Process description

Context and task: In the course of the deregulation of European energy markets customers of electric utility (i.e. power) have the opportunity to switch to a different power supplier because the new supplier may better meet customers' requirements (e.g. lower rates, better services, etc.). This *supplier switch process* is therefore initiated by the customer himself. This process involves the interaction between process stakeholders for the case of a new supplier being assigned to a customer's power gauge[1]. From the supplier's perspective who is contacted by a new customer who is willing to terminate the contract with the *old supplier* the process is called "Winning customers" (because a new customer is acquired).

You are asked to model the process "Winning customers" in BPMN (the model will be used as the main specification in subsequent implementation activities). You are provided with a reference business process model as an assistant artifact that you should reuse and adapt as needed. Your process model should focus on the Customer Service department of the new power supplier. Activities taking place at the customer and at the *grid operator*[2] should also be detailed for clarity. The old supplier (the 4th stakeholder) does not have to include procedural details other than basic message-based interactions with the grid operator and the – about-to-be-lost – customer.

Process goal: A customer who uses a specific power gauge wishes to switch to a different power supplier. The goal of the process then is to assign a new power supplier to a customer's power gauge.

Process: The process is initiated by a switch-over request. In doing so, the customer transmits his data to the customer service department of the company. Customer service is a shared service center between the departments Sales and Distribution. The customer data is received by customer service and based on this data a customer data object is entered into the CRM system. This object consists of data elements such as the customer's name and address and the assigned power gauge. The generated customer object is then used, in combination with other customer data to prepare the contract documents for the power supplier switch (including data such as bank connection, information on the selected rate, requested date of switch-over). In the following an automated check of the contract documents is carried out within the CIS (customer information system) in order to confirm their successful generation. In case of a negative response, i.e. the contract documents are not (or incorrectly) generated, the causing issues are being analyzed and resolved. Subsequently the contract documents are generated once again.

In case of a positive response a confirmation document is sent out to the customer stating that the switch-over to the new supplier can be executed. The customer then has the chance to check the contract details and based on this check may decide to either withdraw from the switch contract or confirm it. Depending on the customer's acceptance/rejection the process flow at

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[1] The *power gauge* is the measuring point at home from which the customer sources the power from.
[2] The *grid operator* is the organization that manages distribution of power over a network.

customer service either ends (in case of withdrawal) or continues (in case of a confirmation). An additional constraint is that the customer can only withdraw from the offered contract within 7 days – after the 7th day the contract will be regarded as accepted and the process continues. The confirmation message by the customer is therefore not absolutely necessary (as it will count as accepted after 7 days in any way) but it can speed up the switch process.

After the customer has confirmed the planned switch, a request to the grid operator is automatically sent out by the CIS. It puts the question whether the customer may be supplied by the selected supplier in the future. The switch-over request is checked by the grid operator for supplier concurrence[3], and the grid operator transmits a response comment. In the case of supplier concurrence the grid operator would inform all suppliers involved and demand the resolution of the conflict. The grid operator communicates with the old supplier and carries out the termination of the sales agreement between the customer and the old supplier, i.e. the customer service (of the "new" supplier) does not have to interact with the old supplier regarding termination.

If there are not any objections by the grid operator (i.e. no supplier concurrence), customer service creates a CIS contract. On the switch-date, but no later than 10 days after power supply has begun, the grid operator transmits the power meter data to the customer service and the old supplier via messages containing a services consumption report. At the same time, the grid operator computes the final billing based on the meter data and sends it to the old supplier. Likewise the old supplier creates and sends the final billing to the customer. For the customer as well as the grid operator the process ends then. After receiving the meter data customer service imports the meter data to systems that require the information. The process of "winning" a new customer ends here.

Requested changes for the to-be process: The process to be modeled should be extended in an early phase of the process by a customer data check. After customer data has been entered it should then be compared with the internal customer data base and checked for completeness and plausibility. In case of any errors these should be corrected on the basis of a simple error list. The comparison of data is done to prevent individual customer data being stored multiple times. In case the customer does not exist in the customer data base, a new customer object is being created which will remain the data object of interest during the rest of the process flow.

A second change concerns the customer confirmation which currently happens *before* the supplier concurrence check. The to-be process model should be altered in the way that the customer's confirmation is requested after supplier concurrence has been checked, as only then it is safe to inform the customer of a possible execution of the requested switch.

[3] *Supplier concurrence* is the situation when multiple suppliers are assigned during the same period to the same power gauge.