

# Business Process Management Alignment

Mona von Rosing, Henrik von Scheel, Justin Tomlinson, Victor Abele,  
Kenneth D. Teske, Michael D. Tisdell

## INTRODUCTION

Alignment is a concept that dates back to the late 1990s, when it was described by Paul Strassmann<sup>1</sup>: “Alignment is the capacity to demonstrate a positive relationship between information technologies and the accepted financial measures of performance.” Alignment of business process management (BPM) hence should follow a similar principle or pattern to be effective. The objective therefore is how this alignment to and between BPM can create value that is ultimately measurable as a favorable financial outcome for a commercial enterprise.

Business process management alignment, which is focused on both reusability and accelerating automation, requires that business managers have an understanding of what alignment is, how to develop an alignment competency, and what considerations should be made by organizations to ensure alignment is adequately adopted. This chapter discusses these aspects of alignment and gives credence to the development of aligned BPM.

## BACKGROUND TO A NEW WAY OF LOOKING AT ALIGNMENT FOR BPM

The portfolio alignment-unity concept was developed for the United States Department of Defense (DOD), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of Justice (DOJ), and Department of State (DOS) with the aim of

- Unifying common stakeholders, objectives, and size for common, complex, and critical missions and multidimensional warfare such as cyber war, combating weapon of mass destruction, combating transnational organized crime, and for security corporations.
- Achieving information sharing and unity of effort to meet national security objectives for the US DOD, DHS, DOJ, and the DOS.

US Government research involving the DHS, DOS, DOJ, and DOD initiated an alignment effort to:

1. Identify and specify common and repeatable patterns for business, application, and technology areas
2. Support analysis and stability operations planning efforts per JROCM 172-13
3. Change and update joint doctrine

4. Assess for use by the Executive Committee Joint Program Office (JPO) for Assignment of National Security and Emergency Preparedness Communications Functions per Executive Order 13,618
5. Benchmark, research and analyze, and identify alignment and unification patterns
6. Pilot first projects within US Government
7. Join and develop alignment and unity reference content that increases the level of reusability and replication within alignment and unity of stakeholders, portfolios, programs, and enterprise modeling, enterprise engineering, and enterprise architecture concepts
8. Extend with accelerators and templates, such as the:
  - a. Alignment and Unity Stakeholder Map
  - b. Alignment and Unity Quick Scan
  - c. Alignment and Unity Maturity TCO-ROI evaluation
  - d. Alignment and Unity Maturity Benchmark
  - e. Alignment and Unity Development Path

The alignment-unity framework concept was such a success that DOD Stability Operations recommended the alignment-unity framework concept be used to support analysis and stability operation planning efforts per JROCM 172-13. A Unity of Effort Synchronization Framework Joint Knowledge online course was developed and over 600 DOD and other governmental personnel have taken and completed the course. In addition to this, Joint Doctrine Publication 3.0, 3.22, and others have adopted the alignment-unity framework and are incorporating it into the newest editions.

As of August 2014, the alignment-unity framework concept was being assessed for use by the Executive Committee JPO for Assignment of National Security and Emergency Preparedness Communications Functions. The framework has already been applied by US Special Operations Command to align its information technology portfolio as well as assist the J3-International division in finding commonality while building the Global Special Operations Forces Network (GSN) with its multinational mission partners.

Such a comprehensive alignment management concept uniquely recognizes that any organization, department, or even program, even if it has its own mission, vision, strategies, and critical success factors, is only one element of a larger delivery and service mechanism. In nearly all cases the success of strategy to execution depends on the ability to operate in alignment and therefore unity with the rest of the organizations with a common stake in the issues.

This truly encourages collaboration across areas, groups, portfolios, programs, and projects that will enable value creation and realization. However, realizing higher levels of alignment and unity requires identification of common objectives, initiatives, and standards or requirements.

Most organizations today face significant hurdles to ensure organizational alignment among goals, stakeholder, plans, programs, projects, and portfolios. Identification is the first step toward developing solutions or mitigation strategies. This US DOD Unity of Effort Framework project was developed with several organizational participants to identify important inhibitors to achieving unity of effort. Identifying the negatives is important, however; we learned that identifying the positives such

as goals, areas of interest, and categories of effort applied by each of the organizations worked much better for gaining unity.

A lesson learned was that working together with a framework provided many more benefits than detractors on the way to improving unity of effort for complex governmental missions to include operational design, planning, and decision making about scarce resources. The framework also enables orchestrated development of planning to achieve regional and national objectives and is an enabler for building partnership capacity and security sector assistance.

The framework allowed for recommendations based on opportunities for strong organizational partnerships. Another lesson learned while working with stakeholders is that the framework allowed for identification of redundancies or overlaps, gaps in support requirements, seams in the operating environment, and shortfalls in resources.

We also learned that to develop true alignment, it requires representation, participation, and collection of information from stakeholder organizations. To facilitate this, an organization or group must be identified to manage the time and processes to complete a framework. In addition, some events must occur in person to allow time for stakeholders to validate and clarify collected information and participate through staffing activities.

The alignment as indicated in this chapter needs to be specific to business processes and their related objects and enterprise business elements. First, though, we need to define what alignment is in relation to BPM.

## ALIGNMENT OF BPM

Most stakeholders across the enterprise landscape have some of the same external and internal forces and drivers influencing them, but different approaches. These stakeholders do not see what is common and hence they do not know how or why to work together. This indicates a lack of alignment maturity and results in enterprise strategy, management, and operations that are disjointed and do not provide the expected return on investment, representing an untapped potential of cost savings and operational excellence for both effectiveness and efficiency only based on the wide range of duplication of goals, competencies, services, process, functions, task, resources, roles, data, etc.

Alignment of BPM provides for the policy or strategy of the organization to drive the alignment of BPM portfolios, programs, and projects that require the relevant stakeholders (business process owners) to develop a common understanding of their business process so that there is a transformation of business process from the “as-is” through to the “to-be.” The to-be business processes that have been aligned can then be used in enterprise transformation and innovation to enable improved financial measures of performance. This high level of BPM alignment is described in [Figure 1](#).

## ESTABLISHING ALIGNMENT TO BPM

One of the key tasks before even starting to establish alignment to BPM is to confirm that BPM alignment within an organization is even feasible. This requires two questions to be answered in the affirmative:

1. Is there a clear link with the organizations planning and budget commitments?
2. Does the organization have the level of competency required to carry out such a task?

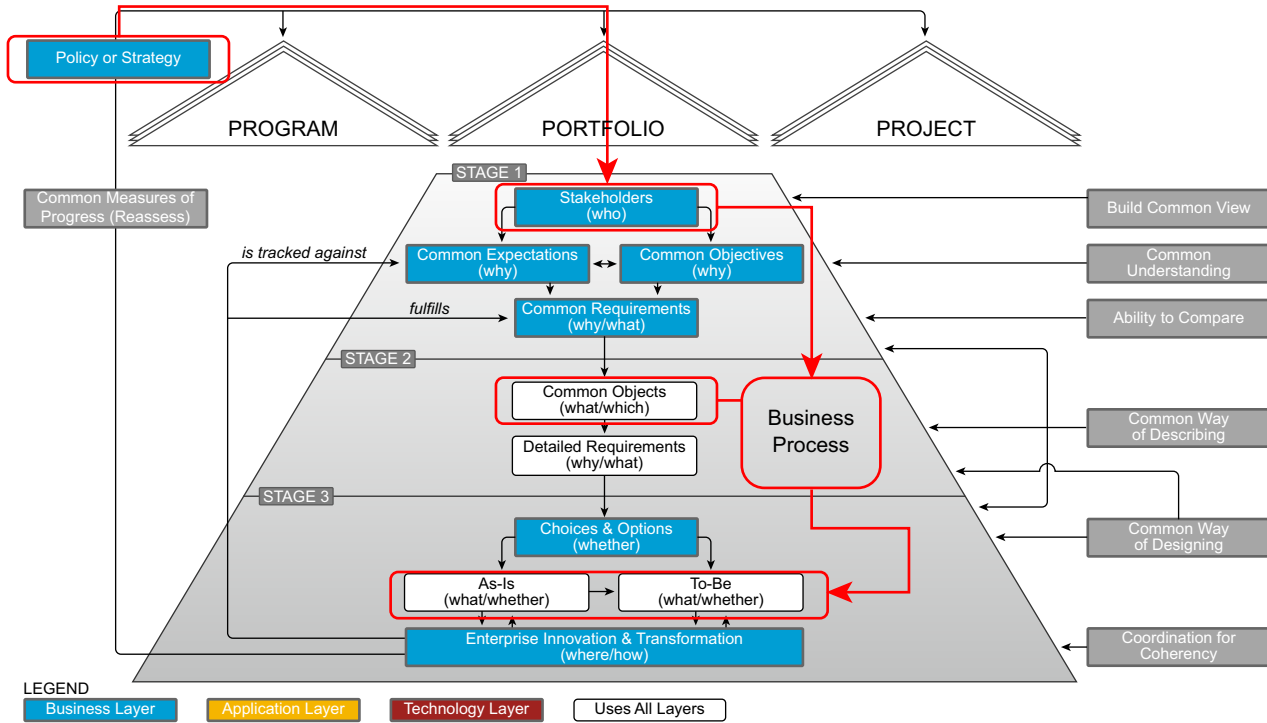


FIGURE 1

Business process management alignment from policy to enterprise innovation and transformation.<sup>2</sup>

If the answer to these two questions is no or if it is uncertain, it is likely that the organization is suffering from one of the following symptoms in the area of BPM:

1. Stove pipes/silos (lack of process information sharing)
2. No visibility of BPM efforts and activities
3. Duplication of efforts and investments across the same set of business processes
4. Lack of planning resources to enable aligned BPM
5. No collective repository of process-centric information
6. Competing priorities among the stakeholders of a specific business process
7. Differing lexicon/taxonomy/language/vocabulary/semantics for BPM
8. Disparate activities across the organization relating to BPM

Overcoming these challenges requires the buy-in and leadership of senior executives. Decision makers and corporate governance requires a higher order of insight to effectively identify gaps and overlaps in its transformation and innovation plans. Furthermore, this is needed to identify opportunities to minimize costs and improve performance of its operational services, as well as to determine a road map for capital investments in corporate infrastructures. Finally, without a methodical way to link strategic business objectives across all layers of a corporate architecture, the organization runs the risk of disjointed execution and a diminished capacity to effectively control and assess the performance of service providers, both internal and external.

In both public and private sector organizations, the consequences translate to higher operating costs, disappointing returns on investment in transformation and innovation, and lost market opportunity.

Throughout business planning and project gating cycles, an organization needs to identify the portfolios, programs, and/or projects that are BPM related and identify aspects that are not aligned to their planning and budget commitments, correct misaligned and redundant efforts, and adjust where possible to an aligned state. Furthermore, the organization needs to identify what competencies are required to achieve the level of BPM alignment, which will bring improved efficiency and effectiveness and advance the organization's financial measures of performance. To methodically assess the potential for business process alignment, it is valuable to take an architectural view of which objects the business processes would relate to and therefore what templates could be used to facilitate improved alignment.

Table 1 describes objects that would be relevant to the overall business processes group object.

As indicated in Figure 1 the alignment starts at the highest level for BPM with the policy and the relevant stakeholders. They then need to ascertain to which business process meta objects can be related and aligned, bringing about synergy to the higher levels.

In Figure 2, alignment of the business process meta objects is highlighted through the relationships that can be made. The way this is achieved is through the development of maps, matrices, and models that cover from forces and drivers all the way to infrastructure high availability. This means that the templates that are relevant

<b>Meta Object</b>	<b>Description</b>
Process area (categorization)	Highest level of an abstract categorization of processes
Process group (categorization)	Categorization and collection of processes into common groups
Business process	Set of structured activities or tasks with logical behavior that produce a specific service or product
Process step	Conceptual set of behaviors bound by the scope of a process, which, each time it is executed, leads to a single change of inputs (form or state) into a single specified output. Each process step is a unit of work normally performed within the constraints of a set of rules by one or more actors in a role who are engaged in changing the state of one or more resources or business objects to create a single desired output
Process activity	Part of the actual physical work system that specifies how to complete the change in the form or state of an input, oversee, or even achieve the completion of an interaction with others actors and which results in the making of a complex decision based on knowledge, judgment, experience, and instinct
Event	State change that recognizes the triggering or termination of processing
Gateway	Determines forking and merging of paths, depending on the conditions expressed
Process flow (including input/output)	Stream, sequence, course, succession, series, or progression, all based on the process input/output states, where each process input/output defines the process flow that together executes a behavior
Process role	Specific set of prescribed set of expected behavior and rights (authority to act) meant to enable its holder to successfully carry out his or her responsibilities in the performance of work. Each role represents a set of allowable actions within the organization in terms of the rights required for the business to operate
Process rule	Statement that defines or constrains some aspect of work and always resolves to either true or false
Process measurement (process performance indicators)	Basis by which the enterprise evaluates or estimates the nature, quality, ability, or extent regarding whether a process or activity is performing as desired
Process owner	Role performed by an actor with the fitting rights, competencies, and capabilities to take decisions to ensure work is performed

LEAD Templates & LEAD Meta Object Relations		Forces & Drivers (FD)	Vision, Mission & Goals (VM)	Requirement (Rq)	Stakeholder (ST)	Strategy (S)	Value (V)	Balanced Scorecard (BSC)	Performance (Pe)	Measurement & Reporting	Competency/Business Mod	Revenue (Rev)	Cost (Co)	Operating (Op)	Information (I)	Role (Ro)	Owner (O)	Organizational Chart (OC)	Object (Ob)	Workflow (WF)	Rule (Ru)	Channel (Ch)	Media (Me)	Process (P)	BPM Notations (BPMN)	Service (Se)	Application (A)	Application Service (AS)	Application Roles (ARo)	Application Rules (AR)	System Measurements/Rep	Application Interface (AI)	Compliance (C)	Data (D)	Data Service (DS)	Data Rules (DR)	Platform (PL)	Platform Service (PS)	Platform Rules (PLR)	Platform Distribution (PD)	Infrastructure (IF)	Infrastructure Service (IS)	Infrastructure Rules (IR)	Virtualization (V)	High Availability (HA)								
Business Process	Process Area (categorization)	1,2							2					1											1,2	2																											
	Process Group (categorization)	1,2							2					1											1,2	2																											
	Business Process		1,2						2				2	1											1,2	2,3	2	2																									
	Process Step									2			2											1,2	3	2	2																										
	Process Activity									2			2											1,2	3	2	2																										
	Events																							1,2	3	2		3																									
	Gateways																		1,2		2				1,2	3	2		3																								
	Object (Business & Information & Data)													2											2,3	2,3	2																										
	Process Type (main/mgmt./support)											3			2						1,2				1																												
	Process Flow (incl. Input/output)																1,2								3	3	2		3				3	3																			
	Process Roles															1,2									2,3	2,3																											
	Process Rules																			1,2					2	2,3			2																								
	Process Measurement (PPI)							1,2	1,2		2,3	2,3												2	2,3																												
	Process Owner			2					2				1,2				1,2								1,2	2,3	2			2																							

FIGURE 2

Alignment across business process objects (1, maps, 2, matrices; 3, models).<sup>3</sup>

to alignment within BPM and the strategic, tactical, and operational aspects are covered satisfactorily.

As an example of this alignment, the business processes (meta object) can be related to the requirements map and matrix, to the competency of an organization through a matrix, to cost through a matrix, to business process notations through a matrix and a model, and so on.

Each of the business process meta objects can be aligned in this way to the specific aspects required by an organization to fulfill its portfolio, program, and projects. It furthermore ensures that the business process alignment is applicable across the following layers of business and application.

Why is it important that the business processes be linked to the application layer? This is vital so that the process automation can be executed in line with the to-be business processes designed in the business layer.

## **BUSINESS SCENARIOS THAT WOULD REQUIRE BUSINESS PROCESS ALIGNMENT**

The following section deals with some of the possible business scenarios that would require extensive review of the business processes and a transformation project to bring about alignment.

### **Stakeholder Alignment**

Most stakeholders across the enterprise landscape have some of the same external and internal forces and drivers influencing them, but different approaches. These stakeholders do not see what is common and hence they do not know how to work together.

### **Alignment Portfolio, Program, and Project Management Challenges**

Portfolio, program, and project management (PPPM) has a definite placeholder within the greater enterprise management organizational structure, as depicted in [Figure 3](#). All three of these disciplines have been well documented and researched on their own and in combination. Within the enterprise structure the influence of their alignment is most noticeable and hence most influential. All organizations, whether larger or small, across all industry sectors will recognize that they need a combination of portfolio, program, and project management to delivery change initiatives that transform and or innovate their business. For PPPM the alignment context is multidirectional. Alignment needs to flow from both a top-down and bottom-up perspective. Aligning the portfolio at the strategic level through the programs at the tactical level to the projects at the operational level will enable smarter decisions. Alignment of PPPM is also influenced through the stakeholders who influence the enterprise structure at each of the organizational layers and all of the processes involved.



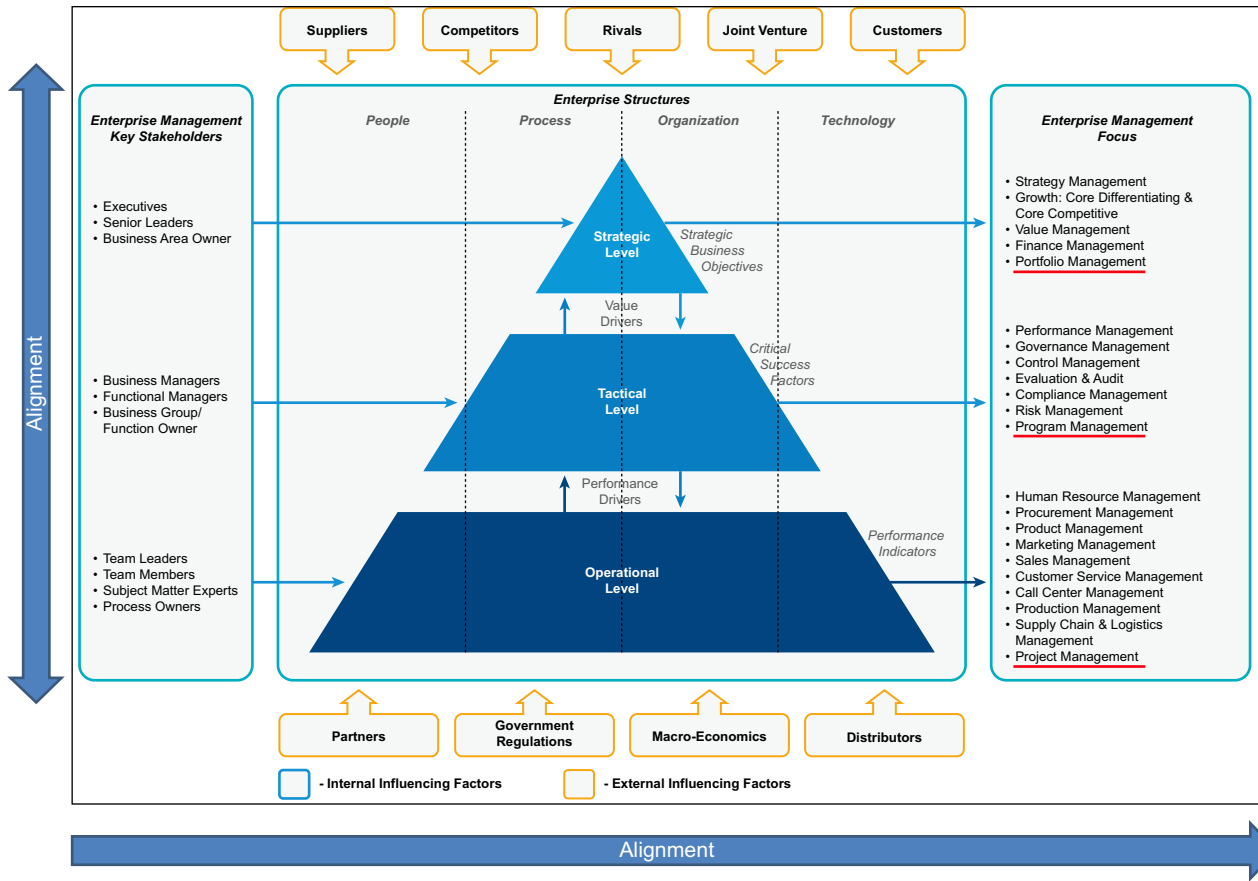


FIGURE 3

Alignment of PPPM across the enterprise structures.<sup>4</sup>

### **Merger and Acquisition**

A typical example of when alignment of BPM would be necessary is when a company goes through a merger or when it acquires a new business entity through an acquisition. The merger or acquisition would require a transformation project that would focus its attention on identifying the common set of stakeholders who have a common set of business processes. The use of [Figure 1](#) and [Figure 3](#) is important to guide the flow from start to finish in terms of a transformation BPM alignment project.

### **Align BPM with Business Intelligence to Achieve Business Process Excellence**

Today, many organizations implement BPM and business intelligence initiatives as separate programs. They are flooded with indicators—mostly process performance indicators and key performance indicators—but performance monitoring is carried out at too local a level in too isolated a way, and with too much focus on lagging indicators. Usually it is hard to see how the various factors measured contribute to different aspects of business value. Combining BPM and business intelligence to achieve closed-loop performance management makes it possible to relate all these indicators to each other. It thus becomes possible to analyze cause-and-effect relationships over different dimensions. As a result, management and staff can make better and more timely decisions and the organization becomes more efficient and effective. This is a crucial step for any enterprise with its sights set on intelligent business operations.

### **Align BPM with Master Data Management for Master Data Governance, Stewardship, and Enterprise Processes**

When organizations align their master data management (MDM) and BPM (BPM) projects, they maximize the value of each solution. Analysts recommend that clients and vendors adopt a strategy that supports this aligned approach. An enterprise can gain differentiating value by aligning its MDM and BPM initiatives. Master data management provides data consistency to improve the integrity of business processes, making those processes smarter, more effective, and productive. Business process management is an agile process platform that can provide consistent visibility, collaboration, and governance. By aligning MDM and BPM initiatives, organizations can optimize their business performance through agile processes that empower decision makers with the trusted information that can provide a single version of truth.

### **Align BPM with SOA for a Business-Driven, Service-Oriented Enterprise**

There is still a gap between business and information technology (IT), because until now the services provided by an Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) could not

support the business processes immediately. Thus, combining and aligning SOA and BPM projects results in increased benefits that are achieved more quickly than when either is initiated alone, especially for larger initiatives, achieving a business-driven, service-oriented enterprise and with automated processes across business functions. Processes that need to execute across functions are often hampered by a lack of interoperability of underlying systems. Automate new processes with greater speed and change processes quickly in response to business needs. Avoid costly business errors and focus on improving business processes—not integrating systems. Align IT investments with business needs: With an SOA, it is straightforward to prioritize building services needed for key business processes and to establish service-level key performance indicators. That maximizes not only the alignment with business needs, but also the return on IT investments.

### **Align BPM with Cloud for Business Process as a Service**

Many business processes, are good candidates for the cloud service. Alignment of BPM and cloud, called business process as a service, combines business processes and a cloud-based infrastructure enabling core computing resources best directed at the core business to be freed up. With goals of transparency and cost-efficiency in mind, it is logical to outsource many IT functions that are no longer cost-effective or when internal innovation is lacking. Increasing numbers of applications can be provided as a service with the right combination of technology and knowledge, from reporting and trade management to digital rights management and business analytics.

## **BENEFITS OF BPM ALIGNMENT**

The strategic value of BPM alignment and the effect on organizational performance are significant, ranging from better processes produced to lower costs, higher revenues, motivated employees, and happier customers. The benefit checklist for the executive team includes the following:

1. Eliminates unnecessary process steps that are either regional- or system-driven
2. Standardizes and integrates the process across all geographies and business units for better benefit realization
3. Automates after elimination of unnecessary steps and standardizes the process
4. Enables process innovation using historical data from the BPM system once you have automated the process to transform it
5. Creates a repeatable pattern to align stakeholders with various portfolios, projects, and programs
6. Creates a consistent and institutionalized approach to align, plan, and resource programs and projects toward meeting common strategic objectives, expectations, and requirements
7. Improves alignment within planning, investments, and synchronization of effort across multiple portfolios, projects and programs, departments, inter-agencies, and resources

8. Enables alignment for complex planning efforts
9. Reduces duplication of efforts across business, application, and or technology areas
10. Improves joint delivery and execution
11. Is a proven concept to reduce radical cost
12. Enables better transparency and traceability
13. Does not disturb existing efforts; rather, it provides a means to inform, integrate, synchronize, and control

## CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter we have focused on BPM alignment and how it is a top priority for executives. We covered what BPM alignment is, why it is important, and how and where it can or should be applied. Business process management alignment establishes the basis for effective tactical planning and drives continuous improvement and change management. The effectiveness of BPM efforts can be predicted by the maturity of an organization's planning, alignment, and change management. We described this "how and where" to enable replication of the same success across projects, portfolios, and programs. Combined with Business Intelligence (BI), MDM, SOA, and or the cloud, BPM alignment offers significant potential to drive value and affect organizational performance.

## End Notes

1. Paul A. Strassmann (1997), *The Squandered Computer*. Page 27–29 ISBN: 0-9620413-1-9.
2. LEADing Practice Alignment & Unity Reference Content #LEAD-ES60001AL.
3. Business Process Objects Relations from LEAD Template & LEAD Meta Object Relation, LEADing Practice.
4. LEADing Practice Alignment & Unity Reference Content #LEAD-ES60001AL.