

## 5.3 The Process Management Matrix (PMM), variations in process management

**T***o ensure process- based service management works, organizations need to make clear choices in organizational structure. Wim Hoving and Jan van Bon analyze the “process management drama” and describe how you can use the Process Management Matrix as a tool to make the right division of tasks, responsibilities and authorities for line and process management.*

### INTRODUCTION

It wasn't until the end of the eighties that the discipline of IT service management received serious attention with the development of the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL®). Ever since, the discipline has quickly developed from infrastructure management to service management. While this is a general development, there are many different interpretations in service management frameworks. The simple choice for process-based service management, using ITIL, and using process managers, is not sufficient to be a successful service organization. It is impossible to implement ITIL as a blueprint. ITIL is too general, too inconsistent and lacks descriptions for too many aspects. Complementary choices need to be made for many aspects in order to make an organization operate as a successful IT service provider. If these choices are not made when setting up the IT service organization, the resultant departments and processes will be in constant battle over their respective interests. This will ultimately have a negative impact on the service. This paper focuses on a balanced approach to process and line management<sup>1</sup>.

In this paper, we will introduce the Process Management Matrix (PMM). This matrix describes the different forms of collaboration between the process organization and the line organization.

### THE PROCESS MANAGEMENT DRAMA

In the last decade, more and more IT management organizations have turned to the implementation of IT service management processes. Starting from the ITIL principle, most of them will have described a number of relevant processes. Many organizations also appointed process managers at the same time, either in part-time or full-time positions, and these process managers were allocated responsibilities. Unfortunately, in many cases the appointment of process managers led to problems: employees were confronted with additional managers who had something (or nothing) to say and who interfered with their jobs; and process managers and line managers themselves argued because they felt the other was interfering with their responsibilities. The commotion, emotion and hardening of the situation that resulted from this certainly did not help the easy implementation of process-based working. Besides seared process descriptions, this is one of the most important reasons for the failure of many ITIL projects. *People don't seem to get the matrix to work.*

<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on a paper by Wim Hoving and Rolf Akker, about the Process Management Matrix, in part one of the Dutch “IT Service Management, best practices”.

In our opinion, a major reason for this chaos is that the introduction of process management, and specifically process managers, didn't receive enough and proper attention. The role of the process manager is created straight from the blueprint, and tasks, responsibilities and authorities are connected to the role without understanding the consequences for the organization as a whole. In particular, the two following issues are not addressed:

1. There are many different ways of granting tasks, responsibilities and authorities to process managers. ITIL does not help out here and the information in recent literature is highly insufficient. The possible variations are not mentioned and the merits of selecting a specific variant are not included.
2. Assigning tasks, responsibilities and authorities to process managers directly influences the position of the line management.

The **Process Management Matrix (PMM)**, as described in this paper, lists some of the major variations that can be chosen for the positioning of these process managers. The associated consequences for the line management are then described for each variant.

What happens if insufficient attention is paid to the organizational structures during the set-up of IT service management processes? Whatever happens, it will always result in a lot of discussion within the organization. The key issue here is that when the responsibilities and authorities are not distributed properly in the management team, individual managers may end up with overlapping responsibility sets, and consequently they may need to manage employees from the same resource pool. This will, inevitably, cause disagreement between the managers involved. On top of that, when these managers are line managers (vertical dimension) as well as process managers (horizontal dimension), the lid is off.

What are the obstacles in practice?

- process managers who feel overpowered by line managers
- line managers who feel overpowered by process managers
- employees who are given contradictory tasks by process managers and line managers
- activities that nobody feels responsible for

---

## THE DRAMA TRIANGLE

Considering the problematic situation we've just described, we can recognize the "drama triangle". We will focus on the three parties in this triangle: line manager, process manager and employee.

---

## LINE ORGANIZATION AND PROCESS ORGANIZATION

The set-up of an IT service management organization needs to resemble its objectives. Organizational studies tend to focus on the so-called hierarchical line organization (the "rake" movement). With such a set-up, the vertical lines are often our main starting point. The question is whether these vertical lines enable us to realize the objectives of our organization. To be able to work with these objectives correctly we often introduce processes. The focus then is on horizontal work processes that aim to deliver something to a satisfied customer in an efficient and effective way. Organizations, usually, are a mix of both management dimensions.

Organization = Line organization + Process organization

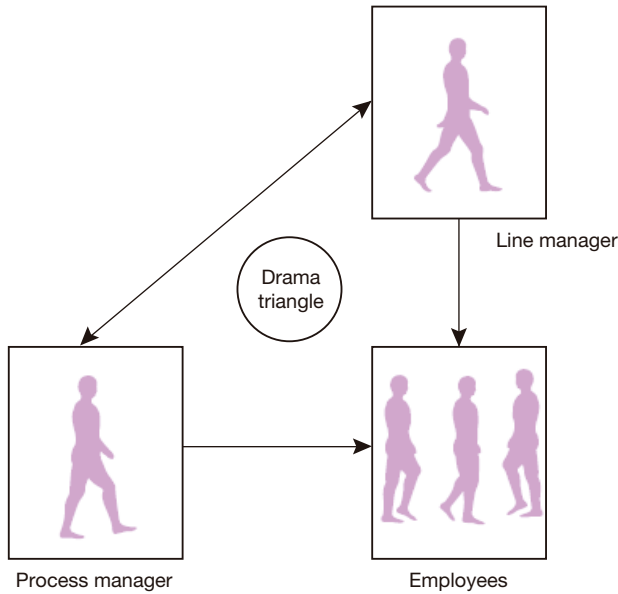


Figure 1 The drama triangle

At this point, we can already point out a contradiction between the vertical line organization and the horizontal processes. How should the line manage the processes? Is that really necessary and, if so, how do you organize this? Within every organization both dimensions are present. The line dimension describes who executes the activities, whilst the process dimension describes how the organization’s objectives are realized. This can lead to the conclusion that every organization will have to solve the matrix question.

**The process organization**

The process organization appears in formalized as well as non-formalized form. The non-formalized process organization is based on a set of informal (collaboration) agreements between departments and employees, with or without official quality requirements. The agreements can be embedded in several local procedures.

The formalized process organization is characterized by a combination of detailed processes that are linked through a process model and focused on the realization of the organization’s objectives.

**The line organization**

The line organization is characterized by the department structure, with departments made up of people with sufficient capacity and quality (capability) to execute specific activities. Apparently, when an organization has several departments, no single department is capable of realizing all of the organization’s objectives on its own. IT departments often have a specific task, for example to execute system management tasks, application management tasks or helpdesk tasks. Realizing the organization’s objectives requires these specific tasks to be aligned. The tuning and organization of these tasks is done through the set-up of the process organization.

## PROCESSES

What exactly are processes and what does ITIL say about them? We will summarize all this in an explanation of how we believe that processes work.

### ITIL processes

Within ITIL, a process is defined<sup>2</sup> as: “A structured set of activities designed to accomplish a specific objective”.

Several statements from ITIL can now be used to conclude something about the organization set-up:

- The process owner is responsible for the process design. The process owner is also responsible for ensuring that everybody involved in the execution of the process is kept up-to-date on changes that will take place.
- Because processes and their activities exist throughout organizations, they will need to be listed and coordinated by process managers.
- A frequent question when starting the introduction of processes is “do I need to adjust the structure of my organization?” This question originates from the fact that, according to ITIL, the processes need to be managed, while they are executed by more than one department, in an organization with traditional hierarchical structures. Some organizations may already have adopted a matrix organization, but others may have to make a start with this.
- Processes embrace the hierarchy of the organization. Therefore it is important to define the responsibilities that belong to the activities that are executed within each process.

The ITIL V2 Service Support book<sup>3</sup> compares three organizations’ forms for the adoption of ITIL processes. See table 1. In this paper we focus on the hierarchical structure and the matrix-organization.

Hierarchical structure		Matrix organization		Self learning teams	
+	Traditional role model	+	Process-oriented structure	+	Continual quality improvement initiated from within
+	Clear lines of communication	+	Flexible	+	Equality of various teams
+	Clear job and task definitions within each department	+	Clear communication model	-	Requires quality awareness
-	Can lead to bureaucracy when procedures are described in too much detail	-	No (or less) clear responsibilities	-	No performance control
-	Hard to position processes in this model	-	No (or less) clear leadership roles (informal leadership)	-	Possible role conflicts
-	Process approach will require a complex structure of communication				

Table 1 Comparison of three organizational structures (Source: OGC)

<sup>2</sup> ITIL V3 Glossary, 2007

<sup>3</sup> OGC, 2002, p.282

With regard to the organization issue, we can conclude the following:

- ITIL does not indicate a preference for an organization form. ITIL does not care whether it is adopted in a hierarchical model, a matrix model or a networked model.
- ITIL does not answer the question of how tasks, responsibilities and authorities can be adopted within the triangle.

This means that we always have to make our own choice in terms of the organization, as well as in the division of tasks, responsibilities and authorities. This choice needs to be made explicitly and we need to be aware of the consequences.

### IT service management processes

When using the term *process*, throughout this paper, we mean a goal-oriented series of activities, performed to serve the customer. There are two core elements in this definition:

1. **Goal-oriented:** indicates that a certain objective should be realized. This objective is defined and related to the customer.
2. **Activities:** processes are sets of activities. Processes do not refer to organization, tooling, etc. Processes only concern activities.

This means that we always need to determine the organizational structures for ourselves when setting the processes up. The same goes for the usage of support tools, which is another question we need to answer when starting to implement processes. In this respect we believe that the IT service management system is realized through three elements:

1. **people** – employees, organization, skills, tasks, responsibilities, etc.
2. **process** – process models (IPW, ISM, ITIL, MOF), procedures
3. **product** – tools, forms, templates, etc.

In our opinion, too often it is only the process element that is considered to be contained within IT service management. This is not only a serious shortcoming, it is also a shortcoming that will lead to problems, as we described above.

Furthermore, we can distinguish the following roles that are involved with processes:

1. **Process owner** – Role that is responsible for a process; the characteristics of “ownership” are: control, ability to regulate, dedication, insight, authority. The process owner can be confronted with several line managers when the process oversteps departmental borders. The process owner often delegates the operational responsibility for the process to a process manager.
2. **Process manager** – Role that is responsible for operational management of the process.
3. **Employee** – Role that is responsible for the execution of process activities.

To serve the readability of this paper, we will only use the process manager and employee role besides the line manager role.

---

## MATRIX ORGANIZATION

Pure process organizations, where activities are managed exclusively by process management, are very rare. In practice, process management exists only in combination with line management, in a so-called matrix organization. In these organizations line and process will both influence the same activities that need to be executed. The complicating factor here is that line management does not need to work from the same responsibilities and priorities as process management. All-in-all a matrix organization is a complex organization form (see figure 2).

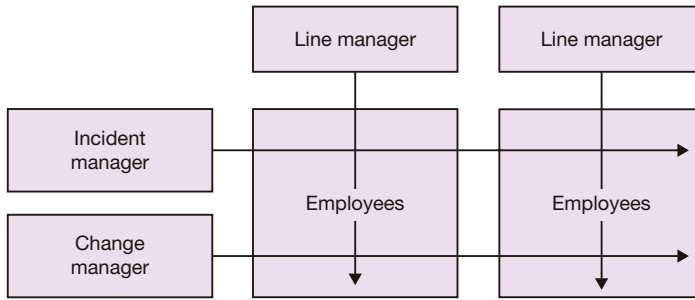


Figure 2 The matrix organization

When tasks, responsibilities and authorities in a matrix organization are not covered properly, we will encounter the following problems:

1. Employees are managed/directed by the line as well as the processes.
2. Employees are told by one manager that the one particular task is very important and by the other that the other task is more important.
3. Alignment between line management and process management is fought over at the expense of the employee.
4. Employees are continually chased.

One thing is for sure, all this will result in deteriorating services and subsequently lead to growing customer dissatisfaction.

### THE PROCESS MANAGEMENT MATRIX (PMM)

Organizations have very different characters and objectives. Depending on the character and the objectives, the management model needs to be set-up in such a way that it results in maximum performance.

Differences in character can be diverse, ranging from variances in an organization's size, to its culture, type of product or service, and routes to market. The objectives of organizations can also differ in the same way, varying from profit to non-profit, focused on market penetration and maximum profit margins, to simply creating employment. Depending on the type of organization, a choice will be made on the use of processes for the realization of organization's objectives. The weight of process management in the management system may differ considerably from organization to organization.

In addition to having a clear view on the role of the processes, it is also important how these processes will be managed. It is even more important to understand and accept the consequences of these choices. Depending on the choices made, an organization will be fully or partly managed through processes.

The section below describes various typical variations, starting with a control model in which processes do not exist at all, and ending with a control model that is completely determined through processes. The differences and consequences will be listed for each variant. It is very important to show that there is no *best* position in the PMM. This completely depends upon the conditions, culture, and views of an organization.

**PMM1: the pure line organization**

The pure line organization is often represented as the familiar rake, a hierarchy scheme. All responsibilities are determined top-down; cross-connections cannot be recognized. The line manager is responsible for controlling his team, which consists of staff or line managers. The performance of the organization is the sum of the performance of the departments. As such, the department's results are a direct responsibility of the department manager.

Despite being a "pure" organization, the situation only *appears* to be simple. Often, in line organizations, interrelationships between teams do exist (temporary or not). Such interrelationships mean that the line manager of the department isn't the only one with authority for the working methods or management of the department. This is often caused by centralization of specific responsibilities - which means that these responsibilities have been taken away from the departments where they were previously managed.

An example of this is the Finance or Human Resource department. Often, these kinds of departments are centralized departments that support all business units or other teams and report directly to the CEO. It is generally accepted that these departments have their own responsibilities and that they do not belong to the line departments.

Another example is the creation of a project team with employees from different departments. This example becomes clearer when the project manager reports to the CEO directly. In this situation, the line manager still has the hierarchical authority for managing and awarding the employee, but will have to give up part of the functional management of the employees, for at least the duration of the project.

The moment an organization decides to appoint responsibilities outside the line, the line organization is no longer solely responsible for the results of the organization.

**PMM2: the line organization recognizes some processes**

In terms of managing, this organization is still a pure line organization. But in addition to PMM1, an organization now recognizes a flow pattern of activities. By laying down these patterns in a process description, the organization determines which activities must be executed, their order, and the quality criteria with which they must comply. Recognized processes are often cross-departmental. In this variant, the management of the department executing the activity and the staff involved bear exclusive responsibility for correct communication and collaboration.

Describing the processes and the associated activities is often done as part of a project. A lot of ERP projects were done that way. The project is responsible for the process description, the KPIs, the tools support and the initial training of staff. After the project, the project organization is dissolved and the line organization becomes responsible for the correct execution of the agreed procedures.

Not implementing process management with this variant is an explicit choice. Reports are not based on processes, but are limited to team performance reports for customers and line management.

**PMM3: tactical process management**

In this variant, the organization not only recognizes process-based relationships in its activities, but it also decides to make someone responsible for the set-up and maintenance of the process. The person responsible must also report on the process.

A crucial characteristic of this variant is that someone is appointed to the position of process manager and thereby made responsible for creating and maintaining the process description and the manner in which the process is executed. As a result, the line management is no longer *exclusively* responsible for the management and results of the organization. The added value of the correct execution of well-structured processes and the negative consequences of their failure must be demonstrated not only by the process set-up, but also - and especially - from the reports.

Introducing process management creates a light form of a matrix organization and limits the responsibility of the line management and their authorities and tasks. This is even the case when the role of process manager is connected to the role of a line manager. Whereas line management was responsible for the management of the organization and (either recognized or not recognized) processes with PMM1 and PMM2, in PMM3 they will need to give up part of this responsibility.

Further, PMM3 is characterized by the fact that process management is not actively involved with the execution of the processes, but re-actively involved through reporting on process performance, analyzing these reports, and possibly deciding on the adjustment of the process set-up or underlying tools. Line management is responsible for correct execution of the prescribed processes, and process management is still set at a distance. Despite this position of process management, its influence on the behavior of the organization must not be underestimated; process reporting can show the effectiveness and efficiency of the line management and therefore influence their behavior.

#### **PMM4: operational process control**

In this variant the process management, in addition to the responsibilities from variant PMM3, is also tasked to monitor the correct execution of the defined process set-up and address deviations. In this case, "correct" means that the process is executed in conformance with the process description and within the constraints of the agreement with the customer. "Monitoring", however, does not automatically mean correcting the execution, but is still limited to detecting deviations and, if necessary, escalating this information. This means that the process management must be aware of the manner in which process activities are executed. It must also report (possible) deviations from the prescribed operating method or SLAs to the stakeholders, and inform them of the situation. In this variant, process management isn't responsible for correcting staff who are involved; process management's responsibility is limited to informing those hierarchically responsible, on possible irregularities. In addition, employees involved in the execution of process activities need to provide information on the progress of their tasks.

Thus, the responsibilities of process management in this variant are extended, with the monitoring of the process execution and escalating possible irregularities. Possible irregularities that have to be noticed by process management are, for instance, an unauthorized deviation from a prescribed sequences of activities (e.g. deployment before testing), not executing certain activities (e.g. skipping the user acceptance in a change) and not executing activities on time (conform SLA).

The effect of this addition may seem small but will be significant in practice. The position of the process manager goes beyond department borders. An insight across departments and up-to-date information on the progress obtained by active monitoring will provide valuable information for executives and line management (possibly informed through escalation). As



a consequence, executives and line management will listen to suggestions from process management. Assuming that everyone within the organization aims to contribute to its success, nobody will ignore valuable suggestions, if only because they don't have to explain why correct suggestions weren't followed afterwards.

Still it is not always wise for employees and line management to follow the directions of process management. It could very well be that, from a one-sided process perspective, certain suggestions are sensible but that line management needs to make choices between other sensible suggestions, possibly coming from different processes. In this variant, ultimately the employees, possible directed by their managers, will remain responsible for making a choice.

#### **PMM5: operational process direction**

In variant PMM5 the organization decides to grant the process managers a mandate of directing resources. The main characteristic of this variant is the transition of decision rights from line to process, and the transition of the escalation responsibility from process to line management. In variant PMM4, the staff or manager decides whether they will follow the suggestion of the process manager. If the process manager does not agree with his choice, they must decide whether they wish to involve higher levels of authority in the conflict, or will accept the decision made.

Typically for PMM5, process management has the task to make a decisive recommendation for the involved employee to follow whenever necessary. If the involved employee feels that it is unwise to act upon the recommendation of process management, the employee needs to escalate this to higher layers in the line organization. If higher layers of authority are not able to convince the process management of their vision, the recommendation of the process management holds. Process management can only be overruled by their principal.

The recommendations of process management are process-based directions. This means these directions need to involve the sequence and pace of activities. Directions can also involve the accuracy of the execution of, for example, registration activities. Furthermore, in this particular variant process management doesn't interfere with directions on technical content.

#### **PMM6: operational and content direction through processes**

While less obvious, it is possible to *also* authorize the process management to decide which department - and which individuals in that department - must execute activities. As a result, process management influences content-related aspects. Process management will select the most suitable department and staff member with regard to the situation. In this variant, the line management's role is virtually reduced to *resource management*. The line manager must ensure that the department has adequate resources with sufficient knowledge to execute the activities. In this variant, process management decides on deployment of the resources.

#### **PMM7: full process direction**

This is primarily a theoretical variant. It is the last step in allocating more responsibility to the process management. This variant allocates the responsibility for resource management, which in PMM6 still remains with line management, to the process management. The result is "process departments", meaning that all activities that must be executed for a process are executed by resources from those departments.

An example is the creation of an Incident Management department with all knowledge (quantitative and qualitative) to solve all incidents with their own resources. A more likely alternative is in situations of intensive outsourcing, where the Incident Management department still has the first-line knowledge available (quantitative and qualitative), but is responsible for managing the outsourced activities in terms of second and third-line activities.

**PMM alternatives**

Like any model, the PMM describing seven variations is actually a simplification of reality. In practice, every organization needs to determine in more detail what the tasks, responsibilities and authorities of the different managers are. And there could, of course, be alternative positions in between the seven variations presented here. The seven variations in PMM describe the major, characteristic and distinctive positions.

A choice of a variant for one process does not have to apply for all processes. For example an organization may chose PMM5 for its operational processes, based on the large number of calls that should be managed in a standardized way across the organization, and PMM4 for the tactical processes, where there is generally more time to discuss the order in which activities should be executed.

**Main positions in the PMM**

The matrix in table 2 summarizes the different variants of the PMM.

PMM position	Line management	Processes recognized	Processes managed	Processes controlled	Who escalates	Who allocates resources	Who manages resources
1	Y	N	N	N	n/a	Line	Line
2	Y	Y	N	N	n/a	Line	Line
3	Y	Y	Y	N	Process	Line	Line
4	Y	Y	Y	Y	Process	Line	Line
5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Line	Line	Line
6	Y	Y	Y	Y	Line	Process	Line
7	N	Y	Y	Y	n/a	Process	Process

Table 2 The seven main positions in the PMM

It is important to recognize that, following the variants from PMM1 to PMM7, there are systematically more tasks, responsibilities and authorities granted to process management (see figure 3). Simultaneously, this means that the very same tasks, responsibilities and authorities should be removed from line management.

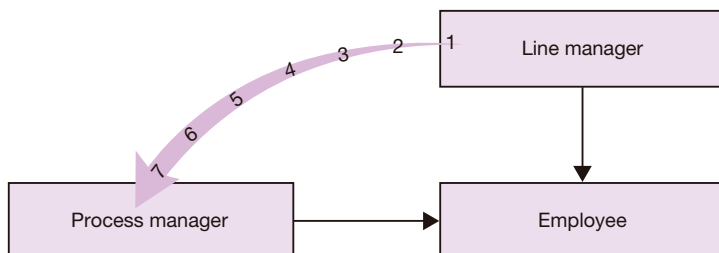


Figure 3 The shift in responsibilities and authorities

Tasks, responsibilities and authorities remain the same for employees with the variations from PMM1 to PMM 7. The main difference for employees is just who manages them. When the line and process management function is properly set-up this shouldn't lead to conflicts as the different managers are only directing based on their own responsibilities.

---

## APPLYING THE PROCESS MANAGEMENT MATRIX (PMM)

Applying the PMM requires insight in the factors that also influence an optimal organizational set-up. Although not always possible, there is a logical sequence for the set-up choices. An insight into the consequences of these choices will help with the successful implementation.

### Factors of choice

Determining the most effective or desired position in the PMM is a choice that is influenced by different factors. A few of them are listed below.

#### Size of the IT organization

Processes ensure the accurate execution of activities and largely determine the communication. Every organization needs accurate execution of activities and proper communication, but for smaller organizations the number of activities and communication lines are limited and therefore easier to structure. When deciding upon a process and process organization, it is advisable to be cautious not to create an overkill situation where you try to organize everything. The short lines in small organizations make it ineffective to grant a lot of tasks, responsibilities and authorities to process manager roles.

#### Type of delivery

Organizations that deliver products have a different kind of interaction with their customers than organizations that deliver services. Organizations that deliver products have a different balance between their processes. Generally, the change and incident processes are less prominent in product-oriented organizations than in service-oriented organizations.

#### Management culture

Organizations with a strong hierarchical culture are less suitable to grant a lot of responsibilities to process manager roles at once. A culture where the department manager is heavily involved in the performance of the department doesn't suit the presence of a process manager who has an influence on the line manager's department (strict directions, strict accountability).

#### Process experience

Organizations that have experience in working with processes have the opportunity to intensify the process manager role. In this situation, line managers are used to not being the only one responsible for the business outcome, and employees are familiar with the effect of direction from several roles.

#### Hierarchical positioning

Although theoretically unnecessary, in practice it helps when the hierarchical position of process management is comparable to that of line management, with a comparable package of tasks, responsibilities and authorities. E.g., a soldier on guard-duty who needs to stop everybody without valid papers, has the correct tasks, responsibilities and authorities, but it will be inconvenient for the soldier to stop a general. For the general it will be inconvenient to be stopped by a soldier in front of his sergeants. Despite the fact that formally everything

is correct, the situation that occurs is hard to work with. So, when processes and process management play a crucial role in an organization, it is important not to position process management too low in the hierarchy. If process management is to be taken seriously, we prefer the process management role to report to the CIO directly, being part of the CIO's management team.

### **Roles and functions**

The size of the process management role depends on the granted tasks, responsibilities and authorities, and the size of the organization. With bigger organizations the role of a process manager can be so extensive that it fills a full day's job. In this case, the process manager role can be a full-time job. For smaller organizations, the process manager role will be a part-time job.

### **Order of choice**

The time to make a choice is often determined by the situation. However, there is a preferred order to adhere to when possible.

### **Determining delivery position**

Within an organization, the question of what the organization delivers to the customer will get many different answers. Answers vary from PCs, network, infrastructures or information systems, through application management, system administration or help desk, to services.

An important difference between product and service delivery is that generally with service delivery the interaction with the customer is much more intensive. The production chain of the supplier needs to be aligned to this. In addition, the service delivery often has a more continuous character. Both effects mean that it is important to draw-up internal collaborative agreements. For this reason, organizations that deliver services are more in need of processes than organizations that deliver products.

### **Determining process position**

When the delivery position is acknowledged, the choice needs to be made of which role the processes are going to play in realizing the delivery. If there is lots of customer interaction and the delivery of the service requires a lot of successive activities to be executed by many different people and departments, processes will soon show their value. In particular, change and incident management processes may be the first because of the huge numbers of calls that need to be handled under pressure conditions. Also the configuration, problem and production processes can quickly contribute to improved service quality. The importance of processes will be expressed in the accuracy they are worked with, in the way they are supported by service management tools, in the strictness with their implementation and - maybe the most important - in the way process reports are used for guidance in the management and set-up of the organization.

### **Positioning process management**

The more important the processes, then the more important is the position of process management. In cases where processes are expected to make an important contribution to the successful support of the service, than such processes need to be managed properly. In particular, careful consideration needs to be given when determining the suitable package of tasks, responsibilities and authorities for the management of processes in relation to the line management. The position in the organization hierarchy will also be a crucial factor in

successfully working with processes. E.g. in PMM4 and higher, several process managers may be part of the organization's Management Team.

### **Differentiating between processes**

It is not necessary to give all process managers similar responsibilities. A differentiated division of responsibilities can, for example, be based on process characteristics such as the number of call per process, or the time pressure that comes with the handling of calls. Organizations could opt to choose a higher position in the PMM for incident and change management than for configuration management or problem management.

### **Aligning the process and line management relation**

Most important is perhaps the alignment between tasks, responsibilities and authorities of process and line management. The tasks, responsibilities and authorities granted to process management should not be on the line management's list and vice versa. As in most situations with the set-up of process management, line management already exists, and this always implies that line management loses tasks, responsibilities and authorities. Too often this consequence is not acknowledged. While this can be painful, management needs to make a clear and unambiguous choice. The solution is not a vague description that people can interpret any way they like. Again, clear choices are crucial here.

The choices made can be set out in collaboration agreements between line and process management. They need to be detailed in terms of (adjusted) job descriptions of line and process management.

### **Appointing roles and/or functions**

After completing the division of tasks between line and process management, roles need to be appointed. Keep in mind that the role of the old line management is changed. Check whether roles are, and remain, full-time jobs, or whether functions can be combined. Combining line and process management roles is an option, but whether it is actually possible depends on the nature of the local functions. While processes in IT service organizations can be standardized, the organizational structure varies a lot, e.g. depending upon culture, size, and history of the organization. In small organizations we will see many combinations of roles in one employee, simply because of the low numbers of staff. In larger organizations we may find more specified roles and combinations, e.g. an organization with 25 services may have five services managers, and one service manager may also be the line manager of an application development team, or the problem manager may manage one of the operations teams.

### **Standing by the consequences**

Besides influencing management, the choices made obviously also affect employees. As was stated previously, the choices made for process management do not change the task package: all tasks still need to be executed. However, the way these tasks are managed can change. When more management tasks are granted to process management, this means that the employee will be managed more from the position of process management, and consequently line management will lose some of its power. Both process and line management need to stand by the chosen policy to prevent the employee from ending up in an undesirable situation that may be full of tension.

**Publish all choices**

All people who are involved should be aware of the choices made. Therefore it is highly recommended that all organizational choices are accessible for everyone. This prevents organizations from having to spend their time in useless discussions. A good example is the creation and publishing of a matrix where all process activities are cross-referenced with all functions or roles. For each activity at least one role should be Responsible, Accountable, Consulted or Informed (RACI).

**Evaluating and collaborating**

It is recommended that the collaboration between line and process management should be evaluated frequently, with adjustments made where necessary. When the process and line reports are properly set-up, they can make important contributions in determining the quality of the collaboration. Changes to the set-up of the collaboration between line and process management can be caused by changing delivery positions: organizations often develop from product suppliers to service suppliers, and this may well, in turn, have effects upon the position of process management. Changes may also be driven by experience with process management: after some time, the organization may be capable of introducing a more intensive form of process management. Alternatively, choices made at the time may require adjustment because they simply didn't turn out to be most effective.

**Consequence of choices****Learn to escalate**

With the appointment of process management next to line management there are two different management structures present in an organization. In the classic line organization, vertical escalation (informing a higher layer in one of the management structures, as opposed to horizontal "knowledge" escalation) is easily seen as crossing the hierarchy, which has a negative connotation. Vertical escalation can be a useful mechanism for extra verification when necessary. If employees or managers feel that a decision will result in damage to the organization, we believe they are obligated to escalate the issue.

In the matrix organization there are two management structures that make choices from their own position of responsibility, so now there are two routes for vertical escalation. This complexity increases the chance that one of the management structures is missing the required overview, which will lead to making the wrong choices.

**Roles**

In many organizations the role of process manager will not be a full-time job. As such, this is nothing special: the same goes for line manager roles. Often, the solution is found in granting combinations of executive tasks to one manager or making one manager responsible for several departments.

The same solutions can be chosen when constructing process management roles. However, there is one relevant distinction. A common characteristic of many processes is that they cross department borders, so that several departments are involved with the execution of a process. By connecting the process manager role to the role of a line manager, a situation can develop where the one *line* manager appears to interfere with the work of the other *line* manager - which can lead to conflicts. A combination regularly used is to combine the roles of service desk manager (line) and incident manager (process). However, when the responsibility of the incident manager then requires corrective action to be taken against,

for example, the system administration department, this can lead to a conflict as the system administration department may feel that they being managed by the service desk manager. Combinations like these should be avoided where possible.

Logically, the combination of roles is often based on where they overlap. Therefore, combining the roles of incident manager and service desk manager may seem logical but at the same time may create a situation where managers control themselves.

### Output responsibility

The setting up of process management means that line management is no longer exclusively responsible for the organization's output. As a consequence, process management contributes to the realization of this output and should (also) be accountable for it. This should be made explicit in the job description. In addition, the way a process contributes to the organization's output should be indicated in clear process reports.

---

## CONCLUSION

Every organization should choose the set-up structure that is most effective for realizing their objectives. In particular, processes can provide essential contributions to the realization of the business outcomes for service providers.

The introduction of process management in an organization causes a complex but also desirable matrix organization. To gain control of this matrix, explicit choices need to be made. A frequently jammed matrix is often not caused by explicit choices but by the lack of choices. Not insisting on certain choices creates a situation where line and process managers are made to be each other's natural opponents. By definition, the set-up of process manager roles has consequences for the position of line managers.

The PMM position chosen by an organization totally depends on the conditions. Good and bad only have a meaning in the way the choice supports the organization's objectives.

The PMM has been used in practice over the past five years and it turned out to be a powerful instrument to explain the possibilities and consequences with the (re) set-up of organizations. The application of the PMM has made it possible to have structured discussions that improved the transparency and consistency of decision processes.

The development of the PMM is a continuous process, based on new experiences. With this publication we hope to receive useful comments from the market that will lead to further improvements in the way the PMM can be used in practice.

**Wim Hoving** (The Netherlands) is director of BHVB, an expert consultancy organization in service management. Since 1990 he has been involved in managing and improving IT service organizations and developing various management frameworks (IPW, ISM) and instruments.

**Jan van Bon** (The Netherlands) is director of Inform-IT, expert editors & innovators, producer of many publications and knowledge platforms, and an experienced trainer and practitioner in the field of IT service management.