

Reduce Risk with Business Process Management

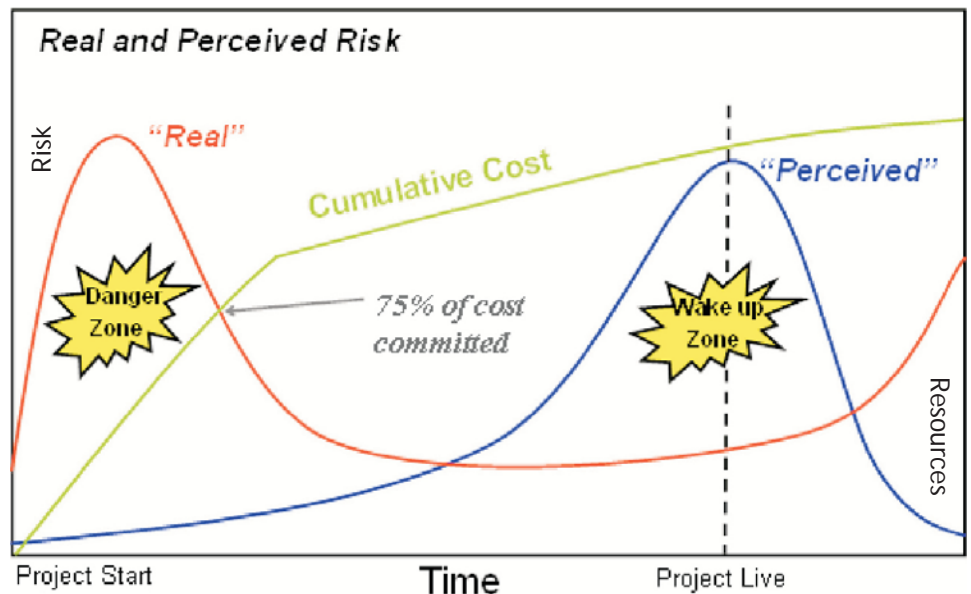
Capture the knowledge... Business benefits come from improved processes. Processes can only be improved by understanding what works now, and what might be improved. At the heart of this improvement lies the ERP system - starting with an intelligent implementation and followed by educated use.

A valuable asset of any company is the knowledge accumulated by its employees. Contained in this knowledge, built on day by day, is the way core processes work, how these processes flow and how the workforce carries them out. These processes interact with all aspects of the organisation, including daily operations, use of business software, ongoing training, auditing and compliance, and delivery of successful projects.

The biggest risk to an implementation project is a failure to understand these business processes properly when defining the scope. To define the scope of a project properly, it is essential that this knowledge is captured, documented and maintained. A purpose built tool makes this straightforward and easy. A business modelling exercise should be regarded as the foundation for the rest of the project.

Modelling business processes has many benefits including structuring the contributions and involvement of end-users, achieving better scope definition and more effective testing and training. In terms of change management it improves the 'buy-in' and adoption of the new system.

The truth about project risk



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The Whitehouse Difference
Whitehouse has experienced business analysts who understand project methodology and can efficiently document and review business processes. These consultants bring operational and functional experience in their respective fields.

When undertaking Business Process Modelling, Whitehouse's preferred tool is Nimbus Control 2007, which is ideal to develop comprehensive models that are easy for business users to understand.

The result of working with Whitehouse on business process modelling is a clear, understandable, easy-to-maintain process model to manage business processes and provide a sound, low risk basis for the implementation or upgrade of an ERP system.

The risks in a project

A Standish Group survey of 8,000 software projects found that the average project exceeded its planned budget by 90 percent and its schedule by 120 percent.

It also found that three of the most common reasons for failure were incomplete requirements, changing requirements and lack of user involvement. The critical time where these failures mostly occur is at the beginning of a project as the diagram over leaf illustrates. In other words, when and how the project is defined is a source of risk.

Process modelling addresses these three issues and massively reduces the early risks to the project: by recording the existing processes and developing the new processes with the end-users; by documenting resources, metrics and the relationships between them; and by describing the activities, roles and accountabilities for each person involved.

Risk reduction - Step 1:

Documenting existing business processes

Very few organisations have up-to-date, documented business processes. Those that have typically use Word, Visio or another mapping tool. This is an inefficient method because it does not facilitate the updating of the models as the business processes change over time, and the maps can be difficult for the business user to understand.

The benefit of documenting business processes in a powerful, purpose-built tool is that it ensures these processes are reflected correctly in information systems. It also allows easy maintenance. Ideally, mapping business processes is done before the start of the implementation project. It is never too late, however, and can be done during or after the implementation and still yield benefits.

In structured, interactive workshops with the business users, the tool is used to map the current processes quickly, note issues with them, and capture comments and suggestions for improvements. Other documents and data such as URLs, screens, forms and data tables can also be attached to the models, ensuring all information is kept together and ready to develop the new processes. This approach ensures good user buy-in, better scoping and helps with adoption of the new system.

Risk reduction - Step 2:

Planning and implementing new processes

New business processes can then be developed, based on the agreed definition of current processes, incorporating captured issues and comments. Reports enable new and old processes to be compared to identify changes easily.

Risk reduction - Step 3:

Driving your project with process modelling

These new processes and specific business requirements drive functional specifications, test scripts and the development of end-user training material.

The model provides an end-to-end view of the process that ensures testing is faster, more relevant, consistent and complete. Training is based on live processes, with links to supporting software screens and transactions.

Once the system and processes are implemented, having the tool in place allows business processes and on-going user training to evolve, reflecting the changes in the business as they occur. At all times the tool gives access to accurate, documented up-to-date processes.

It is these improved processes that enable better management and control of the business.

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