

## **Business Process Management - Leveraging Globally**

Since time memorial, commercial enterprises have strived to continuously improve business processes by taking benefit of segmentation and standardization of work effort, for higher efficiency.

The end of 19th century saw many inventions leading to improvement in output of workers. One of the big inventions during the industrial revolution was origination of an assembly line to manage the movement of WIP product in a systematic manner, through a sequential process till the product is completed. Assembly lines along with high level of automation, has resulted in developments where most manufacturing processes do not require any human intervention, while meeting production standards consistently.

While manufacturing has been the locus of performance innovation, optimizing service processes that involve people and dynamic changes has been historically more complex. **Lack of visibility and ownership for processes that span functional departments or business units is a big impediment.** However, just like other practices that have been imported from manufacturing to service industry, the assembly line concept eventually did catch up with service sector to resolve tradeoffs among cost, dependability, quality and flexibility.

In the early days workers required to complete a service used to sit in proximity to each other in an assembly line manner so that paper or file would move from one specialized resource to another till the final work is completed. This assembly line concept or workflow was so evident especially in financial service sector that usually has high volume of standard work. However, advent of computing technology and digitization combined with workflow technologies allows virtual movement of piece of work from a worker to another, thus eliminating need for physical movement of paper. **Technology has enabled service industry to shift the production line paradigm to next level** of 'lean service' concept also known as Business Process Management - a systematic approach to improving a company's business processes.

BPM technology has taken the value chain orientation to higher levels through highly efficient workflows, that provides communication and collaboration functionalities to effectively integrate people, process and information across different time zones and continents. BPM gives an organization the ability to define, execute, manage and refine processes that allows:

- Flexibility and responsiveness
- Focus on end product/ customer need
- Value chain integration and disintegration

- Knowledge management
- Networked organization, and
- Empowerment of employees and teams

A well thought and sophisticated BPM solution challenges the value paradigm of aggregating full production capability (end-to-end) at a centralized location for optimal gains. In practice an optimal BPM solution allows firms to **leverage skills and institutional knowledge found in disparate locations across the globe without making tradeoffs among cost, quality, flexibility and end customer focus.**



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