

Preface

It was not until the early 1990s that the idea of process optimization began to shape the way companies operated. The concept of “business process reengineering,” as defined by Michael Hammer and James Champy, shifted the focus of all processes to the customer and required organizational structures to be built around optimized processes.

This concept gave birth to numerous management methods that have become established in companies, including lean management, total quality management, and kaizen, to name just a few.

Properly defined and managed processes lead to increased customer satisfaction and—thanks to smooth internal processes—employee satisfaction, and allow businesses to develop new products and services more quickly. Customers with optimized business processes also have tighter control of their costs.

The ability to quickly adapt business processes within the framework of an ongoing process of adaptation represents a significant competitive advantage in a market environment that is constantly evolving to meet global requirements.

Business process management (BPM) is the method developed by SAP[®] Consulting to help companies optimize their processes. In addition to the methodology that addresses the optimization of processes, BPM offers a collection of best practice processes from the process manufacturing industry. This allows chemical and pharmaceutical companies to identify and implement improvements rapidly.

These approaches are underpinned by the development of service-oriented architectures in the area of IT. For example, the growing demand for reusable software modules in companies necessitates a high degree of process standardization. The work of the traditional IT department is moving toward process management. The identification of use cases and adoption of new technologies such as smartphones and tablet PCs or SAPs in memory database can be rapidly improved by a process management driven company. BPM offers a holistic approach to defining the IT architecture of the company on the basis of industry-specific business process knowledge.

We begin this book by describing the market environment and the particular challenges faced by companies in the process manufacturing industry. We then go on to explain the business process management method, which is illustrated using examples of industry-specific business processes.

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Guido Grüne
Stephanie Lockemann
Volker Kluy
Stefan Meinhardt

Business Process Management within Chemical and
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Grüne, G.; Lockemann, S.; Kluy, V.; Meinhardt, S.

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