ABBYY

What Is Process Mining, and Why Do You Need It?

5 key reasons

In today's changing business environment, continous process improvement is a must. To remain profitable and competitive, there's simply no room for inefficiencies. That's where process mining comes in. Process mining is an approach to process improvement that's helping today's leaders make in-the-moment decisions based on fact rather than emotions. Use this guide to help you understand how process mining works, how it benefits businesses, and how to implement it successfully.

What is process mining?

Process mining first appeared as a more advanced approach to business process management (BPM) about ten years ago with the publication of the Process Mining Manifesto by Professor Wil van der Aalst at the Technical University of Eindhoven. It is an approach to process improvement that's driven by advanced data analytics. Relying heavily on automation, it uses process event data to discover and map process operations and their possible variations, or check existing processes for conformity with pre-defined business policies, standards, and models. These analytics help decision-makers uncover the root causes of any inefficiencies in their business processes to reveal opportunities for improvement. In other words, process mining helps businesses keep track of what they're doing best and reveal where they could do better.

How can process mining benefit companies?

Process mining helps business decision-makers unlock the potential value in the increasingly vast amounts of data their organizations generate. It's also a critical enabler of robotic process automation (RPA) in a wide range of environments, such as logistics and manufacturing.

The overarching benefit of process mining is that it gives decision-makers more control over their businesses in times when resiliency is essential to growth and survival. It's more necessary than ever to keep processes under control, operate quickly and efficiently, and prepare for the many unknown challenges of the future.

Here are five key reasons that businesses invest in process mining:

1

To gain objective visibility into their operations

Most managers feel they have quite a good idea of what goes on in their organizations. They tend to have their key operations documented so that everyone on the team knows what to do. But often, when the people involved in these operations report on the process, there are deviations. Process mining delves beneath this surface-level knowledge and reporting to provide full visibility into the inner workings of the business.

2

To make decisions based on facts, not emotions

While process managers tend to be rational in their decision-making, humans are all prone to acting on emotions to some degree. This can cause problems when making important decisions regarding critical changes in the organization. Process mining gives decision-makers the facts and figures to back up their decisions by serving as an irrefutable source of truth.

3

To derive maximum value from data

With businesses doubling the amount of data they generate every two years, process mining has become a practical necessity for making sense of it all. In the age of big data, automated tools are essential for parsing increasingly large data sets and turning them into insights that make sense to people. Process mining bridges the gaps between different data sources and presents them in a single, intuitive manner.

4 To drive a culture of continuous improvement

The old approach to doing business, whereby significant changes often took years to implement, is no longer relevant in today's market. Creating a culture of continuous monitoring, learning, and improvement, whereby changes are applied incrementally as they're needed, helps businesses adapt to constant shifts in demand. You can also measure the effectiveness of these changes and learn what makes your business more successful.

5 To improve customer experiences

Optimizing business processes leads to better customer experiences. For example, optimizing supply chain logistics translates into shorter lead times, resolves bottlenecks, and harmonizes interdependent processes. In healthcare, it can improve patient experiences by prioritizing consultations. In finance, it helps automate approvals of things like loan applications. Virtually every routine process in any business, in any industry, can benefit from process mining.

How to implement process mining successfully

Process mining happens over three key areas. Firstly, the platform should automate business process discovery. Secondly, it should check conformity with business policies and models. Finally, it should provide insights into how you can enhance your processes and drive your business forward.

1   The starting point for any process mining solution is event logs. These are digital footprints of processes such as transactions and other activities that form steps in a particular procedure. Event logs should include additional information, such as the individual or device carrying out an action, a timestamp of that event, and any other important elements, such as the size of an order.

2   Before you can implement process mining, you first need to define your business processes. If they aren't fully digitized already, you should also digitize them, since this will allow you to maintain a complete data trail of every event that occurs in your organization.

3   To achieve the best results, you should simplify and consolidate your data environment. You need to know where your data lives before preparing it for connection and extraction to your process mining platform. Depending on your current situation, this is likely to be the most time-consuming step of all, but the long-term benefits of increased resilience and reduced risk cannot be underestimated.

You can apply process mining to a wide range of situations:

- ⊘ In sales, you can apply process mining to lead-to-order and order-to-cash functions to find opportunities for reducing cycle times and increasing conversion rates.

- ⊘ In finance and supply chain management, you can identify manual steps to automate and reduce maverick spend by identifying misalignments with business policy.

- ⊘ In logistics, you can reduce warehousing costs by optimizing inventory management and identify the root cause of delays to prevent possible revenue losses.

- ⊘ In manufacturing, you can reduce cycle times to optimize supply chains and improve client experiences, as well as reduce the amount of rework required.

ABBYY Process Intelligence

ABBYY's Process Intelligence platform empowers businesses to use the information contained within their systems to create a visual model of their processes, analyze them in real time to identify bottlenecks, and predict future outcomes to facilitate decision-making.

With access to real-time data about exactly how processes are working and the content that fuels them, ABBYY enables you to gain end-to-end visibility into processes where it matters most: customer experience, competitive advantage, and compliance.

Learn more.