

## Adding the Dimension of Time to BPM

E. Scott Menter, VP Business Solutions  
BP Logix

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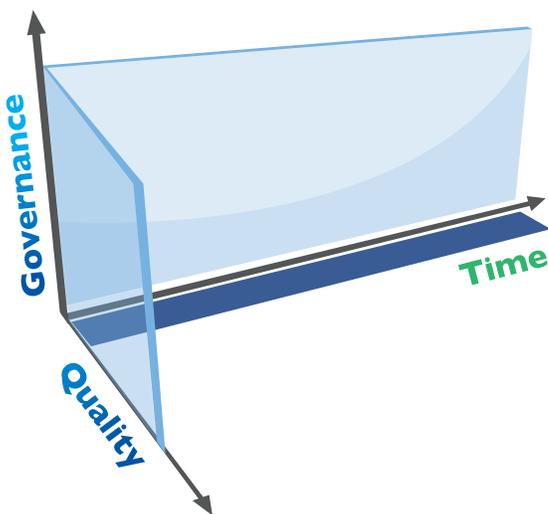


## Executive Summary

Time is a critical element of the planning, oversight, and improvement of business processes. However, business process management (BPM) solutions traditionally have focused on other aspects of the BPM challenge, such as quality and governance. Time represents a vital third dimension, one that enables business users to gain additional control over their processes and creates the opportunity to predict how later stages in the process will be affected by changes introduced in the earlier stages. This predictive capability, (we call it process intelligence), provides the earliest possible notification of potential delays. Early notification leads to early response, resulting in more available options which can be executed more effectively and efficiently (because there is now more time available to plan them). As a result, the inclusion of time, with the benefit of early prediction, adds significant value to the quality and governance aspects of the managed process.

## BPM Drivers

The adoption of BPM has traditionally been driven by two requirements: the desire to improve processes, resulting in higher quality outcomes; and the need to ensure that appropriate controls are in place where financial, privacy, or regulatory concerns are at issue. Generally speaking, we refer to these two goals as the **quality** and **governance** dimensions of BPM.



While **cost savings** are also an oft-stated goal for organizations, the difficulty in calculating the ROI of BPM means that anticipated cost savings alone are often not considered sufficiently compelling to move a company to adopt a BPM solution. In practice, though, actual cost savings are indeed realized either through higher quality (frequently resulting in less paper consumption, lower shipping costs, and less time spent) or better governance (resulting in reduced risk, and the elimination of hard and soft costs of non-compliance).

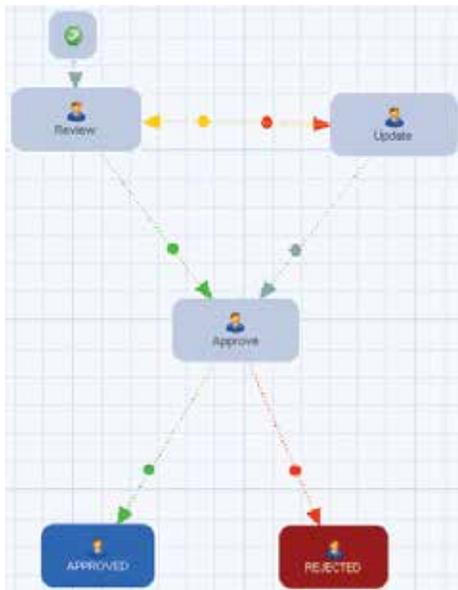
Organizations are also very interested in reducing the overall amount of time it takes to execute processes — especially those that are repeated with great frequency, or those for which timely completion is critical. Process owners expect to be able to achieve a certain amount of time efficiency as a benefit of automation — and this expectation is indeed borne out by experience. Even relatively primitive BPM solutions tend to improve the efficiency of processes, if only by substituting online

forms and email for paper and FedEx.

But, as we shall see, the incidental time-related benefits of BPM fall far short of what becomes possible through the use of a sophisticated, time-focused process modeling technique.

## Traditional Process Modeling

Ask a business analyst to describe her process, and she is likely to hand you some sort of flowchart. These come in several flavors — swim lane, for example — but all basically consist of a series of boxes and arrows. Each box represents an action or decision, with each arrow representing a potential path from one action or decision to the next. Ultimately, the way such models are designed is by answering the question “What happens after this?” for each step in the process.



This modeling technique is quite useful, as its popularity suggests. It is also effective at addressing the traditional drivers of BPM adoption. Process quality is improved simply by having an understandable, deterministic model, such as a flowchart. Process governance is addressed by ensuring that, at each appropriate point in the workflow, there is an approval step or review sub-process in place.

Unfortunately, while widespread, the flowchart model fails a simple test that is — or should be — of great importance to process owners. Specifically, a manager should be able to use a model to answer the question “When will this task complete?” or even “When will this entire process complete?” This goal represents more than the simple desire to speed things up generally, which, as noted above, is frequently achieved through simple automation. By way of comparison, consider that while managers are always pleased to learn that they are on track to remain within this year’s budget, they still need to know precisely

what their individual expenses are. They need to know which costs may escalate by year’s end, and which may be candidates for further reduction. That level of detail is just as important when it comes to the question of time.

## Process Timeline™

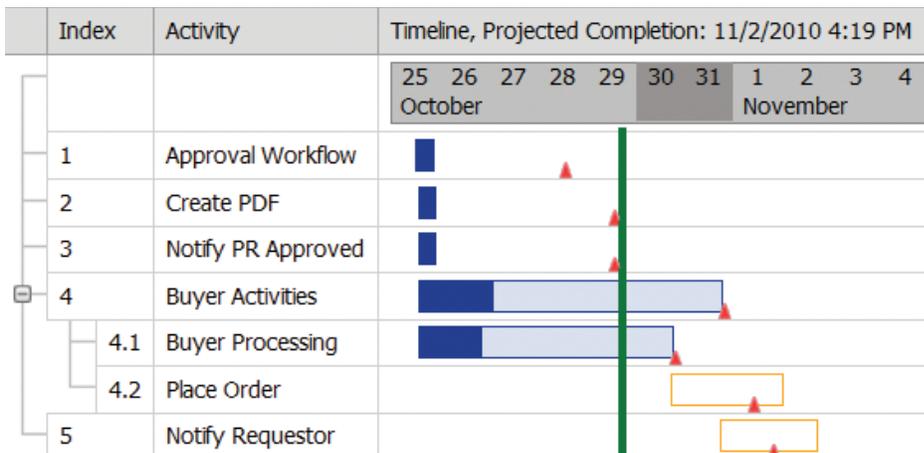
### FEATURES

BP Logix developed the Process Timeline to address the need to measure and predict process execution times. Process Timeline enables organizations to build robust, executable process models within Process Director. Business users design Process Timelines by answering two questions as they add each step to the process:

- What must complete before this step can begin?
- How long will this step take to complete?

We refer to these, respectively, as the dependence and duration questions. Each activity will begin as soon as its prerequisites, if any, are complete. The result is a solution with many valuable features:

1. Modeling is greatly simplified: project owners list each activity, estimate its duration, and then drag-and-drop it onto the activity or activities that must complete before it can begin.
2. As many of the activities as possible will run at the same time, without the need to explicitly configure parallel behavior.
3. The status of the process can be determined at a glance.
4. At any point — even the moment the process is launched — the system can determine which activities, if any, may not complete by their due date.
5. The system records actual versus predicted execution times each time the process is run, and adjusts its time estimates accordingly.



**BENEFITS**

Thanks to the simplified, dynamic nature of the Process Timeline, Process Director provides a number of benefits over other BPM solutions:

1. **Faster time-to-value:** The simplified model gives businesses the opportunity to go from discovery to full automation faster than was previously possible.
2. **Proactive response:** The earliest possible notice of potential delays (and the resulting missed deadlines) — even for tasks that haven’t yet begun — means that your business can predict a future problem, adapt to changing circumstances, and succeed in overcoming those obstacles.
3. **Improved compliance:** Every approval, every piece of data entered, and every step of every process is permanently stored by Process Director, and can be made available to internal or external auditors, regulators, or risk management personnel.
4. **Rapid changes:** Business processes must respond rapidly to changing requirements. Process Director is configured through a simple, intuitive graphical interface, requiring no programming skills. As a result, Process Director makes it possible for your processes to change at the speed of your business.

## Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc.

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. is one of the leading hotel and leisure companies in the world with 1,051 properties in 100 countries and territories, and 145,000 employees at its owned and managed properties. Starwood Hotels is a fully-integrated owner, operator and franchisor of the internationally renowned brands that include St. Regis®, The Luxury Collection®, W®, Westin®, Le Méridien®, Sheraton®, Four Points® by Sheraton, the recently launched Aloft®, and ElementSM.

Matthew Guglielmetti is the Sr. Manager of Revenue Management Systems within Starwood Hotel's Operations Group. His team is responsible for Starwood's automated revenue management system. That system involves a lengthy installation process, conducted across properties globally, with multiple users per property being trained or working on the process. The automated revenue management system also includes constituents from across many departments, as well as multiple 'pass-offs' from business users to the IT organization.



In addition to the pass-offs, the process itself changes frequently. Recognizing that Starwood wanted to streamline and automate its process, and that management did not want to have to engage IT or an outside company every time an adjustment was needed, Guglielmetti's group was tasked with finding a software solution that could accommodate a process with many tasks and dependencies.

"Tracking installations manually was not sufficient as things could be missed and there were an increasing number of properties and users requiring the system. We knew we needed

to automate our processes to have a better customer experience – and it had to be one that could be used by business users (and not require the assistance of IT) would be cost effective and could be quickly implemented."

Recognizing that his group needed an automated way to collect the files and documents associated with workflows, as well as between team members, Guglielmetti's team identified criteria for the system they wanted to implement. The team recognized that it had a number of completely different processes whose workflow, activities and routing needed to take different paths based on pre-defined criteria.

In addition they needed to:

- Route documents without user intervention
- Accommodate end user decisions as to next steps
- Manage parallel, non-linear processes running at the same time (that was critical)
- Interact with hotel users outside of its own group
- Provide security based on system on roles and responsibilities
- Find a system that was simple to implement and control
- Use a tool that did not require the business users to be technical (no programming!)



Guglielmetti believed a cloud-based product could address his requirements. After evaluating competitive offerings, his team recommended Process Director/Cloud Edition and became one of the first companies to take advantage of the Process Timeline™ technology.

“As a business group, we needed a solution that didn’t require us to write code in order to implement workflows and provide the automation we required. BP Logix Process Timeline was a huge benefit to us. There are currently 33 steps in our Timeline. At any point in time, we have properties that are at different points in our process – and we now know, and can identify, what is happening at any step within that process. The Cloud Edition represents an ideal solution for organizations that want quick results with a lower capital investment,” said Guglielmetti.

## Mixing It Up

Although a time-driven model like Process Timeline offers many advantages over traditional flowchart-driven workflow automation, there are still times when a flowchart-based model is useful. That's why BP Logix has integrated both models within Process Director. A single Process Timeline activity can contain an entire traditional workflow, enabling several workflows to be strung together to form a more complex, yet easily manageable process.

Conditions for: Business Rule: Notify

If the following conditions evaluate to true, the rule will be evaluated.

Description  
Determine if notification is required

Activity Due Date: Place Order no earlier than Days From Now: 5

[ AND ]

Form Field: Price (Total cost of all items in cart) >= Number: 10000

Buttons: Add Condition, OK, Update, Cancel

## The Time is Now

Introducing time into business process management is like introducing animals to the zoo: one can be forgiven for assuming it was there all along. And yet BP Logix is the first company to recognize the importance of the time dimension in business process management, and is the only company to offer Process Timeline technology.

If timeliness, flexibility, and foresight are important to your organization, BP Logix invites you to experience Process Director, the only business process management solution featuring Process Timeline technology.

Visit [www.bplogix.com](http://www.bplogix.com) to learn more.

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