

Assessing an IT-systems portfolio from the Business Processes perspective

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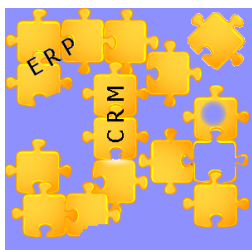
Rethinking IT-strategy

Present-day advances in IT-technology require radical rethinking of IT-strategy. Given that many companies and organizations already have large portfolios of existing IT-systems, it is rarely possible to devise a new strategy from scratch. One needs to start with assessing the existing portfolio first.

Assessing IT-systems portfolio

A company's IT-portfolio can be assessed from many perspectives, for example: technology used (e.g., SOA, WEB2, etc.), legacy compliance (e.g., with Sarbanes-Oxley act), information security, or business needs (e.g., how well IT-systems meet the current needs).

The business perspective is one of the most essential, meeting business needs is the primary goal of any IT-systems portfolio. In the majority of organizations, the picture of IT-coverage of business needs is represented by a puzzle, with many gaps, mismatches, overlaps, broken, and removed pieces. Revealing what is not covered is of utmost importance. Instead of **pouring millions** in upgrading already existing systems, it may be more profitable to invest **thousands** in covering those areas that do not have any IT-coverage.



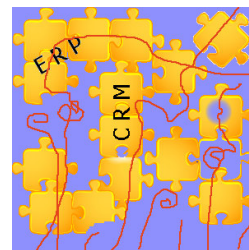
A puzzle of IT-coverage:
■ Business needs
■ IT systems

Importance of Business Processes (BP)

To reveal the current state of the IT-coverage puzzle, we need to start from business needs, rather than from the existing systems. The only proper way to identify all business needs is by considering the functioning of an organization from the business processes (BP) perspective. If we, for example, start from the organizational structure instead, we can easily miss the needs for communication between the departments.

Gaps in IT-coverage represent the areas of potential business risk. As long as a chain of activities, i.e. business process thread, runs inside some system, the workers know how to handle it.

As soon as a business process thread leaves all systems, they may get lost, and wander long time before getting back to the area covered by one of the systems. Such wandering does not leave any traces and this is why we don't know why something takes too much time and resources. What is more, we do not know how many threads totally bypass the areas covered by the existing systems.



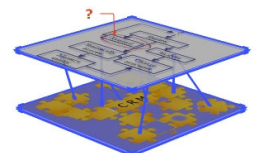
■ Process threads
Threads can be easily lost in the areas with poor IT coverage

IT-coverage service

IT-coverage is a consulting service aimed at identifying the extent of IT-coverage for a company's business processes. The scope of this service varies from identifying the extent of IT-coverage for a particular process (for which the organization already has a description) to establishing the extent of IT-coverage for all processes (which first should be identified and analyzed). The extent of IT-coverage is established by analyzing IT-support for completing tasks, workflow management, communication between workers involved, traceability of threads, etc.

Depending on the scope, the service may include the following steps:

- Identification of BP
- Selection of an approach to carry out BP analysis
- BP analysis
- Inventory of IT-portfolio
- Mapping of BP elements to the IT-portfolio
- Blueprinting IT-coverage for non-covered areas



The work is done by IbisSoft consultants, who know how BP should be analyzed and supported, in cooperation with the employees involved in business processes, who know all about the business.

IbisSoft is a Swedish consultancy founded in 1989. It provides Management and IT services related to BPM