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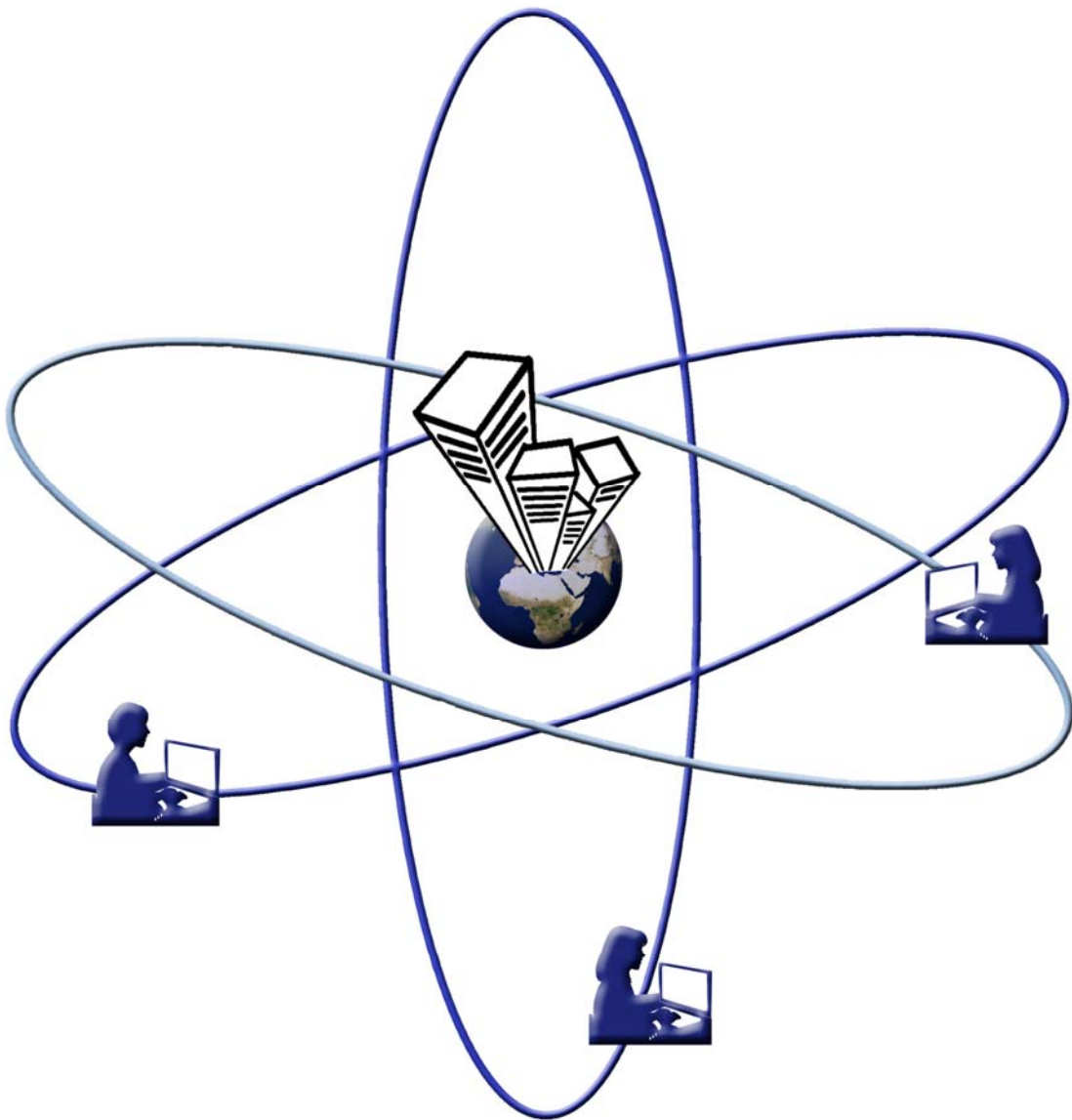
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The management of people, processes and places in the virtual workplace

APPENDICES





APPENDIX A: CASE STUDY – COMPANY F

1.0 Background

Company F, a research company located in Alabama, USA, was founded in 1996.

Company F established an unparalleled research team whose expertise covered various specialist areas, for example marketing, customer relationships and field research. Research was conducted for various industries, such as the automotive industry, financial institutions (banks) and the health care industry (hospitals). Clients in the telecommunications industry included the second largest telecommunications company, Bell South who was later acquired by the largest telecommunications company, namely AT&T.

In order to maximise returns on a client's investment, Company F adapted their research capabilities to their client's needs. Company F paid thorough attention to their client's individual requirements by working through each phase of the research project with the client. These phases consisted of:

- assessment of the strategic research needs
 - creation of the research design
 - selection of an appropriate research technique
 - evaluation of the sampling procedure
 - collection and analysis of the data
 - interpretation thereof and presentation of the research results
- (Geldenhuys, 2002:69)

Accuracy, flexibility and speed characterised the services offered by Company F. *Accurately* identifying and understanding a client's needs were vital to the creation of the research design and selection of an appropriate research technique. As each client presented individual needs, research designs were adapted (*flexibility*) to suit each client's needs. *Speedy* presentation of results, such as customer delight and failure analysis provided to bank management within 24 hours, afforded bank management with the ability to praise an employee for excellent service or to take corrective actions where needed.

Company F's competitive advantage was entrenched in providing clients with the research results faster than the competition and put them ahead of the competitors through the use of web portals to communicate research results.

The above-mentioned was aligned with Company F's vision, namely "Company F will be the preferred research company in the Southeast. We will consistently have the fastest turnaround, have the highest standards of objectivity and integrity, be the most flexible when dealing with our customers, and be the best cost provider. We will use the latest methodology and technology to ensure our vision becomes a reality. Our customer service will fulfil even the unexpected wishes and needs of our customers." (Geldenhuys, 2002:69)

The company had a "total focus" on its clients and that resulted in Company F being successful. The research and analysis services offered to their clients as part of Company F's "total focus" aimed at providing their clients with the best possible management information, assisted them in achieving a competitive lead in the ever-changing business world where quality of service, customer satisfaction, trust and commitment are fundamental for survival (Geldenhuys, 2002:70, 71). This "total focus" also formed the foundation for Company F's BPM practice.

1.1 Services offered by COMPANY F

As Company F had a "total focus" on their clients they strived to provide clients with a first-class one-stop service, covering research design, data collection, analysis of research results and reporting of such results using the latest technology available. Research capabilities were adapted to a client's specific needs, selecting an appropriate method, such as:

- telephone surveys done by the centralised call centre
- focus groups used for product related research
- mail-, web- and email surveys handled by the centralised workplace
- Interactive Voice Response (IVR) (This method was research was later abandoned due to very low response rates.)

Company F's research expertise, as stated by Geldenhuys (2002:70), covered multiple disciplines, thereby providing them with supreme research capabilities, such as:

- customer/employee satisfaction studies to establish which specific element (segment) of a customer's experience led to customer satisfaction
- customer perception studies to assess a customer's perception of assistance rendered by a company or firm, such as the quality of service a customer received

These above-mentioned studies focussed on customer satisfaction and often involved the banking and health care industries. These studies were the following:

- Preference studies aimed at providing a detailed analysis of the client's products/service against that of a competitor. Specific product attributes were analysed to determine its preference.
- Possession studies intended to establish the reach of the client's own and its competitor's product availability.
- Usage studies to obtain answers on some critical questions pertaining to the usage of the client's product and its competitor's product. Questions related to expansion of market share, value the customer received from using a specific product, as well as unsatisfied needs that offered a potential growth opportunity.

These studies centred on product preference and availability and were relevant to the automotive and banking industries.

- Marketing strategy research assisted clients in defining and formalising their marketing and positioning strategy, as well as the implementation of marketing strategies.

Combining these multiple research disciplines with fast turnaround times provided Company F with the edge to be the research firm of choice.

2.0 Organisational structure

Company F started off with five people who worked in a virtual workplace. The organisation expanded over time to have 20 managers and 200 employees. The call centre consisted of 120 permanent employees who worked from 16:00 until 20:00, as that was the time clients preferred telephone surveys to be done. Only about 20 percent of telephone survey calls were made during the 09:00 until 17:00 time slot when businesses were called.

The call centre consisted of 120 workstations which allowed for interaction with co-workers, supervisors, quality control staff, as well as trainers. Human Resource (HR) functions were executed and managed from the call centre according to recommendations from the HR director. The strategy component of hiring was part of the centralised functions. The Human Resource division was also in charge of training, therefore being on-site was an improvement in organising on-site training classes.

Data centre leadership and IT functions also formed part of the call centre's centralised office. Consideration was given to having a virtual call centre, however this idea was discarded as it would have complicated IT requirements, supervision and quality measurements. This environment was very high-tech and highly supervised.

Procurement Services and General Management were handled via the virtual workplace. Marketing and Financial management were initially managed via a virtual workplace but was moved to the centralised workplace as preferred by the new chief financial officer (CFO) whose portfolio included large management responsibilities. This happened during the last two years of the organisation's existence.

The organisational structure and work processes were developed to support the virtual workplace, for example no meetings were held at 14:00, as that was the time women fetched their children from school. All research and statistical analysis were done using virtual teams, thereby enabling employees to work at times best suited to their individual circumstances with the understanding and commitment that timelines had to be met.

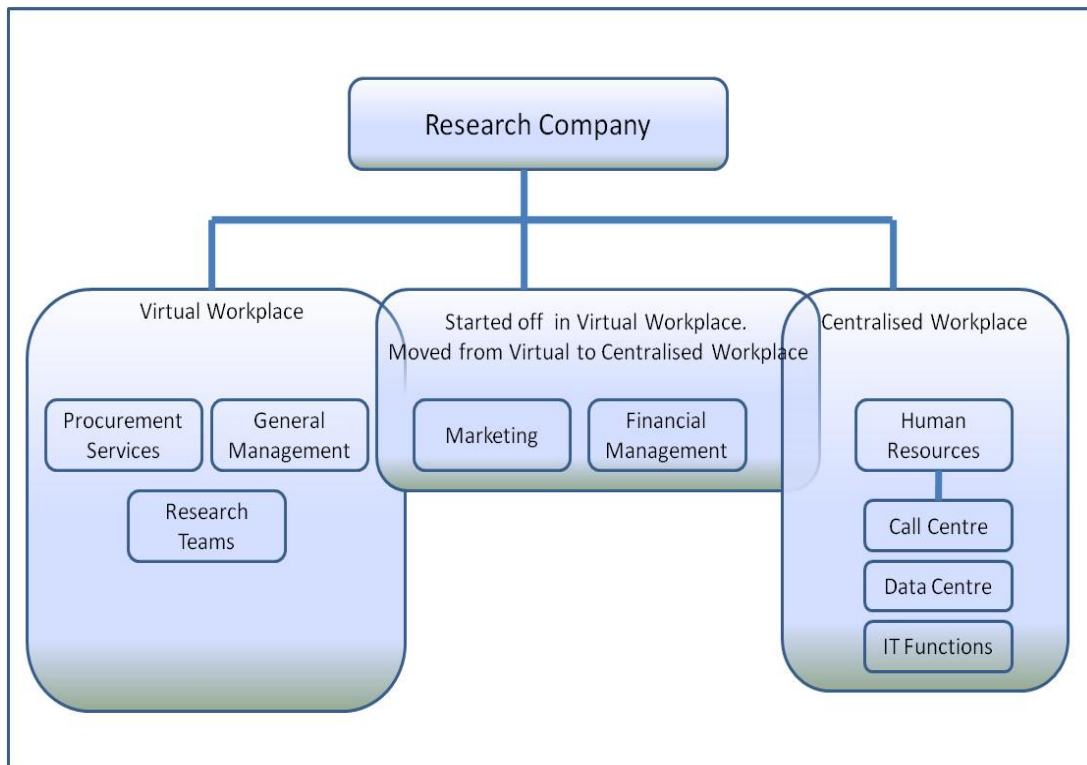


Figure 1: Organigram depicting virtual and centralised workplaces

3.0 Virtual workplace

From its inception Company F placed a high premium on the virtual workplace. Employees used conference calls as a communication medium, as technological features, such as Facebook and Skype did not exist thirteen years ago. Face-to-face business meetings were mixed with social interaction to assist in embracing the human aspect within the virtual workplace.

Company F placed a very high premium on healthy family life and regarded it as one of the cornerstones of life. Treasuring family life was encouraged through the culture established within Company F, as can be seen from the following statement: “Company F recognises that family comes first, happiness and job satisfaction come second and Company F comes third. Company F is committed to the concept that the work environment can be organised in such a manner that each person will be able to fulfil their family needs, their happiness and job satisfaction, as well as implementing the Vision and Objectives of Company F” (Geldenhuys, 2002:71).

The original employee teams, which is the marketing, finance and analysis teams formed when Company F was founded, preferred a virtual workplace. As these employees left Company F, either for better positions or to pursue other opportunities offering more free time, new employees were given the choice of working from a central or virtual workplace. The initial team consisted mostly of women with small children who preferred to work from home having the freedom to attend to their children's needs. The virtual workplace therefore suited women who preferred to work from home, allowing them to attend to small children matters. A time-off policy also catered for students who wrote examinations.

It is also important to recognise the type of work suitable for a virtual workplace. HR, documentation, finances and marketing can be done from a virtual workplace, meaning that almost anything, except work requiring an assembly line such as the mining or automotive industries can be done virtual.

A co-founder of Company F, identified characteristics or driving forces unique to the virtual workplace during an unstructured interview conducted on 20 May 2009. These driving forces are:

- economic drivers
- quality of life drivers
- technology drivers or enablers
- enabling culture

3.1 Economic drivers

Economic drivers can be viewed from different perspectives, such as the actual monetary value of income received in relation to the expenses incurred to be able to work, for instance fuel, parking, vehicle maintenance, lunch, suitable clothing and day care for children. When working from home, as in virtual, these "expenses can be reduced hugely". It was also found that employees were willing to work for a lower salary, as they had less of the expenses mentioned above related to working in a corporate or centralised workplace. This had a direct impact on corporate expenses, as it meant a lower salary bill and a reduction in the cost of "fitting out an office". Flexible

working hours allowing employees to set their own pace, assisted in increasing productivity and retaining good employees.

3.2 Quality of life drivers

Quality of life drivers go hand in hand with economic drivers, in that flexibility of working hours enabled mothers to take care of children and their school related activities. Less commuting time also meant less time away from home, for example, an employee working at a centralised workplace could spend two hours a day commuting. When adding these two hours to the eight hours spent at the centralised workplace, it meant being away from home for a total of 10 hours. The economic implication of this is that an employee is not paid of the two hours on the road.

3.3 Technology drivers or enablers

Technology enablers, such as wireless technology, broadband and virtual private networks (VPNs) assisted individuals in managing their emails and diaries. Secretaries were used far less, leading to a reduction in salaries. Social networks such as Skype, Twitter and Facebook are essential to help people keeping social contact. However, face-to-face contact is still needed.

3.4 Enabling culture

Organisations need to have an “enabling culture”, that is a culture that enables as well as supports employees who work virtual, for example, this “enabling culture” can provide day care assistance for mothers and needs to recognise the changing structure of households with men becoming more and more the “trailing partner”. Woman moved higher on the salary scale, earning more than men, resulting in men often becoming the caretaker at home.

Trust, loyalty and comfort are essential components of an enabling culture. This means trusting that employees will deliver quality outputs on time, loyalty towards the organisation and its objectives and comfort that the organisation values its employees. “It is impossible for an employee to be worker, parent, housekeeper and spouse”.

The organisation furthermore needs to have a reward system that supports the virtual workplace, which is a reward system that is “results based and not activity based”. This means rewarding employees for quality outputs/outcomes achieved. Time spent is not of the essence, but the quality of the results or outputs are vital. Employees working in the virtual workplace are responsible for time management, whereas the organisation rewards them for quality outputs. Activities therefore need to be planned and organised carefully to ensure that requirements for quality outputs are met. This also goes hand in hand with BPM as BPM is results-driven.

During the unstructured interview, reference was also made to “fiercely independent youths” in the labour market. These individuals set their own standard and function very well in a virtual workplace. They have a different culture from the traditional chief executive officers (CEOs) and managing executives (MEs). Many of the youth of today grew up with technology such as Twitter, Facebook and iPods, enabling them to communicate in different, less structured ways, resulting in them not “being cubicle people”, or not relating to a structured or centralised workplace. Quality of life and time spent with family and friends are also of cardinal importance. Although this could be seen as a generalisation, it is noted to illustrate how different the youth of today relate to their work environment when compared to the older generation who follow the structures as prescribed by corporate life.

3.5 Communication methods

Communication methods frequently used were SMS (short message system) via mobile phones, emails and web portals. This was in an endeavour to use the newest technology available to support customers and make information available within the shortest possible timeframe, which is within 24 hours.

3.6 Performance management

Company F conducted regular weekly or two-weekly progress meetings with supervisors where constructive and positive feedback was shared. Team members were rewarded on the basis of performance in implementing the company’s vision and objectives. Bonuses were calculated on both individual

and team efforts, with individual efforts tied to those job aspects that the individual could control. Team bonuses were tied to achieving and exceeding the financial budget. As bonuses had no upper cap, it became a major portion of individuals' compensation. Performance contracting was done quarterly or annually.

3.7 Development

Training matters were co-ordinated by the centralised HR division based on requirements identified.

3.8 Recruitment

Recruitment was handled by the centralised HR division. The virtual environment is suitable for people who want to work virtual and who can benefit from the flexibility it offers. First of all you need to choose people who want to work in a virtual office environment. The following personality traits were previously identified by Company F as relevant to the virtual environment:

- Self driven
- Possess high self-motivation
- Trustworthiness
- Self starter with a high sense of responsibility
- Being organised
- Have self-discipline and time management skills
- Commitment to performance
- Flexibility and good communication skills

3.9 Difficulties experienced

According to the participant, difficulties were experienced in the virtual workplace when settling in new employees into the organisation, as social networking is crucial to create a sense of belonging for new employees. This relates to knowing co-workers, knowing where to fit into the organisation and understanding the organisational structure.

Body language cannot be read over a teleconference and the use of Skype and video conferences can act as substitute to some extent.

The biggest drawback experienced by employees working in the virtual workplace was “no start or end to a work day”. Employees tend to work 24/7 reading emails even before going to bed. Company F tried to introduce a cut-off time of 20:00 for email responses in order to keep to reasonable time limits. “This was not successful”.

The advantages and disadvantages related to the virtual workplace are covered in section 3.3.2.

4.0 Business process management (BPM)

Company F’s understanding of BPM is the process of being “focussed on aligning organisations with the wants and needs of its clients”. As mentioned earlier, Company F has a “total focus” on their clients and the services offered forming the foundation of their BPM practice.

Company F’s BPM practice translated into backward planning, that is starting with identifying the needs and wants of clients working backwards in order to ensure that the desired results were obtained.

In order to accommodate employees in both the centralised and virtual workplaces, the same business processes and rules applied with reference to flexible working schedules, for instance that no meetings were held at 14:00 as that was the time women collected their children from school. The most significant difference between the business processes followed in the centralised and virtual workplaces related to flexibility in working hours. Call centre agents were required to work (make calls) at times specified by the client whereas analysts and report generators could work at any time provided deadlines were met. The window during which call centre agents were required to work, left them with little opportunity for flexibility with the opposite being relevant for research teams.

The call centre consisted of 120 permanent workstations which were centrally located, managed and maintained with the assistance of IT and data centre support. IT and data centre support formed part of this centralised workplace. Employees used mostly standardised software that simplified IT and data support with the added advantage of the integration of activities.

5.0 Summary

During its existence of thirteen years Company F functioned successfully in the virtual workplace. Company F established itself as the research company of choice with flexible services and excellent turnaround time, providing research results using the latest technology available.

The **people, processes and places** components applicable to this research are reflected in that people worked traditional or virtual, depending on the type of work being performed. The company's enabling culture instilled and reflected trust and responsibility, with activities that did not require supervision being done virtually supported through business processes allowing flexibility and fast turnaround times.

The company's ability to adapt their research activities to their client's needs irrespective of location served as a prime example of their **people, processes and places** adaptability.

6.0 Conclusion

Company F was used as a case study due to its invaluable experience in the virtual workplace. Company F lived their vision, of being the preferred research company in the Southeast of the USA, with the fastest turnaround time (24 hours); had the highest standards of objectivity and integrity, was the most flexible when dealing with their customers and was the best cost provider.

They used the latest methodology and technology, such as SMS, email and web portals to ensure that their vision became a reality. Their customer service fulfilled even the unexpected wishes and needs of their customers.

7.0 References

Geldenhuis, I. 2002. Management report. The concept of a virtual office: infrastructure and recruitment. MBA dissertation, Pretoria, University of Pretoria.

Strickland, A.J. 2009. Unstructured Interview. University of Pretoria on 2009-05-20

Strickland, A.J. 2009. Information questionnaire response.

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APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT LIST

PARTICIPANT	TYPE OF SESSION	COMPANY	ROLE
1	Focus group	Consulting Firm A	Business Process Repository Manager: Responsible for management and governance of technical and business process tool services and application, mentoring and training of technical services resources according to methods and standards, business process quality assurance and compliance to methods and standards.
2	Focus group	Consulting Firm A	Business Process Analyst: Formulate and document business, data and systems requirements and processes according to methods and standards; identification, investigation and analysis of business processes, procedures and best practices. Use process modelling techniques and tools to create clear business process and related specifications.
3	Focus group	Consulting Firm A	Business Process Quality Manager: Responsible for all business process methods and standards as part of project initiation to ensure that deliverables adhere to business process quality. Compile business process quality plan; monitor, control and provide quality compliance report. Business process training for consultants and contractors. Update and maintain QA Governance documentation and version control.
4	Focus group	Consulting Firm A	Business Process Analyst: Formulate and document business, data and systems requirements and processes according to methods and standards; identification, investigation and analysis of business processes, procedures and best practices. Use process modelling techniques and tools to create clear business process and related specifications.
5	Interview	Consulting Firm A	BPM Tool Suite Expert: Responsible for helpdesk, integrated prioritised scripting requirements; compliance to quality, time and communication standards, design, development and testing of BPM tool scripts. Develop training material; conduct training in accordance with standards.
6	Interview	Financial Institution Company B	Senior Business Process Analyst: Certified business process analyst, business analyst and project manager. Responsible for business processes development and alignment of subsidiary's business processes with enterprise policy, quality and business process standards.



7	Interview	ECIS 2010 Conference (G)	BPM Consultant with 4 years professional experience across Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. Involved in large scale BPM initiatives and process improvement activities. Industry sectors: Aluminium, Mining, Automotive, Capital Goods, Government, Armed Forces
8	Interview	ECIS 2010 Conference (G)	Senior SAP Researcher: SAP BPM, BPM technologies and future trends
9	Interview	ECIS 2010 Conference (G)	Research assistant at European Research Center for Information Systems. Area of expertise: Collaborative BPM, ICT and E-Government
10	Interview	ECIS 2010 Conference (G)	Research assistant and PhD student at the Department of Information Systems Engineering and Financial Management. University of Augsburg. Area: Business Process Flexibility
11	Interview	ECIS 2010 Conference (G)	Post-doctorate fellow and BPM project manager
12	Interview	Telecommunications Company C	Senior Specialist: Responsible for Enterprise Architecture Governance including integration of system and BPM tools; BPM Governance
13	Interview	Telecommunications Company C	Senior Specialist: Business Process Analysis and Enterprise BPM Project Manager.
14	Interview	Financial Institution Company D	Business Process Specialist: Responsible for the defining, improvement and implementation of processes for different organisations.
15	Focus group	Consulting Firm E	HR Team Lead: SAP Support Center and Support Hub in Australia
16	Focus group	Consulting Firm E	Resource Management: Talent Development and Placement. Member of ERP Management Board
17	Focus group	Consulting Firm E	Team Lead: SAP BPM Support Hub
18	Focus group	Consulting Firm E	Team Lead: Remote Virtual Employees – Services, Logistic and Finance
19	Focus group	Consulting Firm E	Team Lead: Remote Virtual Employees – Cross Applications
Total Focus Group Participants: 9			Total Interview Participants: 10



APPENDIX C: WEBLOG STATISTICS

WEBLOG STATISTICS as obtained from Google analytics for VirtualBPM.blogspot.com

Details	Date created	Date		Date		Date		Date discontinued		TOTAL	
Dates	16 April 2010	30 April 2010		31 May 2010		30 June 2010		31 July 2010		31 July 2010	
Unique visitors	0	10		17		63		20		94	
Site visits	0	56		336		289		108		789	
Countries	0	4		6		10		9		18	
Names of Countries	0	Australia	20	Australia	100	South Africa	45	South Africa	22	Australia	154
		South Africa	17	Malaysia	82	Australia	33	UK	2	South Africa	151
		USA	3	South Africa	67	Germany	10	Germany	2	Malaysia	82
		Canada	2	Singapore	4	USA	4	Australia	1	Germany	13
				Germany	1	Saudi Arabia	4	Sweden	1	USA	8
				UK	1	Netherlands	4	Austria	1	Singapore	7
						Singapore	3	USA	1	Netherlands	4
						UK	1	Brazil	1	Saudi Arabia	4
						Spain	1	Turkey	1	UK	4
						Norway	1			Austria	2
						Denmark	1			Sweden	2
						Austria	1			Canada	2
						Finland	1			Norway	1
						Sweden	1			Denmark	1
										Turkey	1
										Brazil	1
										Finland	1
										Spain	1
Page views	0	42		255		110		32		439	

USA – United States of America; UK – United Kingdom



APPENDIX D: PERSONALITY TRAITS



GENERIC PROFILE: PERSONALITY TRAITS/CHARACTERISTICS

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE				
Description	Left	Characteristic	Right	Description
Happy to let others take charge, dislikes telling people what to do, unlikely to take the lead		Controlling		Likes to be in charge, takes the lead, tells other what to do, takes control
Accepts majority decisions, prepared to follow the consensus		Independent minded		Prefers to follow own approach, prepared to disregard majority decisions
Prepared to make decisions without consultation, prefers to make decisions alone		Democratic		Consults widely, involves others in decision-making, less likely to make decisions alone
THINKING STYLE				
Favours changes to work methods, prefers new approaches, less conventional		Conventional		Prefers well-established methods, favours a more conventional approach
Prefers to deal with practical rather than theoretical issues, dislikes dealing with abstract concepts		Conceptual		Interested in theories, enjoys discussing abstract concepts
More likely to build on than to generate ideas, less inclined to be creative and inventive		Innovative		Generates new ideas, enjoys being creative, thinks of original solutions
Prefers routine, is prepared to do repetitive work, does not seek variety		Variety seeking		Prefers variety, tries out new things, likes changes to regular routine, can become bored by repetitive work
Behaves consistently across situations, unlikely to behave differently with different people.		Adaptable		Changes behaviour to suit situation, adapts approach to different people
More likely to focus upon immediate than long-term issues, less likely to take a strategic perspective		Forward thinking		Takes long-term view, sets goals for the future, more likely to take a strategic perspective
Sees deadlines as flexible, prepared to leave some tasks unfinished		Conscientious		Focuses on getting things finished, persists until the job is done



FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS				
Tends to feel tense, finds it difficult to relax, can find it hard to unwind after work		Relaxed		Finds it easy to relax, rarely feels tense, generally calm and untroubled
Feels calm before important meetings, less affected by key events, free from worry		Worrying		Feels nervous before important occasions, worries about things going wrong
Concerned about the future, expects things to go wrong, focus on the negative aspects of the situation		Optimistic		Expects things will turn out well, looks at the positive aspects of a situation, has an optimistic view of the future
Difficult to trust people, wary of others' intentions		Trusting		Trusts people, sees them as reliable and honest, believes
Openly expresses feelings, finds it difficult to conceal feelings, displays emotions		Emotionally controlled		Can conceal feelings from others, rarely displays emotion
Sees career progression as less important, looks for achievable rather than highly ambitious targets		Achieving		Ambitious, and career-centred, likes to work to demanding goals and targets
Tends to be more cautious when making decisions, likes to take time to reach conclusions		Decisive		Makes fast decisions, reaches conclusions quickly, less cautious
REPORTING STYLE				
Prefers to work without constraints. Has own ideas and enjoys the opportunity to develop them with minimal intervention				



APPENDIX E: COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK	
<i>What do you want to say?</i>	
The message	Communicate the BPM Strategy and BPM Roadmap
	BPM deliverables in each step of the transformation process
	Clear and simple message enabling collaboration and active participation
<i>When will you say it?</i>	
The timeline	Awareness: BPM Strategy, building blocks creation of process communities, information on progress and future plans.
	Pilot: Inform all audiences of pilots and BPM Roadmap. First transition results available.
	Implementation: BPM transition completed. Continuous communication plan for all audiences.
	Continuous feedback: Feedback mechanisms in place to measure progress.
<i>How will you say it?</i>	
The channel	Channel to fit audience
	Intranet, newsletters, board updates, internal magazines, passive media data on posters and flyers, testimonials, workshops, committees, blogs
<i>To whom will you say it?</i>	
The audience	Senior management: Overall transparency, decision-making, high level interest.
	Team leaders: Align vision, strategy, collaborate with business process owners.
	Business process owners: Process transparency, collaborate with IT, business process measurements.
	Project managers: Tools, methods, training.
	Employees: Job performance, transparency, responsibilities

Snabe, Rosenberg, Moller & Scavillo. (2009:237–242).



APPENDIX F: ONLINE BUSINESS PROCESS MATURITY ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS EXAMPLE

BPM Maturity Check Questions

The following questions relate to an online BPM Maturity Check powered by IDS Scheer at <http://www.bpmmaturity.com/bpm.aspx?lang=en-US>

The BPM Maturity Check consists of sixteen questions which have been grouped into the Strategy, Design, Implementation and Controlling components. Each question has a choice of five possible answers. The maturity assessment rating is based on the answers selected.

Its inclusion in this thesis serves as an example of a BPM Maturity Check Tool.

STRATEGY
What is your organisational “readiness” for BPM?
Who are your BPM strategy and objectives aligned with the business strategy?
How do you manage your BPM?
Are BPM standard methods and tools defined for BPM initiatives?
DESIGN
How well are your business processes documented?
How far do you integrate other aspects of the enterprise with your process architecture?
What level of process analysis are you doing?
What are you doing in terms of process optimisation?
IMPLEMENTATION
How are required changes in the processes managed?
How much do BPM efforts currently affect the organisation structure of the company?
How structured is the collaboration between BPM and IT?
How are business processes communicated and how is the BPM knowledge communicated?
CONTROLLING
How are implemented processes measured?
How well is a target system for the BPM objectives defined?
How are the implementation of BPM knowledge and the communication of BPM achievements measured?
How are suggestions for improvements and related process changes managed?