

# Selected aspects of change adoption and of the functioning of business process management offices in enterprises

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## Introduction

Modern companies operating in a turbulent environment expect to be able to improve their competitive position through the implementation of process management<sup>1</sup>. The concept allows flexible adaptation to changing environmental conditions and involves the identification, modeling, automation, control, measurement and optimization of business processes while taking into account the strategic objectives<sup>2</sup>. Process-oriented enterprises strive towards systematic process improvement using to this end appropriate methods and tools, leading to their further

- 1 M. Balzarowa et al., *Key to success factors in implementation of process – based management. A UK housing association experience*, “Business Process Management Journal” 2004, no. 4, pp. 387–389; C. Wolf, P. Harmon, *The State of Business Process Management 2014*, <https://www.bptrends.com/bpt/wp-content/uploads/BPTrends-State-of-BPM-Survey-Report.pdf> (accessed: 18.12.2019); A. Bitkowska, *Biuro zarządzania procesami w teorii i praktyce gospodarczej*, Difin, Warszawa 2018; P. Grajewski, *Organizacja procesowa*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 2016; A. Bitkowska, *Od klasycznego do zintegrowanego zarządzania procesowego*, C.H. Beck, Warszawa 2019.
- 2 T. Hernaes, *Influence of strategic approach to BPM on financial and non-financial performance*, “Baltic Journal of Management” 2012, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 376–396; R.K.L. Ko, S.S.G. Lee, E.W. Lee, *Business process management (BPM) standards: a survey*, “Business Process Management Journal” 2009, vol. 15, no. 5, pp. 744–791; B. Niehaves et al., *BPM capability development – a matter of contingencies*, “Business Process Management Journal” 2014, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 90–106.

development<sup>3</sup>. What also follows is the assessment of business process maturity<sup>4</sup>. By implementing the concept of business process management, the enterprise is forced to update its business model, accelerate the dynamics of change adoption, and ensure the new rules and principles that respond to the changing demands and expectations of customers. To introduce changes more effectively, some process-oriented enterprises establish business process management offices which help with the implementation of process and design solutions. This article aims to identify, based on the course of action observed in Polish companies, an implementation area of organizational changes for fuller adherence to the requirements of process management. One of these measures concerns the changes with particular emphasis on the creation of business process management offices in organizations. To better determine the actual steps taken in this respect by companies, a survey was conducted giving rise to a number of conclusions and recommendations. To this end, literature review and analysis of personal research findings from the 2019 research study conducted in Poland are used in the article.

## Change adoption and the functioning of a business process management office in modern enterprises

The multidimensionality of process management requires additional solutions, in particular changes, including organizational, which will facilitate the implementation and operation of the adopted business model. An inherent solution in process-oriented organizations is change management and appropriate staff training. To make changes, and particularly those related to economic processes, the organization may use simple improvement solutions conducted by individual employees or teams within the current operation model<sup>5</sup>. Changes can be adopted within the framework of process management, using to this end both simple improvements

3 D. Nadarajah, S.L. Kadir, *Measuring Business Process Management using business process orientation and process improvement initiatives*, "Business Process Management Journal" 2016, vol. 22, no. 6, pp. 1069–1078; R. Gabryelczyk, *Samoocena w badaniu dojrzałości procesowej organizacji: studium empiryczne*, "Ekonomika i Organizacja Przedsiębiorstwa" 2016, no. 12, pp. 66–78; R. Brayer-Marczak, S. Nowosielski, *Zdolność organizacji do ciągłego doskonalenia procesów*, [in:] A. Bitkowska, E. Weiss (eds), *Wielowymiarowość podejścia procesowego w zarządzaniu*, Wyższa Szkoła Finansów i Zarządzania w Warszawie, Warszawa 2016, pp. 43–57; A. Jurczuk, *Wieloaspektowa klasyfikacja źródeł niespójności procesów biznesowych*, "Przegląd Organizacji" 2017, no. 4, pp. 4–11.

4 M. Chrapko, *CMMI. Doskonalenie procesów w organizacji*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2010; R. Gabryelczyk, *Samoocena w badaniu dojrzałości procesowej organizacji...*

5 S. Nowosielski, *Procesy i projekty w zarządzaniu zmianą organizacyjną*, "Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu" 2017, no. 463, p. 68.

(with the help of Kaizen, Lean) and projects<sup>6</sup>. Selected guidelines for change adoption in process-oriented enterprises may involve the following assumptions:

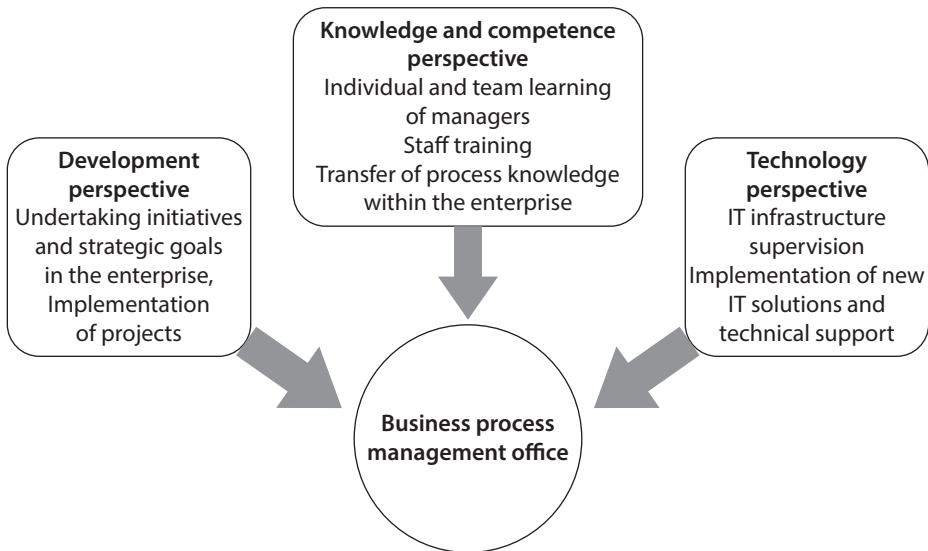
- process owners/managers recommend changes in the area of business process improvement and coordinate work related to business process implementation;
- employees and process teams have an impact on business process improvement, can propose changes and participate in their implementation;
- all employees have access to business process architecture and current business process models;
- business process changes are implemented in the organization and the effects of these changes are measured;
- introduced changes favour the implementation of the organization's main strategic and operational goals;
- systematic review of all business processes is undertaken, methods (tools) are used to optimize these processes.

Underpinning these improvement measures are the so-called bottlenecks identified in processes in the course of ongoing analysis. According to Nowosielski, a process team acting under a process manager (owner) is enough to handle that task. However, should continuous business process improvement be insufficient and more radical process changes were needed that go beyond the competences and powers of these units, a project will need to be implemented.

Enterprises reaching ever higher levels of process maturity encounter many barriers when adopting changes that can be difficult to solve without the help of qualified professionals. This is why many process-oriented enterprises establish a centralized and separate unit, a business process management office<sup>7</sup>, whose goal is to boost the overall performance of processes, provide recommendations and guidelines as to their functioning, and to manage business change projects in the enterprise. It is also a centre lending support in the scope of adopted changes and of sharing process management knowledge while promoting good practices at a company level. Reflecting on the functions of a business process management office, we can point to perspectives such as: development, knowledge and competences, and technology (Figure 1).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 78.

<sup>7</sup> The following concepts can be found in the literature: Business Process Management Office, Business Process Management Center of Excellence.



**Figure 1.** Perspectives for setting up a business process management office in an enterprise

**Source:** personal elaboration.

This unit offers specialized services and process management support related to changes and implementation of projects<sup>8</sup>. Rosemann<sup>9</sup> put forward a comprehensive list of services provided by the business process management office, as shown in Table 1.

- 8 L. Jesus et al., *A Framework for a BPM Center of Excellence*, 2009, <https://www.bptrends.com/publicationfiles/FOUR%2009-09-ART-Framework%20for%20BPM%20Ctr%20Excellence-Jesus%20et%20al.pdf> (accessed: 18.12.2019); C. Richardson, *Process Governance Best Practices: Building a BPM Center of Excellence*, <https://www.bptrends.com/process-governance-best-practices-building-a-bpm-center-of-excellence/> (accessed: 18.12.2019); M. von Rosing, H. von Scheel, A.-W. Scheer, *The Complete Business Process Handbook*, Morgan Kaufman, Amsterdam – Boston – Heidelberg – London – New York – Oxford – Paris – San Diego – San Francisco – Singapore – Sydney – Tokyo 2015; J. Boots, *BPM Organization and Personnel – Part 1: Building a BPM Support Group that Creates Value*, 2011, <https://www.bptrends.com/publicationfiles/12-06-2011-ART-%20BPM%20Org%20and%20Personnel%20-%20Part%201%20-%20Boots.pdf> (accessed: 18.12.2019); P. Harmon, C. Wolf, *Business Process Centers of Excellence Survey*, 2012, <http://www.bptrends.com/reports/2012-BPTrends-CoE-Survey-3.pdf> (accessed: 18.12.2019).
- 9 M. Rosemann, *The Service Portfolio of a BPM Center of Excellence*, [in:] J. vom Brocke, M. Rosemann (eds), *Handbook on Business Process Management 2*, Springer, Berlin 2010, pp. 267–284.

**Table 1.** Services provided by the business process management office

Type of service	Characteristics
Process management maturity assessment	Marked by an evolutionary development path that allows the transition from the level of inconsistent, uncoordinated activities to the stage of ordered and managed processes in the organization in accordance with selected maturity models.
Strategic dissemination	Serves the implementation of the company's goals, includes defined relationships of customers, suppliers and other business partners in the aspect of process management.
Business process modeling	Creating process models involves the use of various IT tools using standard notation.
Business process library management	Concerns supervision and coordination of different versions of process models.
Business process improvement	Requires specialist knowledge and competences to improve the functioning of processes, in particular basic ones, often labour-intensive activities that do not lead to immediate positive financial and economic effects.
Designing information systems	Involves the planning and implementation of modules dedicated to specific stages of process management.
Business process automation	Enables supporting individual activities in processes through IT systems.
Change management in business processes	Involves the implementation of change management in individual processes and in the entire process system.
Business process project management	Enables the implementation of support for projects improving the process management system.
Business process supervision	Processes are measured using the balanced scorecard, can be part of the system for monitoring and assessing the status of an organization.
Audit of business processes	Consists of scheduled and regular assessment of all aspects of the process (effectiveness, efficiency, or supply of resources). The internal audit may cover many aspects of business operation and various processes (basic, auxiliary, management).
Measuring business process performance	Processes measured in relation to strategic goals and assumptions.
Business process monitoring	Measurement of processes requires a formalized procedure for data collection and interpretation.
Business process management training for employees	Training for employees to help them understand the underpinnings of process management, process modeling in accordance with selected notations.
Business process portfolio management	A project portfolio is a collection of projects or programs that have been grouped together to facilitate effective management and achievement of strategic goals. Projects in the portfolio are linked in a certain way, usually institutionally, financially, or with reference to time or site.

**Source:** personal elaboration based on: M. Rosemann, *The Service Portfolio of a BPM Center of Excellence*, [in:] J. vom Brocke, M. Rosemann (eds), *Handbook on Business Process Management 2*, Springer, Berlin 2010, pp. 267–284.

The range of services presented in Table 1 is rather extensive while not all services are fully provided by a business process management office. Over time, the scope of services increases depending on the company's needs and the development of organizational maturity. Business process management offices are also responsible for the internal promotion of knowledge about process management as such, which they create, accumulate and distribute by organizing training sessions or workshops (e.g. dedicated IT tools, soft process management, methods and tools used in improving process solutions). Preservation of business process and design knowledge is stored in databases (e.g. project documentation, project experience registers, process models, process experience registers, performance indicators). In the case of many processes being implemented in an enterprise, difficulties may arise due to inconsistencies in process designs and process management practices, which themselves stem from a lack of coordination and inconsistent management of the process environment, including knowledge management and intra-organizational learning. For this reason, the business process management office supports the implementation of business processes, enables the implementation of projects improving the business process management system overall and acts as the integrator of the process environment and also the coordinator of the knowledge management system.

Measures aimed at institutionalizing business process management initiatives and consolidating the benefits they entail throughout the enterprise require establishing a business process management office. In making that decision, the question must be answered about the value such a solution will add to the enterprise, bearing in mind that its main role is to actively support business process management at many levels: organizational, social, technological and knowledge. The proposed solution will bring benefits in the form of a more effective implementation of business processes and projects in the company. Establishing a business process management office may be necessary due to the creation of informal networks of practitioners and specialists in solving complex problems or due to the difficulty in acquiring and distributing knowledge. An argument in favour of business process management offices is that they relieve process teams from tasks involving knowledge exchange, especially investing significant resources in methods of knowledge exchange and transfer.

Along with the changes, more projects and new initiatives, and the development of process maturity that comes with it, the demand for new specialists also increases. The process management office gathers various professionals: these are process managers, project managers, process architects, business analysts, process analysts, process designers, HR specialists. They should all have knowledge and skills in the field of change management, knowledge of process management,

skills in managing complex projects, communication skills, be task-driven, able to solve problems and to motivate a team of lower-rank employees. Their tasks may include: participation in the work of analytical teams in the field of business process management, holding workshops aimed at developing the target form of business processes, their reflection and modeling, drafting analysis and implementation documentation in the field of business process management, participation in analytical work on the integration of implemented business processes with universities' IT systems.

Process-oriented enterprises implement permanent changes. An indispensable resource in change implementation are employees – their knowledge, experience and competences. One of the main areas of responsibility of a business process management office is to provide the right employees with the knowledge and experience necessary to complete projects and business processes related to change management. Because of that, business process management offices are held accountable for making decisions and defining the services, architecture, standards, and rules of continuous business process management. Through their existence, they support the implementation of strategic initiatives, ensure the provision of infrastructure resources and provide specialized process implementation services throughout the enterprise. They also have their say in: defining and implementing process architecture and process management systems in cooperation with senior and middle management, conducting quality audits, managing project teams in change projects, process optimization, managing a team of process specialists, defining the rules of the business process management system and its relationship with other management systems, conducting business process analyses for handling new products forming part of the process. As argued by Nowosielski, the subject of transformational changes is usually the key processes of the organization, but also of the entire business process architecture, both in relation to specific entities – supply chain links – and the entire chain. In the meantime, changes introduced as part of continuous improvement concern individual processes and/or their selected activities<sup>10</sup>.

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10 S. Nowosielski, *Procesy i projekty...*, p. 75.

## Implementing organizational changes in process-oriented enterprises – personal research results

Our research from 2019 analyzed the responses given to the questions about actual measures, or steps, taken by enterprises as part of improving business process management in the context of change management. We were particularly interested in the issue of creating separate organizational units specializing in process management. The survey covered enterprises operating in Poland. The research sample was selected through purposive sampling and included only those enterprises with established business process management. The research technique used in the study was a questionnaire survey addressed to business process management specialists, business process owners and business process experts. The survey was completed correctly by a total of 121 process-managed enterprises.

Changes in process-managed organizations are marked by the continuity of their implementation. Among the drivers of business process improvement, and therefore the improved performance of processes, participants indicated as key the human factor, meaning employees (business process managers, employees forming part of business process teams) along with important technical and organizational solutions. Table 2 shows the measures indicated by the analyzed organizations while column 3 reports survey results showing the actual measures taken by process-managed enterprises to improve processes and successfully pursue a process approach within the organization.

**Table 2.** Measures taken by enterprises to improve processes and implement a process approach

Code	Factor/measure taken by the organization	Responses (%)
ZP_1	Change proposals can be submitted by any employee	55.74%
ZP_2	Change proposals can only be submitted by managers	12.30%
ZP_3	There is a dedicated unit/team/position responsible for process improvement	37.70%
ZP_4	There is an internal knowledge portal for process management in the organization	22.13%
ZP_5	Managers have been trained in process management	24.59%
ZP_6	Employees have been trained in process management	21.31%
ZP_7	Employees are informed about process management implementation on an ongoing basis	20.49%

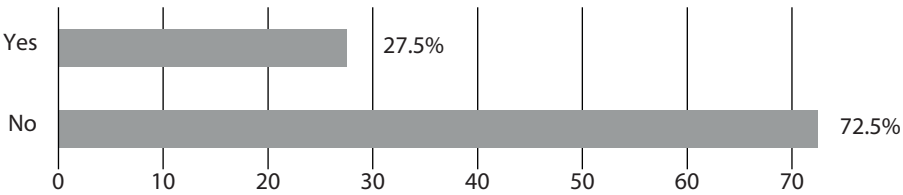
**Source:** personal elaboration based on empirical research conducted in 2019.

Referring to the results in Table 2, it is clear that enterprises focus primarily on making employees aware of their importance in implementing a process



approach. This includes communicating to them a possibility of reporting improvements and changes in the currently implemented processes, regardless of their function (managerial or operative) – a direct reference to Lean Management where problems arising during a process (the concept originally focused on manufacturing processes, but it can be referred to any process in the organization) are first noticed at the place of their origin. In practice it means that the first person to notice an irregularity or the possibility of a different, better solution to a problem is the person directly involved in the implementation of the process. Hence, it is not surprising that more than half (55.74%) of the respondents emphasize the importance of cooperation with employees in process improvement, and **even less surprising due to the fact it** has become common knowledge in Polish business management practice. Further on, the study found that in every fifth enterprise there is an internal portal which aims to provide employees with knowledge about process management and process orientation in the organization. Companies also value training employees in knowledge management, both operative (21.31%) and managerial (24.59%). However, what is particularly telling given the nature of this research is that as many as 37.7% of the surveyed organizations have a dedicated business process improvement unit. For the purposes of this article, the name adopted for this department is business process management office.

Among the questions there was information about the existence of knowledge portals for business process management and the implementation of this concept in organizations. Knowledge portals can take a variety of forms, which is why the following question referred specifically to business process knowledge repositories within the organization, meaning related to its direct activity (Figure 2). However, dedicated repositories were found only in 27.5% of the organizations, with the rest storing process knowledge in a different way. The research does not identify how it is stored but it should be viewed as a premise for a further in-depth investigation using an interview format in order to be more precise than a survey.



**Figure 2.** Existence of business process repositories in the analyzed enterprises  
**Source:** own elaboration based empirical research conducted in 2019.

To examine the impact of individual factors previously listed in Table 1 on the improvement of organizational processes, a study of their correlation, meaning

mutual statistical effect, was conducted. Although correlation does not necessarily indicate a causal relationship, its analysis provides a rich insight into the mutual changes occurring between the analyzed factors, their strength and direction. This information should be enough for an initial stage of research such as the one shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 3.** Correlation analysis for the analyzed factors

	STRAT	ZP_1	ZP_2	ZP_3	ZP_4	ZP_5	ZP_6	ZP_7
STRAT	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
ZP_1	0.18	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
ZP_2	0.24	–0.04	1	–	–	–	–	–
ZP_3	–0.17	–0.31	0.06	1	–	–	–	–
ZP_4	0.11	–0.04	0.19	0.31	1	–	–	–
ZP_5	0.10	0.03	0.37	0.20	0.21	1	–	–
ZP_6	0.20	0.28	0.36	0.12	0.22	0.41	1	–
ZP_7	0.25	–0.10	0.25	0.03	0.16	0.18	0.06	1

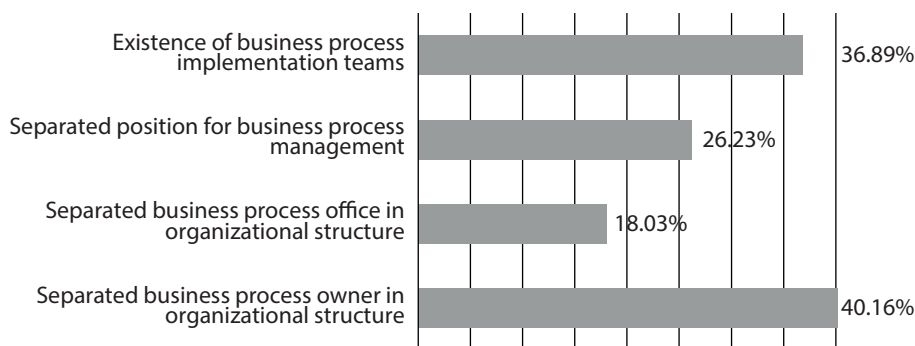
**Source:** own elaboration based empirical research conducted in 2019.

The data in Table 3 shows that a correlation of moderate strength appears only for a few variables. The goal here was to examine the relationship between the factors described in Table 2 and the STRAT factor determining the degree of implementation of the business process improvement strategy in the organization. However, it occurred there are clear-cut correlations between the factors stating that changes can be proposed by the manager (ZP\_2) and that information on business process management implementation is provided to employees on an ongoing basis (ZP\_7). These are certainly interesting conclusions that may pinpoint the real importance of providing information and knowledge about the progress of implementing business process management in an organization – an activity that consolidates process orientation in employees and reinforces their focus on this aspect of company management. As a result, “process thinking” can grow to become a daily routine.

An interesting correlation is also that between ZP\_3 (existence of a dedicated business process management unit) and ZP\_1, (changes proposed by all employees). In this case, a negative correlation can be observed, meaning the office existence “relieves” employees from thinking about improving processes and submitting their own suggestions. This may also indicate constantly emerging communication problems between the business process management office and the employees. The data in Table 2 also clearly reflects the essence of employee and manager training (ZP\_5 and ZP\_6, respectively), as this is a factor correlated with the fact of proposing improvements. Interestingly, however, the people who are more active

in reporting ideas for business process improvement are managers, but it can still be assumed that training all employees improves communication within working teams and between the manager and the employees. However, these remain merely hypotheses that will require further, in-depth research.

Implementation of business process management offices in organizations is not easy, since – as already stressed in the previous section of this paper – it entails changes not only at a structural level, but also in the very way processes are implemented in the organization itself (Figure 3). The fact of having separate departments dealing with business process management results from a strong process orientation and represents a shift towards pursuing a strategy of continuous improvement and increasing process efficiency. However, as suggested by the literature review and the observations made in this study, the will to improve organizational processes can take various forms, a business process management office being one of them.

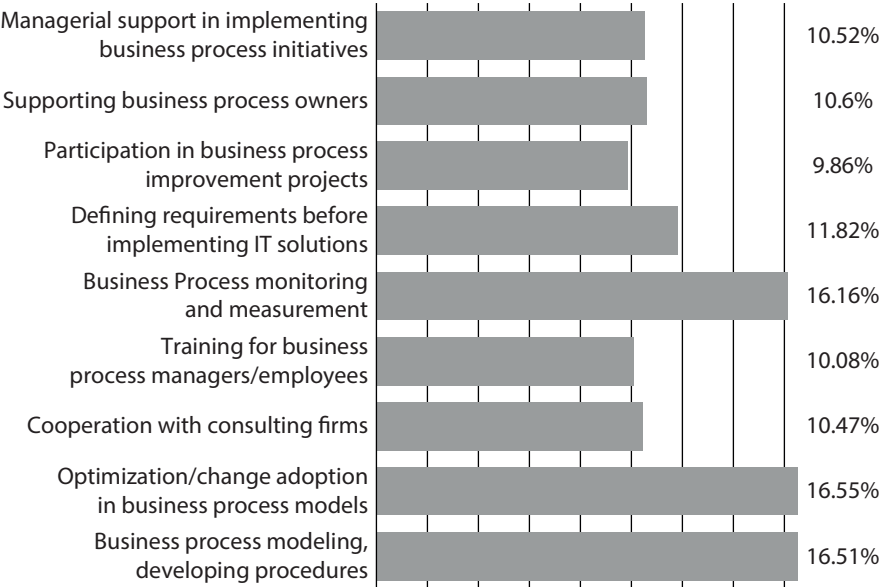


**Figure 3.** Organizational solutions adopted in enterprises

**Source:** personal elaboration based empirical research conducted in 2019.

Figure 3 lists the responses given to the questions about the actual measures taken by Polish enterprises at an organizational level. As can be seen, the most common action is to establish separate business process owners and business process management teams. Only 26.23% of the surveyed enterprises have a separate position for process management while the business process management office only appears in 18%.

Establishing a business process management office is a crucial step in the building of integrated process management. Services provided by business process offices seem important, too. Respondents mainly pointed to business process modeling (30.51%), optimization support and change adoption in business process models (26.55%), business process monitoring and measurement (23.16%), training for business process managers (18.08%) and cooperation with consulting firms (21.47%) (Figure 4).



Note: Respondents could select multiple answers.

**Figure 4.** Tasks of a business process management office in the organization

**Source:** personal study based on empirical research conducted in 2019.

The research clearly shows that process-oriented companies in Poland are slowly gaining experience in the building and operation of business process offices, even if their importance is not always well embedded into the organizational structure and employees' minds, as clearly shown by the correlation analysis. This may be due to the fact these offices are relatively new units that are still in the development phase. We are also inclined to believe that a parallel study conducted again in two years' time would report different results, therefore allowing forecasts. Our deliberations and research signal a need to strengthen thinking and procedural action as well as to further train managers in this area by supporting specialized units in the organization.

## Conclusions

The implementation of a processes-oriented approach in organizations and the continuous improvement of processes is a multi-stage task. Enterprises with an established market position are taking a number of steps towards implementation in process orientation. However, it is neither quick nor easy. It requires numerous adaptations and significant changes both in the organization's structures and the way it functions. An important, if not pivotal, element in the adaptation process

are people who are both a carrier and recipient of change. An example of a measure adopted at the stage of implementing process orientation is the establishment of a business process management office.

The task of the business process management office is to institutionalize process initiatives and consolidate the benefits arising from implementing process management. It is a specialized organizational unit established to gather and develop business process knowledge along with supporting the implementation of individual processes. The growing interest of managers in having a management office indicates the need to consider this problem in research. A business process management office is, after all, a complex and long-term undertaking requiring the involvement of many specialists; it requires proper preparation and readiness to incur additional costs on the part of the enterprise. As a venture, it can happen to be difficult in practice given the significant commitment required from the management and the resources needed to hire the right people or train selected employees. The human factor can also be an obvious limitation, as clearly reflected in the findings of this study. A professional approach to building a business process management office will make processes more efficient and effective while maintaining the required quality standards and will therefore help the company gain a competitive advantage in the market.

The results indicate that process management is inseparable from change management. Changes are implemented in a planned and informed way, hence the need to transfer knowledge, develop it, train employees, create knowledge repositories for process improvement, and establish business process management offices. This is all undoubtedly a positive experience. However, it is not something that can be conducted overnight. Introducing organizational changes has numerous consequences, mainly observed in employee response. There is a risk that an emerging business process management office will become burdened with the whole initiative and responsibility for process improvement instead of being an expert support body. Its goal should be to propel the development of knowledge and process initiatives by providing support in the implementation of new solutions. Over time, such an office can determine the success or failure of process management initiatives, but it must always be fully integrated with the entire business process management and geared towards both economic and social aspects. The findings discussed in this paper may be a reference point for managers in the adoption of centralized solutions supporting the process approach through setting up a business process management office, while the lack of relevant publications in Polish source literature prompts the need for further scientific and research exploration.

This study has a number of limitations, some of which have been highlighted in the previous sections. Notwithstanding, emphasis should be placed on future

research directions which have emerged along the way, such as why only 55.74% of the enterprises stated that each of their employees is encouraged to participate in improving business processes. This value would perhaps not be surprising were it not for the fact that the research sample was selected randomly. Another interesting point of departure for future research may also be the cooperation of working teams and the preferred flow paths for submissions pointing to process improvement. These and other more detailed issues require additional targeted research, or even cyclical analyses, to identify the emerging trends.

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## Abstract

Enterprises adapt their activities and structures to the requirements of the environment. One such measure, aimed at a more complete implementation of environmental requirements, is the adoption of process orientation. To this end, organizations take a number of different steps, one of them being to establish a business process management office to support various internal initiatives and thus strengthen the overall performance of the organization. The aim of this article is to present, based on personal research, the actual measures taken by Polish process-managed enterprises. This study attempts to indicate, against the backdrop of the research, the course of action prevalent in these measures and the resulting restrictions.

**Keywords:** change management, business process management, business process management office