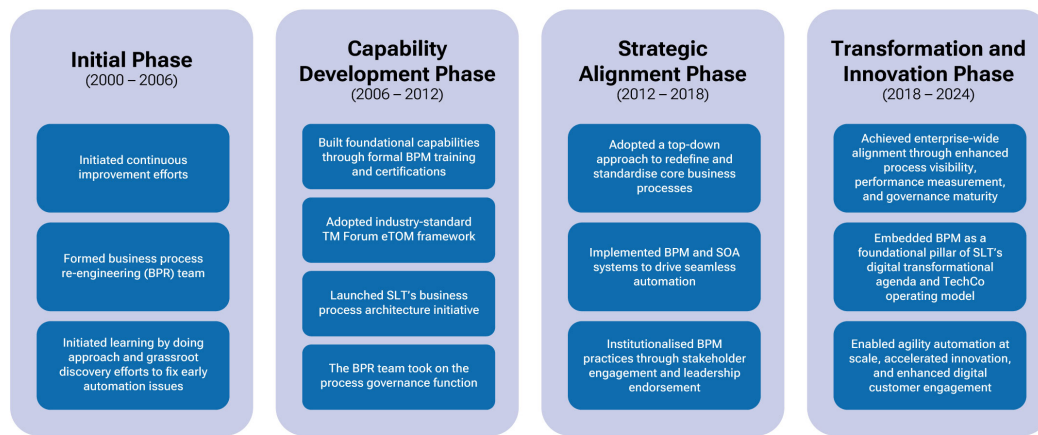
Figure 1: SLT's BPM Capability Development Journey

3.2. Capability Development Phase (2006–2012): Addressing the Lack of Standards and Internal Expertise

This phase reflects Rosemann and vom Brocke's core elements of BPM [7], as SLT began aligning governance, culture, and methods to build sustainable capability growth.

By 2006, it became clear that informal BPM efforts were insufficient for enterprise-scale transformation. SLT responded by formalising BPM through capacity building, investing in staff certifications like ITIL[4], PMP[5], and modelling techniques. This empowered the BPR team to drive cross-functional change.

Recognising the value of external guidance, SLT initially adopted the TM Forum's *e*TOM framework as a reference, specially during early CRM automation. While *e*TOM offered structure and shared terminology, it soon became clear that it could not fully capture SLT's operational context.

Consequently, SLT launched its business process architecture in 2010. The project introduced layered process models, standardised templates, KPIs, and taxonomies, providing a structured yet adaptive foundation for future transformation. In the absence of a formal BPM CoE, the BPR team assumed a governance role, reviewing cross-departmental process designs and supporting CRM-ERP integration.

Regional pilot implementations in high-density areas like Wattala[6], validated new processes under real conditions. The business process architecture project received internal awards and executive endorsement, becoming a key enabler of subsequent IT initiatives. This iterative, hands-on approach to capability development aligns with the early-stage maturity dimensions described by Rosemann and de Bruin [6], particularly in governance, people, and culture.

3.3. Strategic Alignment Phase (2012–2018): Orchestrating Transformation and Managing Complexity

With the rollout of enterprise-scale programs such as CRM, ERP, and SOA-based platforms, SLT faced challenges on aligning business processes with complex IT capabilities. In response, SLT adopted a top-down approach to redefine and standardise core business processes. It marked SLT's transition from BPM experimentation to institutionalisation.

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[4]Information technology infrastructure library (ITIL) is a globally recognised set of best practices for IT service management, designed to align IT services with the needs of business and improve service delivery and efficiency.

[5]Project management professional (PMP) is a globally recognised certification issued by the Project Management Institute (PMI), validating an individual's expertise in leading and managing projects across various industries and methodologies.

[6]Wattala is a densely populated urban suburb located just north of Colombo, Sri Lanka's commercial capital. Its diverse demographics and proximity to key infrastructure make it a representative pilot location for testing in the telecom industry.

A major milestone during this phase was the introduction of a catalogue-driven order management system built on top of the SOA. This initiative addressed previous pain points like disconnected IT systems, manual fulfilment workarounds, and a lack of performance visibility. It marked a clear mental model shift: BPM evolved from a documentation-driven effort to a mechanism for real-time monitoring through business activity monitoring (BAM), cross-functional coordination, and scalable governance.

This period also saw the formal endorsement of SLT's internally developed BPM lifecycle framework by executive leadership. Enhanced with audit tools, escalation protocols, and performance surveys, the framework became embedded into enterprise project governance. It ensured that BPM practices were consistently applied across initiatives, mitigating risks stemming from fragmented ownership, unclear roles, and uncoordinated timelines that had previously challenged transformation efforts.

Through this structural reinforcement, BPM emerged as a unifying guide to manage interdependent programs and sustain transformation momentum. This phase directly addressed organisational issues highlighted in the problem statement, enabling SLT to transition from ad hoc process improvement to enterprise-wide orchestration grounded in strategic process alignment.

3.4. Transformation and Innovation Phase (2018–2024): Embedding BPM into Digital and Automation Agendas

From 2018 onward, SLT accelerated its BPM maturity by embedding it as a foundational pillar of its digital transformation agenda and TechCo operating model. BPM evolved into a strategic enabler of enterprise-wide alignment. It became central to initiatives requiring agility, automation at scale, and continuous innovation, particularly in customer-facing and operational domains.

Under the DigiWay transformation program launched in 2022, BPM principles were institutionalised through the Smart Process Management track. This ensured that process discovery, re-engineering, and automation efforts aligned with KPIs and supported measurable outcomes. The initiative addressed persistent gaps in enterprise-wide accountability and ownership of transformation deliverables.

In 2023, SLT launched the CPE lifecycle management automation initiative to resolve provisioning and inventory delays. The project integrated ERP locators, barcode-based tracking, and OSS updates to unify field operations, logistics, and service fulfilment, addressing fragmentation and data reliability issues rooted in legacy practices.

The investment governance process automation initiative was also initiated during this period. Although automation is still in progress, the underlying workflows were fully redesigned and aligned to SLT's BPM lifecycle and ERP environment, laying the foundation for greater visibility, standardisation, and accountability across more than 300 active projects.

Reflecting organisational recognition of BPM's strategic value, the former BPR section was formally renamed as the 'Business Process Management' section in 2019. Despite this change, employees across the organisation still refer to the team as "the BPR team" a testament to the deep cultural impact and trusted legacy that the group has established in driving enterprise-wide transformation.

A major milestone in SLT's BPM journey was the evolution of its RPA program. Initiated as a pilot in 2019, it grew into a virtual CoE by 2021, co-led by BPM and IT SOA leaders. The development was handled by internal teams, forming the largest UiPath-certified developer team in Sri Lanka. Award-winning use cases in order initiation for service modification (automated in 2020, and the award won in 2021), order creation for bulk credit control actions (started in 2021), and failed order correction (started around 2020) significantly improved service delivery speed, operational accuracy, and cost efficiency. In 2024, RPA was extended to HR and finance functions, introducing AI-based CV matching and automated document understanding for invoice processing within ERP workflows. These advancements exemplified BPM's role not just in automation but in enabling intelligent enterprise capabilities.

In 2023, SLT modernised its business process architecture to match the current TM Forum's process framework (formerly known as eTOM), which is now a core element of the TM Forum's ODA. Designed by the BPM team, the revised architecture aligned SLT's taxonomy and layered models with industry standards to support digital transformation and TechCo's evolution. It became the strategic blueprint for process-led integration, self-care enablement, and scalable service design.

In summary, SLT's BPM approach evolved from grass-roots discovery to enterprise-wide orchestration. While early guidance came from frameworks like eTOM, the organisation progressively internalised BPM through its own architecture and governance models, enabling agility, innovation, and customer-centricity. The organisation maintained continuous alignment across people, culture, governance, strategy, and IT, in line with principles from the BPM literature (e.g., [6]). The success of SLT's internally built automation capabilities, particularly the RPA CoE and AI-enhanced workflows, demonstrates how process maturity can drive scalable transformation. Figure 1 illustrates SLT's BPM capability development journey, highlighting the key actions taken at each phase.

4. Key Findings

SLT's BPM-driven transformation delivered far-reaching results that extended well beyond technical upgrades. It enhanced operational agility, improved service delivery, and embedded a process-oriented culture. SLT's journey demonstrates that sustained transformation is not just about deploying technology; it's about shifting organisational culture, building internal capacity, and aligning processes with strategic goals. The outcomes highlighted in this section reflect a holistic evolution across systems, people, and performance, and can be categorised into three key themes: operational improvements, strategic and cultural outcomes, and capability development.

4.1. Operational Improvements

- **Cycle time improvements (results between 2000-2006):** SLT reduced landline installation time from four weeks to one day and shortened product launch cycles from 4–6 months to 6–8 weeks. Workflow development time dropped by 35% through reusable BPM components, particularly in ERP and CRM rollout. This has enabled faster innovation, backlog reduction, and improved time-to-market.
- **RPA adoption and operational improvements (results between 2019 - present):** Automation over 70 repetitive processes across service delivery and IT operations, led by internally certified developers under BPM governance, secured heavy savings to the organisation compared to the outsourced model. In order management, RPA reduced processing times by up to 90%, enabling near real-time service activation and clearing backlogs across 25,000+ monthly transactions. In IT operations, failed order correction bots cut resolution time from 4 minutes to 30 seconds, improving responsiveness and reducing manual intervention. These automations significantly enhanced speed, accuracy, and consistency in high-volume, customer-facing processes.
- **CPE lifecycle automation (results between 2023 - 2024):** This initiative increased regional device tracking accuracy from under 60% to over 95%, enabling precise stock visibility across more than 150 service locations. As a result, avoidable over-procurement was reduced by approximately 40%, and inventory reordering decisions became more data-driven and timely. The system also improved service fulfilment reliability by enabling correct device availability checks during sales order confirmation. This has minimised order fallout and enhanced customer experience.
- **Process visibility and governance (between 2012 - present):** Real-time monitoring through BAM allowed faster resolution of issues (reduced by 20%) and better SLA compliance (improved by 10%), enabling more proactive operational decision-making.
- **Investment governance process redesign (in progress):** Though still in its implementation phase, the BPM-based redesign of SLT's stage-gate investment approval process has already demonstrated value by streamlining review workflows and eliminating redundant submissions. Early results indicate a 40% reduction in approval cycle time within pilot units.

4.2. Strategic and Cultural Outcomes

- **Embedded process thinking:** Process thinking is now embedded across SLT, with over 85% of business units using process mapping, KPI reviews, and structured documentation. This shift has

reduced inter-departmental hand-off delays by 35%, improved cross-functional coordination, and fostered a shared mindset focused on systems thinking.

- **Alignment through industry frameworks and internal process architecture:** This enabled alignment with global best practices. Creating a customised enterprise-wide business process architecture that aligns with its operational context supports TechCo's goals. This architecture is a crucial enabler for scalable automation, cross-functional integration, and digital service orchestration. It also reinforces BPM as a fundamental aspect of SLT's transformation strategy.

- **BPR legitimacy and cross-functional engagement:** BPR team earned lasting organisational trust through its sustained role in leading enterprise-wide transformation initiatives. By orchestrating inclusive, cross-functional workshops, the team fostered alignment, resolved process pain points, and promoted shared ownership. CXO involvement further elevated their credibility and helped institutionalise a collaborative process culture aligned with stakeholder-centric BPM principles [5]. Over time, the BPR team's influence extended beyond project delivery, embedding BPM as an accepted and respected practice across the organisation.

- **Recognition and visibility:** SLT's BPM achievements received formal recognition, beginning with the "Best Team" award at the 2010 Transformation Awards. More recently, SLT was awarded UiPath's Automation Excellence Awards in 2021 and 2022 for the use cases of order initiation for service modification and order creation for bulk credit control respectively [8, 9], highlighting BPM's role in SLT's internal innovation in digital service and credit processing.

4.3. Capability Development

- **Development of internal expertise:** Over the course of its BPM maturity journey, SLT cultivated deep internal expertise. Practitioners enhanced their capabilities through structured BPM trainings and certifications in ITIL, PMP, MSP[7], and UiPath Advanced Developer programs. This was complemented by specialised training such as IRM (UK), which emphasised business architecture and process governance.

- **Establishment of the BPM lifecycle framework:** SLT developed an internal BPM lifecycle framework and business process architecture that standardised over 250 processes across the enterprise. These frameworks introduced reusable templates, KPIs, and governance tools, reducing automation design and deployment time by 30−40% and cutting process rework by 40%. Adopted in over 80% of digital initiatives, they enabled consistent, scalable execution and accelerated SLT's BPM maturity without reliance on external consultancy.

- **Integration into digital transformation:** BPM practices provided structure and repeatability across all transformation streams DigiWay, SOA, RPA, and investment governance, ensuring that process changes were sustainable, auditable, and aligned to strategic priorities.

- **Integrated RPA governance:** SLT deliberately placed its RPA function under BPM governance, ensuring process alignment, reuse, and architectural integrity. The RPA CoE coordinated use cases, monitored KPIs, and standardised automation rollouts across business units.

- **Expansion into HR and finance:** Building on its core automation success, SLT extended RPA into HR (HR initiative started in 2023) and finance operations (Finance initiative started in 2021). After the integration of RPA and AI in 2024, the recent results show that in HR, bots automated leave processing and introduced AI-assisted CV screening, reducing manual effort by over 70% and shortening recruitment lead times by 30%. In finance, over 50 workflows, including journal entries and approvals, were automated, while intelligent document processing cut invoice turnaround time by up to 60% and improved ERP posting accuracy. These expansions demonstrate SLT's ability to scale BPM-governed automation into strategic support domains, reinforcing internal capability and cross-functional maturity.

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[7]Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) certification is a globally recognised qualification that equips professionals with best practices for managing complex program-level change initiatives

5. Significance and Relevance

SLT's BPM journey offers rich, practice-based insights for organisations navigating transformation in legacy environments, particularly those in emerging markets with limited access to external expertise. Unlike many cases that rely on top-down, consultant-led efforts [10], SLT's transformation was internally championed, gradually built over two decades through pragmatic experimentation, iterative learning, and cross-functional collaboration.

At the heart of SLT's success was a deliberate "process-first" approach. Rather than beginning with technology investments, SLT focused on redesigning its core business processes. It adopted the TM Forum's eTOM [11] as a reference framework, from which it developed a layered business process architecture tailored to its operational context [7]. Process discovery and re-engineering workshops were conducted across departments, resulting in a realignment of operations around critical end-to-end domains such as fulfilment, assurance, and billing and revenue management.

This process-first strategy enabled SLT to move from fragmented, manually driven operations to an integrated digital enterprise. It also ensured that subsequent systems implementations, including CRM, SOA, ERP, and RPA, were directly aligned with business needs and customer outcomes, rather than being imposed as disconnected technology upgrades. Several key enablers underpinned this transformation:

- **Structured frameworks** provided legitimacy and direction. The eTOM model helped unify business and IT teams through a shared vocabulary and architectural anchor, which is critical for successful BPM initiatives in legacy-driven sectors [7].
- **Internal champions** were pivotal in translating strategic vision into operational change. These individuals led workshops, mentored colleagues, and promoted BPM principles throughout the organisation, demonstrating the vital role of change agents in process transformation [12].
- **An incremental, learning-driven rollout** enabled SLT to build BPM maturity progressively. Starting with high-impact areas, SLT leveraged each improvement cycle to refine skills, adjust direction, and sustain momentum [13].
- **Shared ownership across departments** fostered alignment and accountability. Co-designed process workshops encouraged joint responsibility and minimised functional silos—a known barrier in traditional organisations [14].

SLT's grass-roots strategy stands in contrast to peers like Vodafone Germany, whose BPM-led digital transformation followed a top-down model. Vodafone focused on CRM integration and omni-channel experiences, guided by external BPM expertise and standardised process modelling [10]. In contrast, SLT relied entirely on internal teams with no prior BPM exposure, developing capabilities organically and learning by doing. This makes SLT's case particularly instructive for resource-constrained or legacy-heavy organisations.

The broader implications of SLT's experience extend to BPM practice more generally. Across industries, BPM implementations commonly encounter resistance to change, difficulties integrating legacy systems, and unclear objectives [15, 13, 12]. Poor data quality and insufficient training are also frequent obstacles that undermine process performance and system adoption [15, 16].

SLT effectively mitigated these challenges by taking a proactive, context-sensitive approach. It addressed change resistance by involving users from the early stages, providing regular training, and building trust in the BPM (former BPR) team's ability to solve real pain points. Clear objectives and shared goals provided alignment across transformation phases, avoiding the fragmentation that often undermines BPM efforts [14]. SLT also established a dedicated data cleansing team to ensure data quality, thereby supporting more accurate process execution and informed decision-making [16].

SLT's journey also reinforces the notion that BPM, when viewed not merely as a toolset but as an organisational capability, can serve as a powerful catalyst for digital transformation. Even in resource-limited environments, internally led and well-contextualised BPM programs can deliver meaningful, lasting change when supported by strong leadership, shared ownership, and strategic alignment [7, 5].

6. Scope and Limitations

This paper focuses on SLT's internal transformation journey over two decades, highlighting how it developed, scaled, and embedded BPM capabilities as a core enabler of enterprise performance and digital modernisation. What makes SLT's experience noteworthy for practitioners is its bottom-up, internally led approach, achieved without relying on external consultants or pre-packaged BPM solutions.

SLT's transformation was driven by internal champions and shaped through pragmatic experimentation, cross-functional collaboration, and the adaptive use of global frameworks, such as eTOM. This makes the lessons specially relevant for leaders in resource-constrained or legacy-heavy organisations who seek to modernise operations by building BPM capability organically.

At the same time, some limitations are important to acknowledge for a balanced perspective. This paper does not provide a detailed financial analysis of SLT's BPM efforts, such as cost-benefit outcomes or return on investment, which may be valuable for decision-makers evaluating BPM initiatives. Nor does it benchmark SLT's BPM maturity against industry peers or global telecom standards, which could help situate its progress comparatively.

Additionally, the paper emphasises internal practices, particularly those of the BPR team, without a thorough examination of external factors, such as regulatory shifts, competitive pressures, or direct customer input. Broader stakeholder perspectives, such as those of partners and vendors, are also outside the scope of this discussion.

Looking forward, BPM leaders and digital transformation teams may benefit from: (i) exploring how customer satisfaction and loyalty evolved in parallel with process improvements; (ii) conducting financial assessments of BPM investments to support value-based decision-making; (iii) comparing maturity journeys across similar telcos or service providers; and (iv) tracking how BPM capabilities scale and adapt as a part of evolving enterprise strategies.

SLT's story is a rich source of inspiration for practitioners navigating similar challenges and a practical demonstration that BPM-led transformation, when rooted in internal capability and contextual fit, can deliver long-lasting value and resilience.

7. Conclusion

SLT's BPM journey is a compelling example of what's possible when transformation is driven from within. Confronted with outdated systems, siloed operations, and increasing market complexity, SLT did not wait for external consultants or costly interventions. Instead, it empowered its people to lead the change.

What began as a response to operational inefficiencies evolved into a company-wide shift. BPM became the backbone of SLT's transformation, moving beyond process mapping and workshops to being deeply embedded in major digital initiatives such as CRM, ERP, SOA, and RPA. Global frameworks like eTOM provided structure, but it was internal champions who brought credibility by solving real problems and cultivating a culture of process thinking across business units. Crucially, this transformation was not driven by technology alone. SLT's success stemmed from a deliberate focus on four strategic pillars:

1. Internal process ownership: empowering teams to take responsibility for how work gets done.
2. Iterative capability building: developing skills and maturity over time, not overnight.
3. Stakeholder alignment: ensuring cross-functional buy-in and shared goals.
4. Cultural change: fostering a sense of shared purpose and accountability.

For organisations in emerging economies or legacy environments, SLT's experience offers a powerful lesson: BPM does not have to begin with a consulting brief or a major investment. It can start with a small team, a clear pain point, and a commitment to learn, adapt, and grow.

The broader message is that BPM is not just a methodology but a mindset. When embedded into the fabric of operations and leadership, it enables agility, transparency, and customer-centricity at scale. SLT's journey offers more than inspiration. It provides a replicable roadmap for organisations seeking

to modernise not only their systems but also how they work, collaborate, and deliver strategic value. It is a foundation for continuous innovation and sustained performance in an increasingly dynamic business landscape.

Declaration on Generative AI

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used X-GPT-4 and SLI Microsoft Copilot in order to: Grammar and spelling check. After using these tool(s), the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the publication's content.

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