Selecting a Business Process Management (BPM) Solution for the Modern Business

Jorge García,
TEC Principal Analyst,
Business Intelligence and Data Management

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TEC Technology Evaluation Centers

Market Landscape Report: Selecting a Business Process Management (BPM) Solution for the Modern Business

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About This Report

The practice of business process management (BPM) is nothing new. Business processes, like vessels carrying oxygenated blood and nutrients to all parts of the body and supporting all organ functions and the growth of the individual, permeate all areas and levels of the organization and provide the necessary components for conducting business activities and sustaining business operations. At all times, business processes are being followed, even if users are not even aware of their existence.

This market landscape report recapitulates the evolution and current state of the area of BPM, and reviews the latest trends in BPM practices. The report also presents an analysis of information gathered from Technology Evaluation Centers' (TEC's) BPM user community to guide individuals and organizations interested in exploring the BPM landscape or staying current with the state of the BPM space. This report provides an in-depth look into the BPM landscape and the key features and capabilities of BPM software offerings available on the market. It provides a discussion on the following elements:

1. BPM practices and their importance for an organization
2. Analyst perspective on the state of BPM practices—their role and value in the daily operations of an organization and their relationship to other business elements
3. Best-practice scenarios and trends within the BPM space
4. Core capabilities of BPM software solutions and general considerations for selecting among these solutions
5. Survey results of TEC's BPM user community
6. Key considerations when undertaking a BPM initiative

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Executive Summary

An increasing number of organizations are realizing that improving their business processes can lead to clear benefits in procuring operational efficiency and gaining a competitive business advantage. Ensuring the effective monitoring and execution of business processes can greatly enhance the likelihood that an organization will succeed in promoting increased efficiency and realizing cost savings.

Business process management (BPM) may not get the same level of recognition that many other business practices do, but having a robust BPM practice in place is vital for many organizations for achieving optimal business process performance, efficiency, effectiveness, and agility. This is particularly important for those organizations that operate in industries such as software and information technology (IT) and services.

Over the past several years, the BPM software scene has witnessed the incorporation of multiple technology paradigms such as mobile technologies, cloud computing, and increased automation capabilities in available software solutions. The end result is the acceleration of business processes, encouraging agile and adaptive ways for handling changing and complex business conditions. Another benefit is increased data centricity, and the potential for analytics to not only improve business process monitoring and efficiency, but also increase automated decision making in business processes.

Analysis of Technology Evaluation Centers' (TEC's) BPM user community provides relevant and valuable information on customers' satisfaction with and functionality preferences of the BPM software offerings currently used by the respondents' organizations. The survey results identify the most common BPM offerings currently in use as well as the capabilities that users ascribe to the core aspects of a BPM solution, such as data modeling and process execution.

The report also provides tools to help organizations improve their BPM practices, and offers guidance on establishing a BPM initiative, including key factors to consider when selecting a best-fit BPM solution.

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Introduction to BPM Technologies

What exactly is business process management, or BPM? Of the many available definitions, one worth mentioning due to its clarity and consistency comes from the Workflow Management Coalition:

> *Business process management is a discipline involving any combination of modeling, automation, execution, control, measurement and optimization of business activity flows, in support of enterprise goals, spanning systems, employees, customers and partners within and beyond the enterprise boundaries.*

What makes this definition a good one is its general and holistic approach. It sees BPM as a discipline that involves a combination of many diverse elements—such as methods, human-machine interactions, data, and flow of processes—that work together to produce continuous execution and enable an organization to operate its business.

This definition also considers the fact that every organization needs to set up a series of processes to address its current operations: processing a customer request, authorizing a budget, monitoring client requests, etc. As a business grows in complexity, these processes will need to be designed, executed, and controlled with the assistance of a specialized tool. While many business processes are defined within other types of enterprise software solutions, such as enterprise resource planning (ERP) and customer relationship management (CRM) systems, the specific approach of these solutions within the scope of the business may impede their extension beyond the boundaries of the business and enterprise. This is when the use of specific BPM solutions come into play—establishing the supporting mechanisms for creating, deploying, executing, controlling, and measuring the efficiency of business processes. In so doing, these specific tools can dramatically improve many, if not all, aspects of every business operation.

While the existence of BPM practices is not new, in recent years the increasing complexity of business operations and the advent of new technology paradigms have led to the repositioning of BPM technologies and practices within organizations. Today, BPM practices are a top priority for those organizations looking to optimize operations, maximize efficiency, minimize failure, and of course increase profit margins.

Let's explore some of the technologies, practices, and tools that are available in the marketplace.

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Business Process Management: The Never-ending Virtuous Cycle

BPM is an essential component of business

An increasing number of organizations are realizing that improving their business processes can lead to fundamental benefits to their business. Enhancements to business processes allow for collaborating to increase business performance and procuring operational efficiency, thereby gaining a competitive business advantage. In other words, ensuring the effective monitoring and execution of business processes can greatly enhance the likelihood that an organization will succeed in promoting increased efficiency and realizing cost savings. But in order to achieve these benefits, organizations first need to set up the appropriate combination of technical, human, and methodological elements, and effectively establish BPM as a practice throughout the business. Once they do that, they can properly define and successfully execute business processes, as well as enable their continuous improvement and evolution.

Unfortunately, due to the aggressive change in focus of the software industry, many companies have lowered their priority expectations of business process improvement and have put more emphasis on incorporating other technology paradigms, such as analytics, and/or effective customer attention or customer relationship management (CRM), into their business. The end result is that they are paying less attention to effective business process management. Figure 1 shows that on Google searches, "BPM" consistently comes up much less frequently than other software-related topics.
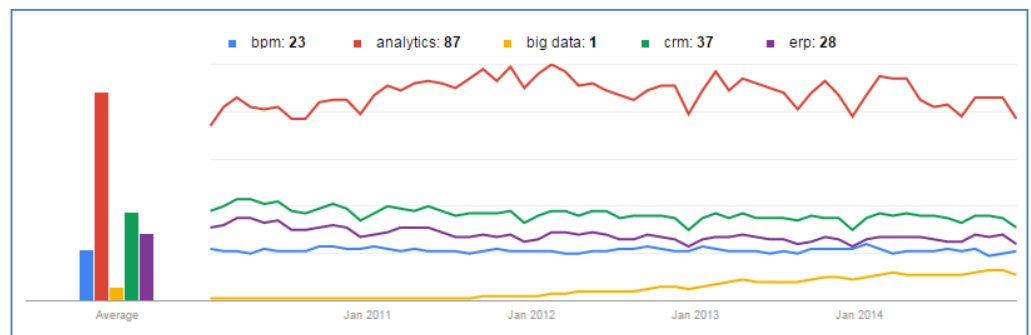

Figure 1. Frequency of BPM searches versus other popular business topics. Source: Google Trends

While these other technologies are also extremely relevant to an organization, the development of business processes is an absolute requirement for improving various aspects of the business. Business process management is increasingly important in incorporating new practices and technologies in the business, and in serving as the starting point for conducting analytics and decision-making support initiatives.

Despite the lesser popularity of BPM compared with other business-related areas, the management of business processes still consistently outperforms specific

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aspects related to business processes such as business process improvement and reengineering (figure 2). These Google findings show that users still need to find ways to improve the way they design and conduct business processes. They also reveal a steady interest in business process automation by modern organizations today.
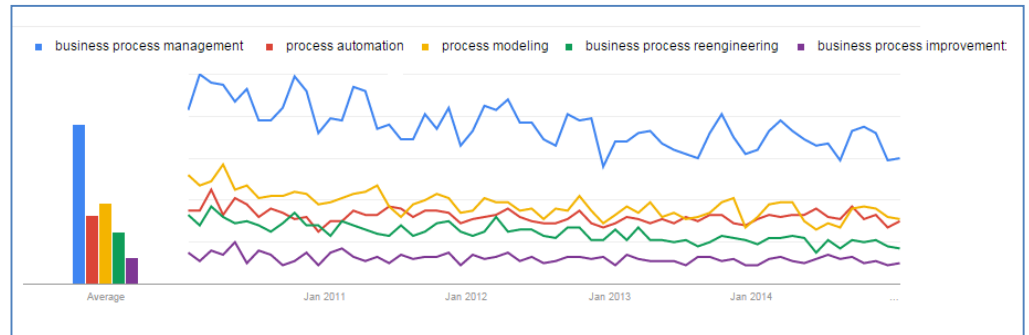

Figure 2. Frequency of business process management searches versus other specific business process areas. Source: Google Trends

While BPM may lag behind other business practices in the level of recognition it receives, for many organizations having a robust BPM practice in place is vital for achieving optimal business process performance.

Below are three general aspects of BPM that every organization looking to establish a BPM initiative should consider:

1. **Business complexity**. The ever-increasing complexity of and constant changes to business operations require companies to continuously review, modify, and improve business processes to keep pace with the nature of the business.

2. **Collaboration**. The increasing need for extensive collaboration, flexibility, and mobility—both inside and outside of an organization—prompts companies to maintain an agile and adaptive approach to BPM practices for operating effectively at any time and from any place.

3. **Process interaction**. The need to constantly improve relations with customers, partners, and associates prompts many organizations to increase the interaction of external parties with internal business processes in order to ensure effective collaboration and overall satisfaction.

In a report titled "Analysis of the Importance of Business Process Management Depending on the Organization Structure and Culture," a survey conducted with participants from all organizational levels working for companies of all sizes and from all over the world revealed some key findings. When asked about the objectives to be achieved by an organization owing to the application of methods of process management, the top three responses were as follows:

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1. Creation of a solid foundation for the complete BPM platform (50% of organizations)
2. Improvement in the coordination of activities taking place within the company (36%)
3. Increase in the efficiency of business processes (36%)

BPM practices can vary according to geographic and economic factors, and business regulations—such as tax policies, country-specific exporting and importing regulations, and specific banking policies—but one thing is clear. An increasing number of businesses are or will be—in the near future—in need of adapting their existing BPM initiative or applying a new BPM practice initiative that includes renewing or updating their software solutions. It certainly appears that BPM is increasing its stronghold within the organization, leading to further challenges that will need to be addressed.

BPM: Still, technology matters

In the business context, a process is defined as a set of connected activities established with the objective of achieving the optimal execution of a business transaction. Thus, as such, a business process needs to be constructed and executed by applying the appropriate approach or methodology that enables it to not only be successful, but also optimal, measureable, controllable, and adaptable to change for continuous improvement.

In current times, doing business has become increasingly complex and requires extensive interaction and collaboration with entities both inside and outside of an organization. In light of this, BPM practices depend on the deployment the proper technology—i.e., the right BPM software solution. To do so, organizations first need to accurately assess their business needs. They then need to accurately outline all their business processes and workflows prior to seeking a BPM software solution that fully supports these processes and allows them to be adapted according to the evolution of the business.

A basic model depicting the development of business processes (figure 3) involves a continuous workflow that starts with the design of a business process and ends with the execution and improvement of the complete business process. With ample experience and practice, and the proper technology, organizations can achieve a virtuous cycle that evolves according to the needs of the business. This way, a proper BPM solution, when combined with a good set of practices and methods, can significantly improve the entire BPM cycle—and improve many, if not all, aspects of a business process. Therefore, an effective BPM solution can make the difference in achieving optimal design, deployment, execution, control, and optimization of business processes as well as reinforcing existing best practices.
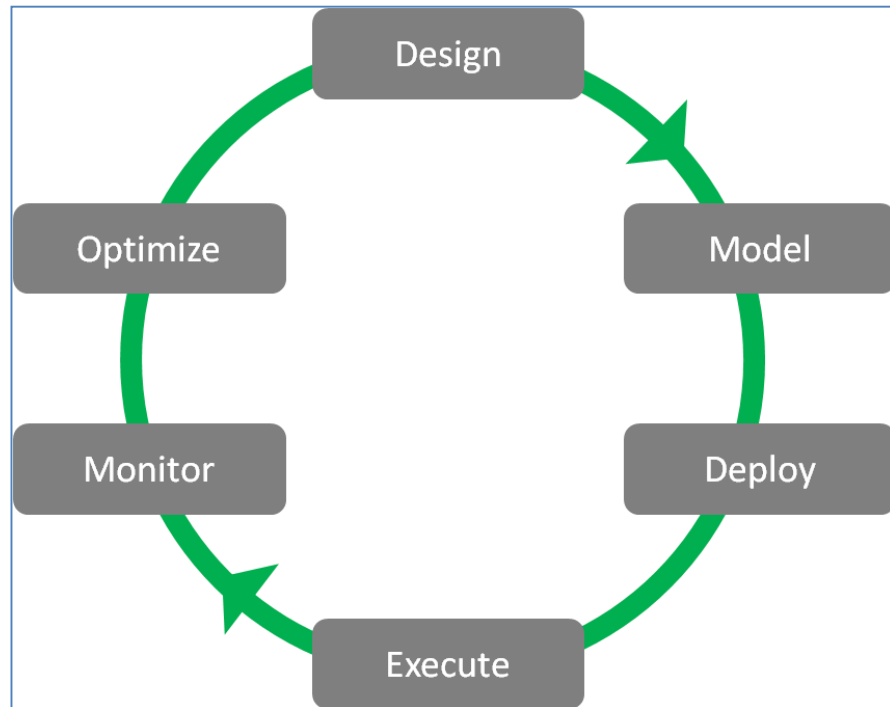
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Figure 3. Common business process development cycle

In this context, having a proper BPM software solution can bring specific benefits in many areas of the organization. In a paper titled "Making the Case for BPM: A Benefits Checklist," Jim Rudden establishes a clear definition of three core benefits:

Efficiency

It is typical for a company to first see efficiency benefits when deploying BPM. Most processes have significant waste because of manual effort, poor hand-offs between departments, and a general inability to monitor overall progress. The initial deployment of a BPM solution eliminates these problems—and the benefit is typically expressed in full-time equivalent time saved.

Effectiveness

Once a company has realized the basic efficiencies that a more controlled process brings, they will often focus on making the process more effective. These are where some of the largest gains are realized. The returns here are typically expressed in the context of handling exceptions better or making better decisions.

Agility

The final key benefit BPM provides is agility. In the era of the Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) and On-Demand, agility is a well-understood concept. In the world of Process Management, the ability to change quickly is essential. Our customers change their key processes 4–7 times per year. The driver for change can be internal or external. New opportunities can arise. New partners or

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customers need you to support a different way of doing business. Federal or international regulations can require you to change your processes. BPM provides the platform you need to be able to change your processes—faster and in a more controlled fashion than any other option. Agility benefits typically include supporting federal regulations faster—eliminating chances of fines or delays in approval.

In addition to these benefits, many modern BPM solutions—if deployed properly—can reinforce the use of best practices as well as corporate norms and initiatives for improving BPM practices. In fact, an increasing number of vendors are incorporating internationally recognized BPM and business process compliance standards, such as the [Business Process Model and Notation (BPMN)](#) and/or [Six Sigma](#), within their software solutions. Having compliance standards integrated within BPM solutions can help many organizations improve the quality of their business process initiatives. Therefore, the selection and deployment of a BPM solution can become an important driver for business improvements within many organizations.

BPM Software in a New World: The Trends

A number of new technological trends are reshaping the entire software industry, and in particular the BPM software landscape considering the central role that BPM software solutions play in mediating the operations of many businesses. These new technologies are being integrated with business practices, and enhance the ability of BPM software solutions to improve the efficiency, control, and management of business processes.

The integration of technology within the business realm has led to the more rapid development of BPM applications that are more technically robust. In fact, it has reshaped how every software vendor approaches the development of its own BPM offerings. Hence, technological advances impact the BPM software market on various levels.

Over the past several years, four main technology paradigms have spearheaded the development of BPM offerings and have reshaped the BPM software landscape. And more and more vendors are incorporating these four major technological trends into their software development efforts:

- **Mobile technologies**—for enabling BPM users to perform business process–related tasks from practically any place and at any time. The provision of BPM software with mobile capabilities lifts space and time constraints, and represents an important step forward in enabling more agile business process operations.

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- **Cloud computing**—for facilitating the adoption of BPM software offerings by many organizations via a subscription-based model or on-demand services, while reducing companies' investment in IT resources for servicing a BPM software solution.

- **Increased automation capabilities**—for accelerating business processes whereby the software handles redundant steps or tasks that do not require any human intervention, and makes those decisions that do not require any human input.

- Data centricity and **analytics**—for enabling the increased use of data analysis to improve business process efficiency and monitoring, and increase the automated decision-making aspect of business processes.

Figure 4. Main trends affecting BPM software

New BPM: From workflows to process-based apps

Another technological trend has the potential to shake the foundations of the BPM software landscape. This trend has to do with the fervent efforts of software providers in extending the capabilities of BPM software solutions to encompass business processes. Rather than providing solutions simply for workflow development and execution, which need to be integrated within the business logic of an organization, these vendors are now creating full-fledged applications containing already embedded business process logic (i.e., business process–based applications).

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Such BPM software can be used by organizations as development platforms for building functionality features that extend way beyond workflow-related components to include forms, analytics, process and data integration interfaces, and others. Vendors are therefore in the process of developing full-fledged independent applications with an orientation toward business processes. Moreover, some of these BPM applications come equipped with advanced mechanisms that do not require complex coding on the part of the users, helping them manage process-oriented design frameworks while avoiding coding to the extent possible.

Social BPM: BPM without frontiers

With interactions inside and outside the organization playing an increasingly important role in the development of new critical business processes, it should come as no surprise that the frenzy of social media activity and collaboration of employed individuals have steered the development efforts for new and innovative BPM solutions. The new so-called social BPM solutions subsume elements for enabling extensive document sharing, process interaction via social media and social media-type styles, as well as new user interface and personalization paradigms.

The incorporation of social media–like features into current and new business processes can endow specific benefits onto business users, some of which are listed here:

- Real-time collaboration via messaging systems and group boards can help improve business communication and speed decision process and risk identification;

- Warehouse managers can request more information on a specific authorization request for acquiring a new product;

- Business managers can share with other individuals the analysis of high-priority tasks to expedite completion, and avoid major delays and risks, and specific measures to put in place via collaborative boards that merge text, video, and audio communications within the BPM platform.

As these trends take a stronghold of the BPM market, they are changing the very fabric of these BPM software solutions—and hence the way these tools are used to streamline business processes. So, many modern BPM solutions on the market are becoming much more than mere workflow developers and executers. They are re-emerging as complete solutions: i.e., process-centric applications that are suited for increasingly complex business processes.

But what has the general landscape to offer those organizations in the need for a new or modern BPM solution?

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The BPM market ecosystem: From concept to reality

Currently available BPM software solutions cater to organizations of various types and sizes. And although the following is by no means an exhaustive list of BPM software providers and their offerings, it does provide basic guidance on the software solutions that organizations may want to consider.

Corporate BPM suites

This category of BPM solutions provides extensive support for large organizations and complex deployments. These may include business processes that require tasks to be performed by teams distributed around the globe, complex case management scenarios that take place in a financial service institution, and key participation of all the teams of a global oil & gas company that are needed in the value chain. These solutions are appropriate for large organizations—they may not fall within the budgets of smaller organizations, which tend to have fewer and less complex business process requirements. Below is a sample of these solutions:

Vendor	Product(s)
Oracle	Oracle BPM
IBM	IBM BPM
Progress	Progress OpenEdge
TIBCO	TIBCO ActiveMatrix BPM
Pega Systems	Pega BPM
Opentext	OpenText BPM
Informatica	ActiveVOS
EMC	EMC Documentum
Appian	Appian BPM Suite
Red Hat	JBoss BPM Suite
Software AG	webMethods BPM

Agile BPM providers

Many organizations today are increasingly relying on having a BPM solution that can help them to design and deploy rapid, constantly changing business processes. Major industries such as IT and manufacturing need to constantly and rapidly adjust their business processes to ensure continuous process efficiency while adopting new business models. The use of such a solution would enable them to adopt not only agile approaches to the deployment of software-guided business processes but also agile development models such as Scrum and disciplined agile delivery methods. Some of these vendors include:

Vendor	Product(s)
Helium	AuraPortal Helium
Bizagi	Bizagi BPM Suite
Adeptia	Adeptia BPM suite
Ultimus	Ultimus Adaptive BPM
Skelta	Skelta BPM
WorkflowGen	WorkflowGen

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Niche workflow BPM solutions

Some companies, based on their level of expertise or company size, may be looking for niche BPM software based mostly in workflow development for building best-of-breed BPM solutions. These solutions can be especially interesting for small to medium organizations (SMBs), specific lines of business, and specific vertical industries, such as automotive and construction, that need to integrate their BPM software with existing core applications. These solutions may consist of a specific of BPM-related applications that may be integrated with the enterprise's stack of software applications (ERP, CRM, etc.). Some offerings in this category include:

Vendor	Product(s)
ProcessMaker	ProcessMaker Workflow
Activiti	Activiti BPM
KissFlow	KissFlow
Meta Communications	Workgroups DaVinci

BPM automation

A number of BPM software solutions are geared toward automating and optimizing business processes. A retailer providing automated self-service capabilities for its online and store customers or a division of a logistics company performing automatic billing can bring significant organizational benefits. These solutions prioritize the workflow management process, and some of them are outlined here:

Vendor	Product(s)
BluePrism	Virtual Workforce
Automation Anywhere	Automation Anywhere
Caspio	Caspio BPA

So with the rapid expansion of the business process management software ecosystem, we can expect the emergence of even more functionally robust solutions with capabilities that extend way beyond workflow design and execution into the realm of complete business process-based applications. These new BPM offerings will see increased integration within enterprise and IT software data-intensive applications and will enhance the organization's automation of business processes.

Additionally, recent advances in two major areas are further reshaping the BPM landscape:

First, the fast-paced evolution of analytics tools facilitates their wide adoption by business users for performing daily work activities. Also, the ease of use and price-accessible nature of these exploration, visualization, and discovery tools further endorses their wide acceptance within the business community. Furthermore, the presence of an increasing number of BPM offerings with embedded analytics capabilities encourages their use in various business scenarios, from marketing organizations to medical sciences.

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Second, recent advances in disciplines like decision engineering and decision management—which collaborate in developing formal systems for decision making, such as the recent publication of the decision model and notation proposal from the Object Management Group—have the potential, along with improvements in analytics, to enhance the proactive capabilities of BPM tools for supporting important decision making and management processes and enabling business process automation wherever possible.

The BPM market is booming with many new advances in software, IT, and business.

A BPM Survey—What Does the BPM Landscape Look Like?

As the BPM software market evolves, so does the profile of BPM software users. Technology Evaluation Centers (TEC) sought to capture a snapshot of the BPM user community: who these users are, how satisfied they are with their current offerings and what software capabilities they are looking for, as well as the most popular BPM offerings on the market. To this end, TEC conducted a survey of its community of software users to get a glimpse of some of the patterns of satisfaction and usage of BPM software.

User profile

TEC surveyed more than 250 users of BPM software from a range of different technical and business positions. Figure 5 depicts the general profile of the organization of the survey respondents—the number of employees, annual revenue, and the vertical industry in which the company operates in (figures 5).
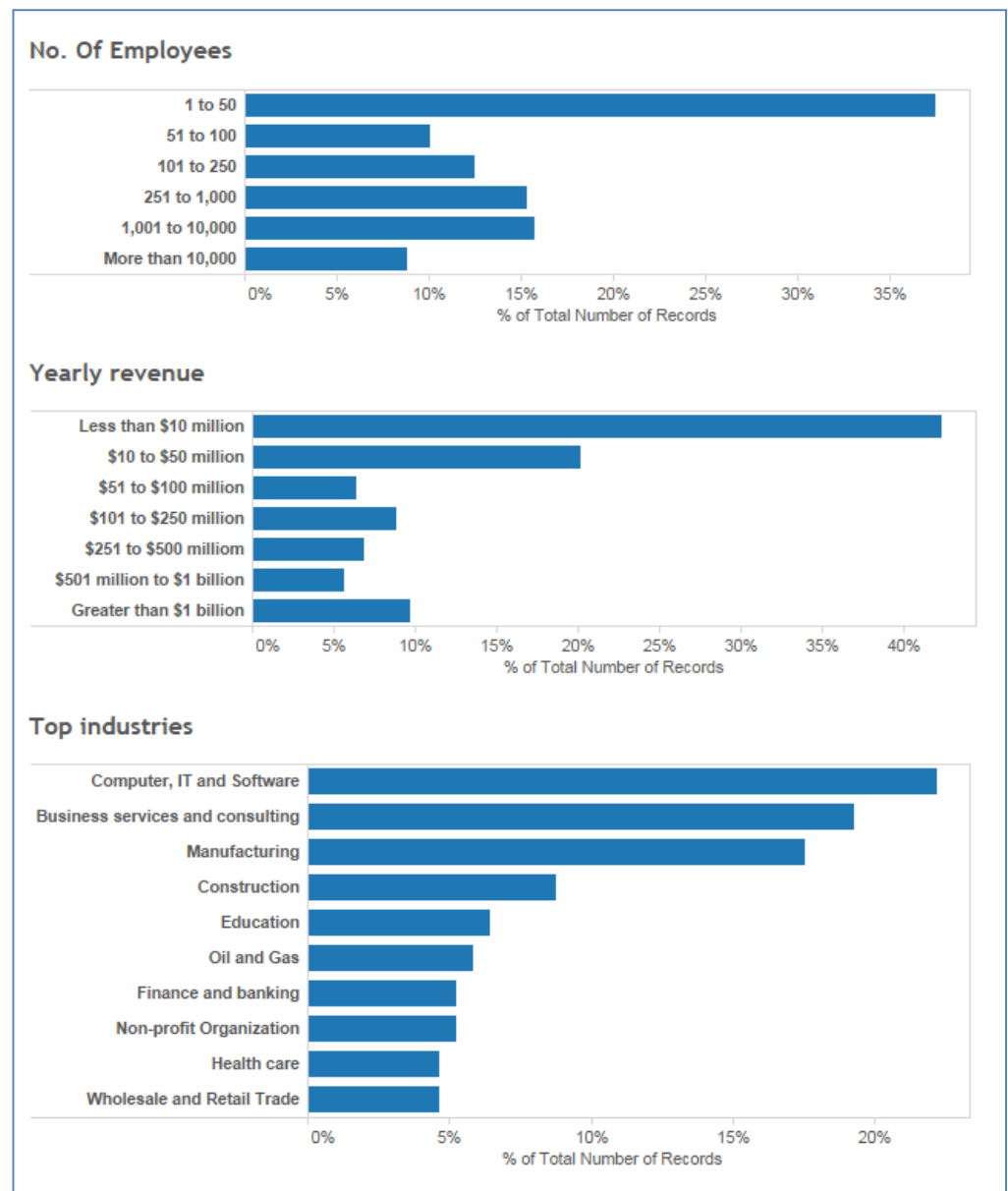
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Figure 5. General profile of the type of organization of the surveyed population

Based on these charts, we can see that SMBs are fairly well represented among the survey respondents. These are organizations with up to 1,000 employees and up to $1 billion in annual revenue. The top industries surveyed are computer, IT, and software; business services and consulting; and manufacturing. These results are consistent with those industries that traditionally rely upon the appropriate management of business processes for success, and suggest that this small sample is representative of those organizations using BPM software tools to run their business processes in real-life business scenarios.

From a user perspective, a number of roles already known to be directly involved with the management of business processes of an organization are fairly well represented in this survey. IT managers and business managers combined

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represent at least 38% of the survey population, chief information officers (CIOs) and chief technology officers (CTOs) combined represent about 12% of the population, and business process management staff represents another 12% (figure 6).
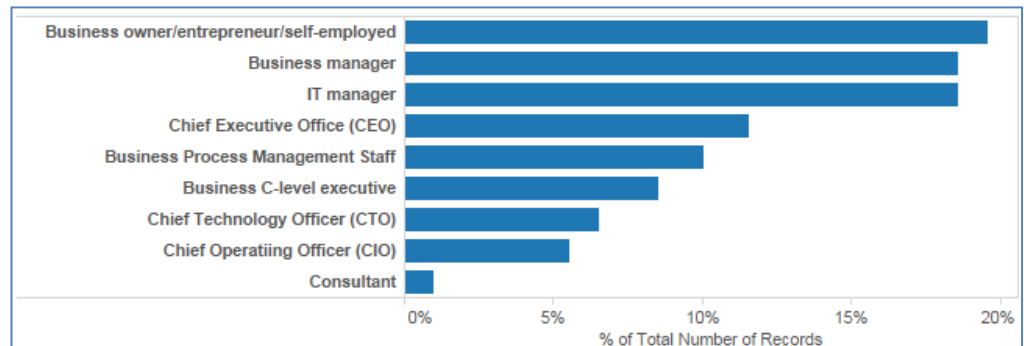

Figure 6. Survey respondents by user role

Satisfaction levels

With respect to overall satisfaction levels, more than 40% of survey respondents report that they are "Somewhat satisfied" with their BPM software solution. About the same proportion combined (44%) report that they are very satisfied and completely satisfied with their BPM offering. This acceptable level of satisfaction suggests that most business people are fully aware of the benefits of having a BPM solution in place, reflecting a sufficient level of BPM software development in the software industry.

When survey respondents were asked about which functionality feature they were most satisfied with in their BPM software solution, core BPM functionality stood out—specifically the process modeling, process execution, and process design functional modules. These results reflect the fact that those individuals working with BPM solutions still give much more importance to the core aspects of a BPM solution. Still, an important consideration for PBM software users is user interaction and experience, as well as tools for process monitoring and analysis, such as analytics.

Finally, when it comes to their most valued BPM solution attributes, users cite reliability and user experience as the top two. Users also highly value innovation, perhaps alluding to the increasing reliance of the user community upon innovative BPM offerings to drive business process efficiency.
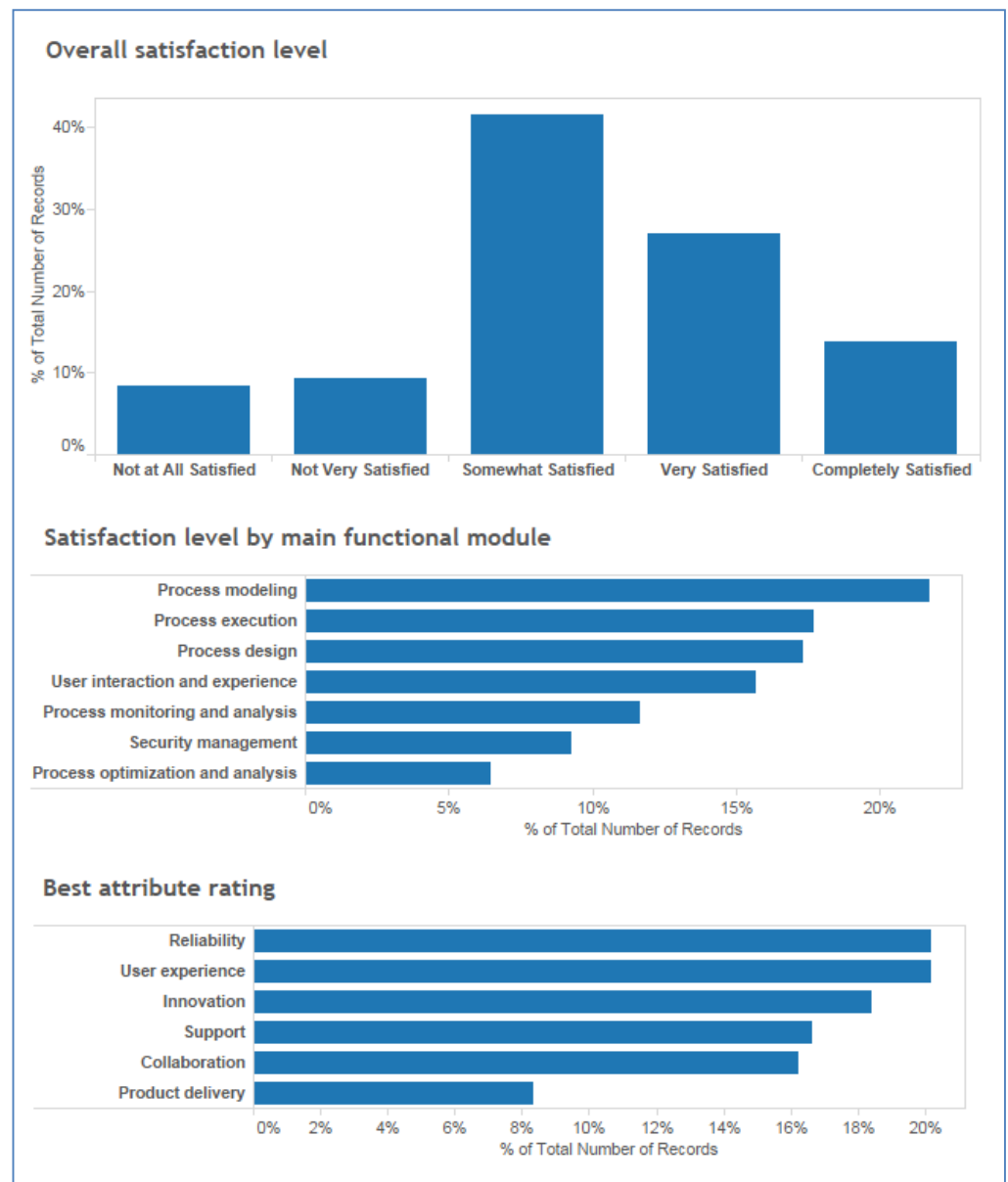
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Figure 7. User satisfaction levels with their BPM offering

While core BPM functions remain as core points of interest, innovation and user experience are increasingly appreciated as drivers for operational improvement and efficiency. Innovation and support are also high regarded attributes of BPM solutions.

TOP BPM solutions

The survey also revealed which BPM applications are most commonly used within the community. When asked which specific BPM solution their organization is currently using, more than 250 respondents cited different BPM solutions, the two most common ones being IBM BPM and Oracle BPM suites (the Top 13 are indicated in the chart). This was followed by smaller-vendor solutions Bizagi and WorkflowGen and then by AuraPortal Helium and open-source product Bonita

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BPM. These results reveal the entry of smaller yet innovative BPM products into the market. Other traditional yet noteworthy BPM solutions cited include Opentext MBPM and Software AG's webMethods BPM platform, which appear to have a good acceptance and adoption rate within the community.

The survey revealed two other important findings: (1) despite the increasing adoption of BPM tools in the business milieu, many organizations still do not have any BPM solutions in place ("None" was the fifth most common response—see figure 7) while others have an in-house custom-made BPM solution in place ("Custom developed" was the seventh most common response—see figure 7). These findings do not necessarily reveal that these companies are failing to establish appropriate BPM practices—some companies may be operating fine without acquiring a BPM software solution, while others may still need to mature their BPM practices before they can think of acquiring a BPM software solution and become more operationally efficient. Thus, there is still plenty of opportunity for developing the BPM software space.
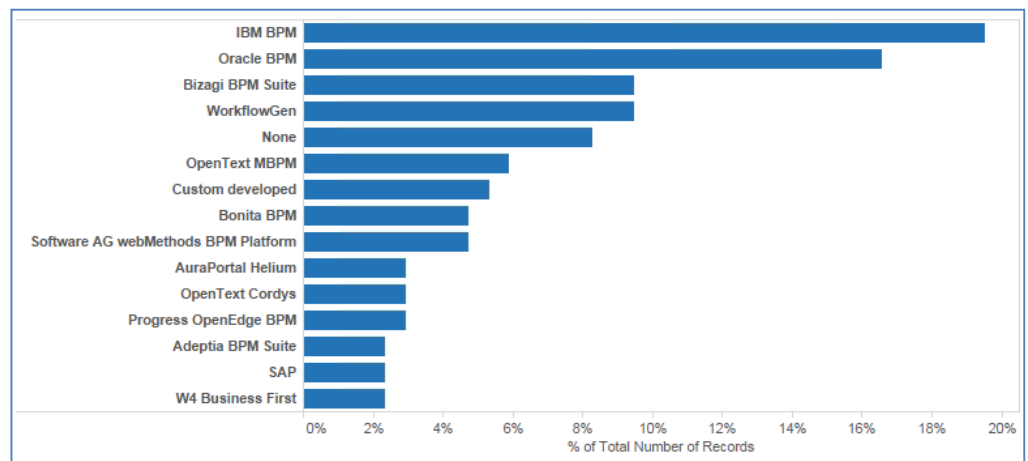

Figure 7. Top BPM applications

Many software providers acknowledge the importance that business process management plays within every aspect of an organization's operations, and offer BPM software solutions that readily integrate with other integral enterprise software solutions, such as ERP, CRM, and others. Organizations look to maintain operational efficiency in the face of increasing business complexity, and require BPM software development and adoption to keep pace with the establishment of IT and business technology platforms. Planning, designing, and deploying the right BPM strategy is an absolute requirement for any company interested in achieving the right balance between business process agility *and* business process control, optimization, and management. Businesses are thus looking to software vendors to achieve better, faster, and more efficient BPM practices.

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A BPM Initiative: What to Consider

Despite the increasing popularity and adoption of BPM software solutions within organizations of all shapes and sizes, many companies are still considering undergoing their first BPM software implementation initiative and many more are even looking to fully boost their existing initiative.

For many organizations, much work is required for BPM software to become a fundamental component of the enterprise's software stack and a common organizational practice and philosophy.

Based on TEC's experience with customers and organizations aspiring to gain excellence in the execution of BPM practices, we have elucidated those guidelines that are essential to the successful selection, deployment, and adoption of a suitable BPM practice and best-fit BPM software solution. The following guidelines—some of which are specific to the BPM arena, others apply to all software types—are key to ensuring the successful adoption and implementation of BPM software:

Having a clear business case

Having a well-defined business case that justifies the need for a new BPM initiative can be instrumental for getting the go-ahead. A good business case will also serve as a decent starting point for the development of a coherent BPM roadmap.

Within the business case, define:

- The current state of business processes and associated concerns such cost, main inefficiencies, and their effect on the organization and its stakeholders, as well as opportunities for and advantages of improvement.

- A proposal for changing and improving current processes: What is the goal? What are the estimated costs and necessary resources to achieve this goal? What is the estimated return of investment (ROI) or the total value of opportunity (TVO)?

Getting executive support

Get senior executives to support the project. Get them to include this initiative to their project list—the higher it is on the list, the more priority it will receive.

A BPM initiative is not just an operational initiative—it is also a strategic effort, which obliges executive support and endorsement. Get decision makers and executives to have a clear understanding of the business objectives, and the key capabilities of the BPM initiative required for achieving specific strategy goal(s). You also need to have a clear understanding of the business processes and the capabilities that are needed to get the BPM initiative underway.

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Undertaking a BPM Initiative, not a project

Executing business process management is a continuous journey, so consider your BPM to be a continuous initiative and not time-limited project. BPM should be seen as an instrument for helping an organization learn how to achieve improvements at an operational level by analyzing new and existing processes and then taking steps to improve them. This process can lead to the continuous improvement and discovery of best practices, and thereby enhance operational efficiency and encourage compliance with the tactical and strategic goals of an organization.

And as managing business processes requires continuously monitoring throughput, it follows that BPM shouldn't be seen as one-time project. Each BPM stakeholder should be aware of the need for continuous improvement as the organization's business model evolves and the business grows to new heights.

Developing a good roadmap

Developing a clear and comprehensive roadmap can provide an effective guide to undergoing all the steps of the BPM initiative. An organization's roadmap will guide people on the tasks that need to be undertaken and on the specific goals that need to be met in order to set the BPM initiative in motion. This can be particularly useful for complex BPM efforts, and an understandable roadmap will certainly allow for successfully meeting systematic plans and milestones.

Additionally, having a roadmap with a customer-centric focus can help decrease, if not avoid, the friction that may arise over meeting the traditional business priorities versus the IT department's priorities. These may include aligning software maintenance and optimization activities with the need for specific technologies—such as mobile, security reinforcement, or data analysis—and improved integration between BPM and analytics applications. It can also help avoid complete IT-led paths, which may be incongruent and conflict with the needs and goals of the business.

Ensure your BPM initiative is designed for achieving these specific goals:

- **Avoiding pure IT-led projects**

  o Every business process that does not have a positive impact on the customer should be taken out of the process or clearly be re-engineered.

  o Traditional BPM might also be too inward-looking. Outside-in customer-centric BPM can be a better fit for business in today's competitive business environment. For example, it may afford business partners and customers proper access to specific business

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processes, and allow them to fit within the internal business operation ecosystem. Collaboration, automation of customer tasks, and mobile access to tasks—which were previously manual and totally internal driven—can play an important role in increasing business operation efficiency.

- **Enabling BPM to react promptly to business change**

  o Ensure that all processes are observed, controlled, and optimized at the process, initiative, and organizational levels.

  o Consider applying performance dashboard key performance indicators (KPIs), so that you can monitor business processes and redesign them accordingly on time.

- **Making the BPM initiative "agile"** to narrow gaps between the modeling-design *and* implementation phases

  o The BPM initiative needs to be frequently adapted according to continual reviews of business processes. Consequently, it is important to plan BPM initiatives that can narrow gaps between the design and deployment phases in order to ensure efficient operations and thus optimized process execution.

While the success of any BPM initiative deployment cannot be guaranteed, having the proper set of measures in place will indeed increase the likelihood that your organization can implement the right strategy to achieve high levels of operational efficiency and performance improvement.

A big challenge for any BPM initiative is to become an optimal tool and practice for achieving high operational efficiency—i.e., operational excellence. Therefore, for any BPM initiative to succeed, it is vital that you put in place adequate process management (governance) measures and the right set of metrics for measuring not only process effectiveness but also process efficiency, as well as satisfaction. This will help ensure that your processes do both the right things and do things right.

A Brief Functionality Assessment for BPM

As for many other types of enterprise software systems, a software selection initiative for BPM involves the evaluation of both the general and specific functionality features offered by different software solutions. These features can be key factors in deciding which specific solution best fits the needs of an organization.

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The following general table shows some of the core functionality capabilities that different software providers can offer within their BPM solutions. The list of features can serve as a solid foundation for assessing the central capabilities of a BPM software solution, regardless of whether you wish to evaluate a number of vendors or perform a self-assessment of the BPM functionality available in your current system.

Hierarchy		Criteria	(P)Provided/ (NP) Not provided	Comment
1		**Process Modeling**		
	1.1	Graphical Designer		
	1.2	Workflow Management		
	1.3	Events Management		
	1.4	Task Allocation		
	1.5	Business Rules Management		
	1.6	Business Controls		
	1.7	Data Modeling Tools		
	1.8	Process Variable Binding		
	1.9	Manual or User-initiated Tasks		
	1.1	Due Dates		
	1.11	Process Linkage		
	1.12	Supports BPMN2		
	1.13	Supports defining escalation paths for user activities independent of process model		
2		**Security Management**		
	2.1	Roles and Users		
	2.2	Role Management		
	2.3	User profiles		
	2.4	User Assignment Algorithms		
	2.5	Timers		
3		**Process Collaboration**		
	3.1	Check-in/Check-out		
	3.2	Versioning		
	3.3	Simulation/Validation		
	3.4	Export Format		
	3.5	Import Format		
4		**Form Management**		
	4.1	Form Types		
	4.2	Formatting		
	4.3	Form Elements		
	4.4	Data Validation		
	4.5	Dynamic Forms		
	4.6	Data Bindings		
	4.7	Form Creation		
	4.8	External Forms		
5		**Workflow Portal**		

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5.1	To-do List			
5.2	Watch List			
5.3	Reports			
5.4	Search and Query			
5.5	Task Information			
5.6	Collaboration			
5.7	User Time Zones			
5.8	User Account Management			
6	**Process Execution**			
6.1	Processes can be deployed to and executed in custom java applications			
6.2	Processes can be deployed to and executed in custom .net applications			
6.3	Non-persistent execution: Ability to execute business processes without storing the state to disk			
6.4	Load balance: Process execution in multiple load balanced nodes			
7	**Monitoring and Management**			
7.1	Instance Management			
7.2	Workflow Initiation			
7.3	Workflow Monitoring			
7.4	Workflow Statistics			
7.5	Audit Trails			
7.6	Resource Organization			
8	**Process Analytics**			
8.1	Performance Data			
8.2	Trend Analysis			
8.3	Optimization			

Organizations looking for more detailed information on BPM can access TEC's BPM Evaluation Center as well as look at the related reading materials provided at the end of this report.

A Final Word

Despite the tremendous development in the BPM arena, there are still many organizations that have a difficult and challenging task in putting in place a consistent BPM practice and consequently implementing and adopting an efficient and effective BPM solution.

While many organizations are already achieving consistent levels of control over their BPM practices, new IT and business developments and requirements are constantly springing up adding an additional level of complexity. Some of these are the handling of big data and the increased immersion of big data within existing and new business processes; and the emergence of new business regulations that necessitate that BPM initiatives become continuous and

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ever-improving initiatives. As a result, more and more organizations are building BPM centers of excellence to ensure continuous process improvement.

On the provider side, the big software powerhouses are still ruling an important segment of the market. But the emergence of new alternatives to traditional BPM offerings from refreshing newcomers to scene is poised to change the ways organizations perform BPM. These recent entrants are bringing innovative ideas and novel development efforts and software designs for managing and improving business processes. The development of new specific technologies and methodologies such as decision management tools, mobile innovations, and process-based BPM applications can greatly enrich the BPM practice of many organizations and bring them one step closer to achieving business process excellence.

Related Materials

- [Ultimus Adaptive BPM Suite 8.3 for Business Process Management Certification Report](#)
- [Bizagi BPM Suite 9.1 Business Process Management Product Certification Report](#)
- [BPM Software Review: Skelta BPM V3.5 by Invensys for Business Process Management](#)
- [AuraPortal BPMS Version 4.3 for Business Process Management Certification Report](#)

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About the Author

Jorge García is a senior business intelligence (BI) and data management analyst for TEC. He has more than 20 years of experience in all phases of application development, database and data warehouse (DWH) design, as well as 9 years in project management, covering best practices and new technologies in the BI/DWH space.

Prior to joining TEC, García was a senior project manager and senior analyst developing BI, DWH, and data integration applications with Oracle, SAP Business Objects, and data integration. He has also worked on projects related to the implementation of BI solutions for the private sector, including the banking and services sectors. He has had the opportunity to work with some of the most important BI and DWH tools on the market.

García is a member of the [Boulder BI Brain Trust](#).

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Technology Evaluation Centers (TEC) is the world's leading provider of software selection resources, services, and research materials, helping organizations evaluate and select the best enterprise software for their needs. With its advanced decision-making process and software selection experts, TEC reduces the time, cost, and risk associated with enterprise software selection.

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Technology Evaluation Centers Inc.

740 St. Maurice, 4th Floor
Montreal, Quebec
Canada, H3C 1L5

Phone: +1 514-954-3665
Toll-free: 1-800-496-1303
Fax: +1 514-954-9739
E-mail: asktheexperts@technologyevaluation.com
Web site: www.technologyevaluation.com

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