

Process Management Based on SqEME®

SqEME Edition 2008



Constitution:
What are the essential characteristics of the enterprise?

Constitution

Enterprise architecture Key result areas

Chemistry:
What makes it tick?
How does the energy flow?

Chemistry

Messages Preconditions

Correspondence:
How have we performed in carrying out our business??

Correspondence

Performances Processes

Construction:
How have we facilitated the work in the organization?

Construction

People Resources



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Process Management Based on SqEME®

2008 Edition

A HORIZONTAL APPROACH TO ORGANIZING THE ENTERPRISE



www.sqeme.org

Edited by Jos.N.A. van Oosten



Colophon

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Preface

Process Management based on SqEME® is an open standard for developing a process centred architecture of an enterprise. It may be reproduced freely by any organization wishing to use it to develop a governance structure on the quality of their business processes.

The twentieth century view at organizing has passed its expiry date. The classic way of thinking went past the fact that organizations are open systems and are part of complex network structures. Processes have to hold a prominent place in observing organizations: how are the different parts of the organization tuned to each other and how does the messaging in between take place? SqEME® Process Management is a method that enables discussing the design of the organization in a subtle but unambiguous way.

SqEME® as a methodology views processes from four different perspectives. SqEME® calls this windows, by means of which one seeks for the Constitution, Chemistry, Correspondence and Construction of the enterprise. Looking through these windows is perceiving organizations in a different way. One not longer just sees the vertical lines of the hierarchic structure, but also (and particularly) the processes in the organization. This provides more insight in the organization, the 'horizontal organization', and gives the answer to the question of how to deal with IT today and how to get the maximum benefit from it.

For many years, SqEME® has been applied successfully in industry (chemistry, automotive, construction, paper), in the business sector (IT service, healthcare), in the non profit sector and in public companies such as the Prosecution Counsel, County Councils and local authorities. *Process Management based on SqEME®* abundantly draws on this experience and supplies the reader with all necessary grip to apply the method himself.

This book is especially meant for all professionals involved in the change process towards process-driven organizations. It is written in a way that all wanting to familiarize with process centred thinking will find an innovative, yet practice-proven approach in it.

This book is the result of experience with the management of business processes in various organizations over more than twenty years. A period of time during which successful results have been achieved by following an approach that over the years has become known under the name SqEME® Process Management. Time and time again, the positive effects of SqEME® Process Management have proved themselves in industry (chemical, automotive, construction, paper), in the commercial sector (including ICT service), in health care (also extramural health care) and in the non-profit sector, such as the Dutch Police Force, the Public Prosecutor and other governmental authorities.

SqEME® Process Management is a contemporary way of managing processes. The SqEME® method helps the reader to recognize, design, control, manage and improve processes in their own organization and supplies a set of consistent and coherent modelling techniques. In addition, and importantly, SqEME® Process Management is a methodology, so as well as being a way of observing processes in organizations, it provides an indication of how to do this. A key

assumption in this method is the professional maturity of the employee. The focus is not on what the employee has to do in detail, but on the surrounding system. It is on cooperation and the flow of information between employees. 'SqEME®' organizations are agile and innovative, and they pay attention to craftsmanship, creativity and passion where it concerns their trade. 'SqEME®' organizations have room for dialogue, openness, interest and respect, whilst the eye remains focussed upon cooperative performance and achieving results.

From 1997 onwards, a network of private and public organizations, consultancy agencies and independent advisors has grown. Experiences in applying the method are discussed and insights into the basic assumptions and backgrounds are shared (see website www.sqeme.org). In 2002, the earlier Dutch version of this book was issued, supported by the network. Since then, it has provided firm support during SqEME® training sessions and reorganization projects in many organizations.

The first and the second edition of this book have both generated a lot of response. People who wished to be kept informed of the latest developments, or who have become members of the network or have supplied their feedback on the content. The establishment of the SqEME® Foundation at the end of 2006 is of particular significance. Our feeling is that the network has moved a further step towards maturity, especially in the way that the 'togetherness' and the open distribution of the method have been emphasized. The time has come for a third and completely revised edition which is with the release of this version also available in English. From this year on, 2008, the Board of the SqEME Foundation has even agreed on using the English language as the basic language for SqEME® Process Management.

SqEME® Process Management is being developed continuously and is being adapted to reflect recent developments. Practical experience remains the core. Experience from daily practice serves as an input for sharpening and developing the method. The growing domain of application of the method thus provides an increasing number of new insights. These have led to adaptations of the book in this third and completely revised edition. The first and the second edition focused mainly on the method. This edition pays more attention to its application and the impact that it has upon the people working with the processes of the organization. SqEME® Process Management can be regarded as a 'business excellence' approach. It helps the reader to organize and improve the quality of business management. It offers a unique way to look at management of one's own company. In our opinion, this way of looking is a translation of how we organize work nowadays, from the present context and within the existing preconditions.

Contents

About the SqEME Foundation	IX
Trademarks	XI
Acknowledgements	XIII
Introduction	XV
1 Developments	1
1.1 The Inheritance of One Hundred Years of Functional School	1
1.2 The Transition to an Information Society	3
1.3 Developments in ICT and Organizations	6
1.4 Out of Control	9
2 Methodology	13
2.1 Mental Model	13
2.2 Principles	15
2.3 SqEME® and EFQM	19
2.4 SqEME® for architecting the enterprise	22
3 Process Management and the SqEME® Approach	25
3.1 Process Management, Working ON the Organization	25
3.2 Processes, the Verbs of the Organization	26
3.3 Describing Processes	27
3.4 Working on the Development of the Organization	29
3.5 Architectural Approach: Language and Signs	30
3.6 Conventions for Language and Signs	31
4 Constitution	35
4.1 Developing a description of the Enterprise Architecture	37
4.2 Describing Key Result Areas	37
4.3 The concept of Key Result Area, Activity and Process	42
4.4 Developing the Understanding of the Constitution of the Enterprise	43
4.5 Reference Model for the enterprise	48
4.6 Tips & Tricks for the Constitution window	50
4.7 Process Accountability in this window	54
5 Chemistry	55
5.1 Specifying of Messages	57
5.2 Taking into Account the Preconditions	60
5.3 Universal Data Element Framework (UDEf)	63

5.4	Tips & Tricks for the Chemistry window	64
5.5	Process Accountability in this window.....	65
6	Construction	67
6.1	Types of Actors in an Organization	68
6.2	Providing resources	73
6.3	Tips & Tricks for the Construction window	74
6.4	Process Accountability in this window.....	76
7	Correspondence	79
7.1	Describing Processes	81
7.2	Performance Indicators	88
7.3	Tips & Tricks for the Correspondence window	90
7.4	Process Accountability in this window.....	92
8	Process Accountability	95
8.1	From Processes as a Project to Process Management	95
8.2	Where People Work, Processes are Managed	97
8.3	There are Various Styles of Process Management.....	99
8.4	It is a Choice to Formalize Process Accountability	99
8.5	Accountability for Processes is Arranged Differently Than for Results	101
8.6	The Scope of a Process owner	103
8.7	Process roles With a Different Scope.....	106
8.8	The Focus of a Process owner	107
8.9	Special Attention for the 'Process Auditor'	108
9	A Tool for a Process Driven Approach	111
9.1	The Organization Wants to be Certified	111
9.2	The Organization Wants to Realize an Improvement	112
9.3	The Organization Wants More Attention for Continuous Improvement.....	114
9.4	The Organization Wants to Reorganize.....	116
9.5	The Organization Wants to Record the Know-how of the Employees	118
9.6	The Organization Wants to be More 'In Control'	120
9.7	The Organization Wants to Cooperate Better with its Supply Chain Partners ..	121
9.8	The Organization Wants to Renew its ICT.....	122
9.9	The Organization Wants to Reengineer Their Business Processes	127
10	The SqEME® Approach and the Harsh Realities of Life.....	129
10.1	Encore with Points of Attention	129
10.2	Use of Supporting Software	136
Appendix I	SqEME® Objects and Relationships	139
Appendix II	SqEME® Examples	141
Referenced documents.....		151

About the SqEME Foundation

The SqEME Foundation facilitates the development and the free dissemination of knowledge to all organizations and people who are committed to Process Management, based on SqEME.

By their membership, users of the SqEME® framework form a network organization. The SqEME Foundation works with 'end-users' of the SqEME® framework, business consultants and consultancy firms, training organizations, IT-suppliers and suppliers of Business Process Modelling Tools. Within this market place the SqEME Foundation is vendor-neutral. Its role is to capture, understand and share current and emerging utilizations of process management and process architectures to improve the performance of organizations.

The SqEME Foundation is the guardian of the basic concept which are stated in the first chapters of this book, shortly addressed as the use of the four windows and open and well defined standards for modelling processes.

The members of the board of the SqEME Foundation are delegates from the associated partner organizations. One board member is chosen by the members of the network to represent the interests of the network as a whole.

The SqEME Foundation and its associated members have over 20 years of experience in field of process management, the use of its concepts, the training of the principles, competences and skills. The SqEME Foundation develops and operates certification programs to validate conformance to open standards and specifications on the era of process management competences and process architectures.

Further information on the SqEME Foundation and the activities of the network organization is available at www.sqeme.org.

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The SqEME Foundation acknowledges that there may be other company names and products that might be covered by trademark protection and advises the reader to verify them independently.

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Ren Hilverdink, to whom this book is dedicated, is the founder of what is the mental legacy now named SqEME®. A group of enthusiastic people, gathered in the network of the SqEME foundation, have further developed and propagated it.

The original Dutch version of this book is written by five authors:

- In their consultancy work at Q-TIPS, Jos van Oosten, René van Velzen and Peter de Klein support managers discovering the business processes and improving the quality of the organization.
- Theo Snijders is an Organization Psychologist and works as an advisor in the area of organization issues and communication.
- Teun Hardjono, member of the prestigious International Academy for Quality and initiator and chairman of the Dutch Academy for Quality, combines over thirty years practice as an organization advisor with a professorship at the RSM Erasmus University Rotterdam. He holds a chair in Quality Management and Certification, established by the *Raad voor Accreditatie* (Dutch Accreditation Council) and mainly concentrates on organization design and organizational change.

Special words of thank are expressed to Frans Stevens for his contributions to, and feedback on previous versions of this book.

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Jos. N.A. van Oosten
Everdingen-NL, March 16th 2008

Introduction

This book is about the SqEME® approach to process management. More and more organizations are discovering the ‘phenomenon’ of process management, and are either applying it or are planning to do so. Developments in the ICT area, the renewed attention for the ‘professional’ on the work-floor, external pressure through standards or legislation, and the necessity for more flexible ways of organizing are all contributing to this. But what does process management mean precisely? How do you make it specific? How can you involve the various units of the organization with process management? How do you use process models and process descriptions in an optimal way? Who are process owners and how can they be assigned or committed? And, above all, what use is it for the organization?

This book challenges and supplies the means to look at organizations in a different way. No longer along the lines of the hierarchical structures, but by focussing upon the processes in the organization. This book is primarily intended for anyone involved in the process of change towards process driven organizations. It is written in a manner that anyone wanting to familiarize themselves with process centred thinking will find an innovative yet proven approach.

This book originates from the domain of quality management but now focuses on the quality of the organization: how to let the enterprise achieve its business goals through a controlled organization which is fit for use? Experience suggests that the reasons to consider the quality of the organization via the means of process management can be found in the desire to:

- emphasize horizontal work flows within and between organizations;
- document processes, for example for the benefit of certification;
- avoid bureaucracy and unnecessary detail;
- develop and implement new information systems;
- strive for a more professional organization;
- realize transparency in the organization, e.g. to enable corporate governance;
- improve cooperation and utilize network structures;
- design an alternative for organizing according to the ‘functional school’ or ‘Taylorism’, that, although used in many organizations, no longer meets the present requirements;
- creating organizational architectures focussed on durability and coherence.

SqEME® approaches these issues with the help of four windows. The desire to look at organizations by means of the four windows originates through the monitoring of organizations that has developed during the twentieth century. This development, as we briefly describe it, can be found in chapter 1. Chapter 2 describes the four windows, Constitution, Chemistry, Correspondence and Construction. The use of these windows is an important starting point in terms of the SqEME® methodology; a way of how one should look at an enterprise. For the connoisseur, this view can be compared to the tradition of phenomenology. As in phenomenology, SqEME® starts with the direct and intuitive experience of discovering the essential qualities of processes. Just as in the phenomenological tradition, SqEME® dissociates itself from the alienation and the denial of the human being in the organization and regards this human (the professional) as the

primary source of energy and information. These central themes of SqEME® are also covered in chapter 2.

In chapter 3 this methodology will be converted into a practical method. SqEME® Process Management constitutes a consistent and coherent set of modelling techniques, the so-called 'language and signs'. These are described in chapter 3 and worked through in detail in chapters 4 to 7. The four chapters Constitution, Chemistry, Correspondence and Construction form the heart of this book. They are the essential practical stages and form the ontology for the development towards a process driven organization.

Chapter 4 focuses at the Architecture of the enterprise by looking at the Key Result Areas. The chapter is about process thinking and focuses upon the principles and values that lie behind this, translated in the modelling of Key Result Areas that should be a particular point of attention for senior managers. Chapter 5 is about communication between people in the organization. Thinking in process terms refers to the flow of energy in organization, patterns in communication and influence. SqEME® uses the term 'chemistry' in the organization. It is especially of interest to people involved with semantics, communication and information flows. Chapter 6, Construction, covers the process thinking aimed at the architecture of the organization, the deployment of tasks to people, the provisioning and use of resources and the implementation of procedures. In relation to this, particular attention should be paid to the types of roles in an organization, the allocation of authority amongst them and the relationships between tasks, responsibilities and authority.

Chapter 7 explains how the Correspondence window can be used to monitor how the organization is performing. The focus is on ensuring that business processes are being executed as planned and that their performance is matching the objectives that have been set of them.

Following earlier references, chapter 8 investigates how an organization might handle the requirements of process accountability, and who in the organization might be responsible for the quality of processes.

Thereafter, in chapter 9 we investigate the potential use of the SqEME® approach to address organizational and managerial issues. Finally, in Chapter 10 we revisit some of the key issues in implementing the method successfully on a step-by-step basis and examine how supporting software can be utilised when applying SqEME®.

1 Developments

Over time many ideas and applications of process management have arisen. The SqEME® method is a contemporary interpretation of managing processes. A translation of how we want to organize work these days, based upon the current context and preconditions. In this chapter, a number of developments that form the basis of this translation will be drawn from the Organization Theory. We will also take a look at the likely implications of current information technology upon the design of our organizations, together with how this may affect the way we handle processes.

1.1 The Inheritance of One Hundred Years of Functional School

Process management certainly is not a new theme. Over a period of time, lots of different approaches of process management have been developed and applied. Standardizing production through working with conveyor belts in the days of Taylor and Ford at the start of the previous century could be regarded as a form of process management. Hardjono and Bakker¹ describe this approach to process management as scientific management, an approach of the Functional School. Significantly, this approach seeks to describe and define processes in such a way that these processes can be split up into the smallest possible tasks in order to achieve more efficiency by short learning cycles and a minimum of time spent on them. Hardjono and Bakker indicate that this definition is contradictory to the view of processes as a sequence of single events defined by time and motion, a view that better matches the SqEME® approach.

Scientific management can truly be called the most dominant paradigm of the twentieth century. This is particularly the case in American (or Anglo-Saxon) management theory, where the principles of scientific management have assumed an important position.

The application of the principles of standardization, specialization, maximization, concentration, centralization and synchronization has resulted in an unprecedented increase in efficiency, and when combined with market opportunities, also in wealth². On the other hand, the main drawback of scientific management (and the functional school as a whole) is not the perspective itself. This is valuable and still makes an important contribution to the performance of organizations. However, the principles are so rooted in our managerial thinking, that they pose the question of whether we are actually able to organize in another manner³. It seems as though we have been caught by it, preventing us from exploiting technological possibilities, especially when we also want to take into account the social reality of the twenty-first century.

In the first half of the twentieth century these principles were a major influence, particularly in car factories, textile and clothing factories and the food processing industry, in other words the

¹ Hardjono and Bakker (2006), Management of Processes.

² Toffler (1980), The Third wave.

³ Morgan (1986), Images Of Organization, p. 6

mechanized production process⁴. They later found their way to other parts of the organization (e.g. administrative processes) and to organizations that had no production processes whatsoever, such as in the service sector and in the public sector (e.g. banks, insurance companies and executive departments of the governmental organizations). Morgan indicates that the application of scientific management in these types of organizations has led to a sort of 'office factories'. In an environment like that, one is expected to work certain regular hours and perform pre-determined activities. Employees have become specialists in certain tasks and are monitored thoroughly in relation to errors and time performance. In numerous departments claims are settled, insurances are taken out, contracts are reviewed, allowances are paid, subsidies are granted, and clerical work is done in this way⁵. In this approach, Process Management seems to adhere to the presupposition of controllability and predictability from a technical system perspective. The main characteristics of scientific management are that the planning and design of work are strictly separated from its execution. There is separation between 'thinking' and 'doing'. The managers have the overview and design the work from that perspective. Just as with a machine, the point is to have a rational knowledge of what is going on inside the organization.

Management has to model the organization along the lines of a predictable machine. These models supply management with the feeling of control, of controllability. The (working) human being is not the primary source of information but rather the weakest link in the system.

Arising out of scientific management, a dominant way of organizing has developed, strikingly described by Morgan in his book 'Images of Organization'. This approach to organizing has been given the name 'machine bureaucracy' by the German sociologist Weber. Weber studied the mechanization of the industry and subsequently drew the parallel with the development of bureaucratic forms of organizing. Next to precisely defined tasks there are precisely defined lines of accountability and information supply. In these, so called, staff-line-organizations, employees get their information via the vertical hierarchy. Reports are sent upwards and assignments are sent down. Although Weber is the intellectual father of the term machine bureaucracy, this does not mean that he would be a great supporter of this type of organizing. On the contrary, Weber himself stated that despite the large potential of the bureaucratic approach, the inspiration and spontaneity of people would be subject to erosion because every aspect of human action would become mechanical and routine⁶.

It is worth noting that Taylor's book was translated into Russian in 1912 and that one of the readers was Lenin. In addition, the centrally controlled communist economy as designed by Lenin -and of which we know the conclusion by now- has all the characteristics of the machine bureaucracy.

When one recognizes that the present society in essence is dominated by this type of organizing, one can easily guess where the reaction of interest for spirituality, creativity and deepening finds its origin. We have built giant 'learning factories', whilst nursing homes and hospitals grow ever larger and become more 'human-denying'. Companies and governmental organizations merge under the guise of advantages of scale. Larger is better, because it is more efficient.

⁴ Womack, Jones and Roos (1990), *The Machine That Changed The World*.

⁵ Morgan (1986), *Images of Organization*, p. 24

⁶ Morgan (1986), *Images of Organization*, p. 17

When the problem gets large enough –and grows out of the organizational boundaries- yet larger organizations have to be created, in order to have the hierarchical structure to bear the responsibility for its solution. In this way, the public transport problem in the urban sprawl in the western part of the Netherlands should be solved by simply merging all local public transport companies in the area. Safety, a problem that has consequences for several ministries, could be solved by the creation of one ‘super-ministry’.

The inability to cooperate at an administrative level could be solved by means of a super-province. In this perspective, the introduction of programme and project management in governmental organizations seems to be a good counterweight.

A countermovement is the search for organization forms that are of a smaller scale, more human and more durable. At scale enlargement we can increasingly difficult foresee what the effect of an intervention will be. It becomes so complex that you can't predict what at the end the effect or the return on the investment will be. Also, scale enlargement anonymizes and can lead to the forming of ‘private kingdoms’ and to indifference. Departments do not work together and sometimes even fight each other. Top management is not always in control of the ongoing business and is frequently surprised by new or changing circumstances in their own organization. In an environment such as that, plans and objectives have to stand by themselves. Employees will be decreasingly inclined to take the responsibility for their own actions. Instead, they will strive for their own interest rather than support the objectives of the organization. All these factors make managers feel the need for more bureaucratic control, resulting in a self-centred syrupy organization. Management structures will be created that can only be described as giant, ponderous, top-down and mechanical. The distance between management, (the decisions) and the work floor (the reality) will only grow in this way. Expressed in metaphoric terms, we are building ‘towers of Babel’. Another characteristic of the tower of Babel was that it drew building materials (energy) from its surroundings without developing these itself. It became a system, sponging upon its environment, at best maintaining itself, without supplying any extra value –at least not to its surroundings-. Relate this to the discussion about durability and shortage. Where organizations lose contact with their environment, they lose their reason for existence, their ‘licence to operate’.

In a rapidly changing environment, this type of organization will have a very hard time. Such organizations run the risk that process management unintentionally leads to even greater bureaucracy and fossilization: the development of fully documented flowcharts in heavy procedural handbooks. The SqEME® approach to process management aims at turning the tide by asking for attention to processes and process management in another manner.

1.2 The Transition to an Information Society

In his book ‘Powershift’, Toffler describes the autonomous employee. With the principle of the autonomous employee, he exposes the social discontinuity between the age of industrialization (with, as a guideline, machine technology) and the social order of the present period (with information technology as a guideline) that we are currently discovering. Based upon his own

experiences as an employee on an assembly line, he describes his vision of the future of the employee in the information era.

The most important conclusion is that anywhere where new technologies are available, new ways of working have to appear in order to utilize them.

As a new way of working, namely scientific management, came into existence through the development of the machine, the conveyor belt and the factory, this will also happen as a result of information and communication technology. Toffler describes how scientific management blossomed because at the time of the rise of the factories one was dealing with an agricultural society. Labourers were not skilled and they were used to working in a family environment. Working in a factory required a new structure and a new way of supervising. Work had to be divided in small standardized activities that were easy to learn and made employees replaceable⁷. Toffler goes on to illustrate that if the old agricultural way of working had been continued whilst working on assembly lines, then the use of machine technology would never have grown and the giant increases of efficiency would never have been achieved. Genuinely new technologies like ICT also require a new way of working. The biggest mistake we can make, according to Toffler, is to leave the advantages of ICT unused, by refusing to change the principles of the existing way of working. It is painful to notice that in many cases ICT has also become the prisoner of bureaucratic thinking. It requires a completely different approach to enable a breakthrough, or at least the start of a transition.

An emphasis on looking at information and the interaction aspects of an organization and their resultant impact upon processes could contribute to a new way of thinking. This new way of thinking is –among others- pointed out by Friedman. In his book ‘The World is Flat’ he describes how organizations are confronted by the development that all routine activities are taken out of their hands through the arrival of ICT. Either through computer automation itself, or by outsourcing these activities to other countries where workers with an appropriate education perform the same tasks at a lower cost. Do not just think of the answering of phone calls and the processing of tax forms, but also the handling of complete administrative procedures and processes. There is a shift towards activities that are not routine or – to put it in a better way- less predictable. Work that has to do with (market) leadership, inter-human relationship and creativity⁸. The most important starting point of the Taylorian thinking, namely the idea that human actions should be reduced and standardized so that people and their operations are made into (exchangeable) shackles in a supply chain, has been left in the points of view of Friedman and others. Partially as a result of this, one should not regard employees as replaceable ‘resources’. Professionals should be seen as the capital, the essentials and the potential of the enterprise. In other words, in the industrial period employees were small cogwheels in the machine, performing standardized routine activities. In the information society, the whole system of creation of value is designed around the professional maturity of the employees. When an employee leaves the organization, he takes a wealth of implicit knowledge with him, along with his contacts and networks. Metaphorically speaking, employees are not the production factors, but rather they actually own the production factors in the form of knowledge and relations.

⁷ Toffler (1990), Powershift, chapter 18

⁸ Friedman (2006), The World is Flat, p. 15.

For the creation of additional value, as Toffler describes, we increasingly have to deal with growing amounts of information and communication that have to be processed.

In the machine bureaucracy, the processing of information is the domain of specialist (staff) senior Management in the vertical hierarchy. Enabled by the growing possibilities of ICT, employees can gain an appreciation of operational management as a whole and, from there, to think about their contribution to it. This stands or falls with the willingness of all members of the organization to share information. Improving the organization by aiming for a better 'information position' of the individual employee on the one hand offers new possibilities, whilst on the other hand it forms a threat to the current 'power elite'. In the past management or staff derived their position from the fact that they had a better overall view of information than others. The new form of organization starts from the point of trust in the self-control of employees. This is a development towards the reunification of thinking and acting, where everyone is manager of their own job. The authority to make decisions is redistributed and from a management perspective this means that the vertical structures in the organization, the hierarchy, get another meaning⁹.

In other words, just as during the twentieth century when machine bureaucracy, the dominant organization form, originated from scientific management, so in the information era a new dominant form of cooperation will evolve, with more emphasis upon the horizontal relations. Organizations will be more focused on humans and the qualities they can utilise. At the same time, organizing will be on a smaller scale. It will focus on the smallest possible principle of organizing: the client-supplier relationship, for example the relationship between professional and customer, or the one between employees transferring information and results to each other. The meaning of 'small scale' will be different than it was during the twentieth century. Organizing will be the connecting of unique variables that together will form powerful (network-like) structures, of which the boundaries are undetermined and more or less invisible. This will be powerful enough to become an alternative for the large organizations of the twentieth century, but with a completely unique form of complexity. Organizations are more likely to be inclined to operate in temporary cooperative structures in order to achieve results. Smaller scale organizational units with less (though better equipped and more dedicated) employees, that work together with others in an efficient and effective way. Gradually a whole jumble (conglomeration) of cooperative relationships will appear which will alter depending on the subject. Because the cooperative themes are usually connected to people, we are likely to talk about value chains and networks when we discuss this phenomenon. It becomes increasingly difficult to talk about organizations and to distinguish organization structures. The focus shifts from organizations to organizing.

From the perspective of process management it is interesting to look at how we can contribute to this development. The execution of processes is vulnerable and strongly depends on good information supply. The SqEME[®] approach to processes requires detailed attention to the communication between processes. It is important to invest in the quality of the communication between the employees. In this sense, the quality of the process and the information supply are two sides of the same coin.

⁹ Toffler (1990), Powershift, chapter 18

1.3 Developments in ICT and Organizations

Another important approach to processes has been in the shape of Business Process Reengineering (BPR), described, amongst others, by Hammer and Champy and by Davenport. Just as with the quality movement, they urged managers to fundamentally change their view of the working methods in their organization. Operational processes had to be revised and completely reconsidered¹⁰. By fundamentally redesigning the operational processes, the organization could achieve significant improvements in its performance¹¹. BPR has been welcomed by many companies, especially in America, but also in other Anglo-Saxon countries. Unfortunately, the approach has been (mis)used for the rigorous reduction (sometimes by more than 20%) of operational staff¹². This was within the bureaucratic tradition for which BPR had, in fact, become an alternative. After all, the intention was to redesign the organization of the traditional machine bureaucracy. Perhaps because of this, a large amount of criticism was generated against BPM: the approach would be founded upon a technical system perspective, it would just be scientific management in disguise. Apart from this, the criticism focused on the approach to change that has been used in combination with this method. Hammer himself indicates that one of the most important plusses of BPR has been that ‘reengineering’ has changed the perspective of top managers. Supervisors no longer see their organization as a set of separate units that are strictly separated by precisely defined borders. Supervisors have learned to perceive the organization as a whole, incorporating flexible groups that are undertaking interwoven activities and information exchange, cutting through the organization horizontally, and ending at the points where the contact with clients takes place¹³. Thus, it remains interesting to study the principles behind BPR in more detail. For this we refer to the work of Hammer (1990), Hammer and Champy (1993), Davenport (1990 and 1993) and Hammer and Stanton (1999).

In spite of the appeal of BPR to change the view at the organization, it did not offer any tools or techniques to do this. In addition, the approach was not able to refer back to a long history. A second chance for BPR came by way of a different approach to process management, namely that of Business Process Management (BPM). BPM differs from BPR because it uses a more incremental approach (just like SqEME®) rather than redesigning the organization in a radical way. Above all, BPM puts the opportunities for new technological developments at the centre of focus[attention]. The attraction of looking at organizations in a different way coincides with the opportunities offered by ICT. This approach to process management is, amongst others, described by Smith and Fingar in their book ‘Business Process Management, the third wave’. Whereas Toffler, in a book titled partially the same, gave his vision on the rise of the ‘information society’¹⁴, Smith and Fingar describe a method that should enable organizations to meet the demands of the information society and to exploit its opportunities¹⁵. Thus, BPM is presented as a completely new approach, in the sense that an entirely new key concept is introduced. Where in BPR ‘efficiency’ was principally placed at the centre, in particular the rationalization and optimisation of the processes that were to be automated, the central theme of BPM is ‘agility’,

¹⁰ Hammer (1990), Reengineering Work: Don't automate, obliterate, p. 104-112

¹¹ Hammer and Champy (1993), Reengineering the Corporation: A Manifesto for Business Revolution

¹² Internet: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_process_reengineering (feb. 2007).

¹³ Hammer and Stanton (1999), How Process Enterprises Really Work

¹⁴ Toffler (1980), The Third wave

¹⁵ Smith and Fingar (2003), Business Process Management, the third wave

meaning something like 'flexibility'. This 'agility' approach is of great importance. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the ICT world is still ruled by a form of 'engineers' thinking'. This thinking strongly resembles the machine bureaucratic ideas. If we think of the statement by Einstein that problems cannot be solved at the level at which they occurred, then an impulse should come from the outside in order to fully realise the potential benefits of the 'agility' approach. Such an impulse can only come from the 'demanding side'; accountable management. It should come up with a thoroughly worked out plan about the framework (i.e. architecture) of the organization.

The traditional ICT approach to process management is focused strongly upon the automation of workflows (Workflow Management). In their book 'Service Orient or be Doomed' Bloomberg and Schmelzer explain that the problem of contemporary 'workflow' automation is that the developers of systems such as this want to control the organization far too much. The idea is that the processes, once documented, will always be the processes as we want to use them. However, 'agility' implies the ability to move continuously, in response to the changes in the environment. ICT now tries to get a closer connection to 'business'. ICT should be organized in such a way that it enables processes which match the strategy of the organization in the ever-changing environment. Changes should be made step-by-step. 'Agile' organizations are organizations that consider changes as a way of continuously improving their own organization¹⁶. At this moment, lots of attention is generated for principles like Service-Oriented Architecture, XML, ESB and web services that, combined with new ways of working, really can give meaning to the concept of 'agility'. All of this, still under the name 'Enterprise Architecture', suggests that the concept of stand-alone organizational units still exists.

The relation between the contemporary process approach as we have modelled with SqEME[®] and the process approach to ICT is based upon a love-hate relationship. In fact, a severe tension exists. Views of process management originating from ICT can almost always be interpreted as the technical system perspective. A characteristic to this perspective is that there is no difference between system acts and human acts. This means that organizations that architect their processes according to the principles of the functional school or Taylorism, get stuck with processes that metaphorically resemble the Charlie Chaplin-like situations known from the film 'Modern Times', in which employees perform actions that are determined by the routine of technology. Bloomberg and Schmelzer criticize this work arising out of the technical system perspective and emphasize that we should ensure that the technology supports the work routines of the employees. This is an idea that matches the SqEME[®] approach.

As pointed out by the EFQM Excellence Model, it is not appropriate to describe employees as 'resources' that we can employ in previously developed workflows. On the contrary, the authors say, the automated workflows should be seen as 'resources' and be at the service of the employees themselves¹⁷. It is Fingar, the second author of 'Business Process Management, the third wave', who predicted a fourth wave, i.e. the 'human interactive processes'¹⁸. In this (in fact remarkable) stage, the developments in ICT come together with the developments in the area of organization and quality sciences. Where the world of information technology revalues the human-human

¹⁶ Bloomberg and Schmelzer (2006), Service orient or be doomed, p. 12

¹⁷ Bloomberg and Schmelzer (2006), Service orient or be doomed, p. 57-59.

¹⁸ Internet <http://www.human-interaction-management.info> (Feb. 2007).

processes, organization science and, in particular, the quality tradition has had this perspective as a starting point since the 1960s. We do not mean methods like SPC and Six Sigma, but rather the Open System Thinking of Bertalanffy, Katz and Kahn, and Emery and Trist, and the quality thinking Juran, Deming and Weick, amongst others. In these traditions, people are not the 'resources' of the organization; instead, in essence, organizations exist because of (and through the support of) people. We call this the social system perspective. We should also point out that some authors see the series 'closed system – open system – social system' as degrees of complexity in the thinking about organizations.

An important development in recent years has been the 'meeting of minds' of the technical system perspective and this social system perspective in the process orientation. In this, the social system perspective is not an extension of the technical system perspective. It is a completely different view of the operation of organizations. The social system perspective is based upon the scientific approach of the phenomenology and the 'social constructivism' in which there is –as a result- a great deal of attention paid to the stories employees have to tell and the way they experience situations. At the point at which these perspectives merge, inherently semantic discussions appear. The concept of what a 'process' is can differ from person to person. Also, the members of an organization will approach the information supply or the employment of ICT in a completely different manner. The differences in the perception of the organization lead to different interpretation of data, to different information flows and different utilization of IT solutions. The information that people in an organization give each other is often more based on what they THINK their colleagues need, then on clear agreements. That phenomenon effect also the use of IT. Illustrative of this development are statements from suppliers of ICT and BPM solutions, like 'we should learn to speak the language of business'. In other words, they should learn to understand the stories of employees. As an approach, the technical system perspective and the social system perspective do absolutely not exclude each other. In practice, both perspectives prove to be equally valid and can co-exist. They manifest themselves in much the same way as the metaphorical 'old woman and young lady', the picture that can be perceived both as an old woman and as a young lady, but only as one of them at a time, never in both ways at the same moment. People perceiving the old woman might describe what they see; however, whilst they are describing the same picture, they actually mention different characteristics than those that somebody describing the young lady might see. This metaphor clearly indicates, as described by Covey, how strongly conditioned our perception is (as with our paradigms). In the longer term, our behaviour (so also our organization forms) is not effective if we are not completely conscious of our basic paradigms¹⁹.

The central starting point of the social system perspective is that it is the people in the organization that have the power and can use their power to enable the organization to excel. De facto, they are the organization. The people have the power to respond to new circumstances, the power to find new solutions and the power to step out of the traditional mental frameworks. The most important power they have is the so-called power to socialize: the ability to work together with others. The other powers are the materials, the commercial power and the intellectual power²⁰. These powers stretch a little beyond what the term 'agility' suggests at first glance. In order to

¹⁹ Covey (1989), *The seven habits of highly effective people*, p. 20

²⁰ Hardjono (1997), (*Rythm and Organizational Dynamics*) *Ritmiek en organisatiedynamiek*

address these we are dependent upon the knowledge, the skills and the effort of all employees in the organization. Creating value is not just about the transformation of raw materials into products or the supply of standard services. It is not just the hands that are important, the creation of value is in the head and in the heart. This means that successful and sustainable organizations are, from the social system perspective, able to address the potential of people.

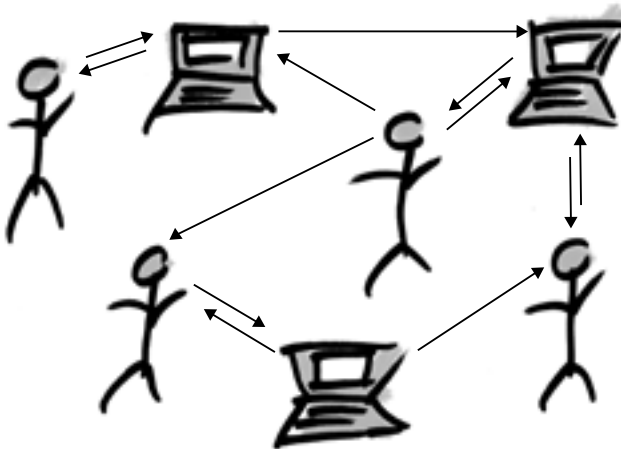


Figure 1.1 Technical system perspective or social system perspective? Focus on technology or focus on human being?

Process management from this perspective is about investing in coherence, about cooperation and about providing an insight into how the activities and expertise of employees contribute to the whole. A social system perspective like this provides a completely different approach to the developments in ICT. From this perspective, ICT is synonymous with connecting people. ICT enables the sharing of information between people and, by doing this, enables them to unite. Information as a concept has a social meaning. People have to be aware of the relevance of information for others and be willing to share meaningful information and to distribute it. On the other hand, people should also be aware of the relevance of information in relation to their work and be willing to receive information and to really do something with it. In this respect, along with the developments in ICT, the importance of a social system perspective is growing.

The ‘world of ICT’ (the technical system perspective) and the ‘quality tradition’ (the social system perspective) come together in the growing importance of information in organizations: the connecting of people’. The SqEME[®] approach aims at serving both types of interests, and complies with the needs of both by respecting the human processes as well as the ICT processes that relate to information supply.

1.4 Out of Control

The emergence of ‘flexibility’ and ‘creativity’ as orientations for the organizing of processes makes it necessary to deepen the perspective of control. As described earlier, the need for control strongly determines our present way of organizing and our way to change. Most of our management

thinking is based upon getting the organization under control. In some situations, for example in some public institutions like the Police and the Public Prosecution Office, but also in fast developing markets such as communication and consumer electronics, the predictability of developments is limited. The threats likely to be posed in two years time is hard to predict, and the developments in the communication industry are so fast that many of us have just a vague picture of the market in five years. This requires another perception of 'control'. Not based upon predictability, but one that transcends technology. A form of control of technology in the sense that one can discuss the situation with the help of technology without being dominated by it, so to speak to be 'liberated' from it. In his book 'Out of Control', Kelly describes a number of principles that are applicable in a context like this. Also for the management of processes these principles have an important meaning²¹:

- A way of working does not have to be studied, thought over, understood and planned in advance. Processes arise and develop themselves continuously. Every time we carry out a task, either in cooperation or not, we learn from its execution. This continuously improves operational procedures. Successful solutions reinforce themselves, and in turn produce successful solutions again. This creates patterns of working. Also De Bono describes this phenomenon in his book 'Mechanism of Mind'²².
- New complex organizational solutions cannot be implemented at once or rolled out at once. It is better to start small with parts that work. From there, one can build on to the more complex solution.

The development of complex solutions just takes time. Even when all parts are present, time is necessary in order to test each part in interaction with the other. When one studies different parts in their relation, complexity exists by definition. Seen through today's eyes, the first motor cars are extremely primitive machines. Still, you could drive them and sometimes even drive them fast. Modern cars are complex systems, as a result of one hundred twenty-five years of development, systems that the designers could never have predicted.

Uniformity of working may seem efficient, but this advantage disappears when the circumstances change. At that stage, major changes in the organization are necessary. Besides universality, organizations in a changing environment need a certain degree of diversity. Allowing diversity (in the way of working) stimulates adaptations and changes in the organization. These changes do not manifest themselves as a few large leaps, but instead proceed gradually, in thousands of small steps. In such organizations, according to amongst others Zuijderhoudt and Stacey, germs of ideas can grow that, through discontinuity, lead to innovation. This idea is also a fundamental point of Kaizen, the key to Japanese competitive success²³.

Changes are inherently and always accompanied by 'errors' that are made in respect to written plans and procedures. In changing organizations, these 'errors' appear. Incrementally improving the organization can in this respect be seen as a systematic way of 'error' management. At the moment that defects become apparent, it is important how to respond to them. In this respect, the importance of learning from errors is greater than preventing them. 'Errors' are not the

²¹ Kelly (1994), *Out of Control*, p. 468-470

²² De Bono (1969), *Mechanism of Mind*, p. 61-65

²³ Imai (1990), *Kaizen – The Key to Japan's Competitive Success*

basis to judge and punish others, but to learn from as a collective. This can be practiced both in predictable surroundings and in those environments where processes with unpredictable results take place. Under all circumstances, management should have the guts to admit that a chosen way has been wrong, instead of staying on this course against one's better judgement. You should accept your loss and try another way of working. Only by doing this, can the thousands of minute changes be made that enable the organization to continuously create value. In an environment full of predictable processes, something like a Six Sigma programme is possible. A Six Sigma programme is, in essence, more concerned with a company's investment in increasing its learning abilities, rather than explicitly enlarging the control of processes. It urges the people in the organization to investigate every error or unforeseen circumstance in detail, especially because it is hard to believe that the occurrence of these circumstances might have been caused just by coincidence. In this respect one should keep in mind that the 'dispersion', the number of sigma's, is determined by the process and not by management.

Only machines can be optimally predictable in their execution. Organizations are not machines and can, therefore, more easily agree on acceptable ways of working for a period of time, knowing that they are capable of evolving continuously. When it works, it is good enough! Besides, organizations can, in contrast with machines, strive for more than one goal and follow several paths at the same time. Optimising operations for one goal might harm other interests. In this respect, accepting 'out of control' and trusting upon the self-organizing abilities present in an organization have more in common, than it seems at first glance, with our dominant 'control-driven' attitude!

2 Methodology

The design of the operational management, the process approach, the assignment of roles, how this is dealt with and way in which this is managed, all these aspects form a complex matter. It is and will be the work of humans; people are at the heart of organizing the work. Primarily, organizational development is about the influencing the behaviour of the collective of individuals in a certain desirable direction. From the SqEME[®] method, the organization is seen as a social system. Human beings are at the heart of it. According to Weick, it is a characteristic of process thinking that man is the defining factor; it is not the organizational structure that should be the object of process management but rather the interactive process that takes place between humans,²⁴. As Weick puts it, it might be better to talk about 'organizing' than about 'organizations'. The basic principle behind the SqEME[®] method is that an organization is essentially a bundling of processes, put into effect by inspired professionals. These professionals arrive at results on the basis of their craftsmanship, effective information services and practical tools.

2.1 Mental Model

The social system perspective of the SqEME[®] method requires another approach rather than the current deterministic approach. Therefore, the mental model behind the SqEME[®] method has a more holistic foundation. The word 'holistic' can be defined as 'based on a theory (originally set up for biology) to explain 'life', in which the entirety, the mutual connection and the cooperation of the parts are key issues'. The SqEME[®] method claims that organizations should be seen from their totality as much as possible: the organization as an alliance of people.

The total view is studied via the SqEME[®] method by posing four basic questions: What are the essential building blocks of the enterprise? What is the bond that unites the professionals? How is the execution of the work organized? How do we perform in undertaking our business?

The thinking model that forms the basis of the SqEME[®] method is visualized by means of four windows. These four windows are called Constitution, Chemistry, Construction and Correspondence. Each one of them enables its own view and has its own 'colour' and its own shape. These windows do not form a 2 by 2 matrix in which the windows can be put side by side in relation to two axes. Each window tells its own specific story and can not be separated from the (holistic) whole. Through the use of the four windows, a coherent view will be created and a deeper insight gained into the organization as a whole. With one eye it is difficult to see depth. The four windows are complementary and lead to a consistent, specific and verifiable understanding of reality.

The Constitution window asks people in an organization to take a look at 'the other side of the picture' by formulating the management philosophy: what is the idea behind the existence of the organization? What are the moral and ideological starting points? What are the value

²⁴ Weick (1979), The social psychology of organizing; Hardjono and Bakker (2006), *Management van processen*.

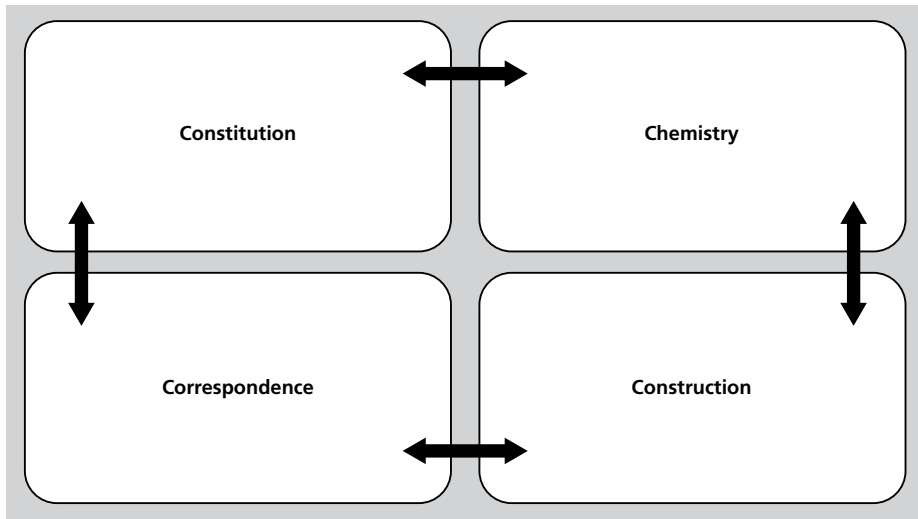


Figure 2.1 The four windows of the SqEME®methodology

systems of the individuals within the organization and what is the preferred value system within the enterprise? How are they translated into a vision, followed by a mission and a strategy for the organization? Constitution stands for the basic ideas, the ethics, for the basic characteristics of the enterprise. Constitution also stands for aesthetics: what makes someone perceive the organization as ‘beautiful’? This constitution is what you ‘taste’ when you physically enter the organization, or even when talking with an employee over the phone. They are the basic patterns that are present in everything that is being done in the organization. Constitution is the DNA of the organization.

Through the Chemistry window people in an organization can get a view at what initiates and keeps the organization in motion: the spirit of cooperation between people. The interaction between people, both inside and outside the organization, is studied through the Chemistry window. This window provides an insight in the ‘game of forces’ between the interests and the interested. Where there is no tension there is no life! It is about leadership, about inspiration, enthusiasm and passion. Where is the energy, what does it mean to you? What makes this organization work? Chemistry stands for the organization as a transformation process, for the interaction between people. Chemistry also stands for the relationship of the organization with the environment. From the perspective of open system thinking this means that the organization is in continuous exchange with its surrounding and that this provides the organization with its ‘license to operate’. The social system thinking even goes one step further: attention for the real interaction, the mutual added value and the interdependence.

In the Construction window the tangible reality appears, how things manifest themselves in reality. This window is the most visible and most tangible one. How is the operation designed? Within organizations, this means the employment of people and means. It is about the people, the materials, the budgets, about supplying laptops, company cars and ICT facilities. All the resources that are necessary to enable operation. Construction is also about the employment of people. It is about the distribution of tasks, responsibilities and power. Who reports to whom? It

also covers the employment of expertise, the supply of information, the design of training and the facilitation of craftsmanship. Construction embodies the organization in its real appearance.

Finally, the Correspondence window provides a view at how the organization actually operates. The dynamics of the organization are studied and monitored. Among the followers of 'to measure is to know' this window is very popular. It is about the monitoring and 'getting in control' of the organization. How does the organization perform? What are the targets? It is the window that covers management data, reports, future analyses and benchmarking. Starting from the principle of 'out of control', this window is about continuous education, recognizing patterns, agreement upon the framing, the bandwidths for self-organizing enterprises. Instruments like the Business Balanced Scorecard and management information systems appear in this window. It is the window of operational research, of statistics, but also of gut feelings. The reality is to be visualized, measured and discussed objectively or at least inter-subjectively. Inter-subjectivity is a very important term within the SqEME® approach. On the matter of understanding organizations objectivity does not exist. What does exist is an inter-subjective truth. When most people see it that way, than that is the truth. So a shared picture of the processes of the enterprise is not an objective fact but an inter-subjective truth.

Through this window, one investigates whether things go as they are planned, expected or desired. From the description that is derived, initiatives can put in place to take action with respect to the Constitution, Chemistry or Construction of the organization.

2.2 Principles

The principles that are the basis of the SqEME® method have become clearer over the years. Essentially they form the 'lessons learned' in terms of the developments in the last decades around the management of processes. In chapter one of this book we went into the matter of these developments. The following four leading principles are representative of the way in which the SqEME® method handles these developments:

1. Result-oriented management in the context of inclusive thinking and open system thinking.
2. Information supply as an incentive for 'horizontal organizing'.
3. Building blocks and patterns for the structuring of processes.
4. The professionally mature employee as a starting point.

Result-oriented management in the context of inclusive thinking and open system thinking

SqEME® for process management uses the term *inclusive thinking*. The term *inclusive thinking* has been adopted from the philosopher Feitse Boerwinkel. It introduces an alternative to antagonistic thinking (thinking in contrasts) and exclusive, egocentric thinking. He describes it as: 'A thinking that is fundamentally based upon the idea that my good (luck, life, welfare) is not achieved at the cost of or without the other, but that it can only be obtained if that person at the same time intends to achieve and improve the good of the other.'²⁵ The fundamental point of inclusive thinking is the consciousness that humanity forms one family and that one cannot harm the fellow human without -in him- injuring oneself. Or, expressed more positively, the consciousness that one only achieves full development if one does not focus solely upon oneself

²⁵ Boerwinkel 1966

but cooperates extensively with others. As Boerwinkel states, ‘man is no longer worth what their own brain is worth, but what all the brains of all people are worth’. He argues for the need to abandon antagonistic and exclusive thinking, stating that any war will in the end only have losers and that Europe, after many hundreds of years of warfare, has finally discovered that cooperation is ultimately more profitable. Apart from this, numerous evidence has been gathered and dozens of exercises have illustrated that cooperation leads to improved results compared with going your own way.

Inclusive thinking propagates a ban on the making of enemy images, as well as ways of thinking that are derived from warfare. Inclusive thinking stands for empathizing with the ways of thinking of others. This attitude is necessary to abandon ‘departmental thinking’ in favour of a way of thinking in which people take responsibility for each other’s acts and ultimately for the common results. Stated in simple terms, it is a remedy for ‘internal political games’ and contributes to a culture in which people assume their responsibilities in the knowledge that their interest is dependent upon the common interest. In this way, it is also an approach to express the ideas of Weick. Only when you try to really understand the thoughts and ideas of others, will you succeed in conquering and preventing ambiguities in communication.

With this philosophical approach, SqEME® underlines that it is not only sensible, but also necessary to get to the truth of the basic principles, the philosophical fundamentals, the possible religious roots and the cultural characteristics of an enterprise. To achieve this, SqEME® uses the concepts of *Constitution*. For SqEME® as a method, the essential starting point is inclusive thinking, including the following guidelines that Boerwinkel supplies for inclusive thinking:

- One has to beware of considering oneself superior to others and one has to avoid ‘self-righteousness’.
- One has to assume the other is convinced in his opinions.
- One has to be willing to listen to the other and be aware of one’s own beliefs.
- One has to beware of stereotyping.
- One has to find a solution to both work and live together by helping and encouraging each other and, where required, providing clear criticism and, if absolutely necessary, opposition.

The choice for inclusive thinking is not meant to be idealistic in the first place. SqEME® shares the opinion of Boerwinkel that it is a realistic choice. Process management is not meant to present things in a better light than they actually are. SqEME® Process Management is mainly intended to make the organization result-oriented, and results that are achieved at the expense of others will only lead in short term to opposition, or in the longer term to rebellion or forceful counteraction. Just keeping in mind one’s own self-interest is not only proof of short term thinking, but is also foolish as it focuses upon immediate results without any long term considerations. Process management is also about cooperation and, from this perspective, the concept of inclusive thinking is a powerful and meaningful starting point. The necessity to cooperate with others finds its origin in the idea that organizations are open systems. On this subject, SqEME® embraces the notions of Senge and the ideas of Emery and Trist (‘managing the boundary conditions’).

Information supply as an incentive for horizontal organizing

The shift in the traditional concept of process thinking is described in literature as the shift from a vertical approach of an organization to a horizontal approach. This implies something else than the 'tilting of an organization'. With the tilting of the organization, the traditional principles of thinking in terms of tasks and responsibilities and the institution of a hierarchy that has to supervise their correct implementation are in fact maintained. The supplementary effect of holding on to this way of thinking is that one opts for a matrix organization in which employees get two superiors: a functional and an operational boss, introducing various conflicts of interest and the opportunity to play off one boss against the other. Matrix organizations work beautifully on paper but appear to function only rarely in practice. Yet, organizations wishing to change over to process-driven operations seem to choose intermediate solution like this and appoint so-called process managers who sometimes get a functional task or sometimes an operational one. Often this leads to the effect that line management or the employees come to stand opposite to the process-managers. The energy is not bundled, instead the company has created a loss or leakage of energy.

SqEME® Process Management takes the view that an organization should be considered as a bundling of processes²⁶ in which the main subject is internal communication; the organization can therefore be viewed as an 'information processing system'. From this point of view, on one the hand one discovers imperfections and barriers that explain why up till now things have never gone as they were expected to. On the other hand one, only then sees what has to be done to really make new technologies work; in fact to make an organization into an integral system, in which employees only have to respond to exceptional situations, because automated production and control systems adequately respond to all standard situations. Reacting to exceptional situations after all means freedom of action, in which the essence is to make choices that match the objectives of the organization, with less emphasis placed upon the way in which they are achieved. In fact SqEME® adopts the idea that functional/hierarchical organizing and Taylorism and Scientific Management have passed their expiry date. SqEME® particularly focuses upon the information/communication processes and on the correctness and completeness of this information. Just as in a Kanban-system²⁷, an empty basket is the signal to start producing. No more but also no less than is necessary to fill up the basket again. One could say that information should start a flow of energy. SqEME® uses the terms *Chemistry*.

Building blocks and patterns for the structuring of processes

With the rise of rationalism, a traditional way of examining organizations has been to adopt the concept that in order to comprehend a complex system, one has to divide a problem into sub-problems, for as long as is necessary until there is just a single issue left that can be handled. There is not much to say against this method, other than that one loses sight of the interconnection of the parts, whilst their relation can actually be a part of the explanation as to why something either works or not. The traditional methods of research were particularly intended to reduce complexity. As our 'calculators' got more powerful, we could handle a greater complexity, but this did not lead to a larger insight in the coherence. Taylorism or Scientific Management

²⁶ Weick, K. E. (1996). Sensemaking in organizations. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

²⁷ Louis, Raymond (2006). Custom Kanban: Designing the System to Meet the Needs of Your Environment. University Park, IL: Productivity Press. ISBN 978-1-56327-345-2.

focused mainly upon splitting up, specializing and standardizing, whilst modern production control systems made this much less necessary, and required integration more than specialization. SqEME® Process Management focuses much less on detailing the descriptions of processes and pays more attention to the decision loops. The idea is that every process is unique and that it will never show itself in exactly the same form. Besides, any process has its own natural fluctuations. As anyone who learns to ride a bicycle has to discover, cycling requires a certain amount of balancing and leaning and, when one tries to correct it, this will result in a fall.

SqEME® regards descriptions mainly as tools that enable the recognition of a pattern; in combination with performance indicators this might possibly trigger an intervention, but if things are going well, then a signal will indicate 'all O.K.' so that the management should absolutely not intervene. In fact, workflow management is nothing more than recognition of patterns, and production control systems are based on earlier discovered patterns to ensure that processes take place in a certain way.

Certain certification models, such as ISO 9000, require that processes are described. The SqEME® method can be convenient for this, especially when the desire is to reduce the description of processes to the absolutely minimum necessary. Also with a holistic approach, or perhaps especially as a result of this, there is not only the need to recognize the different parts, but also the need to know what the performance indicators are (or should be) to get the whole to function properly. Armed with this knowledge, one can monitor whether the system functions properly, recognize possible hiccups or maybe discover opportunities for improvement. Measuring the heartbeat, blood pressure and the body temperature does not explain how our body operates, but it does indicate its condition. The condition of organizations will usually be measured by a series of performance indicators including financial levels, product quality, process time, use of material and consumption of energy, etc. Apart from this, users of the EFQM/INK management model are confronted with the question: 'Who is monitoring our processes apart from ourselves?', in other words: 'Who are our stakeholders?' and with the question: 'Which performance criteria do they use?' It might be wise to adopt the performance criteria they think are important in our own set of performance indicators and perhaps it could even be necessary to adjust our way of identifying business processes to reflect this. The concepts of performance indicators and process descriptions are gathered under the terms Correspondence.

The professionally mature employee as a starting point

For SqEME®, organizations are in the first place people. The quality of the organization is determined by the quality of the individual employee and the ability of the employee to cooperate with others to a large extent. For this, SqEME® uses the concept of professional maturity. Professional maturity is a key concept of the flexible organization. However, professional maturity is not a combination of words that one can find in a dictionary. It is a combination of the word professional and the word mature, that indicates skills, experience and competence of the employee, as well as a form of grown-up and committed with common values. A professionally mature employee is someone who is able to oversee the consequences of his own acts and who dares to deviate from rules when there are grounds for that. An important prerequisite is that the knowledge and skills necessary to execute the various tasks are present. SqEME® recognizes the principles of 'tacit knowledge' and 'explicit knowledge' (Polanyi), where tacit knowledge is the non-explicit (or almost non-explicit) knowledge and experience of someone, that is often regarded

as a proof of craftsmanship, whilst explicit knowledge is the knowledge and experience that can be written down. Managers often strongly feel the need to register all knowledge and experience that is present, and deny that this is either impossible or requires an extreme effort. Apart from the fact that this urge ignores the fact that every human being is a unique personality, it can also be regarded threatening or offending. Writing down the operational procedures can suggest that there is a doubt about the presence of the knowledge needed for perform the work properly. It can be interpreted as an act of mistrust. It can also lead to thoughts that this knowledge is being deliberately held back by someone looking after their own interests. These are hardly the starting points that match the principles of inclusive thinking. When one assumes that every process takes place in a slightly different way each time, one has to ask oneself whether the efforts and the risks being run by the urge to document everything counterbalance the expected benefit²⁸.

SqEME[®] assumes that processes are performed by professionals or professionally mature employees, or that it pays to approach people in the organization as professionally mature employees. The selection on the basis of professional maturity or professionalism, or bringing employees to that level is, in this view, a crucial supportive process. As mentioned, the same professionally mature employees or professionals must have the necessary means and resources at their disposal. Knowing the structure of the organization and their place in it can be seen as a part of that; they must know who are their (internal) clients and suppliers and what their tasks and responsibilities are.

The latter should be undertaken in a manner that supports the focus of creating a process-driven organization so it will not 'slide off' to a classical hierarchical organization, in which knowing tasks and responsibilities is regarded as sufficient. Describing who the actors are and what means and facilities they have at their disposal belongs to the domain of Construction in the SqEME[®] approach.

2.3 SqEME[®] and EFQM

Although SqEME[®] was developed at an earlier date than European Business Excellence or the EFQM model it looks as if SqEME[®] is made for addressing the area of 'processes'. The EFQM model was first announced in 1992 as a reference model for selecting the winner of the European Quality Award. Almost immediately it became a popular framework for self assessment and benchmarking, not least because presenting a self assessment became a requisite for competing for the European Quality Award. For many organizations all over the world the EFQM model became the basis for their quality management, including those organizations who had not intention of competing for the award. Nowadays EFQM is one of the three important quality management approaches, if not the most important, alongside the American Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award criteria and the Japanese Deming Prize.

²⁸ This can be different for hazardous processes in which certain limits should absolutely not be exceeded. Think of nuclear fission processes in atomic power plants and of critical performance indicators as a part of diagnostic feedback systems that differ from persuasive systems coupled to values and interactive feedback systems under conditions of strategic uncertainties.

EFQM thinks from the (quality) management paradigm of *Continuous Improvement* in much the same way as SqEME®. They are non-prescriptive but describe the current situation in order to get an initial insight. This insight forms the basis for critical review and improvement: how is the work done (Do), what we learn from it (Check), what improvements can be made (Act), does the work function as (re)described (Plan) and so on. Because of the non-descriptiveness of both EFQM as SqEME®, they do not fit very well within the *Control* paradigm, although they are not useless. The criteria however are not supplied by the framework but are instead found in the description of the organization along the lines of the EFQM and/or SqEME® framework. For the paradigm *Breakthrough* other management models are more appropriate. For the paradigm *Reaching the Essence*, both EFQM and SqEME® are based on the same philosophy but are not exclusively searching for the fundamental concepts of the organization. With the help of the constitution window, SqEME® probably does this more effectively than the EFQM model.

Processes are at the heart of the EFQM model and this is not by accident. The basic idea of the developers of the model was that we need to look at organizations from another perspective. The ideas of Weick that one should not speak in terms of organizations but rather in terms of organizing, is embraced here. This concept of Weick can also be recognized within SqEME®. Instead of understanding organization in terms of tasks and responsibilities, you need to look at what is happening to the processes. The EFQM model is an input/output model, which is also the method used for working out the different windows of SqEME® as one can particularly see in the way that the Constitution and Correspondence windows are worked out. But it is not only the emphasis on process management makes the fit between SqEME® and the EFQM model. It is also the Rhineland value system that both share. It should be emphasised that the EFQM model was intended as an alternative for the Malcolm Quality Award, not for having something European, but for having an alternative to the Anglo-Saxon value system, focusing on stakeholder value instead of shareholder value, with increased emphasis on processes, weighted 20 % instead of 8.5 % as in the Malcolm Baldrige Award. It is interesting to note that the whole area of addressing 'key performance results' in the EFQM was the latest to be added, whilst the first was *process management* which was subsequently shortened to *processes* only.

In SqEME® result-oriented management is one of the basic principle, and results are equally important in the EFQM model. The EFQM model incorporates four areas on the right hand side of the model that are called the result areas, but in the way the model is drawn one can conclude that every area to be addressed is a 'result area' from the perspective of SqEME®. *People, policy & strategy* and *partnerships & resources* in the EFQM model are the inputs for the 'result area' *processes*, which in turn is a 'result area' that delivers input for people results, customer results and society results. Here, there is an important addition to the EFQM model. The model is based on the assumption that within each area to be addressed, each box is related to the other but it is unclear in what way. Because SqEME® explicitly investigates what is happening between the different 'result areas' with the help of the Chemistry window, where the focus is on messages and message specification, it can be seen as a great addition to the EFQM model. The Chemistry window makes explicit all kinds of communication aspects, of which the EFQM model only addresses in general terms. One of the basic principles of SqEME® is the way in which information supply is viewed as an incentive for horizontal organizing. EFQM, using a Rhineland management approach, focuses on the concept of stakeholder value instead of only on shareholder value. In the EFQM model, the stakeholders have an important

but also somewhat ambiguous position. Firstly, *customer satisfaction, people satisfaction, impact on society* and *key performance results* together form the 'results' part of the model, whilst *leadership, people, policy & strategy, partnerships & resources* and *processes* are the 'enablers'. However, they also form the input for 'innovation and learning'. So achieving results is not enough, they also have to be measured in such a way that they form the input for the enablers, in much the same way as the messages do in SqEME®.

Through using the results as input for different stakeholders, one is able to understand how the stakeholders experience these results. If you are able to appreciate the value that they get out of these results, you can then (re)design the processes of the organization in such a way that the desired results that have been formulated as part of the policy and strategy of the organization can be achieved. For that reason 'inclusive thinking' is an important principle, and it is in this area that SqEME® has made an important contribution to EFQM where this is currently included but is made nowhere near as explicit as is the case in SqEME®.

By describing an organization with the help of the EFQM model one more or less sees that it is made up of different building blocks. Using this description for self assessment and benchmarking as the EFQM organization advocates, follows the same principles of SqEME® where the identification and understanding of structured processes is one of their basic principles.

In the EFQM model particular importance is given to the workers in the organization. In the Anglo-Saxon philosophy the workers are the most important *resources* of the organization. For that reason human resource management is one of the most important criteria of the Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award. *Partnership & Resources* is an area that should be addressed in the EFQM model (with *information* as an important sub area to consider remembering that information supply as an incentive for horizontal organizing is one of the key principles of SqEME®), but humans are not in there. *People* is included in the EFQM model a separate area to address. The ideas behind this is that an organization is a conglomerate of people, and together they are the organization. In other words the people are the building blocks of an organization (well selected, trained, motivated, rewarded and, if necessary, removed) and therefore cannot own themselves as one can own a resource. One of the principles of SqEME® is the concept of the professional mature employee or the skilful worker as a starting point, and this fits in very well with the idea of having *People Management* as an area to address in the EFQM model.

In conclusion, for those organizations who are applying the EFQM model, the SqEME® methodology fits in very well as it also provides the organization with additional concepts that are either lacking or are only implicitly present in the EFQM model. SqEME® and EFQM share the paradigm of continuous improvement and both embrace the Rhineland business philosophy. The basic principles of SqEME®: result-oriented management in the context of inclusive thinking and open system thinking, information supply as an incentive for horizontal organizing, building blocks and patterns for the structuring of processes, the professionally mature employee as a starting point, are all not only present in the EFQM model in some form, in some instances they also provide a valuable addition.

2.4 SqEME® for architecting the enterprise

The term architecture is overrunning the field of management. The fact that it appears as though architecting as phenomenon for managing an enterprise has blown over from the domain of Information Technology is the primary reason why there are some reservations about using the term for addressing process modelling and management activities. The reasons for being rather reticent about adapting the terminology are because architecture has a rather technological connotation. Architecting IT systems is about managing the complexity of designed, developed and implemented TECHNICAL systems. The behaviour of such systems is presumed to be predictable. However, SOCIAL systems, which are how SqEME views organizations, differ significantly from technical systems. Social systems have humans and their behaviour and, as a consequence, the phenomenon of unpredictability as a starting point! From that context, at first sight ‘architecting an enterprise’ looks like a self-contradiction.

Having stated this first reaction, it is obvious that, when accepting the phenomenon of unpredictability and human centeredness in the field of management, the use of (implicit) concepts of architecture can be extremely profitable. In fact it is the adoption of these architectural concepts that have made the use of the SqEME approach such a success. These concepts were already there, but were never described as being ‘architectural’.

The IT field is familiar with the concept of ‘chunkizing’: dividing an object of interest into different chunks. In the IT field this is not done by defining closed boundaries around the chunks, but by defining the sockets and connectors in between the different chunks. This concept is the same as was mentioned earlier when describing the starting point of organizations as ‘open and social systems’²⁹: managing the boundary conditions!

TOGAF^{TM30} as an open standard Architecture Framework emphasizes the use of the concept of an Enterprise Continuum to reflect different levels of abstraction in an architecture development process. This same continuum is also addressed in section 3.1 where we mention the various levels of abstraction for managing processes.

Another very interesting concept within TOGAFTM and other Architecture Frameworks is that of ‘reusability’. Through the use of the four windows, in particular the windows focusing upon the Constitution and the Construction of the enterprise, the use of the SqEME approach leads to the description of reusable building blocks as more generally recognizable Key Result Areas, as well as specific resources for executing the detailed activities required to comply with the agreements.

For all of these reasons, the SqEME approach could be described as an Architecture Framework. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that, for example, the Architecture Development Method (ADM) within TOGAFTM, as with other Architecture Frameworks, evidently has its roots in a technical system perspective. This method doesn’t pay much attention to the fact that discussing, describing and learning about the working of the organization as a social system can, as a result of the growing consciousness of the participants, directly lead to changed working methods, without the need to plan and implement the ‘migration’.

²⁹ Emery, F. & Trist, E. (1965). The causal texture of organizational environments

³⁰ The Open group Architecture Framework TOGAFTM

Maybe in further editions, when the thinking about organizations as social systems becomes more widely accepted, the SqEME approach will be publicly described as an architectural approach by changing its identity to something along the lines of, for example: The SqEME Architecture Framework for Process Oriented Organizations.

3 Process Management and the SqEME® Approach

3.1 Process Management, Working ON the Organization

In this book, we join the tradition of Quality Management, of which Juran – amongst others - is the founder. In the SqEME® approach, process management stands for making the organization fit for use. In other words, process management is about the design and continuous improvement of the organization. Process management has to enable people to ‘take a step back’ from the daily hectic state and to understand what is really happening. They then need to share the big picture and come to agreements about cooperation. It is always remarkable to see how often there is no time for things that are considered really important. Every company will, at a certain stage, be confronted with the need to work on quality. Too often this is related to overdue maintenance and emergency measures (i.e. a reorganization). SqEME® Process management emphasizes the fact that working on the quality of the organization, through sharing views and coming to agreements, has to be a structural activity.

Processes in the organization have always been given an important role by the quality tradition. Organizations working with the EFQM Excellence Model will endorse that process management represents the heart of this model: no result without a process. Process management forms a bridge between the so-called enablers and the results. Reciprocally, the results give cause for reconsidering aspects of the organization. In this way, the model works as a ‘Plan Do Check Adapt cycle’. People in the organization are stimulated to continuously work on the improvement of the organization. The application of the EFQM Excellence Model within an enterprise contributes significant to the understanding of process management. Many companies have described their processes. The managers in those companies have become aware that processes often go beyond and above departments and have for that reason assigned process owners. Apart from describing their processes, they also started improving them.

Apart from the models mentioned, a number of standards are of great value to quality management. ISO 9000 for quality, ISO 14000 for environment, safety and health legislation for the employees and sector-standards like HKZ for healthcare. These standards also have the Plan Do Check Adapt cycle as their basis, which makes process management an important provision. Companies working towards certification on the basis of these standards have often taken processes as a starting point and incorporated them in their operational management. Many companies have described and implemented their quality, environmental or safety management systems (either separately or combined) through processes.

A characteristic of quality thinking is the level of abstraction at which process management is approached. In the European study of quality management ‘The European Way to Excellence’ three levels of abstraction have been described in order to understand the working of the organization³¹. These levels of abstraction have been called ‘framing’, ‘alignment’ and ‘deployment’. The level of abstraction in the quality tradition is the ‘alignment’ of the organization. This is the level at which mission, vision and strategy are translated into the way in which the organization has been designed, i.e. the level of abstraction at which one determines how the operation should take place. This level of abstraction is also called working ON the organization. Complementary to this, we find the operational level, the workers in their hectic daily activities. On this level of deployment one works WITH the organization³².

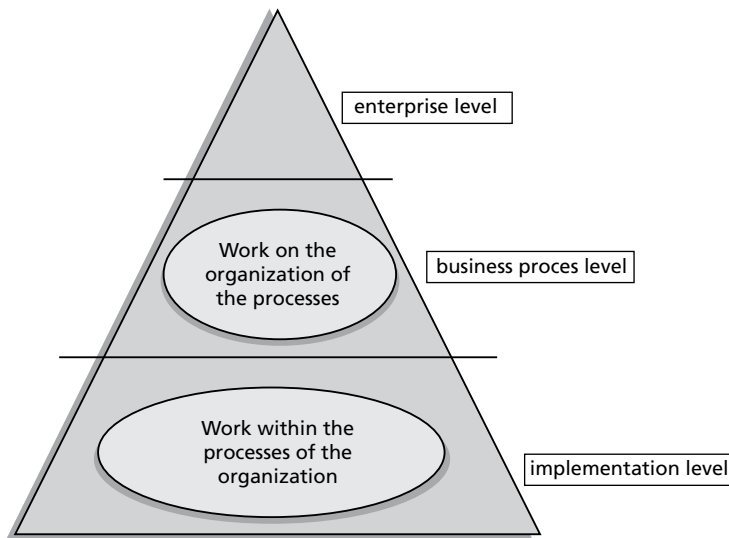


Figure 3.1 The various levels of abstraction for managing processes

In this vision, process management is about working on the quality of the processes of the enterprise. Alongside the perspective of assurance, it includes the perspective of continuous improvement. By placing the alignment of the organization in the light of continuous improvement, this level can also be addressed as ‘maintaining’ the organization.

3.2 Processes, the Verbs of the Organization

When talking to people about their work, it is interesting to observe the words they use. Often, one is inclined to talk about positions or departments. It is better to focus their verbs. ‘we conquer crime’, ‘we produce semi-manufactured articles’, ‘we organize day-trips’, ‘we repair cars’. In an abstract form, processes can be regarded as the verbs of the organization. In the example

³¹ Hardjono, Ten Have and Ten Have (1996), The European Way to Excellence

³² With thanks to former *INK*-chairman Prof. Drs. Frans Stevens

used in this book of the car company, the processes, for example, are ‘purchasing’, ‘preparing’ and ‘selling’. In order to address this properly, one needs nouns like ‘purchase contracts’, ‘sales contracts’, ‘maintenance reports’, completed where necessary with ‘suppliers lists’ and ‘market information’. Commonly used verbs, combined with the common nouns, yield a ‘pattern’ of working. This pattern is the object of interest in redesigning the organization. The pattern of working provides a view of the essence of the organization. Trading cars on basis of a specific client’s request will be organized differently to bulk trade. In patterns like this, the nouns are of great significance. Nouns represent the results in the organization and, as a consequence, they form the basis of the messaging, the chemistry of the enterprise. In other words, at this level of abstraction, information is seen as a representation of the result achieved. Messages are about a concept an ‘event’ or a new situation.

The ‘work order’ in the car company [garage, motor shop] represents the result of the agreement with the client and the ‘repair report’ relates to the repaired car.

To view processes at this level of abstraction has the great advantage that they can be discussed as if they form the building blocks of the enterprise. Clusters of verbs and nouns are the essentials to express the way in which professionals provide results on the basis of their craftsmanship, good communication and useful resources. Because the building blocks do not describe any aspects of implementation, they should be recognizable for people from different organizations.

The understanding of processes from this level of abstraction becomes exchangeable, so other departments or related organizations can learn from each other’s way of working, or they can be connected to improve their mutual cooperation or the wider supply chain cooperation. If processes are viewed as the building blocks that provide results in response to specific client needs, then the level of abstraction can provide the capability to see the enterprise in its entirety and provide the opportunity to identify improvements where the quality of the operation can really be influenced.

3.3 Describing Processes

As soon as the processes in organizations are discussed, a question frequently (if not always) asked is: ‘up to which level of detail do you work out processes and do you also need to work out all exceptions?’. The SqEME® method has a clear rule for working out this process architecture. SqEME® Process Management states that this question should be lifted up to the level of abstraction where it belongs: that is designing, engineering and maintaining the organization. Process architecture is all about working on processes, in which the processes are regarded as the building blocks of the enterprise. Process management is the ‘art of abstracting’. The initial condition for process management is that everyone in the organization is able to think in terms of processes. An organization that wants to control their operational management (their processes) and wants to improve them continuously, will first have to know what the processes are, how they work together and how they influence each other. We call this the process architecture. Whatever the reason for working on the quality of the organization might be (as described above), the starting point will always be the description of this process architecture.

Key to describing processes is understanding the desirable operating procedure. Often one looks deeper and writes down someone's skills. We call this the 'white box' approach. Looking through the Correspondence window, one focuses on the performance. The building block is 'forced open' and made transferable. Often this happens by means of process descriptions.

A service organization had a problem concerning the quality of the work performed. As a solution they sent all twelve engineers 'to the moors' (Dutch expression for outdoor teambuilding) to once and for all agree the standard operating procedures. The engineers came back to work enthusiastic, carrying a pile of paper. All procedures were worked out, duplicated, plasticized and added to the gear in their service vehicles. What became apparent after a while? The quality of work had improved significantly, but a glance at the interior of the vans proved that the documents had either been lost already, or they were retrieved from some corner in their original state. After an evaluation, the company concluded that the value of the session at the moors was mainly to be found in the exchange of knowledge between the engineers and not in the paperwork. Now, they annually organize a similar session, and they no longer use the term 'standard operating procedures', but instead use 'good practice'.

Process management according to the 'white box' approach is about knowing the activities and the risks in detail and, after that, providing the necessary means to support the professional executing the work. The 'white box' approach assumes processes are predictable (or that they are only slightly uncertain) so it becomes possible to map the progress of the processes. The illustration above shows that everyone working on process descriptions in principle learns from doing this. This also implies that organizations that delegate the writing down of processes to their quality department, or outsource them, do not profit from the learning experience. The 'appearances' of the 'white box' approach are tuned to practice on the work floor; job descriptions, posters, stickers, screens, plasticized cards, etc. Process descriptions are, so to speak, in the example of the car company, what the mechanic takes with him under the car to assist him in doing his job. SqEME® Process Management states that the 'white box' approach has a maximum added value if the operations are critical. E.g. when legislation sets preconditions for the type of work, or when it concerns high-risk activities or work related to specific incidents. With the exception of these jobs, processes do not have to be written down into detail. The correct execution of the job does not occur spontaneously but requires a lot of experience, background knowledge and it asks for the mutual transfer of knowledge between employees. Apart from resources, training and education are essential aids.

Another perspective on the describing of processes is the so-called 'black box' approach. The following quote by De Bono about the potato peeling machine is helpful in illustrating the perception of a process as a black box of the organization:

'When young children are being asked to invent a potato peeling machine, they draw a long tube through which the potatoes fall into a box, with the simple note: 'In here the potatoes get peeled'.

Another tube releases the peeled potatoes. There is nothing mysterious about this box, as De Bono says: 'It just performs the potato peeling function'³⁴. Describing processes from this perspective is about 'designing' operational process in response to the required cooperation. The description signifies that there is a long way to go in terms of specifying the content of the work,

³⁴ De Bono (1969), *The Mechanism of Mind*, p.17.

and that the focus is more on the interconnection of the processes and at the way professionals cooperate. Process descriptions coming from a 'black box' approach should be seen as a means to record the agreements about this cooperation. In the example of De Bono, the agreements were about the tubes instead of agreements about the content of the box. The power of process descriptions for the design and development of processes following the 'black box' approach is in an unambiguous framework of terms, the language for the description of the management model in recognizable verbs and nouns. In order to arrive at agreements about cooperation it is necessary for these professionals to really share the same descriptions when it concerns working on the quality of the organization. The 'black box' approach gives elbow room for 'creativity' and 'flexibility', but also the responsibility to provide the right amount of space to these professionals. This means that the professional should be given the right authority to do his job and be supplied with the appropriate means to do so.

In daily practice, these 'white box' and 'black box' approaches cannot work without each other. For any organization that wants to invest in their processes, the application of both approaches has to be balanced for each building block, rather than choosing one instead of the other. The key is to balance their respective use, rather than a choice of one against the other. Does one want to have emphasis on the content of the work, the craftsmanship, or merely on the interconnection of the professionals, on improving the level of cooperation?. The latter is also referred to as the horizontal organization. Above all it is true that the organization is a collection of cooperating professionals. These professionals provide results via a shared ambition, on the basis of their craftsmanship, good communication and practical means. Applying both approaches simultaneously is the natural tension one has to deal with. Managing processes conceals the challenge of finding the right balance between 'ordering' professionals and workers self-control³⁵.

3.4 Working on the Development of the Organization

When working on the quality of processes, the starting point is the organization as a 'social system'. The operation either stands or falls with the correct approach to the interplay of the -professionally mature- employees. It requires the right balance between structure, corporate culture and management style.

Developing the organization requires investment in these three pillars. The structure – the formal agreements that are the basis for cooperation, the corporate culture – the unwritten rules of the game as they have grown or 'bedded in' over time, and the management style - the manner in which the enterprise is governed and the behaviour of its leaders; these three are the points of attention when improving the organization as a whole³⁶.

In the first place, the SqEME® method for designing the management model requires attention for the (horizontal) structure of the organization. This means actively walking along the four windows that are covered in the following chapters. In essence, this is an activity of 'ordering'. The

³⁵ Juran (1951), Juran's Quality Control Handbook

³⁶ Peter Scott-Morgan (1994), The Unwritten Rules of the Game

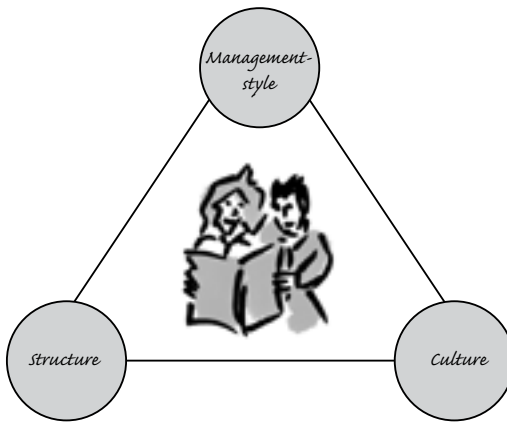


Figure 3.2 The organization as a social system and the three pillars for organizational development

paradigm in this is that working on the structure of the processes, from a social system perspective, ultimately influences the management style and the corporate culture of the organization. This requires a thorough investigation and coaching when looking through the four windows. Why do we see what we see, what are the underlying beliefs, how do we associate with each other on these matters? We have to keep an eye on the balance between the three pillars.

3.5 Architectural Approach: Language and Signs

Applying the SqEME® method makes it easier to communicate the design of the organization. On the basis of strict conventions the essence of the social system is structured. In a technical sense, the SqEME® method can be compared to the method used by an architect who is preparing a design for the radical rebuilding of a house. He draws rooms and floors, sketches the paths between them, indicates building materials, incorporates facilities like electricity and piping for water, etc. With a limited number of symbols and models he can unambiguously lay down the design. Technically, the SqEME® method is just a set of symbols with which to model the business architecture. But beware: adopting this view means that process management can easily be seen as a technical exercise, in which the processes are just written down and then dictated.

Process management using the SqEME® method is something that concerns all people in the organization. The SqEME® method assumes that working on the quality of the organization in principle is a task of every employee. Everyone is, as it were, the architect of the organization, or can be so. So the techniques of describing will not just be used by one architect, but they are a means to work together on the processes of the organization. In this chapter, we have already become acquainted with the level of abstraction of working on the organization. Who the workers on the organization are completely depends on the way the organization has been designed and the perspective one has of organizing. The old perspective is that working on the organization is a task laid down with management. Managers are the people who have the view over the organization as a whole, so they can control the functioning of the organization. Many organizations are still governed in this way. A number of specific tasks are allocated to staff like the quality manager, the controller, or in some organizations with the ICT department.

However, the SqEME® approach starts from the principle that, just like in leadership, these tasks can be claimed by anyone in the organization. Process management is not necessarily linked to the vertical hierarchical structure of the organization. It is primarily to be found in the value system and the passion of the people.

Implicitly, these ‘process roles’ are always present in organizations. They appear either formally or informally. The role can be picked up by process owners or by structures of consultation. Even a ‘role’ like quality manager can, in some cases, be justified. In this case, line management delegates the authority to others in the organization when it is concerned with the working on the organization.

In order to do this properly, one needs a common ‘language’. In its methodology, SqEME® Process Management provides the organization with such a language and a set of signs (conventions) with which to define the descriptions and the agreements. In this way, process management becomes a tool for everyone in the organization, facilitating cooperation in order to realize continuous improvement. The organization puts the professional at the centre.

3.6 Conventions for Language and Signs

When applied to process management, the SqEME® method offers four windows in which models can be distinguished for describing the processes. With these descriptions (images of the complex reality), one wants to answer a set of questions, defined beforehand, in an unambiguous way to the user. A model is a complete, concise and consistent description of an object of interest which is designed for a particular reason. That reason, called the ‘purpose’ of the model, by definition answers a set of questions. In this way, the holistic model presents the opportunity to various target groups in the organizations. Such groups are offered the opportunity to approach the organization from different levels of abstraction by means of the holistic model. The SqEME® method distinguishes eight models for the design and maintenance of the process architecture of an organization. It is important that these models are consistent with each other. In addition to the SqEME® models, other models can also be used, or variations can be made to the SqEME® models, as long as the paradigm of consistency is not violated and the correct target group identify themselves with the models.

Process management according to the Constitution window stands for the overview. It is about sharing views between people in the enterprise on what the enterprise stands for and how it is built up. Acquiring a common understanding of the ‘big picture’. How are mission and vision translated in the Key Result Areas of the enterprise? How are these building blocks interconnected? What outcomes do these building blocks have, represented through the information supply between professionals? These essential structures cross right through the well known organizational structure, the departments detailed in the organization scheme.

The schema's that are used for showing the views through the Constitution window are:

- *The Enterprise Architecture*: a suprastructure of the organization, answering the questions relating to what the main Key Result Areas of the organization are. Do these building blocks, which are the essential verbs of the enterprise, match the mission, vision and strategy of the enterprise?

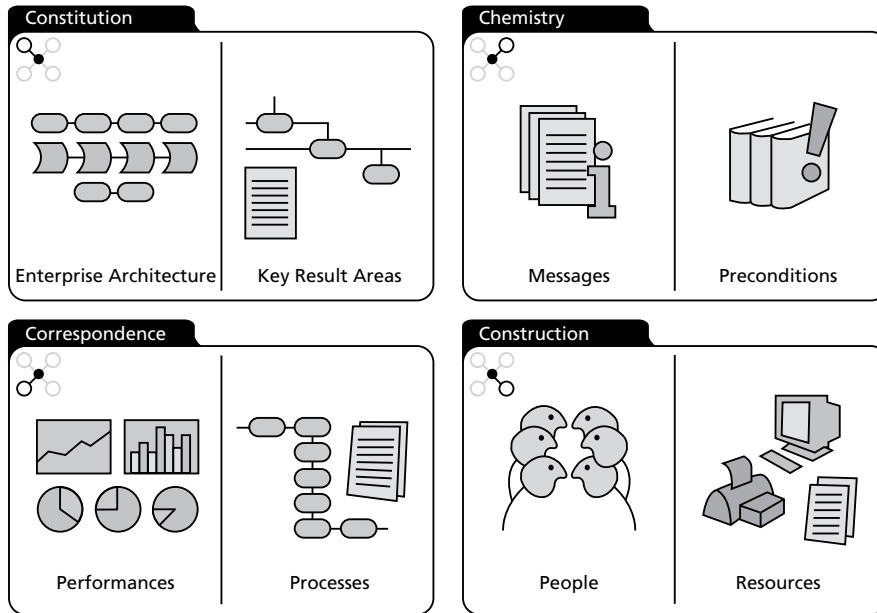


Figure 3.3 The set of symbols of the SqEME® method

- *The Key Result Areas:* Activity (Interaction) Diagrams that answer the questions on what the relationships are between the different Key Result Areas, together with the constituent activities and messages of the enterprise.

Process management looking through the Chemistry window is about the collaboration of people and their commitments, and about connecting their actions. It is about the company as a community of professionals. It can be summarised as *coherence* and *interplay*. In this model, the starting point is the messaging within the organization. The agreements about the quality of the messages can be characterized as the minimal ‘briefings’ that professionals in the organization require in order to fulfil their tasks. What information do I need in order to do my work properly? It is about the interaction between workers, their ‘speech acts’³⁷. What information that others are dependent upon, within or outside the organization, do I need to communicate? A message is seen as the representation of a certain (intermediate) result. By laying down agreements about these messages, the collaboration can be designed. In this, information is specifically a social ‘thing’. People in the company have to be willing to share data. And, last but not least, attention should be paid to the meaning of this data; the semantic interoperability, the quality of the communication between the transmitter and the receiver. It would be easier if an enterprise was like ‘one semantic community’, but in practice that’s never the case. Much effort is needed to frame a universal and unambiguous meaning of data. This is needed to improve the collaboration between professionals who may have very different backgrounds, for example because of different levels of education.

³⁷ John Langshaw Austin: How to Do Things With Words. Cambridge (Mass.) 1962 - Paperback: Harvard University Press, 2nd edition, 2005, ISBN 0-674-41152-8.

What data do I need to distribute to other people in or outside the enterprise that they are dependent upon? Do they extract the right meaning from that data? The quality of the enterprise depends on the quality of the communication between the professionals. Investing in this aspect of the enterprise is, in open system terms, called ‘Managing the boundary conditions’.

The models to show the chemistry between processes are:

- *The message specifications*: mini-contracts between professionals about the sharing of information, answering the question of how collaboration can be made verifiable.
- *Preconditions*: an analysis matrix answering the question of whether the organization is ‘compliant’, offering a grasp of the issue that relates to acquiring a ‘license to operate’.

Process management according to the Construction window is about deployment. Process management covers the implementation of processes via the assignment of tasks, distribution of responsibilities and authority, and definition, development and implementation of the resources (templates, ICT, work orders, training) that are deemed necessary for professionals to be able to perform their tasks properly. The models used for Construction are:

- *People*: matrices specifying the complete range of tasks, responsibilities and authorities in the organization answering the question of who does what.
- *Resources*: matrices that give an insight into the availability of resources that are provided to employees in order to assist them in performing their tasks.

Process management according to Correspondence stands for monitoring the process: be it the desktop of the professional or the dashboard of the business manager. This viewing angle provides the detailed understanding of the business. This can be done in the form of short process charts in which the activities with their input and output are put in successive order. The goal of this is to control and to assure operational management. The models used for Correspondence are:

- *Process flowcharts*: flow charts for employees and process owners, answering the questions about which successive activities should be performed at which moment.
- *Scorecards*: the instruments that answer the questions about how the desired situation corresponds with reality and if objectives are met by performance indicators.

