Romanian Market Acceptance for Business Process Management Skills Development

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Abstract

The paper presents a Business Process Management (BPM) training program initiative (and particular its market acceptance and impact) developed in the context of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme, project no. LLP-LdV-ToI-2010-RO-010, built in an international partnership (Slovenia-Romania-Austria). The experience (wisdom, knowledge, information) gained by a Slovenian group of trainers in building, disseminating and practically implementing a BPM training program has been transferred (and adapted) to Romania, using the basic knowledge already existing in the field. The main ideas debate in the paper are: (1) a brief description of the BPM concept and a short overview of the existing training programs on the market; (2) presentation of the proposed CertiBPM training program structure; (3) research results regarding the Romanian market acceptance of the CertiBPM training program based on the participants/trainees feed-back collection and process (marketing survey); (4) Conclusions and lessons learned.

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1. Introduction

In the last years Business Process Management (BPM) has advanced to one of the most sustainable management approaches that cover organizational, cultural and information technology related methodologies and solutions leading to a wide variety of BPM adoptions. Today’s existing approaches, methods and tools are able to better model and simulate the reality of business processes [9].

Modern companies approach in the field of BPM is related to continuous improvement processes strategies and approaches to gain those capabilities needed to innovate (re-energize) performances and deliver the value in accordance with the global market demands. In addition, BPM makes organization agile course corrections, embeds Six Sigma quality and reduce cumulative costs across the value chain (Figure 1). It pursues strategic initiatives with confidence, including mergers, consolidation, alliances, acquisitions, outsourcing and global expansion. It has been proof that through BPM is the only way to achieve these objectives with a high accountability and management control (and confidence) [11].

BPM is defined as a holistic organizational management practice, which is focused on the identification, definition, analysis, continuous improvement, execution, measurement, monitoring and analysis of intra- and inter-organizational business processes. BPM requires top management understanding and involvement, process-aware information systems, well-defined accountability and a culture receptive to business processes. It is based on a process architecture, which captures the interrelationships between the key business processes and the enabling support processes and their alignment with the strategies, goals and policies of an organization [10].

In addition, BPM approach or initiative implementation is the responsibility of the senior managers. They have to successfully deal with a change management process into their organizations (managing transition). According to Harmon in 2007 [5], the most difficult stage of the process is the Implementing Level (Figure 2) focus on the role of information technology (IT) and human resources (HR) play in developing the soft assets required to execute the business process. In this level IT development is related to activities as: BPM software and suites, ERP support and database development; HR is related to job design, training and development of new skills and knowledge management.
For an efficient and effectiveness management of the Implementing Level of BPM initiative, managers have to pay attention to their own training and also, to their employees training programs in the field [5], [13]. According to BPTrends Report in 2012 diagnosis of the training activity in the field of BPM, several questions identify particularities of the phenomena in the last years [12].

One interesting aspect of the BPTend survey in 2012 is related to BPM spending. In 2011, as in past years, more than half the respondents said they were spending less than $500,000. In addition, have been identified that there has been an overall decline in how much organizations are spending on BPM (because of the economic crisis). The decline has not been precipitous; some companies have managed to avoid cuts, but most companies have responded to the economic slowdown by cutting spending and BPM has not been exempt. The answers of 29% of companies confirm their cutting budgets but others continued their BPM efforts [12].

Since 2009, most of the companies recognize that BPM training and conference attendance dropped dramatically due to their efforts for travel and training reduction budgets. In conclusion, most organizations maintained their BPM efforts and will be ready to scale up their efforts in 2012 when budgets begin to increase [12].

One of the questions diagnoses if managers are trained to do process redesign and to manage processes. Looking at various populations (the sample consists of 399 respondents who participate in the survey; members and/or readers of BPTrends and reflect the perspectives of a broad base of business managers, BPM consultants, BPM practitioners, and business analysts from a broad cross section of international organizations interested in BPM.), it has been identified that Europeans are more likely to have managers trained Most Times (20%) or Always (18%). Eighteen percent of companies that have made a strategic commitment to BPM say they Always have their managers trained. North American organizations, on the other hand, only report that 4% Always have managers trained in process (See Table 1) [12].
Table 1. Are Managers Trained to Analyze, Redesign or Manage Processes? (According to the BPTrends Report in 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of answers</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never (0%)</td>
<td>42/13%</td>
<td>55/20%</td>
<td>36/14%</td>
<td>70/19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally (1-30%)</td>
<td>121/37%</td>
<td>135/50%</td>
<td>127/49%</td>
<td>150/40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently (31 – 60%)</td>
<td>96/29%</td>
<td>48/18%</td>
<td>55/21%</td>
<td>73/19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most time (61-99%)</td>
<td>54/16%</td>
<td>30/11%</td>
<td>35/13%</td>
<td>55/15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always (100%)</td>
<td>15/5%</td>
<td>3/1%</td>
<td>8/3%</td>
<td>28/7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>328/100%</td>
<td>271/100%</td>
<td>261/100%</td>
<td>376/100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to these conclusions, there have been identified lot of training and consulting organizations, vendors, offer BPM training programs that are able to support companies and their employees (course attendees) during the change management process required for the BPM implementation. In the last few years, several BPM related certifications appeared on the market, delivered by: Object Management Group Certified Expert in BPM certification [8], ABPMP [1], International Process and Performance Institute [7], BPM Council [2].

Furthermore, vendors in the field can support specific training sessions dedicated to their tools exploitation [10]. Furthermore, the market competition research has underlined a few initiatives of these organizations in the Central and Eastern European countries, and very less in Romania [4], [10].

These observations, conclusions and facts have conduct us to develop and implement a BPM training program adapt for the Romanian market, using the support of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme, project no. 2010-1-RO1-LEO05-07445, financial support and knowledge exchange environment development in an international partnership Slovenia-Romania-Austria [3]. The experience (wisdom, knowledge, information) gained by a Slovenian group of trainers (mainly located in Maribor) in building, disseminating and practically implementing a BPM training program has been transferred to Romania, using the basic knowledge already existing in the field, by means of a group of Romanian trainers (located in Timisoara).

The main ideas that will be approached in the paper are:

1. the brief description of the CertiBPM training program developed as an innovative product on the market;
2. Debated regarding the Romanian market acceptance and implementation of the CertiBPM training program based on the participants feed-back collection and process (marketing survey);
3. Conclusions and lessons learned.

2. The CertiBPM Training and Certification Program

The motivation for the CertiBPM project (LLP-LdV/TOI/10/RO/010) lies on the Romanian market training needs satisfaction in the field of BPM. The competencies improving processes for the employees of Romanian companies will have a positive impact upon their work results and efficiency. One of the steps towards this improvement is to educate employees, industry representatives in the BPM field of knowledge. The CertiBPM project activities are related to the Transfer of Innovation from Slovenia and Austria to the Romanian market, with the support of the European Certification and Qualification Association (ECQA) and its existing infrastructure (Moodle e-learning platform, self-assessment procedure) and guidelines (procedures, rules, indicators for the examination process) [3]. Figure 3 shows the established ECQA procedure for defining the training and certification strategy in the case of a new professional skill development. In the following, we
shall refer to the key elements of this strategy that can be considered as a business model for an organization that is concerned with human resources development.

![Diagram](image)

**Fig. 3. The ECQA procedure for defining a training and certification strategy**

Figure 4 includes the final structure of the CertiBPM training program. Updated learning materials include results of the gap analysis, additional real-world examples from BPM field and learning materials—student notes (PowerPoint slides with notes). Each slide was updated with exhaustive explanations (student notes) as a relevant result of the training materials exploitation during four training sessions in Romania (two sessions in Timisoara and two sessions in Bucharest, the most developed Regions of the country). A printed booklet in English language and a CD were created from PowerPoint slides and student notes; some examples and case studies were included, too.
Finalized training materials will be translated into Romanian language. In the end of 2012, a printed booklet in Romanian language will be created from PowerPoint slides and student notes. Each trainee will receive printed booklet in addition to e-materials (access to the e-learning platform). The CertiBPM program was to design to facilitate both synchronous and asynchronous learning.

3. CertiBPM Training Program Impact on the Romanian Market

3.1. The Research Context and Scenario

This marketing survey was organized and develops in the end of each CertiBPM training sessions that take place in March - April 2012 (three training sessions, nine days of in-class trainings and some webinars on specific important issues). The objectives of each training session (workshops with the formed target groups) are related to the training needs that were identified at the beginning of the CertiBPM skill card design process [4].

The research sample (trainees involved in the program) consists of: project managers (as project managers, CIOs, quality managers, organization managers, process owners, unit leaders, and business analysts), users of different BPM solutions (as employers’ trainers, quality supervisors, IT supervisors, administrators or consulting, human resources managers) and PhD and master students.

The research sample structure (trainees from the West Region of Romania and Bucharest Region) is shown in Table 2.
Table 2. The Research Sample Structure (per type of companies)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of company in the sample</th>
<th>No. of companies/%</th>
<th>No. of trainees/%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Automotive</td>
<td>8 / 16.66%</td>
<td>31 / 25.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistics (transportation and distributions)</td>
<td>7 / 14.58%</td>
<td>12 / 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software development</td>
<td>5 / 10.42%</td>
<td>18 / 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric and Telecommunication</td>
<td>5 / 10.42%</td>
<td>18 / 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>8 / 16.66%</td>
<td>15 / 12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University (master and PhD. students)</td>
<td>3 / 6.25%</td>
<td>10 / 8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other industries (financial services, banks and travel agencies, public administration)</td>
<td>12 / 25%</td>
<td>15 / 13.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>48 / 100%</td>
<td>119 / 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The group of trainees is representative for the Western Region and Bucharest Region of Romania (the most economic developed Regions). After each training unit the feed-back was collected having in mind two objectives:

1. Identifying what trainees like and do not like during the training activities regarding: the trainer presentation style and his/her rhythms of training;
2. The content of the element that was taught and the impact of the knowledge gained for their professional life and organization.

For attending the first research objective, trainees were asked to express free their opinion, in accordance with an interview protocol that consist three main questions: (a) Understanding the course content; (b) The pedagogical methods; (c) Trainer explanations including examples and case studies. For the second objective, a questionnaire was design taking into consideration Stephen Covey’s Organizational Effectiveness (1997, citied by [6]) as shown in Figure 5.

Fig. 5. The Questionnaire Structure
Stephen Covey’s Organizational Effectiveness is an accepted contemporary Business Model (adapted from Hegedus, 2007) that considers organizational system as a part of a larger system that can be imagine by analyzing the organization’s external environment actors. This dynamic model is the basis of systems thinking and provides the holistic basis from which true understanding of organizational performance is derived.

The designed questionnaire consists of 5 main questions. The trainees were asked to express their opinion about the organizational impact of the CertiBPM training program content, related to the following aspects: (1) Mission, vision, values and strategy; (2) Business operation model; (3) Organization behavior and culture; (4) Organizational results in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and agility; (5) Customer and stakeholder needs. For each answer to the questions below, a Likert scale with 5 point was use to quantified the trainees answers (1 – categorical no; 2 – no; 3 – sometime, partial no and yes; 4 – yes; 5 – strongly support).

3.2. Debates Regarding the Research Results

Figure 6 shows the feed-back impressions regarding the pedagogical strategy used for in-class and on-line training (including the webinars for applicative issues and demonstrations) followed the content of the CertiBPM training program. The results expressed the trainees’ opinions related to the first research objective and the answers underline the trainees’ satisfaction for the CertiBPM program.

Fig. 6. The Target Group Feed-Back after the CertiBPM Training Program Related to Each Training Element (see Figure 4)

Regarding the second research objective, the general question was: How does the CertiBPM training program affect the following aspects of your organizational effectiveness? In Table 3 are shown the results given by trainees and short comments, conclusions. There have been included only the total answers given to enable the determination of the trend line equation. This demonstrate more accurate the training impact and acceptance on the market. In addition, this approach is developed in the context of the management development model that require new and dynamic professional skill to better satisfy the business needs, the organization needs and each employees individual needs.
Table 3. The Impact of the CertiBPM Training Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Issue Analyze</th>
<th>Research Result</th>
<th>Comments; Conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mission, vision, values and strategy</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Graph" /> ( y = -4.8354x^2 + 25.999x ) ( R^2 = 0.6641 )</td>
<td>The answers tendency shows there is a strongly support of the top management teams for clear and decisive objectives when implementing BPM initiative. Trainees were unable to see the CertiBPM utility for their organization mission, vision and strategy definition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Business operation model</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Graph" /> ( y = 5.2671x^2 - 11.62x ) ( R^2 = 0.9704 )</td>
<td>The answer shows that there is an increase tendency for the components of the business operation model and that preserve freedom of action and enhance commitment. Trainees recognize the CertiBPM utility for this organizational issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Organization behavior and culture</td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Graph" /> ( y = 1.9814x^2 + 0.8944x ) ( R^2 = 0.8711 )</td>
<td>The employees’ answers show a positive trend for improving organization behavior and culture through the knowledge of CertiBPM training program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Organization results in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and agility</td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Graph" /> ( y = 4.3571x^2 - 9.0429x + 3.2 ) ( R^2 = 0.99 )</td>
<td>The trainees’ answers recognize that their knowledge gained in the CertiBPM training program will contribute to their company results in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and agility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Customer and Stakeholder Needs</td>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Graph" /> ( y = 5.6429x^2 - 16.957x + 12.6 ) ( R^2 = 0.9912 )</td>
<td>The answers show the increase tendency of satisfying the customers and stakeholders needs through the CertiBPM training program knowledge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Conclusions

Through this paper there have been shown a research approach to understand the impact of the CertiBPM program on Romanian market. After a short overview of the BPM concept, there have been debated the problem of training people in the field of BPM. In the second part of the paper, the design process of the improved BPM training program (skill set design of the new profession and the training program structure) so called CertiBPM has been presented. The skill set is the core of each training program according to the ECQA philosophy and guidelines. Second. In the final part of the paper, was presented a marketing survey design and results related to the CertiBPM training program impact upon important Romanian organizations (gather in a representative sample). Using Stephen Covey’s Organizational Effectiveness business model, a questionnaire was built to collect trainees’ opinions. The research results demonstrate a relevant impact of the CertiBPM knowledge transfer in Romanian organizations.

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References