Developing an understanding of Processes

 [Name of the Writer]

[Name of the Institution]

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**Abstract**

Development of Processes is about refining an organization or business operations or its way of working by finding and generating the most proficient and up to date processes that result in the best outcomes. Processes development has numerous objectives such as making more effective use of money, work, time, raw materials; refining the quality of products, services, and data; and attending to the needs of the customers. The best-performing corporations can always be seen struggling for constant business process enhancements.

Some businesses prefer to deem capabilities more important than processes. Business Capability is a broader word and contains processes, services, competence, and applications. Processes and their development play a vital role in changing business environments and practices. There are numerous processes that can be developed with changing environments concerning businesses, and most of the times it is indispensable to understand and develop processes to be consistent and competitive with the changing business environments and practices. This paper will first discuss the business processes in detail in order to understand them and then reveal some observable and non-observable processes that can be and should be enhanced and understood to counter any altering business situations and practices and which are consistent with changing business environments.

**Introduction**

A business method or business process is a set of interrelated, structured tasks or activities by machinery or people which is a particular progression in producing a service or a product that aid a specific business objective for a particular consumer or consumers. Business processes take place at all levels of the organization and may or may not be observable to the consumers. A business process can be seen as a flowchart or mind map of a chain of actions with consequential rules. The major advantages of using business processes consist of improved dexterity for reacting to swift market or business environmental changes and practices and improved consumer satisfaction. Process-oriented businesses usually cut down the barriers of structural departments.

In a broad sense, a business process according to (Von Rosing, Scheel & Scheer, 2014) can be categorized into three types,

1. Operational processes
2. Management processes
3. Supporting processes

Operational processes are those that represent the core business and generate the principal value stream, such as, taking orders from consumers, opening an account and developing engineering a component and so on. Management processes are those processes that administer or supervise operational procedures. Management processes include in but not limited to budgetary oversight, corporate governance, employee oversight, productivity and deadline observing, etc. Supporting processes are the ones that support the key operational processes; for instance, recruitment, accounting, safety training, and any technical support, etc.

Another researcher named Kirchmer has to some extent a different approach. According to him, operational processes are those where personnel or employees "get the things done" (Kirchmer et al., 2004). Operational processes focus on appropriately executing the operational errands of an entity. Management processes according to Kirchmer are the ones that guarantee that the operational processes are being executed appropriately and accordingly and this is where managers and supervisors make certain that the work processes are effective and efficient. Lastly, Kirchmer reveals that there is a governance process. Governance process is which make sure the entity is working in accordance to the standard operating procedures and full compliance with obligatory legal set of laws, procedure, and investors expectations; this is the process where executives and top management have to make sure that the "rules and guidelines for business success" are followed strictly (Kirchmer et al., 2004).

There are also many complex business processes especially in manufacturing and technologically advanced organizations. These complex processes can be decomposed into more than a few subprocesses in order to diminish the density or any complexity. These sub-processes will have their features and will also add to achieving the overall goals and objectives of the business. The analysis and breakdown of business processes normally include the modeling or mapping of a process and a sub-process down to the task and activity levels. Processes can be mapped or arranged through multiple numbers of techniques and methods. For example, the "Business Process Modeling Notation" is a business process modeling system that can be used for illustrating a business process in a visualized workflow (Shafer, Smith & Linder, 2005). Whereas decomposing processes into subprocesses or process categories and types can be constructive and valuable, and while doing so special care should be taken as there may be crossovers. In short, all processes of business are part of a fundamentally integrated outcome.

Moreover, business processes can be formal or informal. Formal processes are chiefly essential when there are financial, legal or safety-related reasons for following specific stages. Formal processes are also known as procedures; they are having well-established steps and are documented; for instance, having specific processes for the reception and submissions of invoices, or for instituting affiliations with new customers, standard operating procedures for recruitments and terminations, etc. Informal procedures are usually the ones that the organization has created itself, and might not have been in written form; for instance, ways of carrying out market exploration, steps for meeting specific actions or interactions concerning new leads, improving business processes, inspiring innovations, etc.

One thing that is common in these diverse kinds of processes has that they are all intended to simplify the way that the organization or the workforce operates. When a well-tested and clarified set of steps are followed by everyone, there will be fewer blunders and interruptions, less repeated efforts, and staff and consumers will feel more contented.

**Discussion**

A business process instigates with a mission or an objective and ends with the accomplishment of that objective of providing an outcome that offers customer worth. A process may be decomposed into sub-processes, the specific interior meanings of the process. To understand business processes and its development which are consistent with changing business environments and practices, it is imperative that current trends and changes are of the business working conditions are understood.

Understanding processes and changes symbolize some development. Flexibility and readiness to embrace change make one more valuable. Those organizations that can understand their processes and dependably cope with different prospects and environments are the ones that go ahead in the competition. A manager or an organization may not like all the fluctuations that are happening, but resisting them will not help you succeed. It is always helpful especially in current business scenarios to look on changing environments, its challenges and practices enthusiastically and with an aspiration to learn in order to complete well. When you identify the opportunities shaped by change, you are more equipped to take advantage of them. Change is not something to be afraid of or reluctant to, but something to be welcomed and turn to your improvement and benefit.

**Understanding processes and adapting to change in business environments and practices**

Processes that don't work or are not compatible with changing business environments and practices can lead to several complications. For instance, consumers may criticize poor product class, lack of updated features, or bad service. Associates can get frustrated if processes have lagged, expenses might increase, and resources wasted if businesses do not adapt to current efficient ways, etc. Organizational change due to change in business environment and practices is pervasive today, as organizations struggle to adapt or face a decline in the unpredictable atmospheres of a global financial and political world. The many powerful forces in currently changing business environments are technological innovations, competition, demographics, and professionalism. Being able to react to changing practices and environments is possible if the processes of the organization are adaptable. Organizations might need to shift concentration, amend their goals, reshuffle the workforce roles and duties, and develop various compatible forms.

Understanding the development of business processes is a critical one for any manager, top management or a supervisor. As a manager, the primary measures you can take to understand the development of processes which are consistent with changing business environments and practices include:

* Becoming aware and responsive to your organizational situation and current market trends
* Understanding changes that leading organizations are going through to stay ahead
* Building your skills and knowledge along with staff skills and knowledge that are well-matched with current and future job needs

Organizations should widen their sources of information to discover new ideas. By enhancing their consciousness of change in the environment or practices through readiness to take in new material and processes, an organization will have a distinctive benefit. While collecting information spot the movements which may be indicating prospective changes. The organization should not just react to change once it is spotted but it should be first investigated it in more detail, and the preparation should be made for it.

 Business environments and practices are constantly changing for many reasons such as technological advancements, the taste of consumers, needs and wants, globalization, etc. it is imperative for businesses in such altering business environments that it understand s its processes and keep on developing them accordingly to be relevant and successful in the market. Following are some business-related processes that are important to be understood and either repeated or developed consistently to be consistent with the changing business environments and practices.

**How to stay relevant in a changing business environment**

 From globalization to technology, it’s a truism that today’s prosperous businesses must become accustomed to and embrace speedy change. For an organization to endure, its processes must be compatible with its surroundings, for instance, external economic, social, and political circumstances that can affect the organization's processes, nature, actions, and existence. When the business environments and practices alter, the organization must sooner or later respond, and current situation` this must happen at a swift rate. Those organizations that do not understand their processes and how much their processes are compatible with the current or future business practices and environments are likely to fail in responding to any change.

Some of the most influential forces acknowledged by the businesses and organizational literature are changes in professional roles, the surge in the scientific knowledge, the technological outburst, and the shifting demographics of the workforce around the globe. It is a fact that almost all business atmospheres are in a state of continuing change or uncertainty. Companies must understand how their processes such as operational processes that constitute taking dealing with customers and engineering a product etc.; management processes that govern operational processes, including company governance, worker oversight and budgetary oversight; and supporting processes, which assist the key operational processes such as recruitment, accounting, technical support etc. are congruent with changes in their surrounding environments and respond to these fluctuations sharply, or dynamically foresee changes in prospective new products and services, consumer demographics and prospective technologies, and by this means recreate their processes. It should be known that business practices and environmental changes typically request answers from businesses and they are chances to reform themselves as well as their processes.

 Every organization that wants to stay relevant in changing business environments and practices must develop an understanding of the following business processes. These are the simple and commonly used processes that any business or organization can adopt, consistently monitor or perform. Being able to understand these processes and work on developing them will let the organization deal easily and successfully with changing business environments and practices as they are all consistent with changing business practices and environments.

**Review the problems or challenges**

Every business must review the problems or challenges that is currently facing. These challenges can be in the form of productivity, market share, marketing, workforces, or technology, etc. These items or challenges that the organizations think need to be addressed and described should be noted down. This will aid the business in keeping track of the problems and addressing them. After listing the problems, the business should look for resolving the issues or enhancing its processes. For example a company or business should:

* Reflect on something that can be done more proficiently, economically or with better quality.
* Keep track of (KPI’s) key performance indicators to spot any weaknesses or lags and to recognize what is working well so to retain its quality.
* Look for basic problems along with upcoming challenges or competitions.

**Identify the goals**

Identify the objectives or goals you would like to realize with your business process. Emphasize on developing the efficiency, quality, or cost of your services or products. Consider the future of your business and where you anticipate it. If there are any changes in business mission, vision or any additions, then you must reassess that your goals are still fitting with the vision and mission of the business or not.

**Deciding activities**

List the activities mandatory to achieve business objectives. When deciding activities, it is valuable to reflect on the causes and effects of each activity, how they relate to current trends and practices of the business world. Identify the beginning of the process and cater to the undertakings that lead to the business objectives.

**Supervisor and managers roles**

Supervisors and managers job duties changes with the change in business practices. As participants of an organization’s management team, supervisors or managers need to prepare themselves to adjust productively to fast-changing business environments and change their procedures of dealing with the new ways and work practices of the employees.

 **Maximize the efficiency**

With developments in the business world, every organization will need to maximize the efficiency of their business processes. Assessment should be made to about the current business activities to define which processed or steps in processes are unnecessary and what additions have to be made to comply with the changes. All excessive activities from processes should be deleted. It is imperative to modernize the processes and avoid having excessive or outdated steps as they might become overwhelming to the workforces.

**Optimize processes**

 Look for any processes or activities which could be amended or deleted from the processes to increase competence, superiority, or drop costs. If the order of processes needs to be reorganized or improved to achieve its objectives in the changed scenario, then it should be done promptly. A business must look at its processes and practices from a consumer point of view and consider any ways that could improve the consumer's overall experience and satisfaction.

**Streamlining tasks to improve efficiency**

 An organization or business undoubtedly use lots of business processes each day. Streamlining a process or job means fewer inaccuracies and deferrals. For instance, same steps may be followed each time you resolve a customer complaint, produce a report, manufacture a new product, or contact a new customer; and in the process you may also have come across the consequences of wasteful processes, unhappy customers, stressed coworkers, missed targets, and augmented costs some other complications that dysfunctional processes can produce. That is why it is very important to improve processes not only with changing environments and practices but also when they are not functioning healthily.

**Embrace technology in processes**

Embrace upcoming technological advancements and learn and teach how to use it constructively. New technologies should not be avoided but most often embraced and tried (Bassellier, Reich & Benbasat, 2001). Engagement of technology in business processes can significantly help the business in becoming more productive, cost-effective, and prosperous.

 **Limiting factors**

There are numerous limiting factors related to business and its processes. Consolidating what is acknowledged from the current changes or revolution in business environments can help the organization advance the change process in the near future. If the organization wants to evade a demanding adaptation process, it must improve its capability to anticipate and organize for potential change. The ability to anticipate is the basic element of effective change management.

**Changing the business environment and managers**

The practice has displayed that most of the times managers fail to respond to or anticipate change for multiple reasons effectively. One reason is that the managers merely notice any modifications in their business atmospheres. As a consequence, they are blinded by the modifications that have happened quite surprisingly. Managers frequently miscalculate the importance of changes in business environments and practices, or they wait too long to react, or not react at all. Some managers may anticipate well the changes, but they fail to make necessary changes to the business processes. For managers to constantly monitor business environments and respond accordingly is an important process that must be consistently performed as this process will always be consistent with changing trends.

 **Performance**

Performance improvement is an important business process that has some serious effects on any business. With a change in practices or environments of business, performances changes and often the performance of workforce changes drastically. Thus, it is also imperative for the organization to use different training and development processes to improve their workers' performances and respond accordingly to the changes.

**Effective action and fast respond**

Even when supervisors or management is fully conscious and familiar with the significance of the changes that are happening in the business environments, they may still find it difficult to frame fitting reactions or strategies to avoid any intimidations. A worthy example of how to effectively deal with such a problem is Kodak. Kodak’s management prepared the company and its processes with the adequate flexibility needed to react swiftly to environmental modification of businesses. Failures in organizational development and process understanding limit an organizations adoption and capacity to change. One of the most vital organizational learning concerns is the discrepancy amid higher-level development and lower-level development. Lower-level learning is described by enhancements or improvements of existing understandings, organizational processes, and beliefs. Higher-level learning includes developing entirely new understandings, beliefs, and organizational processes. Lower - level development leads to improvements of prevailing organizational processes and knowledge that permit organizations to decrease per unit costs as collective output rises. Complications ascend when company management give more emphasis to lower-level learning at the expenditure of higher-level learning.

Increase Your Speed. Swiftness and eliminating lags in services is also the development of a process that is vital in changing business scenarios. Superior opportunities come to organizations that fully understands their processed and can react rapidly to changes. Consumers value speed in providing amenities. Organizations that are quick in response and flexible usually lessen the expenses by reducing their time. As a business, you need to uninterruptedly assess your processes and ask the question like how you can shrink the time consumed on work.

 **Act like an entrepreneur.**

To keep consumers satisfied, retain and build a reputation, and make profits in ever-changing business environments, companies should act like entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs continuously look for ways to develop their markets, skills, and to lead the market, invent, etc. Likewise, companies need always to develop their processes, keep an eye on changing markets and ideally renovate or innovate their business processes ahead of time to be competitive and successful. An entrepreneurial approach can also serve the company's managers and workforces by motivating them to keep developing the processes and find ways to cut expenses, enhance productivity, and go out of the way to keep consumers satisfied. An entrepreneurial outlook will help prepare you for many possibilities and make you harmonious with change and adjust easily to it.

 **Resources allocation**

With changes in the environment, some elements become obsolete or less important, and others become more important; resources must be shifted or relocated in such situations. Most businesses allot most of the resources for lower-level employee development rather than higher-level management development. This kind of dispersing of resources is damaging though there are arguments for doing so. The low-level employee development process has an expected and constructive impact on performance. High-level development is more probable to have constructive effects on the economic performance of the business. Lower-level learning and development rely on enhancing current work, whereas higher-level learning and development might offer innovations, new markets, and breakthrough strategies.

**Be a fixer**

There will always be issues and concerns in organizations that ascend from changing circumstances. In noticing these complications, one should not complain about it but work for resolving the complications. To be a fixer, you should isolate the basis of the problem and propose actions to cope with it. Being a fixer is also a process that is present in every situation personally and professionally. Concerning business, being a fixer means that the business continuously fixes its issues and develops its processes.

**Build your skills and keep learning**

Adapting to change regularly demands the efficient use of all your acquired capabilities, skills and processes. Sometimes, adapting to change requires the use of other skills as well, the ones which have not yet have been mastered, learned or thought about. In a rapidly changing business environment, skills and processes also become outdated. To be capable of handling the change effectively, it is crucial to understand what skills do you require more and what processes need to be re-engineered or adopted. Also, which skill sets need to be built. As much skills and up gradation of processes as you can build before the previous skills and processes become obsolete should be acquired. Updated skills and processes in business become essential for survival. An organization or individual cannot stop learning, understanding and upgrading the skills and processes if they want to maintain its value in the altering business marketplaces. You need to take accountability to educate your business processes and yourself. Doing so will aid you in keeping your skills and processes up to date, and it will display an initiative for self-development that helps you become a more evident and feasible entity for a successful future.

This is one of the most vital tips for adapting and reacting to changes as it places you ahead of the curve: predicting changes and putting relevant processes into practice before other people or businesses think to do so. It is essential to keep your skills and business processes fresh and developed; understanding how to learn is also very worth a lesson to let it waste away over time. To be specific, the more you know your operations and how to perform them and the more up to date your skills and your capabilities are in applying them successfully in your business processes and personally as well, the more flexible and flourishing you and your organization will be in any environment.

**Conclusion**

Organizational change is not discretionary to keep pace with commerce or businesses. All corporations, at some point, face substantive changes to some features of their businesses. Management can get themselves ready to settle in successfully in a swiftly altering business atmosphere by following a number of tips as outlined earlier. The most effective way to understand the development of processes which are consistent with changing business environments and practices is to keenly realize what each method comprises of and what do they imply. After getting an understanding of what are these processes one can understand their impacts on business and can easily project if they are consistent with current business environments and not.

Lastly, if the processes are lacking consistency with changing business practices and environments or have become obsolete or might become obsolete, then one can work for developing or enhancing these processes. For any business to be relevant in changing environments, it is indispensable for the business to have relevant, up to date and efficient processes in place. Reviewing the problems and challenges in the processes, deciding activities that results in cost and time effectiveness, updating and improving of manager and supervisor roles, maximize efficiencies in jobs and optimizing processes, embracing contemporary technologies in business processes, allocating relevant and required resources and finally keep learning about, understanding and enhancing your processes are all in other words development of business processes, and all of them are kinds of processes that will always be in congruence with changes in environments and therefore, they must be understood and developed continuously.

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