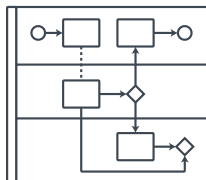## What is Business Process Modeling Notation

What is Business Process Modeling Notation

What are your BPMN diagram needs?

I'm new to BPM diagram and wa to learn more.

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Contents

Professionals in sales, project management, and other areas use business process modeling software to map out their approach to any specific process. Learn the essentials of BPMN and BPMN 2.0, along with the history, purpose, benefits, symbols, diagram types, and key tips for business process modeling.

7 min read

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Make a BPMN diagram

What is BPMN?

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method that models the steps of a planned business process from end to end. A key to Business Process Management, it visually depicts a detailed sequence of business activities and information flows needed to complete a process.

Its purpose is to model ways to improve efficiency, account for new circumstances or gain competitive advantage. The method has been undergoing a standardization push in the past few years and is now often called by a slightly different name: **Business Process Model and Notation**, still using the BPMN acronym. It differs from Unified Modeling Language (UML) used in software design.

Very recent history

Business Process Modeling Notation was developed by the Business Process Management Initiative (BPMI) and has gone through a series of revisions. In 2005, that group merged with the

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, which took over the initiative. In 2011, OMG released BPMN 2.0 and changed the method's name to Business Process *Model and* Notation. It created a more detailed standard for business process modeling, using a richer set of symbols and notations for Business Process Diagrams. Since 2014, BPMN has also been complemented by a decision flow chart method called the Decision Model and Notation standard, since BPMN doesn't naturally lend itself to decision flows.

Purpose and benefits

At a high level, BPMN is targeted at participants and other stakeholders in a business process to gain understanding through an easy-to-understand visual representation of the steps. At a more involved level, it's targeted at the people who will implement the process, giving sufficient detail to enable precise implementation. It provides a standard, common language for all stakeholders, whether

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participants, managers and technical developers, as well as external teams and consultants. Ideally, it bridges the gap between process intention and implementation by providing sufficient detail and clarity into the sequence of business activities.

The diagramming can be far easier to understand than narrative text would be. It allows for easier communication and collaboration to reach the goal of an efficient process that produces a high-quality result. It also helps with communication leading to XML (Extensible Markup Language) documents needed to execute various processes. One main XML standard is called BPEL or BEPEL4WS, standing for Business Process Execution Language for Web Services.

BPMN 2.0 diagram elements and symbols

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diagrams:

1. **Flow objects:** events, activities , gateways

2. **Connecting objects:** sequence flow, message flow, association

3. **Swimlanes:** pool or lane

4. **Artifacts:** data object, group, annotation

These are the individual elements and how they are used to define a business process:

Events

A trigger that starts, modifies or completes a process. Event types include message, timer, error, compensation, signal, cancel, escalation, link and others. They are shown by circles containing other symbols based on event type. They are classified as either "throwing" or "catching," depending on their function.

Activity

A particular activity or task performed by a person or system. It's shown by a rectangle with rounded corners. They can

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compensations and multiple instances.

Gateway

Decision point that can adjust the path based on conditions or events. They are shown as diamonds. They can be exclusive or inclusive, parallel, complex, or based on data or events.

Sequence flow

Shows the order of activities to be performed. It is shown as a straight line with an arrow. It might show a conditional flow, or a default flow.

Message flow

Depicts messages that flow across "pools," or organization boundaries such as departments. It shouldn't connect events or activities within a pool. It is represented by a dashed line with a circle at the start and an arrow at the end.

Association

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event, activity or gateway.

Pool and swimlane

A pool represents major participants in a process. A different pool may be in a different company or department but still involved in the process. Swimlanes within a pool show the activities and flow for a certain role or participant, defining who is accountable for what parts of the process.

Artifact

Additional information that developers add to bring a necessary level of detail to the diagram. There are three types of artifacts: data object, group or annotation. A **data object** shows what data is necessary for an activity. A **group** shows a logical grouping of activities but doesn't change the diagram's flow. An **annotation** provides further explanation to a part of the diagram.

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Make a BPMN diagram

Who does business process modeling?

Business Process Modeling can range from simple, hand-drawn diagrams to more involved ones with expandable elements to provide sufficient implementation detail. At its most sophisticated, BPMN is conducted by credentialed analysts. The Object Management Group (OMG) provides
five certifications in BPMN 2.0 called
, which stands for OMG-Certified Expert in BPM 2.0. One track is business-oriented, and the other

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business process modeling in the same way that Unified Modeling Language (UML) standardized software modeling.

BPMN requires a commitment of time and energy, but the payoff in understanding and improvement can be huge. Version 2.0 builds on previous versions by providing a richer standard set of symbols and notations, allowing more detail for those who need it.

The idea behind Business Process Management is to create a life cycle of continuous improvement. The steps are model, implement, execute, monitor and optimize. BPMN diagrams play a key role in that.

Sub-models within a BPMN diagram

The diagrams are used to communicate with diverse audiences, both non-technical and technical. Sub-models allow the diverse viewers to easily differentiate between sections of

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sub-models are:

- **Private** business processes. These are internal to a specific organization and don't cross pools, or organizational boundaries.

- **Abstract** business processes. These occur between a private/internal process and another participant or process. The abstract process shows the outside world the sequence of messages needed to interact with the private process. It doesn't show the private/internal process itself.

- **Collaboration** business processes. These show the interactions between two or more business entities.

Other diagram types

In BPMN 2, there are these other diagram types: conversation, choreography and collaboration.

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two or more participants. It also may be expanded with sub-choreographies.

- **Collaboration diagram:** Shows interactions between two or more processes, using more than one pool. All combinations of pools, processes and choreography may be used in a collaboration diagram.

- **Conversation diagram:** In general, this is a simplified version of a collaboration diagram. It shows a group of related message exchanges in a business process. It may be expanded with sub-conversations.

Key tips for business process modeling

1. Clearly define the scope of the process with a beginning and end.

inefficiencies before modeling a better way with BPMN.

3. Aim for BPMN diagrams that fit on one page, even if the page is poster-sized, as some are.

4. Lay out sequence flows horizontally. Show associations and data flows vertically.

5. You can create different versions of the diagram for different stakeholders, depending on the level of detail needed for their role.

6. BPMN is not appropriate for modeling organizational structures, functional breakdowns, or data flow models. Although BPMN depicts some information flows in business processes, it's not a Data Flow Diagram (DFD.)

How to do business process modeling with Lucidchart

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After signing up, simply log in, then create a blank document or start with a template. Be sure to open the BPMN shapes library, then drag and drop shapes onto the canvas as needed.

You can also stylize lines, format text, and reposition elements to get the look you need. Afterwards, share, download, or export your diagram however you like.

Helpful Resources

BPMN Event Types

BPMN Artifact Types

Visio BPMN Stencil and Templates

BPMN & BPMN 2.0 Tutorial

BPMN Gateway Types

Lucidchart's complete BPMN shape library along with its easy-to-use interface make it the ideal tool for modeling your business process. Try it today!

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