

Chapter 5

Business Process Modeling: A Practical Introduction to Academic Entrepreneurship

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents an innovative methodology used by me for teaching a class entitled “Process Management” at the Faculty of Management and Social Communication of the Jagiellonian University. The lecture provides students with insights into the BPM theory and use of a BPM-dedicated IT tool – ADONIS by BOC, a University of Vienna-based spin-off. On the basis of theoretical guidance, as well as desktop and field research (interviews, observations), students are requested to design their own virtual enterprise. Through individual ADONIS-supported project work, they come to understand better the processes management mechanisms, risk assessment and management, and goal attainment. By designing processes relevant for any startup, students learn a key managerial function – planning. By making them aware of the business-inherent risks coming into view in process outputs, it also allows them to prepare themselves for their own market debut.

INTRODUCTION

A question more and more often raised these days by both students and employers is how should an academy prepare its students of management for starting their own business activity, how

should it provide them with skills required for independent performance at their future positions (Fayolle, 2007; Mars and Rios-Aguilar, 2010; Raposo and Do Paço, 2011; Turnbull and Eickhoff, 2011). The issue of self-employment, academic entrepreneurship and innovation has

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become particularly relevant at the time of a global crisis, when many European countries, including Poland, face a situation where nearly every second college or university graduate is unable to find any employment. Hence, the experience of ‘liquid modernity’ (Bauman, 2000) is a challenge for young people to cope with through a flexible and innovative approach to their career tracks (Carey and Matlay, 2011; Lacetera, 2009). The academy should ensure that such qualities are supported, and that students are provided with tools to develop them. In the eyes of students themselves, management teaching in Poland is inadequate for addressing challenges which they would face after graduation. They underline the fact that theory outweighs practical skills necessary for an everyday managerial practice and that the syllabi are full of outdated material and examples ill-adapted to the local labor market’s culture and outmoded communication methods, usually lecture-based. In her overview of the state of managerial education in the present-day world, Kostera also draws attention to the fact that the number of students of economic sciences has surged (out of 2 million students in Poland, 450,000 major in economic sciences); furthermore, she stresses that ‘business management is no longer a managerial domain. It has turned into a common job platform for people of most diverse interests, needs and skills. No wonder, then, that the traditional teaching methods in this regard have been losing their appeal’ (Kostera, 2001, p. 8). This is how the need to search for new efficient methods to teach management had become my focus when preparing the class entitled ‘Process Management’ which I have taught at the Faculty of Management and Social Communication of the Jagiellonian University since 2007. In this article, I would like to share my experience of this class. In the first part, I will present the methodology of process management and description of the successive phases of my students’ project work. In the second part, I will present the opportunities ensured by a BPM-dedicated IT tool ADONIS BPM in a

virtual project visualization. In the third part, I will present a case study of a ‘Museum of Erotic Art’ designed by one of the class participants, together with his reflections on the use of the discussed method in real business project work. The conclusions include some recommendations on a further development of the discussed class through closer ties with academic entrepreneurship incubators and through support for selected ideas as startups showing good business prospects. I believe that providing as many as possible of classes related to practical implementation of entrepreneurial issues and stimulation of student-developed business under computer laboratory conditions may become the most important reason for enterprising students to choose this particular type of studies; furthermore, they will also find the experience of such laboratory helpful in avoiding many disappointments in the real business world and in coping with risks and complex interrelations both inside and outside their organizations.

“PROCESS MANAGEMENT”: THE CLASS AND THE METHODOLOGY

Even if students of management are taught the theory of organization and management functions, methods and functions and economic calculation or participate in classes in the area of psychology and sociology, they still lack something that might combine this knowledge into a holistic whole. Having graduated and started their professional career, they will find themselves unable to use appropriate knowledge effectively, and in particular to implement a prompt solution which, in a specific case, should be intuitive, if only trained properly at an earlier stage. The position of students who have had a chance to complete a quality internship program during their study years is somewhat better, this being, however, still a marginal phenomenon in Poland. This makes students even less prepared to start their own business activity or build innovative organizations. In view of the

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