

Making the BPX Business Case for SAP® TechEd

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August/September 2009

On CIO Corner

Making the BPX Business Case for SAP® TechEd

By Jon Reed, JonERP.com

Editor's Note: Are you a BPXer who wants to attend TechEd? Here's how to get your boss to pay the way. If you are the boss, here's how to get **your** boss to pay your way.

In my last article for ERPtips on "Value Scenarios" (ERPtips June/July 2009), I made the case that "business process expert" skills are essential to realizing the benefits of the more sophisticated aspects of SAP Business Suite functionality. Assuming that's true, then how do you go about obtaining those BPX skills? I've already touched on that in a previous ERPtips article ("What Does It Take to Become an SAP Business Process Expert," ERPtips, Feb/March 2009), but I didn't cover all the bases. One thing I didn't get to was the issue of SAP TechEd.

Each year in the fall, SAP hosts SAP TechEd conferences in several locations around the world, with the 2009 U.S. locale being Phoenix. But is TechEd an appropriate place to obtain BPX skills? And if so, then how does an individual make the "business case" to be sent to TechEd during a time when conference budgets are not exactly loosey goosey? And how does a project team derive value from an individual's attendance at TechEd sessions?

In this article, I'll examine these questions and provide a few answers. Note that in anticipation of this piece, I issued a podcast on JonERP.com with Marco ten Vaanholt, VP of the SAP Community Network and Global Head of the SAP BPX and SAP Business Objects communities, entitled "Building a BPX Business Case for SAP TechEd." I'll draw on a few of Marco's comments from the podcast during this article.

1. Is SAP TechEd Relevant to BPXers?

This is a trick question because the "BPXer" comes in many different flavors and the skills needed to be recognized as an SAP Business Process Expert are still being debated. One thing we do know: "TechEd" is not necessarily the most accurate name for what goes on at these events each year. Yes, there is always plenty of technical education available at TechEd. But there are also business-oriented TechEd sessions. There were more than 100 BPX-related sessions at last year's TechEd, and this year, there are session tracks with BPM and Business Objects themes that are relevant to many pursuing a BPX skill set.



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There's no point in derailing this article with an in-depth discussion of what constitutes an SAP Business Process Expert when I have already written an ERPtips article specifically about that ("The Role of the SAP Business Process Expert," ERPtips, Dec/Jan 2009), but for our purposes, here's a brief working definition: in an SAP context, a BPXer is someone who aspires to round out his or her skills by becoming a techno-business "hybrid." A BPXer is someone with a grasp of the business drivers of the ERP implementation as well as SAP NetWeaver™ architecture. The BPXer understands the SAP Business Process Management (BPM) methodology and is looking to gain hands-on expertise in the SAP NetWeaver BPM process modeling tool, now in general release. Finally, the BPXer understands the impact of business intelligence on ERP, and wants to play a role creating intuitive user interfaces that deliver better reporting and analytics. All this is motivated by the BPXer's desire to help ERP users get more out of the transactional data whizzing through the system. This means understanding the SAP BusinessObjects product line and how analytics are becoming embedded into ERP solutions.

With that definition in mind, let's take a look at some of the topics TechEd has to offer, using the Phoenix sessions for our example. (<http://www.saptech.com/usa/>).

Here's a screen shot from the TechEd BPM session track:

Business Process Management






Session ID	Title
Business Process Modeling	
BPM400	SAP NetWeaver BPM Overview and Roadmap
BPM102	Enterprise Modeling: From Conceptual Planning to Technical Blueprints
BPM104	Process Modeling Best Practices with SAP NetWeaver BPM
BPM105	How Business Process Experts Can Improve Business Insight and Drive Business Process Improvements
BPM108	SAP NetWeaver BPM Supporting Business Processes at a US Customer
BPM110	Newell Rubbermaid's use of SAP NetWeaver BPM to make One Company / One System 
BPM111	Practical Guide to Business Process Modeling in SAP Financials 
BPM160	SAP NetWeaver BPM for Business Process Experts
BPM162	Debugging, Monitoring, Traceability, and Troubleshooting with SAP NetWeaver BPM
BPM200	Workflow for Workflow's Sake 
BPM202	Five Key Reasons for Advocating SAP NetWeaver BPM Solutions When Capital Budgets are Shrinking 
BPM262	SAP NetWeaver BPM Integration with Visual Composer
BPM263	Using Adobe Forms in SAP NetWeaver BPM
BPM264	Asynchronous Communication and Correlation Handling with SAP NetWeaver BPM
BPM302	Business Process Management - From Strategy to Execution 

Figure 1: SAP TechEd Phoenix 2009 - BPM Session Track

This screen shows about half the BPM-related sessions at this year's TechEd. All the courses in the 100 range are "beginner level" courses. You can see the rest of the courses in the BPM track, as well as the expertise level of the classes, with this URL: http://www.saptech.com/usa/edu_sessions/tracksview.htm?id=2