

“A Retrospective Look at Process Change With An Eye to the Future,” *Business Process Management Journal* , (Invited Viewpoint), Vol. 9(2), 2-10.

Find a combination of words like business, process, innovation, redesign, and re-engineering, and you would probably be referring to the phenomena that took corporations by storm in the 1990s. While much has changed since the initial wave of these initiatives, they left an indelible mark on business thinking, by bringing process concepts to the forefront of managerial interventions to cut costs, enhance service, and improve performance. Much of the hype over re-engineering was exactly that, a fad that resonated with firms feeling the tight economy, pressured to reduce costs, and wanting to see better returns on their major information technology (IT) investments. Consultants repackaged old methodologies and printed glossy brochures and charged thousands for their "proprietary" solutions to "fundamental" business problems. So in some way, the ideas of Hammer, Champy, Davenport, among others came at the right time, when there was a hunger for such solutions. However, despite the failure of a large number of initial process change projects, the concepts and ideas have survived. From their beginnings in radical IT-driven re-engineering of the late 1980s, to holistic change management efforts of the mid-1990s, to business process-based electronic commerce and ERP of the late 1990s into the 2000s, business process change has held the spotlight. So what are the sustainable ideas of this phenomenon – that are endearing enough to stand the test of time? What are the lessons learned from failure that we can imbibe into the next generations of process initiatives? Where are the major challenges – the points of inflexion that could take us down new paths for business conduct and organization?