



YOU-GET

How to bring Business in control of processes

Achieving quick wins with the SPRINTer™



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Complex Processes vs. Simple Processes 3

Introducing the You-Get SPRINTer™ 6

Design a Process in the SPRINTer..... 7

Monitoring Simple Processes with the SPRINTer 11

Key Benefits of the SPRINTer..... 12

About the Author 13



COMPLEX PROCESSES VS. SIMPLE PROCESSES

Companies have many processes. Some of them are complex and they frequently form the beating heart of the organization. These often core processes tend to have an external focus towards customers. Therefore, core processes differentiate an organization from its competitors. However, every organization also has a number of simple processes in place and these often have an internal focus. Good examples include a holiday request process, an on-boarding process for new employees, an RMA handling process or an invoice approval process (see figure 1 for more examples).



Figure 1: examples of simple processes

Simple processes are relatively straightforward and they do not depend on external data sources. Exceptions in the process will exist, but they are often limited. Executing the process should therefore be a relatively easy task, but in the end, it usually requires effort to execute these kinds of processes. This is largely due to lack of support and focus on simple processes.

In general, you can state that complex processes involving customer interaction receive much more attention than the ones without. Many stakeholders and managers believe that customer facing processes take priority over internal optimization and organization improvements. The required cost to improve these simple processes strengthens this opinion. Hiring an external consultant usually does not work because of the associated costs. This is understandable, but neglecting simple processes may cause damage to the organization in the long run.



A REAL LIFE EXAMPLE:

A stack of paper holiday request forms was lost in a call centre, but the employees had already been notified of their approval.

The result was the absence of employees, without anyone knowing the reason. Given the fact that their absence was not taken into account beforehand, the department was understaffed.

As a solution the situation was managed by calling in employees for additional shifts, but it took a lot of extra effort and budget. It also affected the customers, because the department was understaffed for a while. Even though the situation was managed, it proves the importance of all processes and highlights the additional costs and time when things go wrong.

The solution to prevent this from happening again was simple. The call center redesigned the holiday request process and supported it with a Business Process Management System (BPMS). From that moment on the process was traceable and the processing time was reduced by 50%. Moreover, it was no longer possible to lose requests.

Overlooking improvements to simple processes can lead to these processes becoming out-of-control over time. Due to a lack of (IT) support and systems, employees handle the processes on paper, by phone, e-mail or any other channel. Often the results are sufficient, but when things go wrong it is difficult to detect the root cause and when it first happened.

Even though solutions for simple processes are available, these often require the support of external consultants and the IT department. This can result in a long lead-time to make improvements for simple processes.

The time and cost involved to make such improvements are often unattractive to the IT department and senior management. This attitude stops the business from taking initiative and proposing such improvements. Only when incidents occur, such as the lost holiday requests is the need to act apparent and budget granted. This reactionary approach based on incidents is prevalent in many businesses and contrasts with the desired process improvement philosophy.

A lack of focus on simple processes is a risk for every organization, profit or non-profit. Simple processes form the majority of the processes within an organization. They often outnumber the complex and relatively complex processes by far (see figure 2). Without solid support processes will lack manageability, measurability, flexibility, efficiency, etc. [1,2].

¹ M. Dumas, M. La Rosa, J. Mendling H.A. Reijers, *Fundamentals of Business Process Management*, ISBN 978-3-642-33142-8, Springer, 2013

² R. Davis, *What maked a good process?*, Publication on BPTrends, 2009

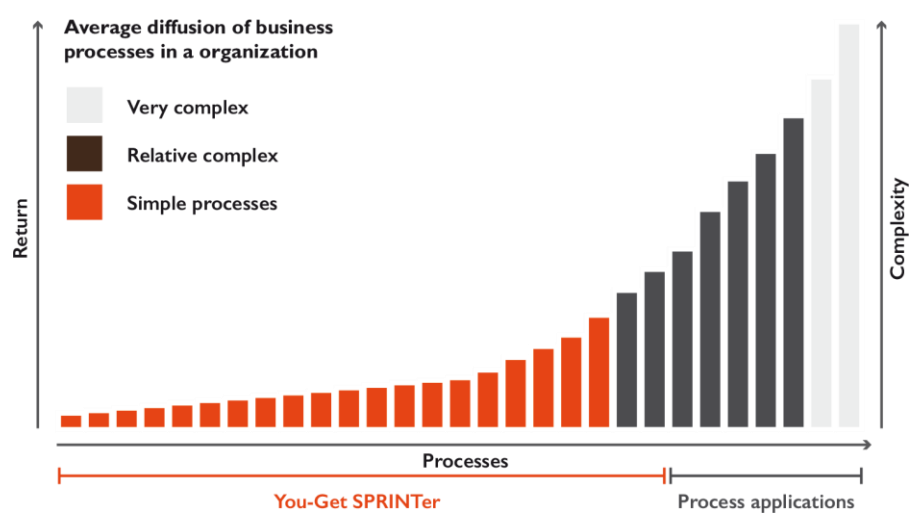


Figure 2 - average complexity of a process within an organisation

This means that simple execution of a process is not possible. Business users want to be in control of their own processes [3]. The best way to gain and maintain control is through empowering business users to improve the process themselves. They should be able to improve simple processes without involvement from the IT department. This enables them to design and change processes whenever they need to, even on an ad-hoc basis, but for most processes you need support from a BPMS in order to reach the desired level of control. It is my belief that the team that is modelling the process should be the same team that is developing the process application. However, research from BPTrends shows that in 64% of the cases the business (modeller) is not involved in the realization of the process support [4].

When businesses are able to design and improve executable processes themselves, without the need for (external) consultants or IT involvement, they create a landscape for continuous improvement. This ensures that no business knowledge gets lost during implementation and takes away the pain of getting a budget to realize process support, since it becomes part of their daily operations.

³ W. Bandara, M. Indulska, S. Chong, S. Sadiq, *Major Issues in Business Process Management: An Expert Perspective*, The 15th European Conference on Information Systems, 2007

⁴ P. Harmon, C. Wolf, *Business Process Modeling Survey December 2011*, BPTrends, 2011



INTRODUCING THE YOU-GET SPRINTER™

Until recently, bringing a process to production without IT involvement was out of question. The IT department normally executed a deployment. With the release of the You-Get SPRINTer, things have changed. You-Get responded to this demand in the market by designing and developing SPRINTer to bring businesses back in control of simple processes. The SPRINTer removes the need for IT executed deployment.

SPRINTer allows business participants (e.g. key-users) to design, implement, approve, modify and execute simple processes within an IBM BPM production environment. Key-users are the perfect candidates to model these kinds of processes. They have extensive knowledge about the processes and underlying steps. Research at a medical company demonstrated that although an abundance of energy and resources were used on automating processes, more was achieved through implementing simple, user-friendly steps [5].

Since modelling in SPRINTer utilizes a subset of BPMN 2.0 (Business Process Model and Notation), it bridges the gap between conceptual and executable modelling. Until recently it was common practice to communicate about business processes with a BPMN model, but the model was normally used for illustrative purposes only and not for execution [6]. With SPRINTer, the model becomes the source for execution as well as giving an illustrative overview of the process. BPMN 2.0 is a worldwide standard for modelling business processes in a language that is easily understood by business users. In 2011, 72% of process models [4] used it and its adoption has grown drastically in recent years. These characteristics make it possible to design an executable process in SPRINTer within 45 minutes.



⁵ J. Wassüing, *Process Improvement – simple steps go a long way in improving quality and operational excellence: The PathCare experience*, Medicine Congress, 2011

⁶ J. Dehnert, W.M.P van der Aalst, *Bridging the gap between business models and workflow specifications*, International journal of cooperative information systems, vol. 13, issue 3, 2004



DESIGN A PROCESS IN THE SPRINTER

So what is SPRINTer exactly? SPRINTer is a process application for IBM BPM that enables business users to design or improve simple processes directly in their production environment. This may sound alarming, but due to an excellent process approval system, the risks are low. It is comparable with deploying a process to production using regular DTAP environments. Since SPRINTer focuses on simple processes, interfacing with other systems is not supported. This makes it possible to validate and test processes efficiently within a short time frame.

The lack of interfacing within SPRINTer does not mean that integration with external systems is not possible; you can still do this within an IBM BPM process application. Realization of an interface will require IT involvement for the integration only. Since the focus of SPRINTer is on simple processes, the need for integration should be limited, and in most cases, will not be a requirement.

The main goal of SPRINTer is to make automating the process flow of simple processes beneficial. Figure 3 shows the position of SPRINTer within IBM BPM. The strength of SPRINTer is in the automation of process flows where tasks within the process will remain manual. Automated tasks, those being the tasks that are commonly executed without user intervention, such as a task (or service) to calculate the order price based on different variables, are not supported in SPRINTer. In simple processes these types of tasks or services are unlikely to be a requirement, especially if the process is currently being handled without support from a BPMS.

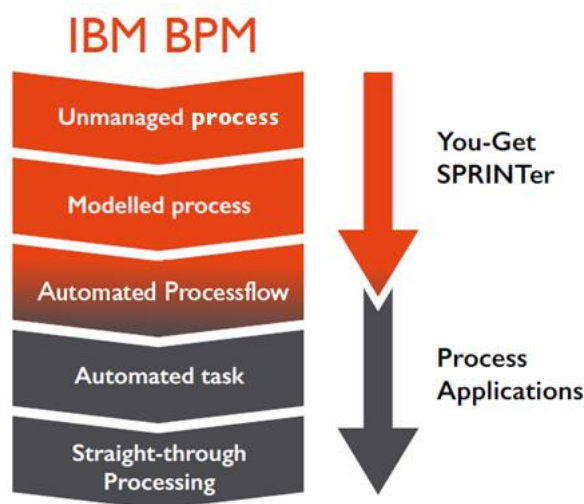


Figure 3: When to use the SPRINTer

SPRINTer is split into three main components that focus on the management and validation of processes:

- I. The SPRINTer Manager
- II. The SPRINTer Tester
- III. The SPRINTer Runner

Only approved processes are available for execution in the Runner. Process participants can execute processes in the Runner in a similar way as 'regular' IBM BPM processes. Process models pending approval may still be executable by admins and process designers, but will not be available for process team members. This is true for new processes, but also for changes to an existing process. As long as the change is not approved, the old version will remain active for process team members. Figure 4 displays the structure of SPRINTer within the IBM BPM environment it is based on.

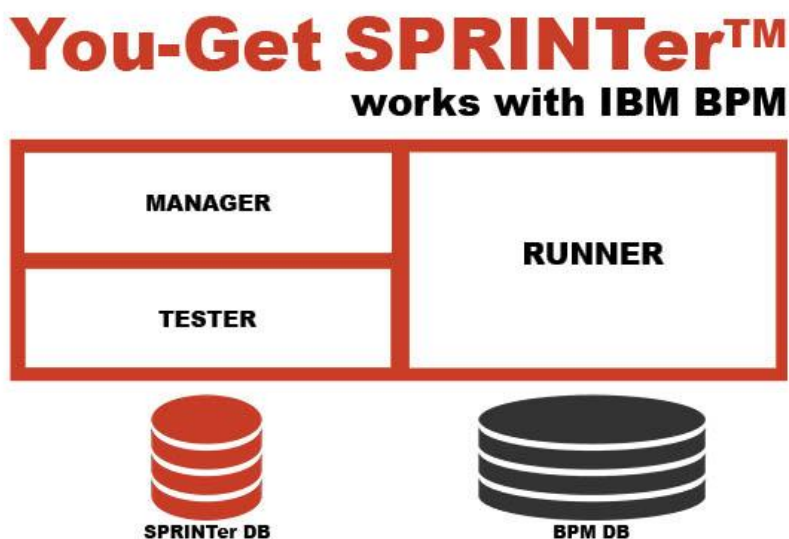


Figure 4: SPRINTer environment

SPRINTer processes are designed in the Manager. Design activities are focused on two main areas:

1. modelling the process flow
2. adding the corresponding data fields to process activities

The model describes the sequence of steps you need to take to reach the end result. Modelling is achieved by dragging and dropping required components in the modeller.

Adding data fields to the process activities is required to make the process executable. There are several types of data fields that can be used to create an input screen for process participants.



Field types include text fields, integer fields, date fields, check boxes and drop-down combo boxes. These fields can be set to be mandatory, optional or conditionally mandatory. Fields are added to the input screen by dragging and dropping. This makes the usability of SPRINTer very easy, even for inexperienced users. Working with SPRINTer does not require any technical skills.

Although modelling in SPRINTer is easy enough for all levels of users, it is advisable to restrict the number of users responsible for building and maintaining processes. This can be achieved by granting the required permissions within SPRINTer. This way only a predefined set of business users (e.g. key-users) are able to design or improve processes.

Once the modelling is finished, the process is ready to be tested. Testing the process means running the process within the testing environment of SPRINTer. The process execution can be run (simulated) by the designer for validation purposes. If during testing modifications are needed or the process doesn't meet the designers' requirements, he can easily change the process according to his needs. As with a regular DTAP environment the process needs to be approved, in this case by a process manager. The manager can use the same testing capabilities as the designer to verify the process. When he accepts the new process, it will be available in SPRINTer Runner immediately.

SPRINTer can automate even ad-hoc processes. In an ad-hoc process the control flow of activities cannot be modelled in advance, but it is determined during runtime depending on the case [7, 8]. Ad-hoc processes allow for flexibility that is required in a number of business processes. In SPRINTer ad-hoc processes can be executed in such a way that during the execution of an activity it can determine whether a new activity is required before the case can be completed. If no further activities are required, SPRINTer finishes the case. The only step required to model an ad-hoc process in SPRINTer is the selection and configuration of data fields to be used within the ad-hoc process. The validation of ad-hoc processes is comparable to the validation of other processes in SPRINTer.

SPRINTer uses its own database schema which stands apart from the regular IBM BPM database schema. SPRINTer is able to maintain its database schema by itself, even if new fields have to be added for a process.

⁷ S. Dustdar, T. Hoffmann, W.M.P. van der Aalst, *Mining of ad-hoc business processes with TeamLog*, Data & Knowledge Engineering, vol. 55 issue 2, 2005

⁸ W. Smit, *Ad-Hoc Context-Driven Changes in a Business Process Management System*, Master thesis University of Twente, 2014



This means that the only thing that is needed to start with SPRINTer is access to an IBM BPM environment. If this environment is not yet available within your organization, it is possible to use a cloud solution. You-Get offers “The Process Cloud”, an IBM BPM Pure App Service and Softlayer based cloud solution, fully hosted within the European Union. The Process Cloud comes with SPRINTer as a pre-installed service at no additional cost. You can find more information about The Process Cloud on www.theprocesscloud.com or in the You-Get whitepaper titled “The Process Cloud” which further explains the cloud environment [9].

⁹ S. Janssen, *Whitepaper The Process Cloud*, You-Get Whitepaper, 2016



MONITORING SIMPLE PROCESSES WITH THE SPRINTER

The SPRINTer also includes 4 standard dashboards, which provide an insight in the performance of the processes in the SPRINTer:

1. Real Time Dashboard
2. Process Dashboard
3. Process History Dashboard
4. Process Adhoc Performance Dashboard

The **Real Time Dashboard** provides an overview of all currently active processes. In real time you will be able to see how the processes are performing. The dashboard shows the amount of instances per process that have one of three statuses: on track, at risk or overdue. Based on this information, a responsible manager can for instance act upon processes with a high number of overdue instances.

In the **Process Dashboard** you can have a detailed look at these processes. For example, by filtering the poorly performing processes, the manager is able to see where the process is stuck, in order to act upon the problems. The Process Dashboard also gives a responsible manager the opportunity to reset, reassign tasks or delete the process instance.

The **Process History Dashboard** gives an insight in the process history. This dashboard shows the total amount of instances and with that the active and complete instances. You are also able to filter on the version of the process.

The **Process Adhoc Performance Dashboard** shows the performance of the Adhoc processes that have been created in the SPRINTer. It provides information about the service level analysis (again with statuses on track, at risk or overdue), as well as monthly/quarterly/yearly performance summary, with statuses Created, On-Going or Completed.



KEY BENEFITS OF THE SPRINTER

Improving simple processes with SPRINTer does not require technical skills, as business users can optimize their own processes within minutes in combination with the Process Cloud. This means that these business led process improvements do not compete or interfere with other improvement programs that are already in place (such as Lean Six Sigma or IT improvement programs).

SPRINTer does not have external dependencies. This enables a time-to-market of hours instead of weeks or even months. In the past, simple processes rarely received attention because of their low priority and lead-time to implement. This is not surprising, since complex processes often have a large and direct impact on daily operations and customer satisfaction. Focus and priority from senior management and IT is therefore given to complex processes, due to their mission critical nature. Business users are able to (re)design their processes as part of their daily operation, removing reliance and dependency on IT and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.



SPRINTer™ benefits

- ✓ **No technical skills required**
 - ✓ **Shorter time-to-market**
 - ✓ **Easily achieve Quick Wins**
 - ✓ **Build processes in minutes**
-

Without SPRINTer, executing simple processes can be time-consuming. Because of the lack of support and standardization, there are often different ways to execute the same process. This increases the occurrence of errors. Customers can be impacted by poor simple process performance, even if these processes have an internal focus. Due to the time it takes to execute the simple processes, less time is available for core customer facing complex processes.

With SPRINTer you easily achieve quick wins, which reduces execution times drastically. Over 50% improvement is not an exception. Additional gains can be achieved through appropriate process support, subsequently improving the quality of these processes.

Process support in SPRINTer is as easy as creating and maintaining a Word document. It gives the business user the necessary tooling to improve processes without boundaries that regularly exist within organizations. Creating a new process or modifying an existing one is as simple as designing, testing and approving it. Upon approval, it is available for process participants to run and use. SPRINTer makes it easy to position BPM directly in the middle of your organization: where it belongs.

For more information about the You-Get SPRINTer, please contact You-Get at info@you-get.com or +31 20 737 0276.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jeroen Theelen is a Business Consultant at You-Get. He has a background in various sectors including banking, utilities, wholesale and business services. He has more than 10 years' experience in Business Process Management, Case Management, Process Mining and Quality Management.

After finishing his master Business Information Systems at Eindhoven University of Technology, he started working as business consultant. Over the years, he improved his skills as an all-round process consultant. His speciality is bridging the gap between Business and IT at all levels of the organisation. Apart from being an all-round consultant, Jeroen is also familiar with various facets of Process Architecture.

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ABOUT YOU-GET – BUSINESS SERVICES PROVIDER

YOU-GET is an innovative Business Services Provider, founded with the vision of creating a fully-fledged Business Service Centre for discovering and solving all business challenges. The You Get team consists of highly motivated professionals with expertise spanning a multitude of industries and professional areas. Together we are capable of taking on almost every problem we encounter. The power of You Get is not only embedded in our *360° Business Services Approach™*, but also in the team and their collective knowledge.

YOU-GET has developed its own flexible and modular *360° Business Services Approach™* to discover and solve business challenges. This framework, built upon the global experience and expertise of the founders of You Get with Business Operations, Business Processing & IT, plays a key role in getting control of your business processes. The connection between process excellence and business results is irrefutable. World-class organizations should be moving towards the path of converting the business process management promise into business process management results. The change can be achieved through a combination of an increased process-centric view of the business and making fundamental, yet evolutionary changes to the structure of IT systems. Modular by design, focused on results, the *360° Business Services Approach™* is suitable for all organizations, small and big, profit or public. The *360° Business Services Approach™* consists of various modules & methods that can be tailored to your organization's needs.

YOU-GET also developed the cloud platform: The Process Cloud. This platform allows companies, that focus on insights into their processes, to improve continuously and to respond quickly to market changes. The Process Cloud is characterized by their transparent pay-per-use model, by their low initial fee and the available process apps, developed by You-Get.

YOU-GET is a Business Services Provider that offers a one-stop solution for every step in the complete business lifecycle of their customers. We provide services and solutions in the following core competencies:

- Business Process Management
- Business Intelligence
- Project Management
- Change Management

YOU-GET offers a rich portfolio of BPM, BI and SOA products, necessary in creating success in business processing, integration and application management. You Get is proud to be the sales and implementation partner in Benelux of several prominent solutions such as IBM BPM and Websphere,. You Get has created implementation frameworks and operational services to support these solutions and has integrated these services in its' *360° Business Services Approach™*.

YOU-GET is confident that we are able to advise and assist companies with all our services and solutions. With this rich portfolio You Get will deliver better results for your company and create a competitive advantage.

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The You-Get competencies:

- Business Process Management
- Business Intelligence
- Project Management
- Change Management

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