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Human Interactions: The Heart And Soul Of Business Process Management: How People Really Work And How They Can Be Helped To Work Better

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Abstract

Despite advances in business automation over the past

fifty years, the heart and soul of every organization is still its people--without whom the organization will stop dead in its tracks. Yet there is presently no complete way to manage the complex, continually changing work processes carried out by humans--and current work support technologies treat people as if they were cogs in a machine. Frankly, we need to do better. This landmark book combines insights drawn from biology, psychology, social systems theory, and learning theory with a deep understanding of business process analysis to form a complete theory of human work. It's about how we really work, and provides management and information technology techniques that will help us to work better. The book shows how to deal properly with human issues in the workplace, transform the working relationships on which success is founded, and leverage intangible assets. Government agencies need this in order to meet the demands of citizens, and commercial companies need this if they are to survive. In today's world of globalization and extreme competition, it's not satisfied customers you are after--it's never-satisfied customers. In the networked future, repeat business from loyal customers is no longer just the best business; it's the only business. And to get it, you need Human Interaction Management--the breakthrough that changes the rules of business.

HUMAN INTERACTION: THE MISSING LINK IN BUSINESS PROCESS MANAGEMENT

There's a new breed of competitor on the block. In today's uncertain global business world, these fierce new competitors are dominating industries by leveraging the universal connectivity of the Internet with a new category of business technology, Business Process Management (BPM). But the BPM techniques currently available are suitable primarily for activities carried out by machines. What about the many processes centered on the very foundation of commercial success—human-driven processes? After all processes don't do work, people do. Indeed, technology support for human interactions is the missing link in today's BPM systems. Even the early process-based competitors are eager to reinvigorate human-centered work processes, for they know that these are the heart and soul of performance improvement and innovation. So, what is work? What does an information worker actually do all day? Read and write emails, create documents, make phone calls, attend meetings, talk to people, research, think, decide, agree, reject, ... this is the process of work; it's how real work works. But because little of real work is augmented by modern computer systems, how can it be properly managed for greater effectiveness? The solution is not to try and find systems that replace humans --to automate people out of the picture. We are nowhere near the (perhaps mythical) stage at which humans have become irrelevant to the daily functioning of the enterprise. To

the contrary, we need to make the best use of human skills by facilitating how work actually gets done, by real people. Amplifying the work carried out by people not only benefits the enterprise as a whole, but also improves job satisfaction of the individuals who are its life-blood. To amplify human-driven processes, we need to first understand how to formally describe such work, and then capture this understanding in a computer system. This calls for a change in kind in both business process modeling, and the BPM systems being proffered by today's IT vendors. This book examines the true nature of work, and shows how it can be supported by the next generation of BPM systems. Drawn directly from first-hand experience, it's a practical guide, not an exposition of abstract theory. In this groundbreaking book, a high-level discussion, written for business people, is supplemented with a technology focused discussion for enterprise architects and developers, providing them with detailed guidelines for implementing computer support for human-driven processes.

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