Agile Business Processes:
Blueprint for the Digital Enterprise

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In many industries, markets today show a volatility, which we at most have only experienced in some segments of the financial industry up until a few years ago. Business models with a half-life of only a few years or even months are no longer uncommon. This is also a characteristic of the digital economy. Drivers are in many cases business processes or service innovations that are made possible by new digital technologies or through new uses of technology. This contribution explores how a business model's efficiency and sustainable success can be ensured even if this business model undergoes ongoing changes if not re-inventions?

We believe that such an occurrence requires a blueprint, which is commonly understood and formulated in a way that is easy to communicate, but which holds so much agility that it can adapt quickly and resiliently to changing markets and environmental conditions at any time. The blueprint must allow different views of the digital economy: A consistent strategic corporate vision with business objectives, strategies and an objective risk assessment as well as a comprehensive definition of business processes with process context, processes, business rules, business objects, competences and responsibilities as well as the relevant corporate structures (cf. [SVO11, SVO12]).

An important aim in developing such a blueprint is to grasp the value- and knowledge context of the entire business community. Here fore we propose Horus® Method[2] which basically organizes the entire business community in a social network to involve internal and external business users in the design of the blueprint as well as in the execution and continuous improvement of business processes (cf. [PfV15]).

Such a blueprint of the digital enterprise may not be rigid, as it would fail. It must rather be agile by being stretched from a lot of "conceivable" business processes, which constitute an agile character themselves. The mapping of business processes in semiformal models then allows rapid implementation procedures, in which the technical requirements of the business process models are implemented into productive enterprise software systems using standardized Software as a Service (SaaS) offerings from the Public Cloud. Examples are given based on the public cloud offering of Oracle® Corp..

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[2] Horus® is a method and a family of software tools for Business Process Engineering made by Horus software GmbH, Ettlingen, Germany.

However, these are currently only the first phases of the digital enterprise, where this method has been proven. Further phases will follow, in which singular business processes must be connected to enterprise-wide process chains and process networks. Seamless integration and best usability for all users involved are required just as much as an optimal tapping of the potentials of the Internet of Things (IoT).

References

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