# Business Process Modeling and Improvement

Say What You Do, Do What You Say – Only Better

"People, process and technology" is a mantra in IT circles, meant to show that technology is there to support people and processes, not the other way around. Yet, faced with a need, many users jump to the question: "what tool should I buy?" In reality, it doesn't matter whether you spend millions on software if you do not know precisely *what* your enterprise does (its business capabilities) or *how* it does it (its business processes). Doing the wrong thing – or doing things wrong – with good tools is worse than doing the right thing with pen and paper.

As we show in our enterprise architecture framework below, processes occupy are central role. They form the interface between the upper layers (which belong to the business) and the lower ones (managed by IT).
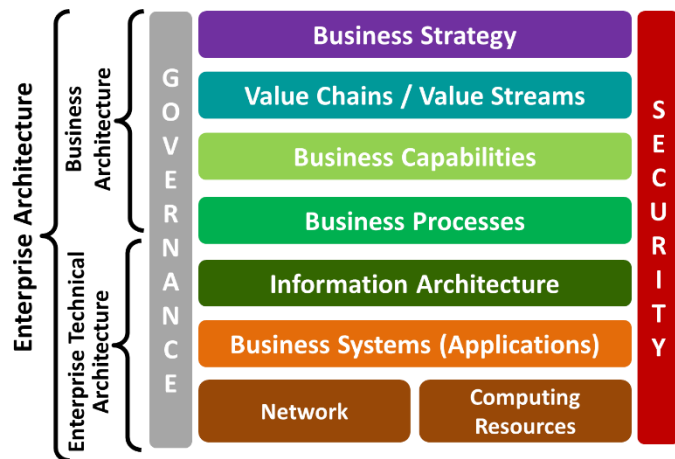
Identifying key processes and documenting them is a key initiative to help an organization improve:

- It leads to identifying missing processes, unnecessary activities, time wasted doing things in sequence instead of in parallel – generally helping to achieve a "lean enterprise."
- It creates training materials for new employees or partners.
- It prepares for business process automation, when it is appropriate.
- It helps with compliance and certifications.

When it comes to the formal representation of processes, there is no contest – the **Business Process Model and Notation (BPMN),** from the Object Management Group, is the universally recognized standard, and models can now be interchanged reliably between dozens of modeling tools from different vendors.
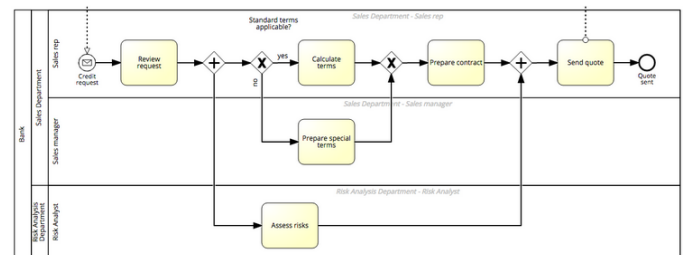
Not all activities proceed according to a predefined plan. Some are reactive to unpredictable situations, such as handling a patient in an emergency room, responding to a natural disaster, or even adjudicating an insurance claim. It may be judicious to also use the Case Management Model and Notation (CMMN) and the Decision Modeling Notation (DMN), both also from OMG, to build a more complete and accurate repository of business process models.

cébé IT & Knowledge Management proposes a rigorous approach to clients who wish to take control of their processes. We start with business interviews – what are the key capabilities? Which ones are the most critical? Which ones seem to present the most challenges? From that "heat map," we identify key processes and document them, using any existing materials (procedure manuals, training guides) as well as facilitated brainstorming sessions from the people who execute them on a daily basis.

In the next phase, we ask: what changes can we make, what can we automate, and what do we change about training, documentation, and quality metrics? We then help the client put the resulting discipline in place: create a process repository, design training sessions, and/or recommend workflow management tools as needed.