

2009

Mapping & Modelling Tools – Survey Report



Report Sponsored By



Mark

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Executive Summary

It is now 20 years since the first MS Windows based modelling tools came to market. Many thousands of licences of modelling tools have been sold since then. They are becoming pervasive in software development and were accepted long ago in the Data Modelling community. The market segment where they would appear to have struggled to get real traction appears to be the area of Process Modelling. By Process Modelling, in this context we mean as used by the business and process analysts who work to improve processes, rather than by IT staff simply for system design and implementation. (This latter group have been fairly well served by CASE tools for some years).

The survey was conceived and commissioned in order to try and ascertain what the current state of the mapping and modelling market is, as relates to process. It was also designed to establish whether there are different perceptions among different groups. In order to better understand the impressions of users, we also looked at what tool functionality they use and value and also what methods and approaches they are using to undertake their process improvement initiatives.

The report is intended for anyone involved in, or considering, process modelling and provides some interesting insight as to what is working and what is not. There is also added commentary to many of the findings in order to provide further clarification, or to make suggestions to improve the effectiveness of one's mapping, modelling or marketing (depending on the perspective of the reader).

About the Author

Mark McGregor has been involved in the process industry for the past 15 years. During that time he has worked as an employee and consultant with many of the leading players in the modelling market. Although his focus today is on business and process improvement, in the past he has been involved many of the other recognised modelling disciplines e.g. Data Modelling and Software Development Modelling. He is credited with the creation of what is today called “Enterprise Modelling”.

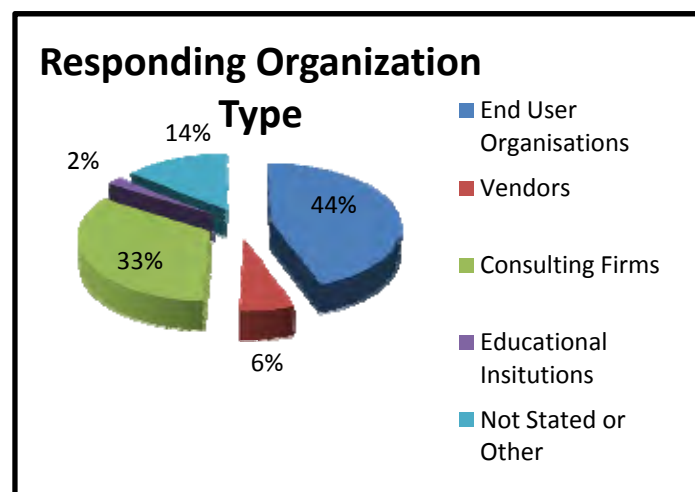
While still heavily involved with modelling software, Mark is better known for his more general writings and teachings around process improvement and business transformation; it was through this work that he created the concept of “Next Practice” – A fresh way of looking and conducting business that leads people and businesses to those “Aha!” moments that can create breakthrough success. He is also one of the creators of the 8 Omega Framework – a framework for change.

Mark’s passion is people and helping them to achieve their dreams through living life to their full potential. In the end he suggests that business, life or spirituality it is all about change and understanding the process of change.

About The Respondents

In total there were around 600 respondents. A Cleansing of incomplete data brought the total down to 522, which makes this probably the most comprehensive survey ever undertaken into the use of Modelling Tools and user opinion.

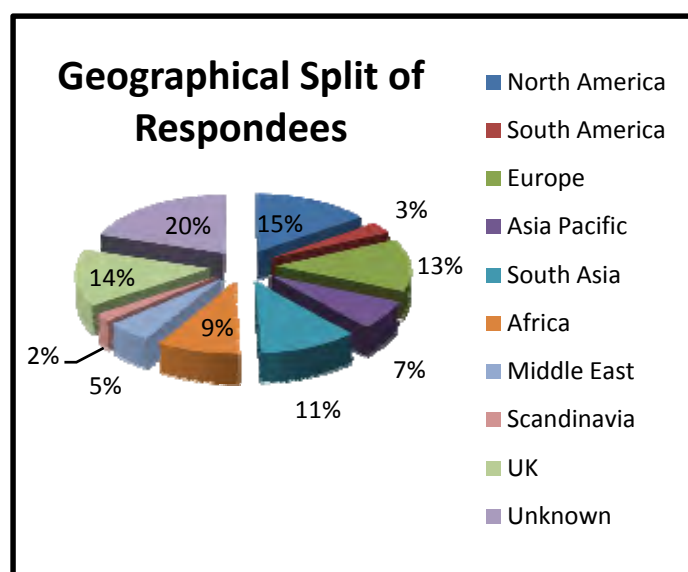
The respondents were sourced primarily from the marketing list of Mark McGregor and supplemented by people responding to web links in the Process Performance Blog and via the Modern Analysts web site. Respondents were also asked to share the survey link with friends and colleagues. Although the links were shared, there is no disproportionate number of responses from any one organisation and in fact the diversity of organisations was extremely pleasing.



As can be seen from the graph below, the majority of respondents represented end user organisations. A significant number of responses also came from consulting firms. It should be noted that, in this context, consulting firms also included BPO, Outsourcing, and VARS, as well as traditional consulting and service companies. The vendor responses came mainly from vendors of BPA, BPM and BPMS solutions. Among the vendors, the

majority of responses came from people working in marketing or product support functions, with a few working in a consulting capacity within their organizations.

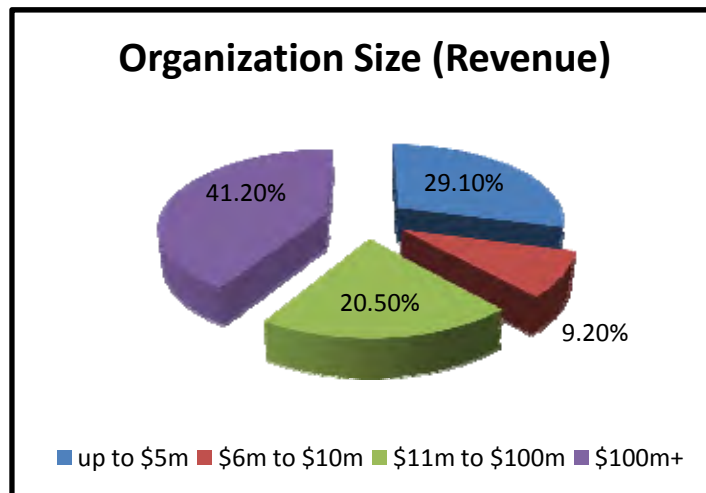
Another pleasing aspect of the survey was the diversity of countries from which responses were drawn. As expected, the largest number of responses was drawn from the UK and USA, but the significance of responses from Africa and South Asia must not be ignored. These two markets represent significant potential for the sale of modelling tools, with Africa increasingly making use of such technology and India still trying to find ways to either avoid using tools, or at least avoiding investing



in them, or trying to better understand how they can and will improve productivity.

Organisational Information

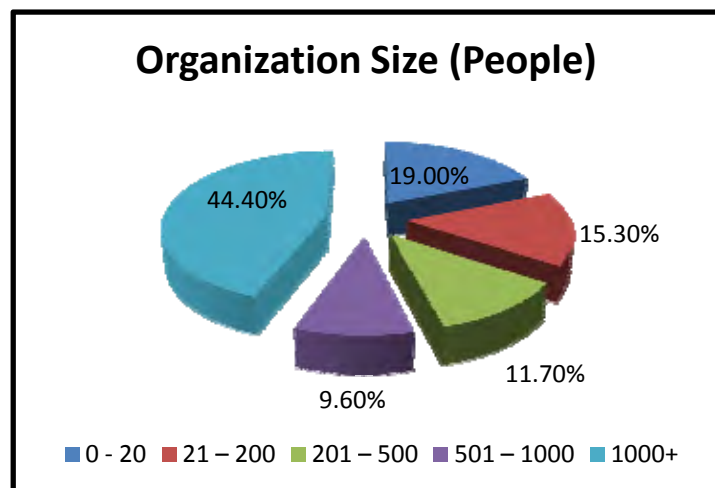
In order to provide some perspective on the results that follow in the survey, we started by asking people a couple of questions regarding their organisation. As can be seen in the graph below, the



range of revenues of organisations was quite nicely spread, with the majority of respondents coming from large scale operations. The fact that only 29% of responses came from firms with less than \$5m of revenue means we can be pretty sure that the data collected is not skewed by the thoughts and opinions of too many one person and small consulting firms. It is also perhaps symptomatic of the diverse database from which

responses were requested. The variance in organisational size is quite important when considering what types of tool are used and the features that are important in a tool. There is always a risk when asking questions that the answers will only be applicable to large or small firms, as opposed to addressing the needs of the broader community.

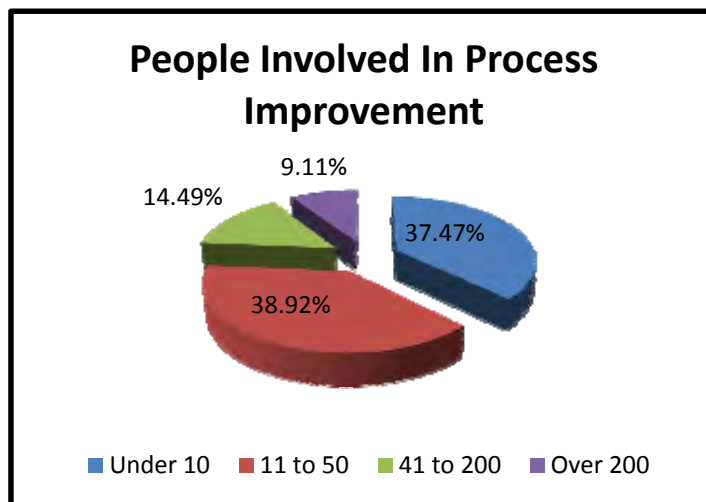
The adjacent graph shows that over 50% of responses were obtained from organisations with more than 500 employees, 44% being from firms with over 1,000 employees. Although large firms are of course important, what is perhaps more important for the survey to confer meaning, is that once again we have a diverse mix of responses. This will be particularly useful when looking at questions around what types of tool are used and specific questions regarding multi-user support and repository functionality.



So as demonstrated by the charts used so far, based on the Geography, Class of Organisation, Revenue Size and Employee Size the survey represents a good cross section of the market being studied. As will be seen later, it also represents a good mix of representatives of users from many different vendors, something which may have been lacking in previous attempts to study the use of modelling tools in the market.

I would also like to make special mention of the vendors who have answered the survey. Through studying their specific answers it is good to see that, for the most part, they too have answered the questions pragmatically and not simply treated the survey as an opportunity to suggest that theirs is the only game in town, or that their tools deliver great value while other peoples suck – uou know who you are, so thank you!

The final piece in the jigsaw regarding organisational information is the number of people directly involved with process improvement initiatives within the organisation. This caused problems, as a

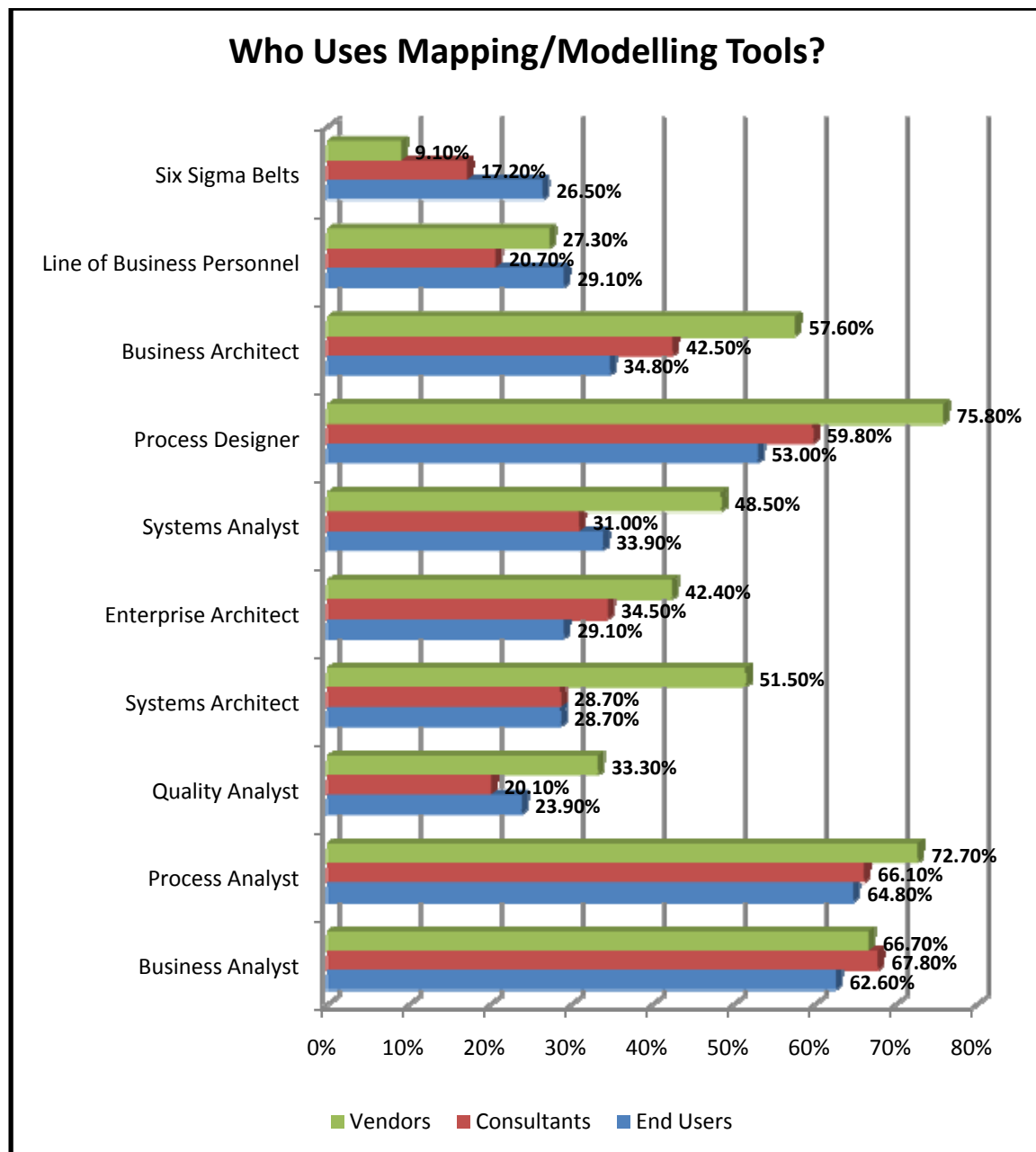


number of people simply stated, “All” or “Everybody”, which of course is commendable, but in reality very unlikely in many organisations. Yes, of course many strive to achieve this and that would be great. However, I wonder of those that responded in this way, and many were large organisations, how many of the “All” had actually been trained in process improvement techniques and were provided with the tools and time to

actually undertake process improvement project? Probably more likely would be that large numbers of people had been affected by, or been a part of a team that had its work changed or affected by, process change projects of some description. There may well be some exceptions to this rule, but based on the experience of the last 12 years around the world, there are less than a handful of firms where truly everybody is involved in actively improving processes.

Who Uses Mapping & Modelling Tools?

Read the marketing literature of any of the mainstream (or even non-mainstream) tool vendors and you are bound to read about how their product is “useable by business users”. Whilst the idea sounds great in concept, rarely do we see it happening in practice. So the purpose of this question was to find out whether the tools are actually crossing the chasm into non-specialist users.



As can be seen from the responses above, the range of people using such tools is very varied. This in itself highlights the challenge for vendors - how can you provide a tool that addresses the specific needs of each of these groups of people, while not overloading them with functions and complexity they don't need?

It is nice to see that the majority of users do fall into the process and business analysis roles, although what we cannot tell is whether these are IT people or business people. What we can see

however, is that the number of line of business people using tools is quite high, at over 20%. Looking further into the data we can see though, that such users are in the main using mapping rather than modelling tools. In fact if we look deeper we can see that the usage for Business Analysts, Process Analysts, Quality Analysts and Line of Business users all drops dramatically when the question is simply who uses modelling tools. It would seem that we have still to see enough modelling tools in the market that can deliver their power with the simplicity of use of a mapping tool.

By way of balance for the vendors, there is also the fact that many businesses have still to make modelling a reality. This may be because of a lack of understanding of the business benefits of modelling, an unwillingness of management to enforce the discipline required, or simply laziness on the part of people in the business. We say laziness, because to spend a great deal of time creating maps only to have them either languishing on PCs or on desks seems a dereliction of responsibility at some level. In addition, those who simply create isolated maps and don't have them connected are wasting an opportunity and in some cases are actually making the organisation worse instead of better.

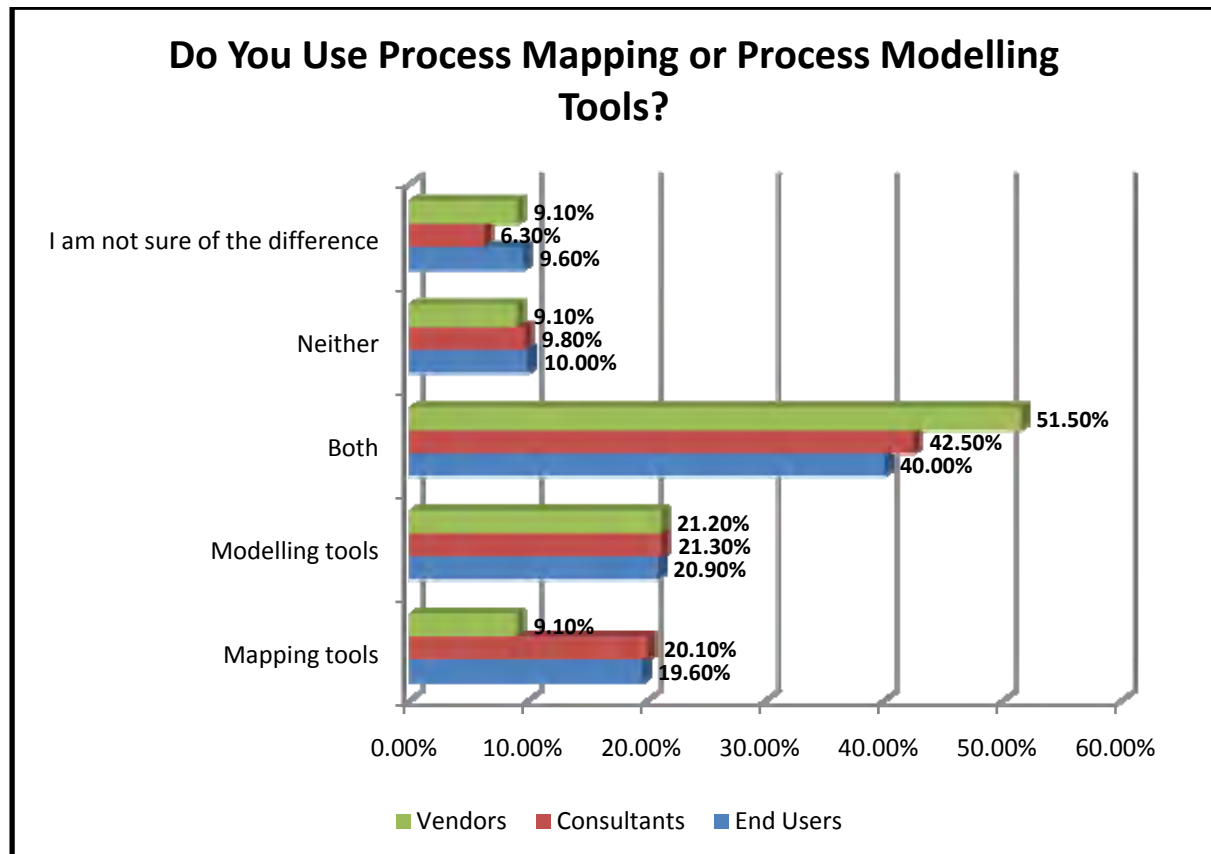
To undertake mapping is of value - it is still the easiest way to create common understanding and to eliminate some levels of waste. Maps also serve to share knowledge and facilitate communications around the business. However, if they are not stored and managed in some joined up way, then they will simply become outdated and inevitably duplication of effort will occur.

Perhaps the saddest reflection from these responses is just how few Six Sigma Belts use tools. Without wishing to be rude, this conjures up the image of a back street garage - you know the one - where the mechanic uses an adjustable wrench to undo all bolts and metal hammers instead of rubber mallets. The mechanic knows how to fix things, he has been taught, but never seems to have the right tools to do the job.

As an aside, a recent article by Daniel Jones of "Lean Thinking" fame commented on the fact that many people doing Lean also seemed to skip the process mapping step. So perhaps we need to rethink how we train people in approaches like Lean and Six Sigma to ensure that, while numbers and statistics might be useful, there are other things they need to do properly in order to do an even better job. A word of advice to those organisations undertaking Lean and Six Sigma; in addition to training your people with the skills to do the job, you also have to provide them with the right tools. These approaches are not simply about taking cost out without thought, they are fundamentally analysis based and the easiest way to understand something is with a picture or map.

Which Do You Use - Mapping or Modelling Tools?

The aim here was to understand what types of tools people were using. Very often there is a lot of confusion between mapping and modelling. There are many people who think they are doing modelling, when in fact they can only be mapping, as they only have a mapping tool. Conversely, there are also large numbers who have invested heavily in a modelling tool, only for users to simply use it for mapping.



As can be seen from the graph above, 40% of respondents are using both mapping and modelling a tool, which raises a number of questions around how much reuse they are getting of the work they produce, and how they are linking the two types of outputs together. One suspects that in reality there are different camps within the organisations using different tools; a common occurrence still.

It is also pleasing to see that almost 10% of people were happy to admit that they did not understand the difference between the two. Experience suggests that the actual percentage is probably much larger. This is indicative of a number of things, too many people using the same words to describe different things: poor differentiation on the part of vendors in their marketing, and probably, in some cases, a lack of education and training on the part of users.

Some responders suggested that Modelling had reached saturation; however, based on the figures above, we can see that at most 70% of users were actually using a process modelling tool. Therefore, given that this sample was likely to attract users with some experience in such tools, it is probably safe to say that in the market generally, less than 50% of those who could are actually using such

tools. In my opinion, the actual number is far lower, more likely to be less than 50% of organisations using them and in total less than 30% of Business and Process Analysts (the title of Process Analyst includes those using Lean or Six Sigma).

The two main reasons for this will be seen in later questions, but would appear to be ease of use/complexity and price. One also must not discount lack of training and education, which came out far stronger than might have been expected. The issue would appear to be not so much the availability of training, but the lack of willingness of organisations to invest in providing adequate training for their staff.

The Difference Between Mapping & Modelling

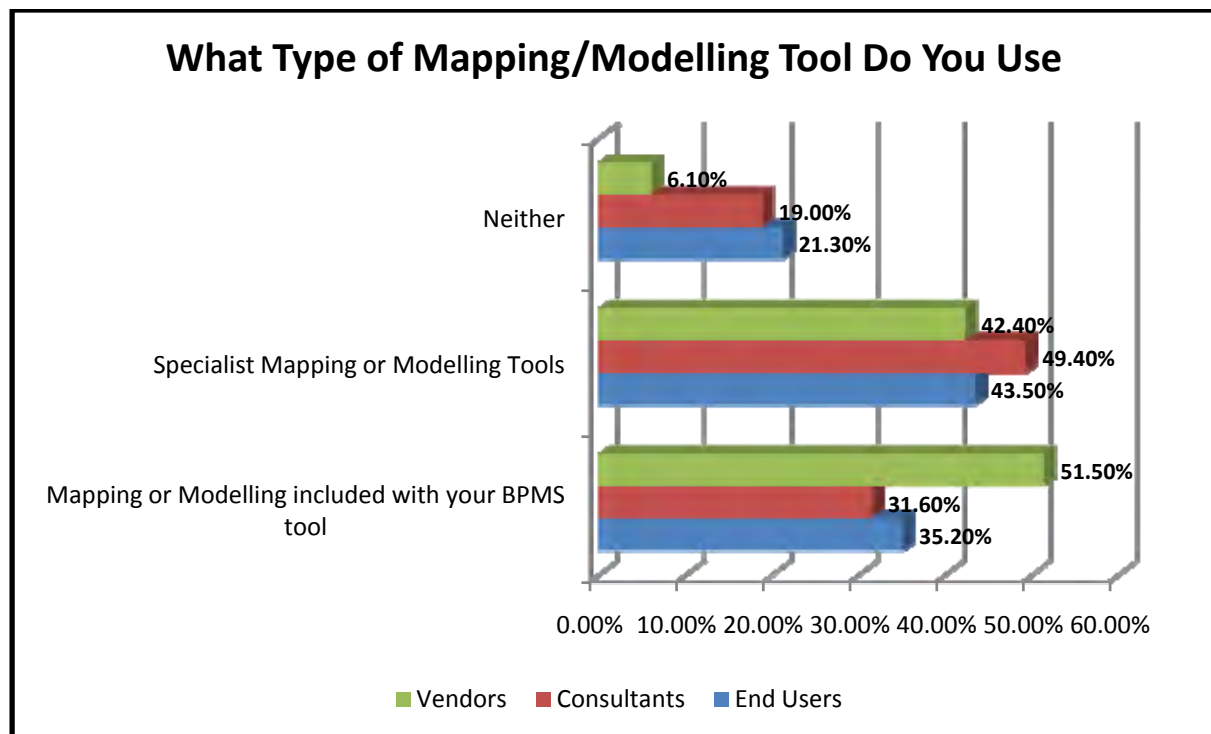
Although the purpose of this report is to analyze the survey data, some discussion on this topic may be of benefit. Take the most familiar map, the road map; we can place many maps together and create a road atlas, which is great for allowing us to see where we are and where we might want to go. We could even trace a route in order to plan a journey. However, if there had been a new road built or an old one dug up, we would at best waste time and at worst be unable to complete our journey. Our maps or atlases are static representations of the world and once drawn, they are difficult to edit and change, especially if a change on one page or map has an impact on another. So in process terms, if we are simply drawing pictures on a page then the chances are that we are creating maps and most maps are just that – pictures. This is confirmed by the fact that Visio and PowerPoint the two most common mapping tools used today.

If, having created a map, you wish to undertake any kind of analysis, be it impact, time, what-if, resource or any other kind, then maps will not be suitable; in order to do this you will need a model. In today's world the best example of rich models we use can be thought of as GPS Navigation systems. With these devices we can assess multiple route options based on a whole host of criteria. Compared to our road atlas, the maps in these devices are seamless. It takes much longer to build a model than a map, as for each shape on the chart one will be required to input additional data about such things as resources, cycle times, wait times, costs etc. The richer the "definition" contained in the chart, then the richer the analysis that can be performed. This is partly why modelling tools are perceived as being harder to use; they are designed to provide a richer analysis experience and to allow the computer to do some of the comparisons and calculations for you. Maps can only really be compared with other maps by using the human eye and a whole host of other spreadsheets and calculators.

Whether to use a map or a model depends on your purpose; it may be that using a simple map as a first stage in knowing what the process is and how to simplify it is a good step. However, if you then want to do more detailed analysis you will need to take the simplified map and enter it into a modelling tool. It is also better in the long term to store maps in a modelling tool, as it makes it significantly more practical to maintain both the map and the interdependencies.

What Type of Mapping/Modelling Tool Do You Use?

This question was designed to assess the impact the Business Process Management Suite vendors are having on the traditional stand-alone Process Mapping/Modelling Market and as we can see, it is becoming quite significant. There are those who are (and have been) predicting that the stand-alone Process Tool will disappear in the light of these larger suite offerings, but it is too early to say that. Also, as we have seen, for many of the people using such tools, automation is not their objective and for these people, stand-alone or best of breed products will always be preferable.

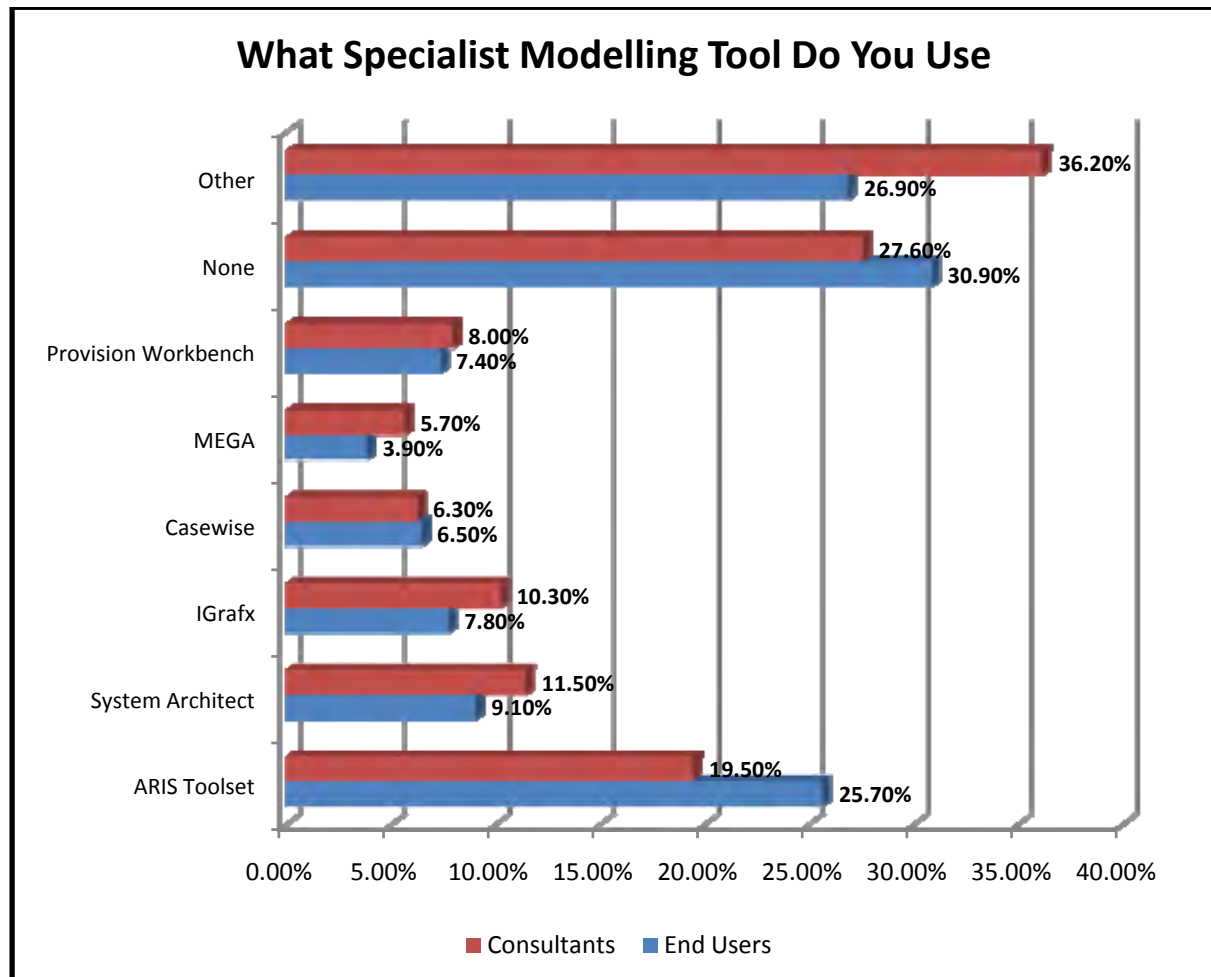


Responses to this question again show that over 20% of users say that they don't use and mapping or modelling tools. This comes back to the issue of education, but this time executive and management education. It is almost impossible to see how organisations can claim to be ISO9000 or Sarbanes Oxley compliant, without a clear and integrated set of process maps and models, Understanding how they achieve this without tools is actually quite hard.

There is quite a difference here between vendors and users, no doubt fuelled by the vendors thinking that users should be using their mapping/modelling tool as opposed to a specialist one. However, many vendors still have a long way to go in this regard. Most are actually still only creating pictures that describe the code they execute and are not able to allow their customers to create rich process maps (which may or may not include the automatable parts of the process.) Conversely, the developers and creators of specialist mapping and modelling tools will really need to step up a gear if they do not wish to see their market eroded further. These vendors will need to do much more work on their value propositions if they are to survive (as I hope they will).

What Specialist Modelling Tool Do You Use?

GartnerGroup, the industry analysts, are famous for their “Magic Quadrants”. In these quadrants they identify the “Leaders”, “Challengers”, “Visionaries” and “Niche Players”. Some years ago we calculated that to be in the “Leaders” quadrant for Business Process Analysis (BPA) tools was worth around \$1million per year in revenue. We decided to see how those who appear in the “Leaders” quadrant of the September 2008 BPA report compare:



It will come as no surprise to many that the majority of people actually don't use any of the so-called leading tools. Remember, when analysts talk about vendors having the largest market share, they mean the largest market share among those who use tools, but as we can see, around 30% of the people here do not use any specialist modelling tools. In some cases this may be due to the fact that they are using analysis tools that come with other software e.g. BPMS.

However what is interesting is that the majority of other percentages are broadly in line with what Gartner suggest as market shares. It is important to note that the Gartner figure is actually a percentage based on revenue market share, whereas we are looking at the number of people using the tools, so we are not comparing like with like. The comparison of what Gartner suggests and what we found is as follows (our percentages in brackets):

ARIS Toolset 15.0% (19.5%) System Architect 8.2% (11.5%) iGrafx 3.5% (10.3%)
Casewise 3.4% (6.3%) MEGA 2.6% (5.7%) Provision Workbench 3.4% (8.0%)

One of the things to note here is the contrast in figures for iGrafx, which we suspect is due to the product having a much lower price point than many of its competitors. Thus, despite Gartner showing iGrafx as having a lower market share, their penetration is actually quite high.

Also not revealed in this table are the results of “others”, where we did ask people to specify what tools they were using. Whilst a number of people suggested that Visio was a specialist modelling tool (we covered this earlier in the mapping vs. modelling), there were also people who suggested that the tool that came with their BPMS suite was a specialist modelling tool. Further analysis of these respondents showed them to mainly be from IT or consulting backgrounds.

A product of note though was Nimbus Partners “Control ES” product. The company are mentioned in the Gartner report as a niche player, but with some interesting ideas. The approach they take to operationalising processes and information is certainly different, but judging by the responses very effective. A tally of the responses suggests that over 6% of respondents were using the product. This suggests that they are at least equal, if not ahead of MEGA and Casewise in terms of usage.

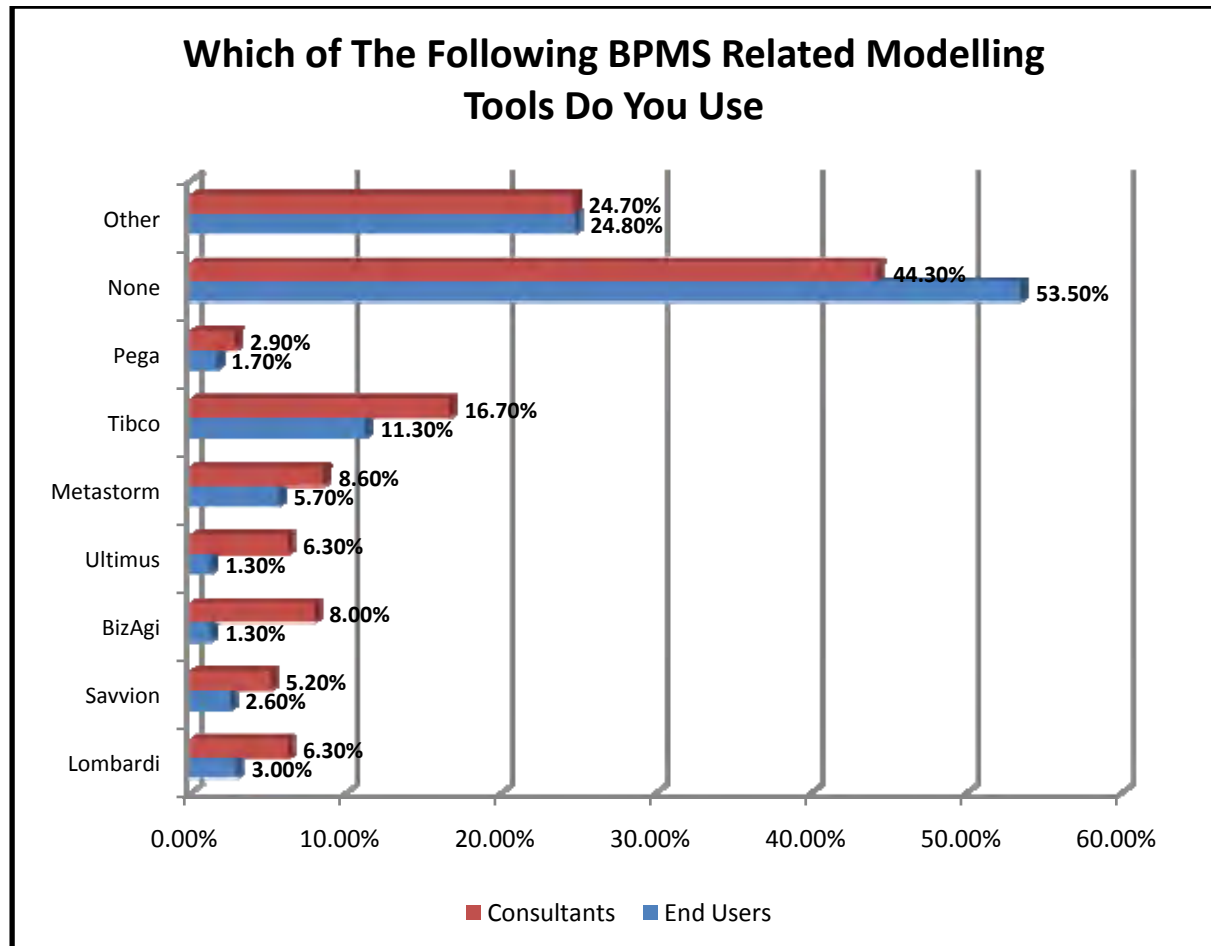
In terms of additional products, there were many mentioned, but none had enough responses to suggest they were seriously registering on the radar. In some ways this serves to illustrate how ready the market is to accept a large number of diverse tools. Alternatively it also shows how fragmented the market still is. One other small surprise was the number of people using software development and data modelling toolkits for their process analysis and design.

These figures certainly serve to show that whilst all the noise is made about BPMN, the majority of people using tools are certainly not focussed on buying BPMN tools. When these are added to the number of people not using modelling tools at all, we start to realise that in reality only a very small percentage of people are actually using BPMN. This disparity between ‘noise’ and usage is easily understood when one considers that most of the noise is within the technical community, who themselves are only a minority of the people we employ in our businesses. They are, however, a vocal group who make a lot of use of the internet to communicate and share their comments and views.

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Which BPMS Related Modelling Tools Do You Use?

From articles and press releases one might be excused for thinking that the market for modelling tools is dead and that modelling tools are now just part of the wider Business Process Management System (BPMS) market. The purpose of this question was to find out whether these BPMS systems are making deep penetration into the market.

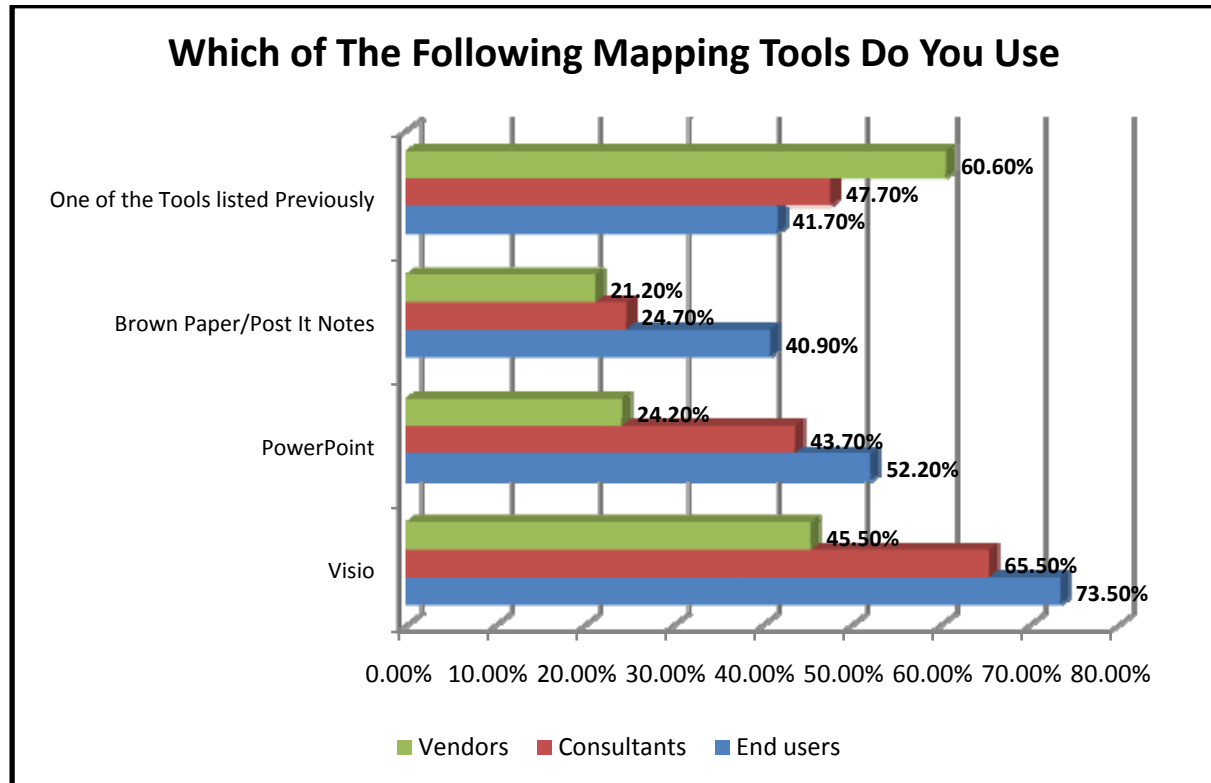


Although the numbers of people using them appear quite large, this is still the minority, with 53% not using them. It also illustrates how fragmented the market is, with only Tibco being used by a significant percentage. Metastorm of course deserves special mention; among the mainstream BPMS vendors they are the only one with a full-blown modelling tool as part of their offering. This came as a result of their acquisition of Proforma Corp. Thus it would be interesting to know how many ProVision customers have now added the Metastorm BPMS tool to their armoury and vice versa.

Further analysis shows that these tools are used mainly by IT people. Who in many cases are trying them out simply because they are free. Our view remains, however that these products are still primarily visual configuration tools for automation engines, rather than full blown analysis tools.

Which Tools Do You Use for Mapping?

As we have already discussed it is important to separate our mapping activities from our modelling activities. From this question we want to identify what approaches people use for mapping and also to see whether people are using modelling tools for mapping.



The results of this question demonstrate perhaps one of the biggest areas of difference between the three groups of respondents. An overall majority of end users actually use Visio for this purpose and almost half of them will also use Brown Paper. Conversely less than half of vendors would use Visio and only 20% Brown Paper. It is surprising that more consultants don't make use of Brown Paper.

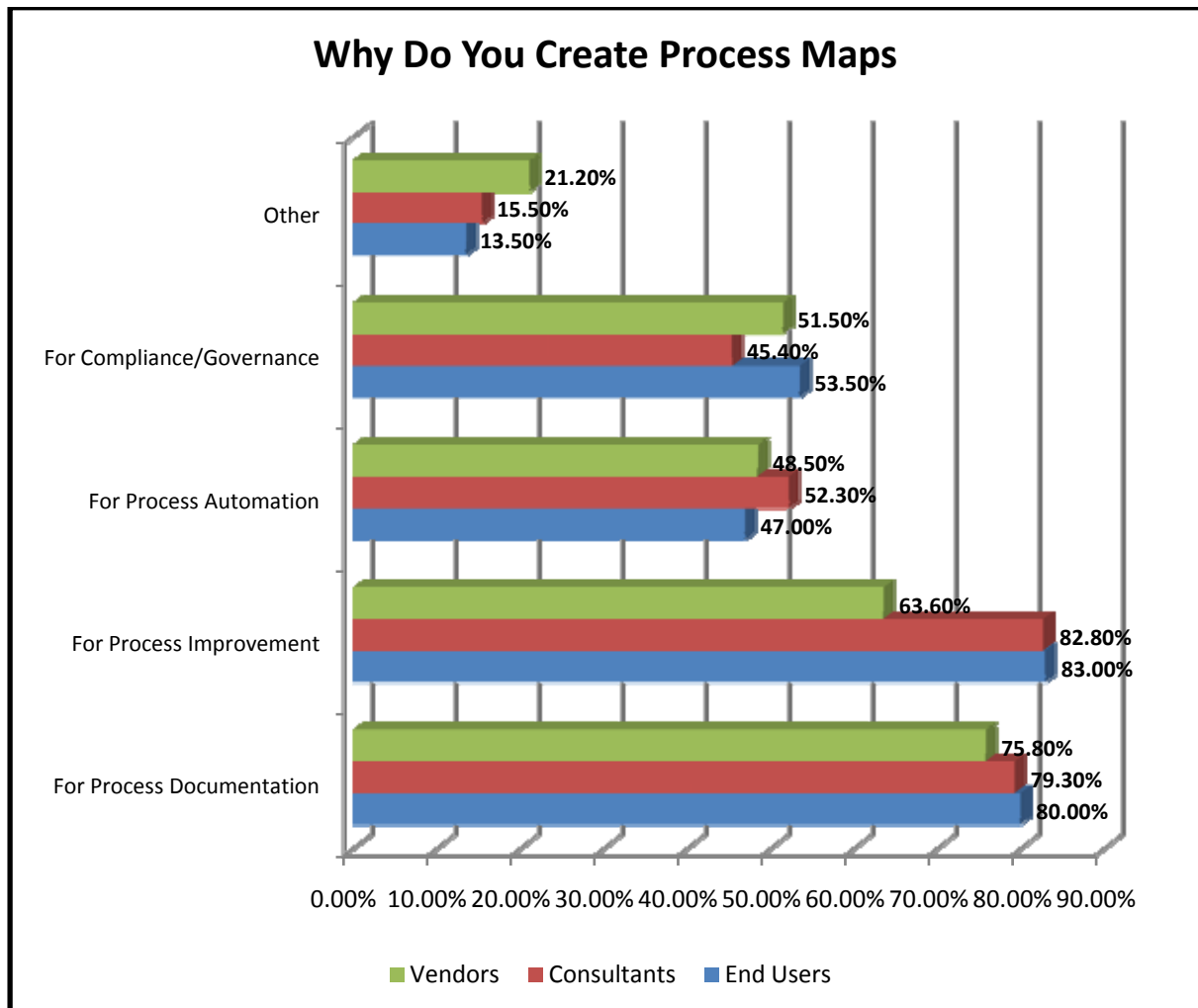
The responses to this question reveal perhaps one of the most alarming things we have seen so far, i.e. the high numbers of people using PowerPoint for process mapping! We can also see where some of the "lack of value from modelling tools" comes from. If we look at the percentages of people listing "one of the tools listed previously", we can see that large numbers of people appear to be using modelling tools for mapping. Now some will certainly be creating maps before converting them to models, but others are using them to simply create maps. It is these people that one suspects will argue that tools do not add value.

The results of this question also seem to prove that there is a potentially significant market for a vendor who can provide good modelling tools with much better, e.g. Visio style, ease of use at an affordable price.

Why Do You Create Process Maps?

To gain more insight into tool choice we asked respondents why they create maps. If we understand why they create maps and how they use them then perhaps we may understand the choice of mapping tool over modelling tool.

If we assume that, for many people, activities such as “Process Documentation” and “Compliance” are seen as just that, i.e. nothing more than paper production issues, and then we can see why such people would not see value in a modelling tool.



More detailed analysis of the results reveals that quite a high proportion of those who suggest they create maps for process improvement are actually not using modelling tools either. This is a group who may find that they are “leaving money on the table”. I am sure that from mapping alone they are able to make potentially significant improvements, but by the same token they could achieve even more by using more sophisticated tools. Chances are they are unable to pick up on overlaps or duplication and they will certainly be missing out on the ability to optimise their processes.

Features & Functionality

When trawling the web, reviewing vendor marketing material, or reading analyst reports, we see a lot of words about “must have “ features in modelling tools, but which of these are really important? This section of the survey looked at 15 of the most mentioned or hyped features and respondents were asked to rate their importance. There is no claim made that the features selected are the key ones required, but in the opinion of the authors, they are the ones on which much of the price justification of modelling tools is made, or on which differentiation among products is suggested. The 15 features selected for this part of the survey were:

- Ease of Use
- Repository based
- Multi-User Support
- ABC Costing
- FTE Analysis
- BPMN Notation
- Discrete Event Simulation
- Business Activity Monitoring
- Dashboard Creation
- Real-Time Data Collection
- Process Animation
- Statistical Analysis
- Monte-Carlo Simulation
- Forms Painting
- Logical Data Modelling

We have further analysed the responses into the following categories: All Respondents, Vendors, Consultants and End Users. While in many cases the responses were pretty similar, quite a disparity can be seen in some cases.

The features have been separated into 5 groups to enable further analysis and commentary:

Core Functionality

- Ease of Use
- Repository Based
- Multi User Support
- BPMN Notation

Analytical Functionality

- ABC Costing
- FTE Analysis
- Statistical Analysis

Simulation Functionality

- Process Animation
- Monte Carlo Simulation
- Discrete Event Simulation

Business Monitoring

- Business Activity Monitoring
- Real Time Data Collection
- Dashboard Creation

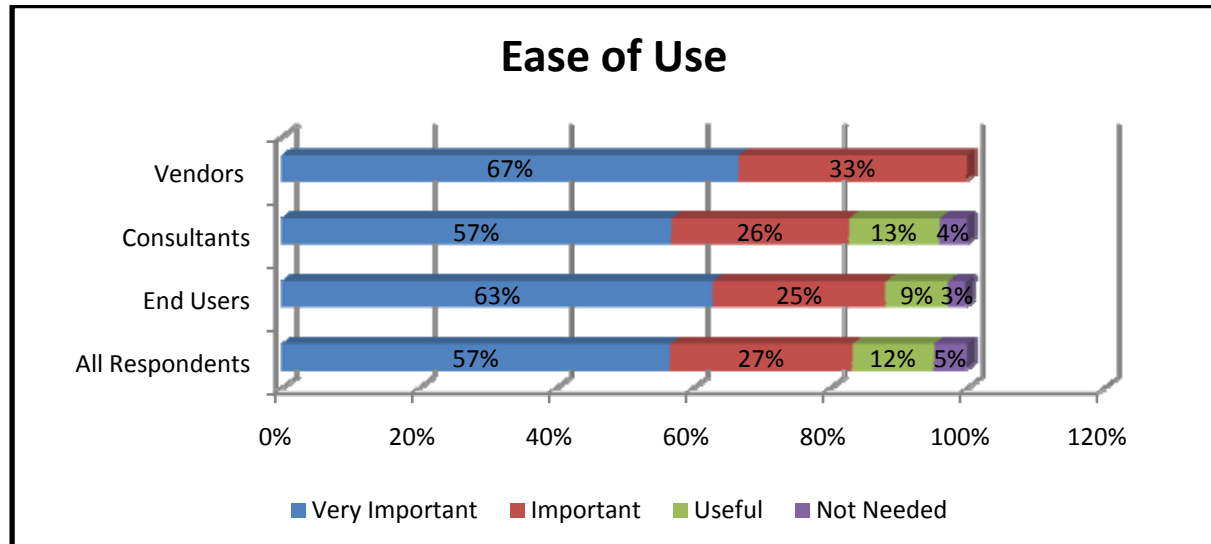
Extended Features

- Logical Data Modelling
- Forms Painting

Core Functionality

The decision on what constituted core functionality for the purpose of this report was arbitrary and based only on the opinion of the author. Others may consider that some of the other functions should be in the core set.

Ease of Use



Ease of use is perhaps one of the most hotly contested and misunderstood areas when it comes to modelling tools. It is unclear whether it is because the majority of tools in the space have developed from IT support tools, rather than business tools, or because they are trying to address so many different aspects of the business, it appears certain that, for all parties, the only way modelling tools will take on a more significant role in an organization is when they become easier to use.

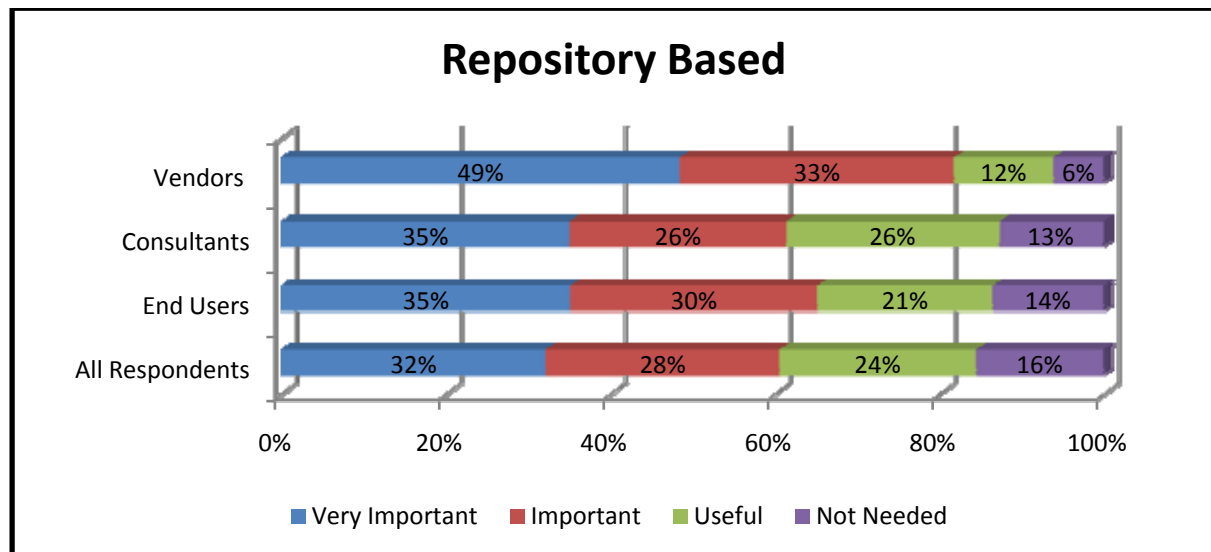
The probability is that as yet we do not have an adequate interface with our computer to deliver the experience that users really want. Conversely, users will need to accept that if they want to perform useful and serious modelling, they cannot expect to be able to do it all from a simple drawing tool interface. As ever there is and will continue to be a trade-off between functionality and ease of use. However, vendors would do well to look more closely at how business users perform other tasks on their computer and provide interfaces that are at the very least more intuitive.

The results above are of interest from a couple of perspectives. In the first instance vendors seemed more in tune with users than consultants, again suggesting that the more you use the tool the easier it is and the fact that consultants also recognise more fully the value of models over maps. The second point of note would be that quite a high number of users did not rank ease of use as “Very Important” – looking further into the collected data we can see that this comes as a result of the levels of experience among the user respondents.

Users with little or no experience of modelling tools rated this significantly more importantly than users with extensive experience. This suggests what many vendors have known for some time i.e. once users have been using their products for 18 months to 2 years they no longer find the tools difficult; it is simply a problem that the tool presents massive functionality and learning up front.

Indeed this is also borne out by responses to a later question about why there is not a greater uptake in the use of modelling tools.

Repository Based



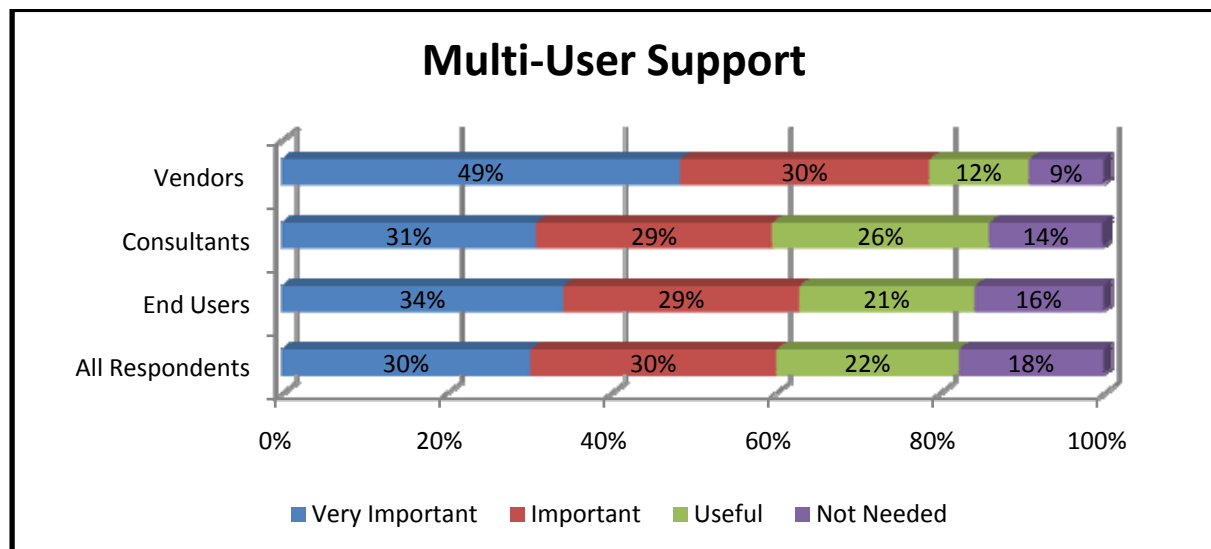
This shows the majority of respondents felt that having repository functionality was important in their modelling tool. However, as we can see from other responses this is not reflected in the number of people actually using tools with repository functionality. So we have some kind of gap here. Either people think it is a good idea, but think it is for others and not themselves, or while it sounds intellectually good the practicality is a problem.

The reality is that it is probably a combination of the two. Certainly based on experience, the learning curve for the added functionality can be quite steep and the rigour they force is not always appreciated. However there are now some tools on the market that do a pretty good job of masking the intrusion of the repository for the average user.

Users who choose to go without a repository are in effect saying that they do not want to model. It is the combination of mapping and a repository that creates a modelling environment. Whether we use the word repository or database is for these purposes a moot point.

From a vendor perspective, more work needs to be done to allow people to access the functionality without the perceived pain of using it. Perhaps also more work needs to be done to get across the value of reuse, especially in terms of the corporate data dictionary that will come about as a result of using a repository based tool. For many organisations we have worked with, the dictionary reuse is actually of more value than the idea of diagram or model reuse suggested by many people.

Multi-User Support



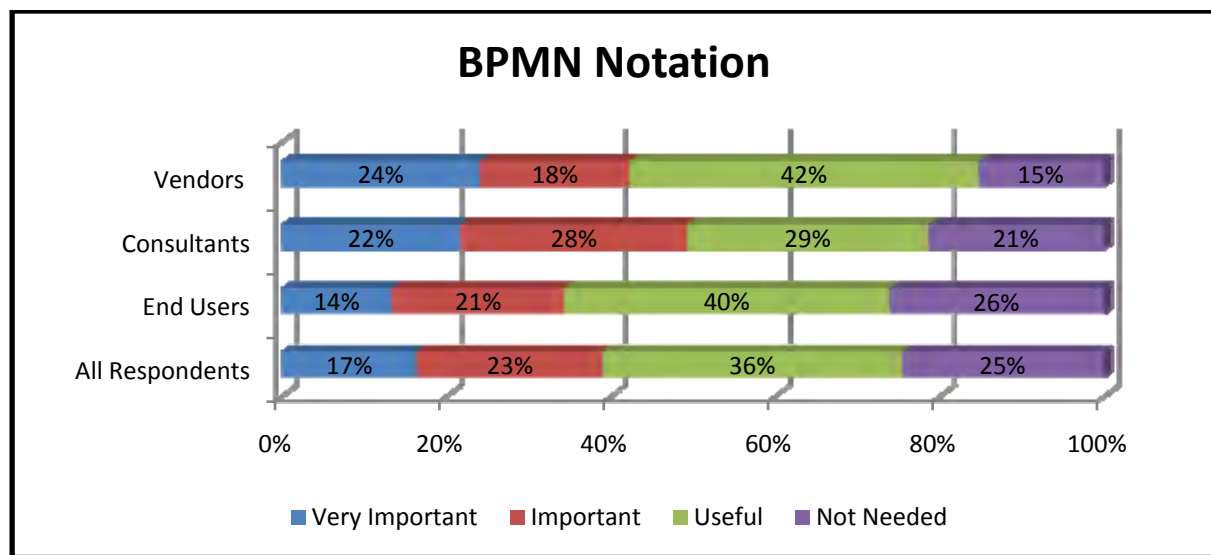
As with the repository, this is functionality that people intellectually want but do not seem prepared to manage the overhead for. We can see from earlier questions that the majority of people are still making more use of single user solutions. In part this may be because of the ease of use, but in other ways it may be down to a lack of management. By lack of management we mean the strength to make people understand that they need to cooperate and work together.

To draw a parallel with software development, how easy is it to get one programmer to maintain the code of another? All too often we hear those immortal words “I have looked at it and it would be better if I just rewrote it” – it seems that programmers prefer to work as islands. Well in life no man is an island, so we need to help people to work together.

On the other hand implementing multiuser support in a tool is challenging,. There are many factors to consider, not least how to have people working online or offline, how to deal with merges and how to handle check –in and check-out. The jury is still out on how well this functionality has been handled in tools to-date. We know that many people have bought the functionality, but suspect that only a small proportion of users are really working with multiple users and types of user on the same projects. What is more likely is that the multi-user environment is being used to allow sharing of dictionary data across projects and that people can copy and paste from the work of others into their own work. This of course is no bad thing.

Multi-user support, like the repository functionality before is an area where vendors perhaps need to spend more effort, both in making it easier for users to have access to, but also in explaining to users how and why they will get real ROI as a result of using it.

BPMN Notation



This question was always likely to be divisive given the emotions around BPMN. It will come as no surprise to most that relatively few end users saw it as important or very important, but what may surprise is that the number of vendors who saw it as important was also very low. The higher scoring among consultants was to be expected. Some years ago Jon Pyke of WfMC and Mark McGregor were discussing the issue of standards with the audience at a conference in London; whilst the audience was very pro standards, Jon and Mark pushed further and discovered that the users in the audience were not bothered, it was the consultants who were. Not surprising really, given that consultants require their people to work on varied assignments for many clients and if everybody used the same notation and standards then the easier and cheaper it would be for them. End users, however, were far more focussed on issues like readability of maps and models and how easy it was for non-technical people to use and create maps and models.

The number of users that felt that BPMN support was not needed may seem higher than some people might imagine, but remember that the base of people undertaking process analysis work used for this survey is very broad. In our experience this is probably typical, if one pays as much attention to the non-IT people involved in process improvement as the IT related ones. Nevertheless, from detailed analysis of the responses we see that, where there is no IT implementation purpose behind improvement, and then there is little or no interest in BPMN as a notation. Of course it would also be true to say that this latter category also includes so the people who judge modelling tools most harshly and who struggle to comprehend the value of such tools.

Although the question was aimed at BPMN, it is probable that the responses could be looked at on a wider basis of the value of standards. Those who want to implement systems want standards and those who are looking at process improvement from a wider or organisational perspective tend not to be interested.

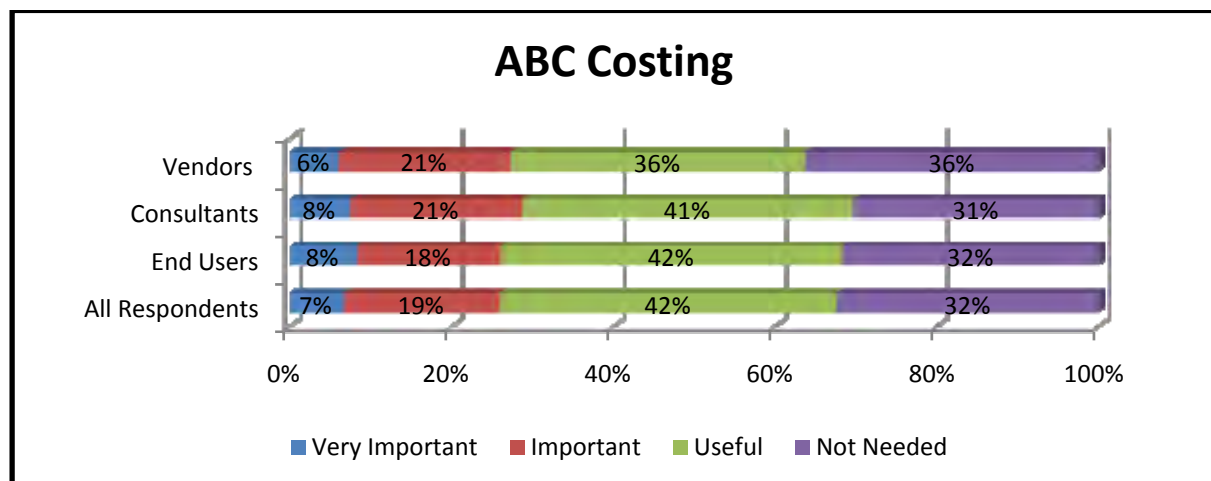
It is hard to see over the short term, say the next 3 to 5 years, how these two opposing views can come together. In fact in our opinion, with the current economic challenge, it may be that more people focus on real results and those standards become less relevant for the time being at least.

Analytical Functionality

For those people who are solely using mapping tools the following functionality, useful or not, is unavailable to them. However, for those people who have invested in modelling tools, then it most certainly is. As we shall see, it is interesting to note just how many people have invested heavily in such tools and then appear not to make use of the analytical tools available to them.

In part this is understandable, as some of the tools and techniques require a lot of work to generate the full value. Others do not require so much effort though and can yield useful, in some cases vital results, just by doing a thorough job of constructing models.

ABC Costing

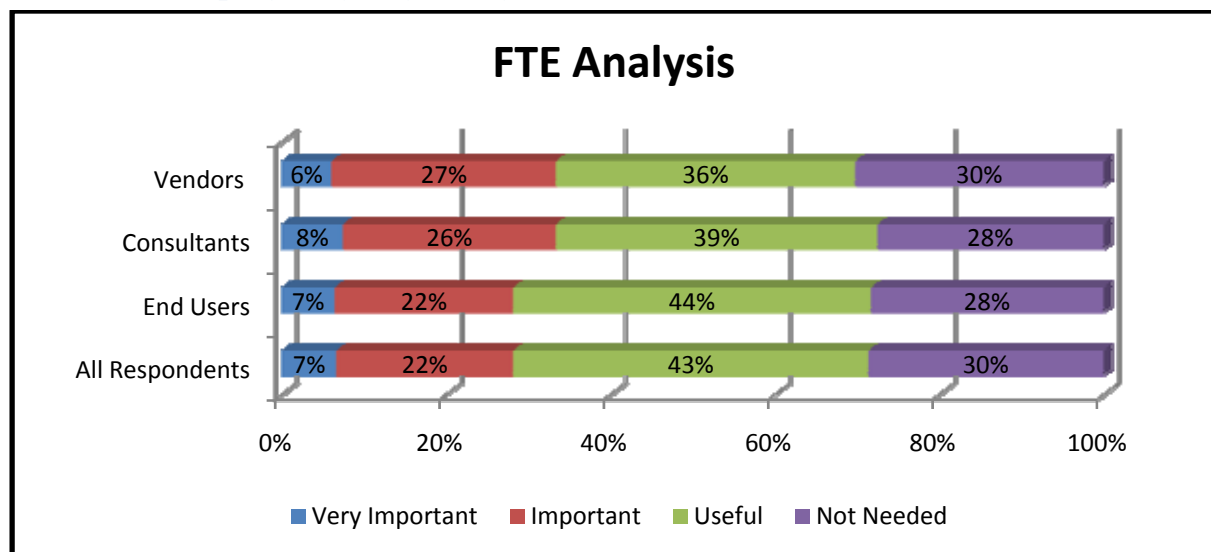


Activity Based Costing (ABC) has been around for a long time and its popularity has fluctuated considerably. It would seem never to have really made it big in the process community, yet outside of this there are organisations which have generated more revenues from pure play costing tools than of many of the modelling tool vendors added together. So we know that within organisations there is a need for such functionality, but we have to better identify where that need is.

It may seem crazy that one can invest heavily in undertaking statistical analysis, without actually costing the process. It is all very well using techniques like Six Sigma or Lean to make the process more efficient, but surely we need to understand the cost?

The question that this and other responses in this section raise is whether the people involved in process analysis and design are lacking in training or knowledge, or are simply not being given access to the information they require. To be specific, is it that they don't know how to capture the right information in order to create models? Or is it that the business is not allowing them access to the information they need? Either way it seems that perhaps models are not actually being constructed by that many people.

Full Time Employee (FTE) Analysis



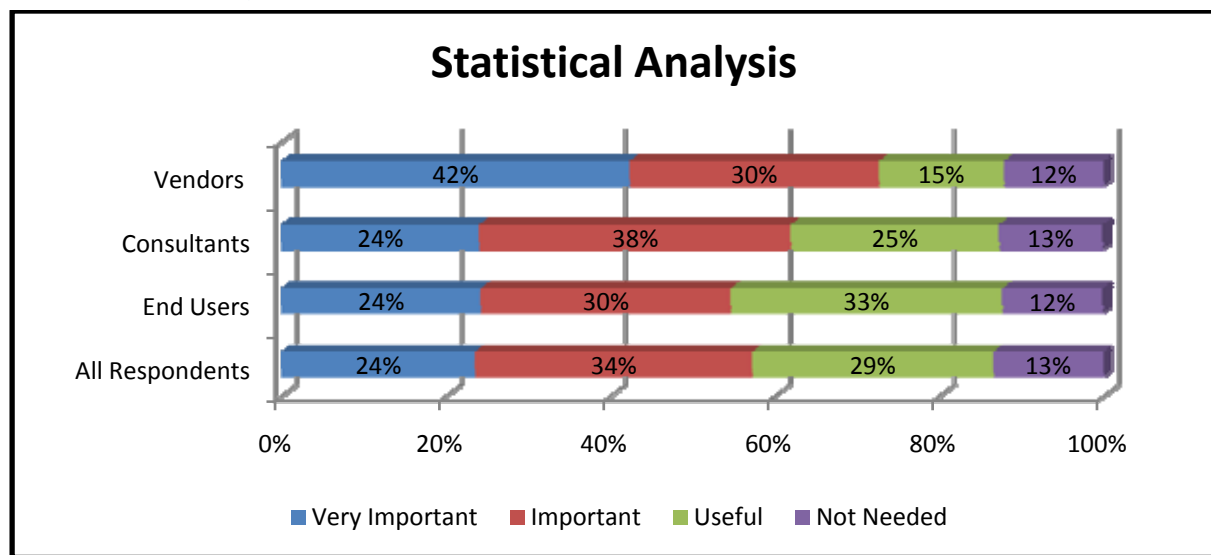
Full Time Equivalent (FTE) analysis appears only to be of serious value to between 29-33% of organisations, which is quite surprising. Given that at the time of writing the news headlines are full of firms announcing massive layoffs, one would have thought that something that would help them understand staffing requirements would be of greater value.

Unlike some of the other techniques, the beauty of this approach is that it is not limited by access to payroll data. Other forms of costing and simulation cannot provide full value without access to salary costs and overhead allocations. So it is surprising that more people are not making greater use of this technique.

Perhaps as with the ABC costing previously, this is the true sign that many organisations are not undertaking process analysis in a meaningful and structured way. Instead they perhaps prefer to continue in their ad-hoc projects and approaches. In the long run this is very risky. As with economic down turns in the past, one still has to keep an eye on the future. History has shown that organisations that reduce costs and headcount without fully understanding the impact of their decisions will not be in a good position to capitalise when the market picks up.

The process community as a whole needs to do a much better job of getting the value of this functionality across to executives and management. The onus for this falls upon all of us, not just vendors, for if we claim to be process professionals then surely we too need to take a greater level of responsibility.

Statistical Analysis



Given the number of respondents using techniques such as Lean and Six Sigma, the relative popularity of this is not surprising. What is surprising, and one needs to dive deeper into the data to find this, is the number of people who suggest it is important or very important (circa 54%) and yet do not use a modelling tool.

It seems that for the most part people are still using statistical tools separate from the process. In today's world this does not seem to make sense. Why would one want to risk such a disconnect when it can be straight forward to have them linked and stored together?

Others see that the effort required in undertaking statistical analysis is not justify the cost. This is a view that is part shared. The challenge always seems to be "just enough". Maybe the costs to collect data on a complete end to end process are not justified; instead we could apply it on just those parts of a process where it is appropriate.

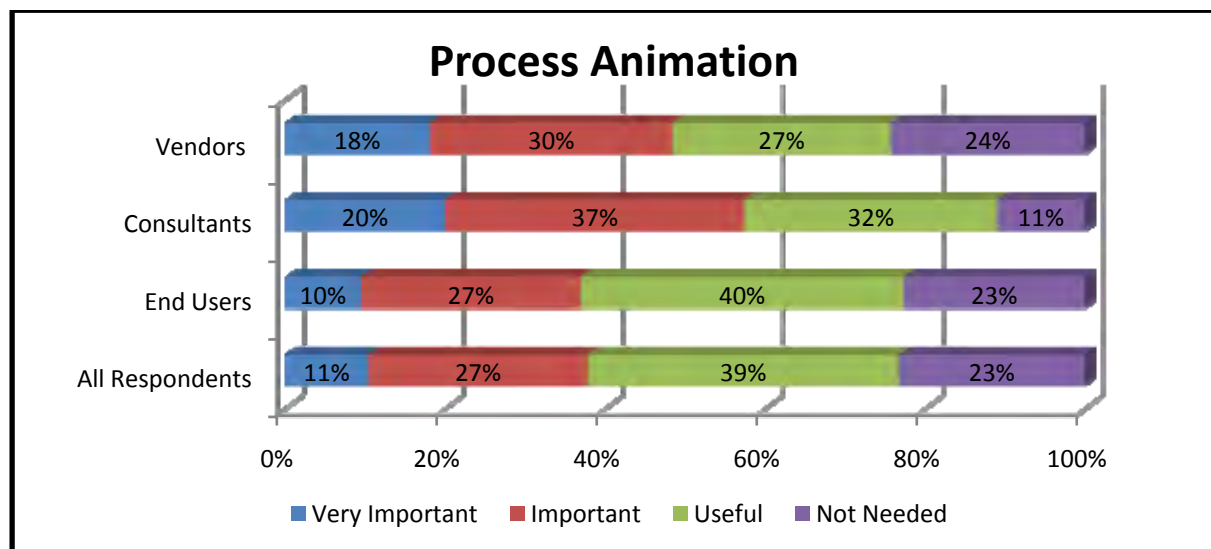
This last point can be generalised out to much of the analysis functionality we are talking about here. It is always a matter of getting the right level of depth. Use complex techniques enterprise-wide at the lowest level of detail and you will certainly have analysis paralysis and waste a lot of time, money and effort in the analysis. Conversely if we stay at too high a level and don't drill down to appropriate levels in parts of the process then we will get the job done quicker, but will waste time, money and effort in the production of our goods or services.

The decision to use good analysis techniques should never be binary; instead use the right techniques at the right level of detail for those parts of the process where it makes sense. Making sense based on a significant cost-benefit return or it may be due to high risk or regulatory issues.

Simulation Functionality

Simulation and process improvement have a long history and not all of it as friendly bedfellows. It was as far back as the mid 90's that people first tried to link simulation tools with business process modelling tools, though few were able to make commercial success from it. It seemed that, at least at that time, there were those who were simulation experts (especially in manufacturing) and those who were business process experts – rarely the twain shall meet.

Process Animation



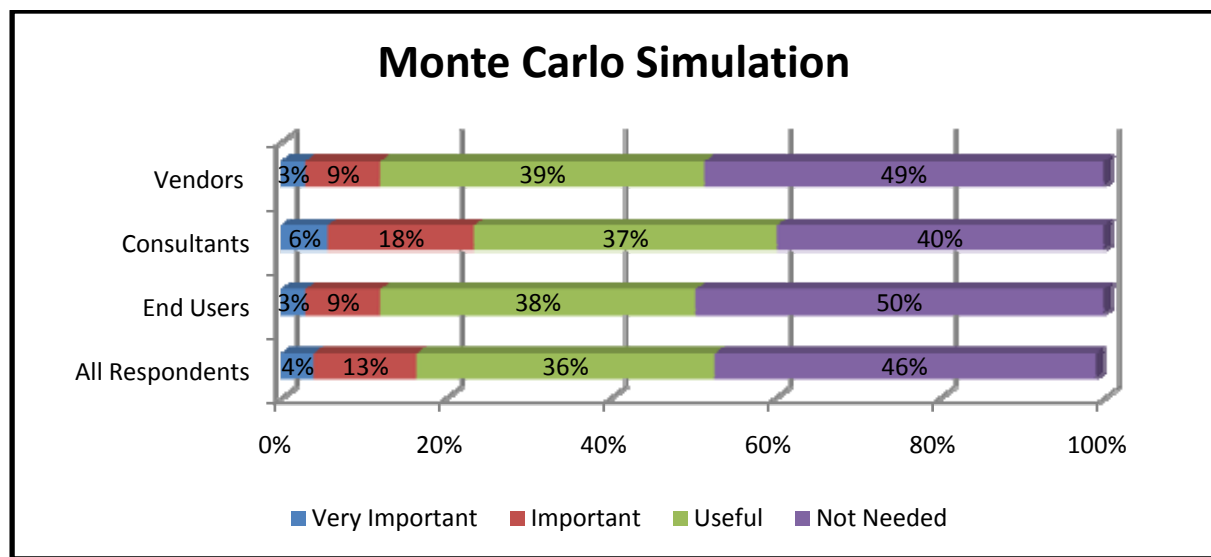
It is not surprising that of the three things under the simulation heading, this was the most popular. It is always said that the prime purpose of any model is to communicate and what communicates better than an animated view of our process?

Whether it is a simple “highlight” of the flow to see what parts are not being used, or a full blown multi-colour flashing light extravaganza, the process animation almost always impresses.

As process professionals we may say that it is meaningless, but if the flashing graphics help us to get our points across to management, such that they can understand problems and buy into solutions – then great! It may well be that animation as a communication vehicle explains why consultants are the most in favour; their success depends on being able to get their point across – and without using 100 PowerPoint slides!

Of course if people are not building models, but simply mapping, then this would explain a lack of interest, since you don't have the information to make it work. Alternatively perhaps the analysts themselves are struggling with just doing what they are told and not seeing enough of the big picture; perhaps they too could do more to ease communication inside the organisation. This is something that has been taken up by the International Institute of Business Analysts (IIBA), who in the latest version of their body of knowledge for Business Analysts place a heavy emphasis on communication.

Monte Carlo Simulation



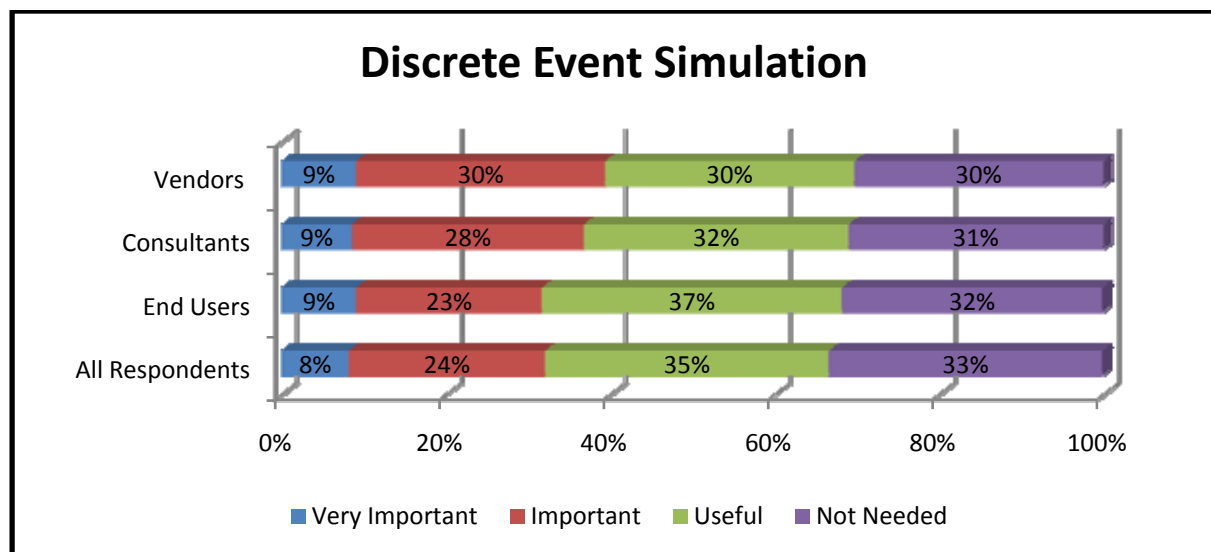
There are many different definitions of what “Monte Carlo” simulation is; some are more correct than others. What is true, though, is that not all are wrong. There is no single approach or method that is Monte Carlo Simulation, it is the label used to cover an overall approach. In terms of how it has been applied to process modelling, we can think of it as a simulation technique that can quickly provide insightful results. At the same time it requires significantly less information or data than Discrete Event Simulation.

It is not surprising to see such low levels of interest, although it would be curious to know how much time and money organisations have wasted as a result of not running simulations prior to implementation. Or how much money they might be wasting as a result of not properly optimising their processes. One can only assume that such organisations are using other tools to ensure they are operating at optimal levels.

Although made slightly in jest, these comments should be taken seriously. Recently we heard of one organisation that had terminated all of their Black Belts for non-performance. They had been accused of sub-optimising the organisation and failing to deliver optimised cross-functional processes.

Cross-functional is another key term that is very often neglected. Many of the approaches people use to improve processes actually avoid going cross-functional. In some ways it is understandable because it can be difficult. But to avoid it also leads to increased sub-optimisation and in the words of the late Geary Rummler “it is all about managing the white space” i.e. to ignore the crossovers is to ignore where many issues lie. Just because something is difficult does not mean we should avoid it; instead we should go for it, on the basis that the rewards will be greater.

Discrete Event Simulation



As with “Monte Carlo” simulation, providing a clear and unequivocal definition of “Discrete Event Simulation” is almost impossible. At least in respect of how it may be applied in the context of process models. For our purposes it may be as easy to think that if “Monte Carlo” is deterministic and can calculate without full data “Discrete Event” requires that you first fully populate the model with all the required data.

It is heartening to see that a larger number of respondents felt that this was important. Again though, we see that vendors (39%) still thought it more important than users (32%). This may be due to the theory versus the reality. In theory you just have to populate the data and way you go. In practice it takes a lot of time and effort to collect and populate the data. In many cases organisations are not even able to collect the data needed.

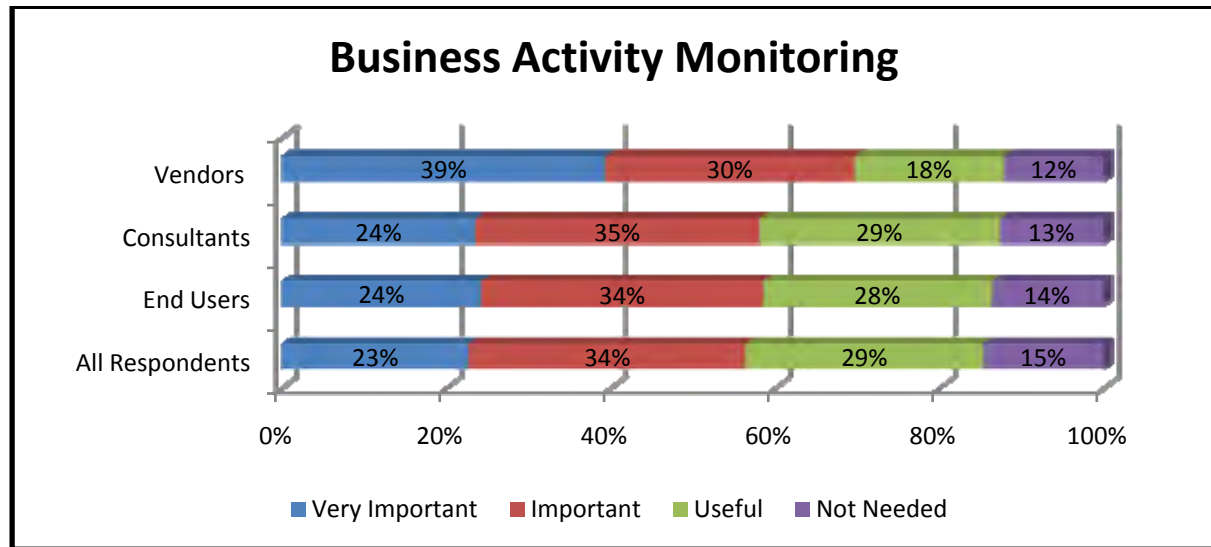
Well implemented simulation will allow you to see both the animation side that so many users love and also provide full details for multi-scenario and goal seeking analysis. A quick comparison between the functionality offered by stand-alone simulation tools and that offered by modelling tool vendors shows that the latter is still lacking in a lot of the required functionality. This does leave the value of the functionality in the modelling tools questionable, as if you are wanting to properly use simulation, you may still need to add on a third party package.

It has been suggested in some quarters that to date vendors have focussed more on doing enough to be able to tick the industry analysts tick box, than they have in delivering what people might need.

It is likely that we will see this functionality grow in usefulness and importance as more and more users come to understand statistics and how to properly execute simulation (it is still in many ways the preserve of specialists and mathematicians.)

Business Monitoring

Business Activity Monitoring (BAM)



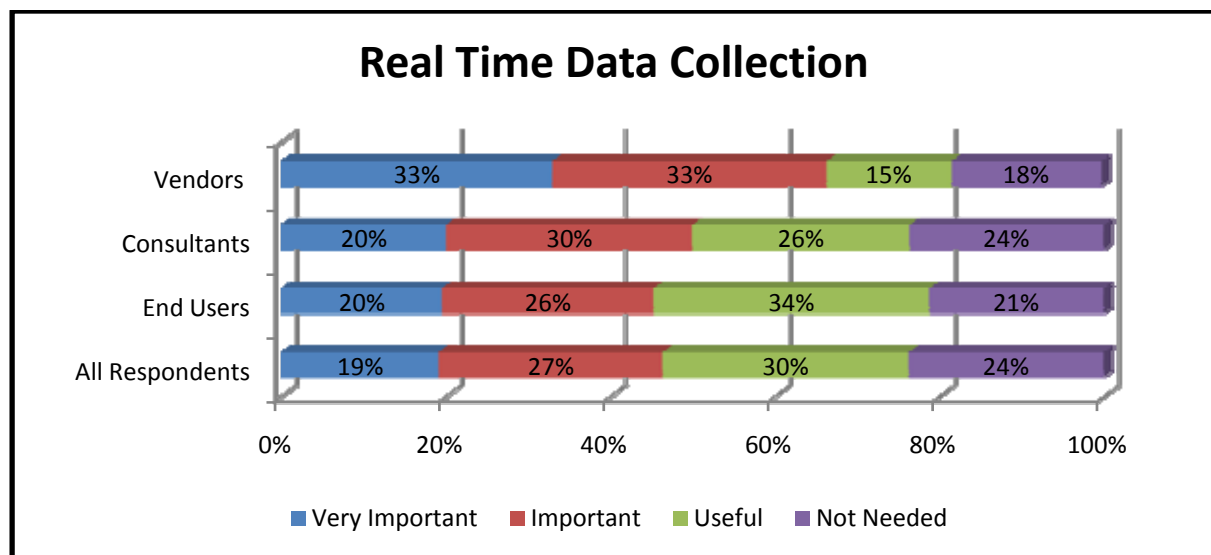
Business Activity Monitoring (BAM) has long been seen by GartnerGroup as an important area for tooling. Sadly, few modelling tool vendors have added links to enable it to happen. This is a shame, because such monitoring, when played directly onto the models, would change peoples' perception of them from static to dynamic. If there are to be traffic light signals on processes or activities, then better that they can actually change colour based on what is happening in the world, rather than at the whim of an analyst.

From the responses to the next question we see that fewer people actually perceive the need for real time data collection than for activity monitoring. This leads one to believe that either they enjoy inputting data themselves, or perhaps they too are not convinced of the viability of solutions in this area.

If it is the latter then they are mistaken. Business Intelligence vendors have been collecting data in this way for some time and let us not forget that many of these vendors also now claim to be players in the BPM market. It is simply that they define BPM as Business Performance Management.

Whatever the approach is, we certainly need to find some greater levels of convergence. Perhaps we should be looking at closer partnerships between the BI vendors and the modelling vendors; certainly both would seem to have a value add for each other.

Real Time Data Collection

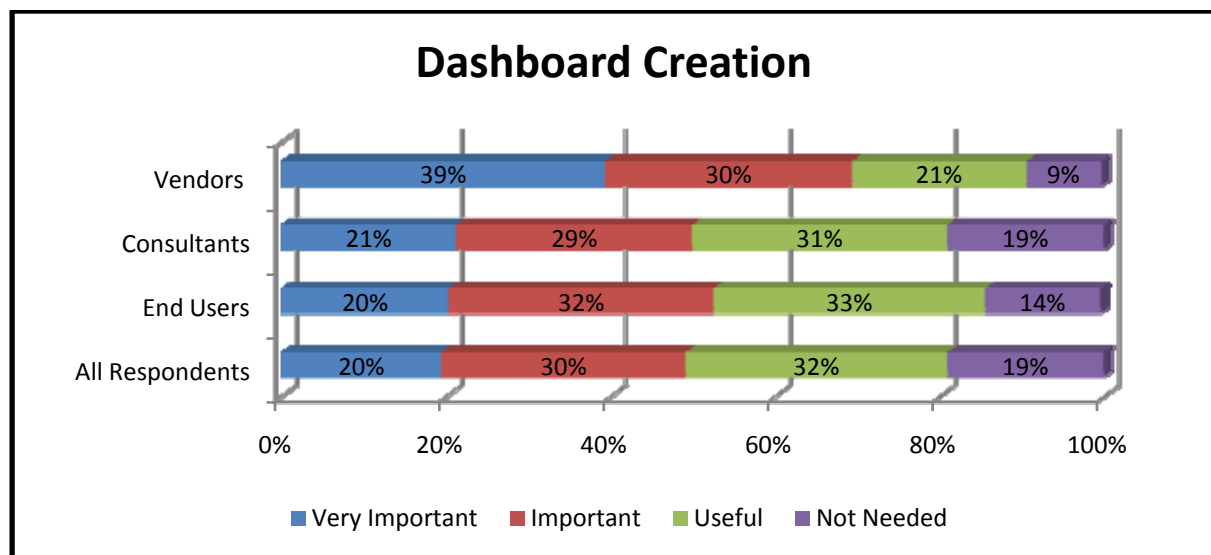


To date Real Time Data Collection has not been delivered as main stream functionality in either modelling tools or BPMS Systems. BPMS vendors offer something similar, but it tends to be restricted to the collection of data related to their own processes. Here we mean the live collection of data from operational systems, regardless of the vendor of the system. The purpose of the functionality is for monitoring purposes and also to enable more accurate statistical analysis and simulations to be executed.

It can be seen that although relatively low numbers (around 20%) of people suggest it is important, this is still higher than for other functionality.

We would suggest that, with more real- time collected data available, more people would be interested in other functions such as simulation. Simulation based on proven historic data will always be more accurate and useful.

Dashboard Creation



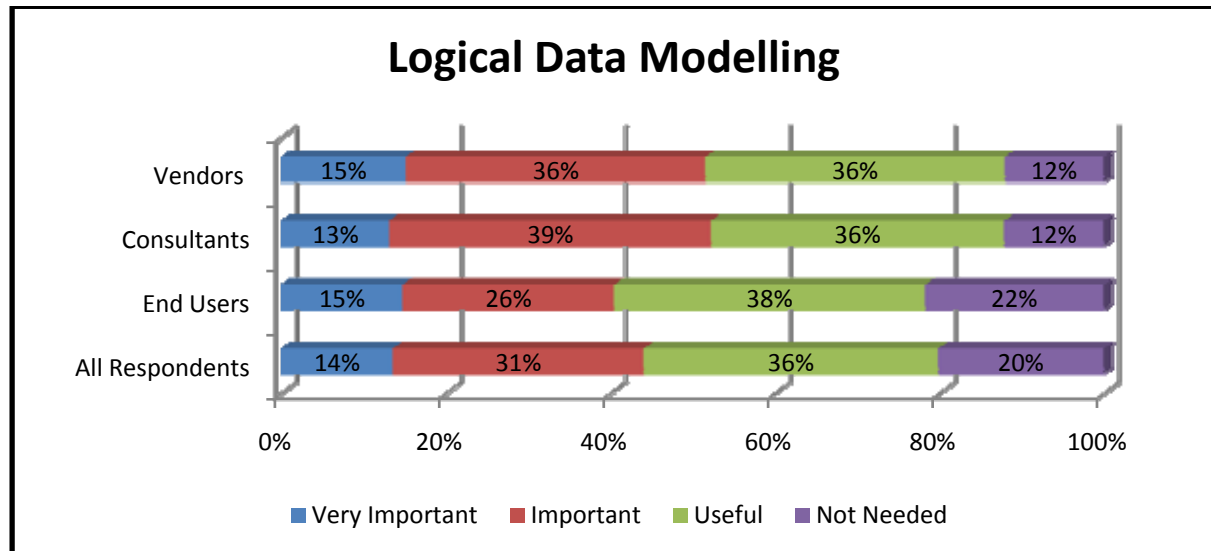
Interestingly enough we can see from the graph above that this appears far more popular than many other areas. I say interesting because, to date, it has not been well covered by the existing product offerings. Historically dashboards have never been seen as a key part of the modelling domain, largely due to the historical disconnect between the models and any real data. Now with the BPMS vendors entering the modelling fray we are starting to see dashboards appearing.

Some of the newer modelling tools are now presenting such dashboards in a very interesting way. They are using the concept of “Heat Maps” to allow users to drill up and down through processes in order to identify issues. This would seem like a more practical application than just red green indicators on a process diagram and perhaps more in line with moving towards true process managed enterprises.

We also see that is one of those areas where users see a greater value than consultants. One wonders how many of the consultants who look at these types of thing are bearing in mind what their customers need as opposed to what might make their life easier as consultants.

Extended Features

Logical Data Modelling



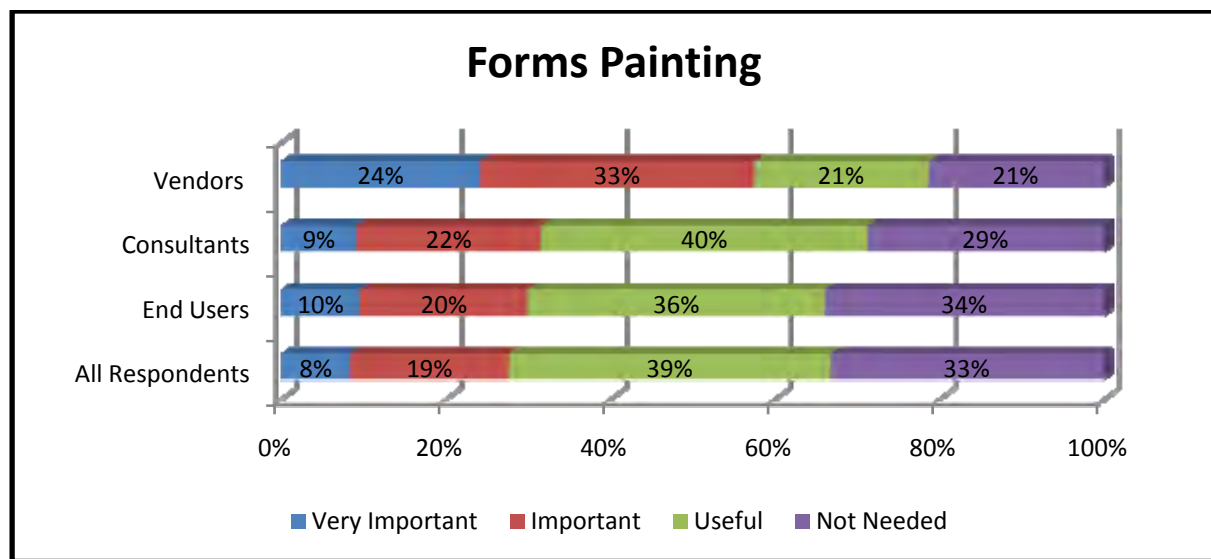
For many people this question is not especially relevant in terms of process analysis and design tools. However, given the trend toward using process analysis and design as the front-end exercise for automation projects, it seemed to make sense to ask. Indeed we can see from the responses that more people thought this of importance than they did most of the analysis functionality.

With other surveys one might assume that this was because of the IT bias of the people responding. Here, though, we know that we do not have that same bias. So perhaps it is because we have a higher number of business analysts responding. This group of individuals would certainly be expected to consider the data implications as well as the process ones when specifying new processes or systems.

Whatever the reason, to date it is functionality that is only found in the higher end tools, or in many cases only in the version of tools with a much broader functional base.

This is also something to bear in mind when considering some of the free or low-end tools. These tools are very much focussed on Process, whereas in reality we need to consider the Organisational and Data models at the same time. The three perspectives are very interconnected and it would be a foolhardy person who tried to make serious changes to one without taking into account the impact of the other two. Impact analysis, as we know, is also something that can only be done through the use of a modelling tool and not with a mapping tool.

Forms Painting



This is another of those areas where we see a big difference between vendors and users. The purpose of the question was to see what else people might be doing with their models and modelling tools. The responses from the vendors show, and detailed review of the raw data concurs, that the majority of vendors were from automation suppliers. In the case of these vendors, implementing systems is their goal and so having input and output screens painted was quite important.

Conversely we can see that for most users, building systems was not their main objective and so this functionality was largely irrelevant to them. In addition, vendors who have this functionality in the tool as standard are running the risk of adding complexity to their product and thus doing more to lose customers than to win them.

One of the objectives of the questions in this section was to look at whether the current tools are adding complexity as a result of delivering features that users don't want, at least not yet. This one certainly seems to fall into that category – unless, as we have seen, you are using your models to build automation systems of some description.

What Method or Approach Do You Use?

From the responses to this question, Hammer & Champy should be proud; along with home grown approaches, traditional BPR scores as the most popular approach to process improvement efforts. The next most popular were the Lean, Six Sigma and Operational Excellence approaches.

Given this survey is primarily about mapping and modelling tools, we can see that in fact the approaches used by most users are also the ones least well supported by the mainstream tools. While some support is offered for diagrams, method-wise they deliver relatively little support; this is perhaps another reason for a lack of deep market penetration.

From a personal perspective it was heartening to see the percentage of people using the 8 Omega approach, but one should bear in mind that this figure would naturally be higher with a survey based on this list than one based on other list people might use. Nevertheless, it is always good to see that people are making use of the techniques that they have learned and are actually delivering value from them.

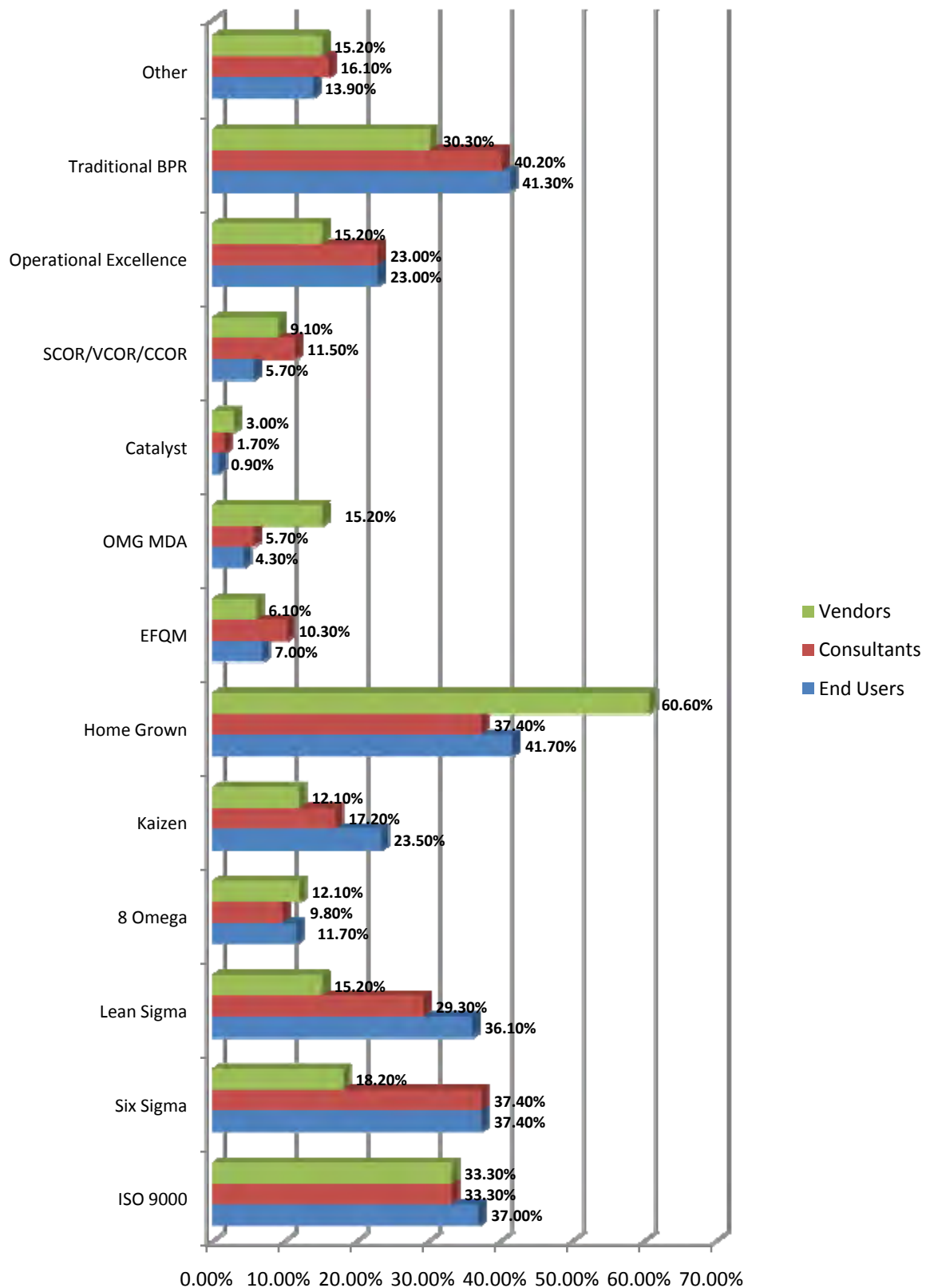
One area of functionality that we did not ask about was “customisability” and from the results below this was perhaps a mistake. With over 40% of users suggesting that they are using their own home grown approach, their views on this might have been useful. However, we have no way of knowing how much rigour has been placed in these approaches and without that rigour, serious customisation might not have delivered full value. Indeed, one or two of the vendors we have worked with rely on having considerable amounts of set up and customisation done before rolling the tools out. This is something that only large end-users or consulting firms can consider, as the time and cost to do so can be quite prohibitive.

The results of this question also demonstrate why, when it comes to tooling, the market is so fragmented. The cost of supporting all of these approaches to a good level of depth would be extremely prohibitive for any vendor. Adding support for all would also add a degree of complexity that users would surely rebel against.

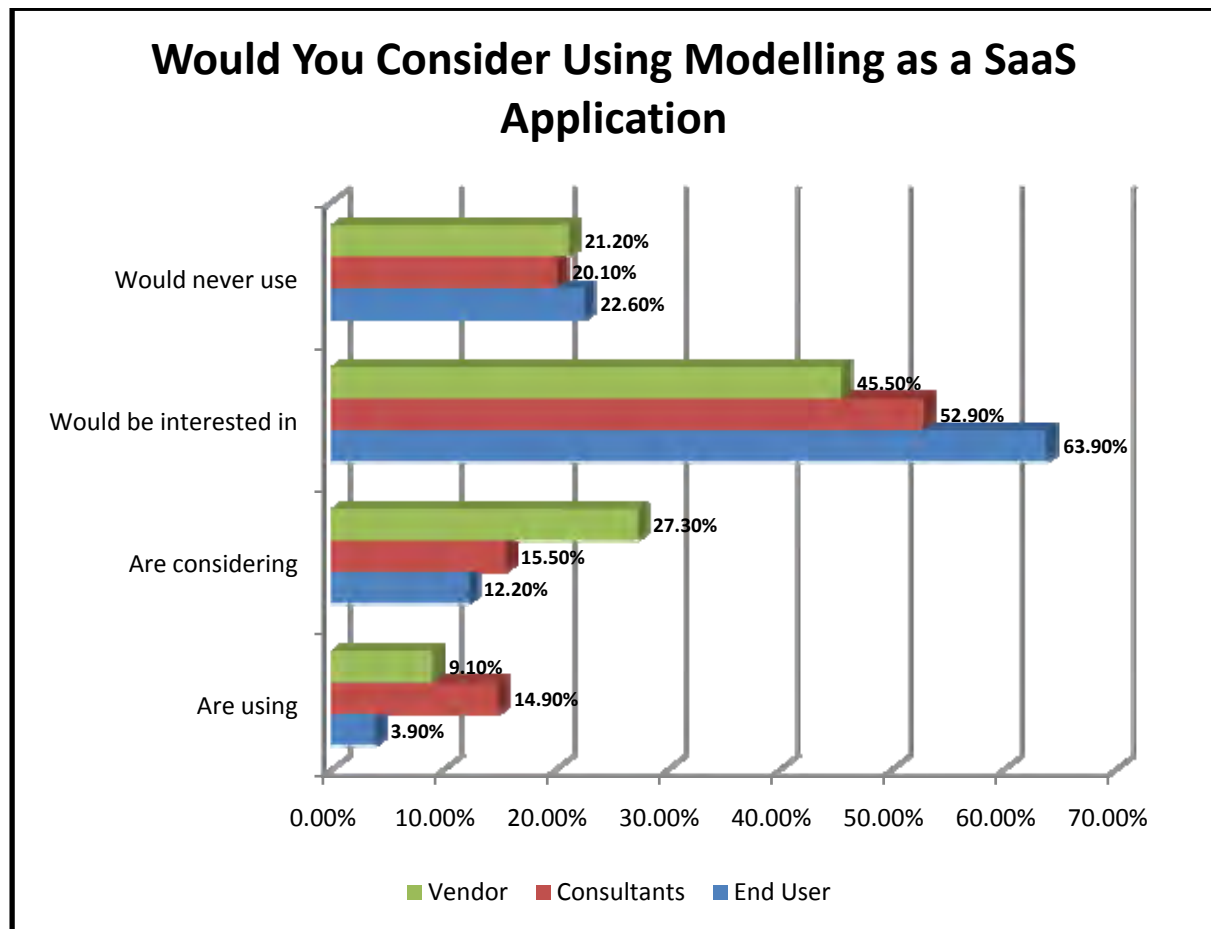
Perhaps the sad part is that, when one looks beneath the covers of the approaches, they are not actually so very different. How much better it would be if we could look for commonality and make it easier for people to deliver business results faster. It seems that the method industry is more about putting over one’s own perspective, rather than blending from the existing ones. Perhaps this is one of the reasons those people who learned about 8 Omega have stayed with it; since it was predicated on blending the best bits of the existing approaches already being used, allowing the borrowing from all at a technique level and then focussing efforts on delivering solid business results.

One might also add that this is one of the reasons for the success of IDS-Scheer. First Prof. Scheer developed a method, then he created a service organisation to deliver results using it and then the tool was created to support it. This is a rounded solution that few others have been able to match.

What Method or Approach Do You Use



Would You Consider Using Modelling as a “Software as a Service” (SaaS) Application?

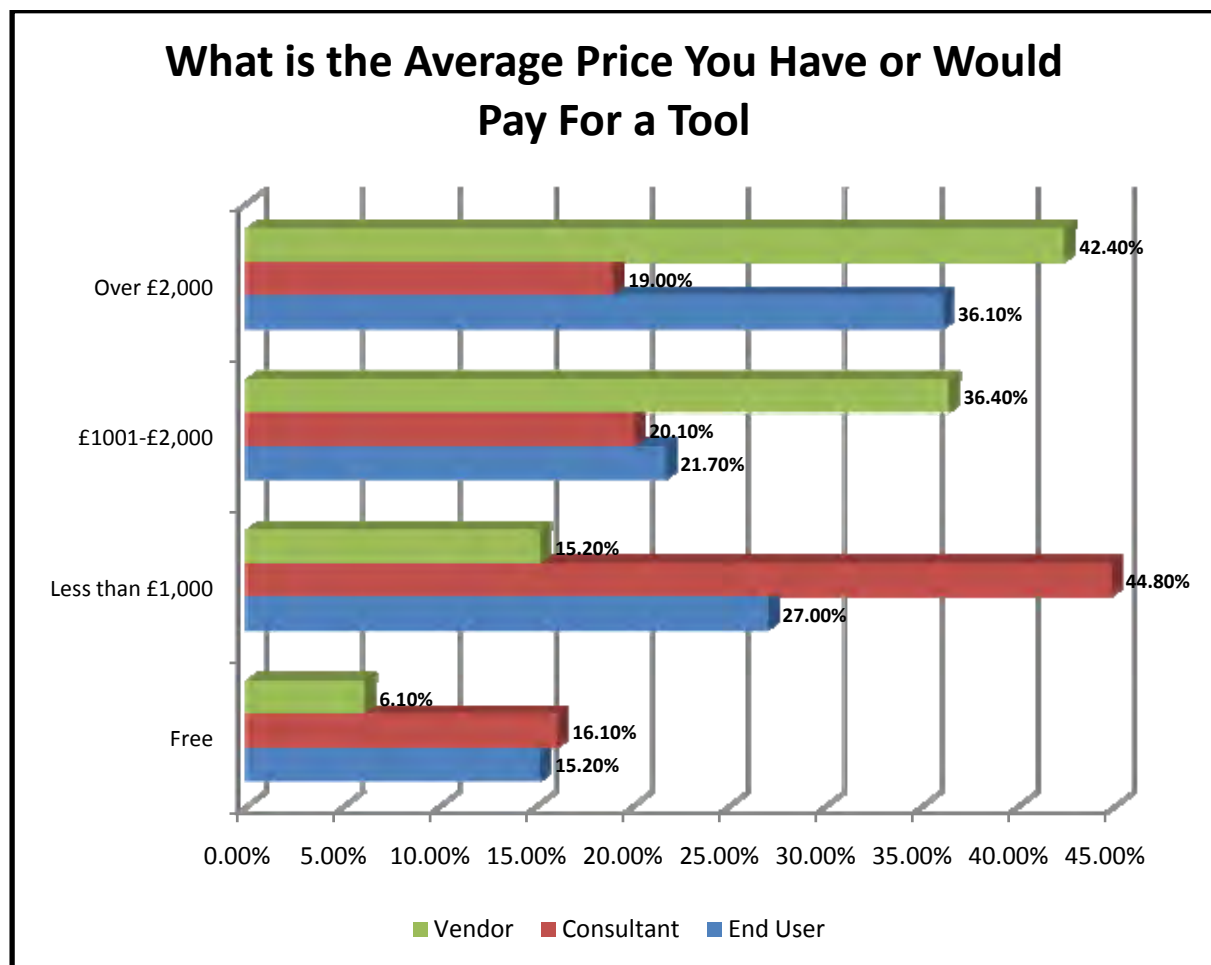


With the growth in interest in SaaS applications, it was inevitable that we would see people using it as a means to deliver modelling. It is not likely to be something we see from mainstream vendors in any serious way for some time, as they have a business model that depends on licence and support fees. For new entrants however, the SaaS market offers an interesting entry point.

As we can see, it is certainly an area of great interest with over 78% of end users either using or interested in doing so. Whether the interest levels at 75% plus will translate into high numbers of actual usage remains to be seen, but for now it is obvious that people are seriously looking at alternatives to the desktop. Although interest from consultants is high, I suspect the take up will be much lower because of mobile working and the internet dependence of such offerings. What may be interesting is to see whether hybrid models emerge, e.g. local desktop-based drawing with hosted repository and simulation functionality, thus giving users easy to use interfaces, while providing organisations with the additional analysis power and cataloguing capability that comes with repositories.

One thing is certain, it is fashionable and we will see many offerings come and go in this space, not just for mapping and modelling but on a more general basis.

What is the Average Price You Have or Would Pay For a Tool?



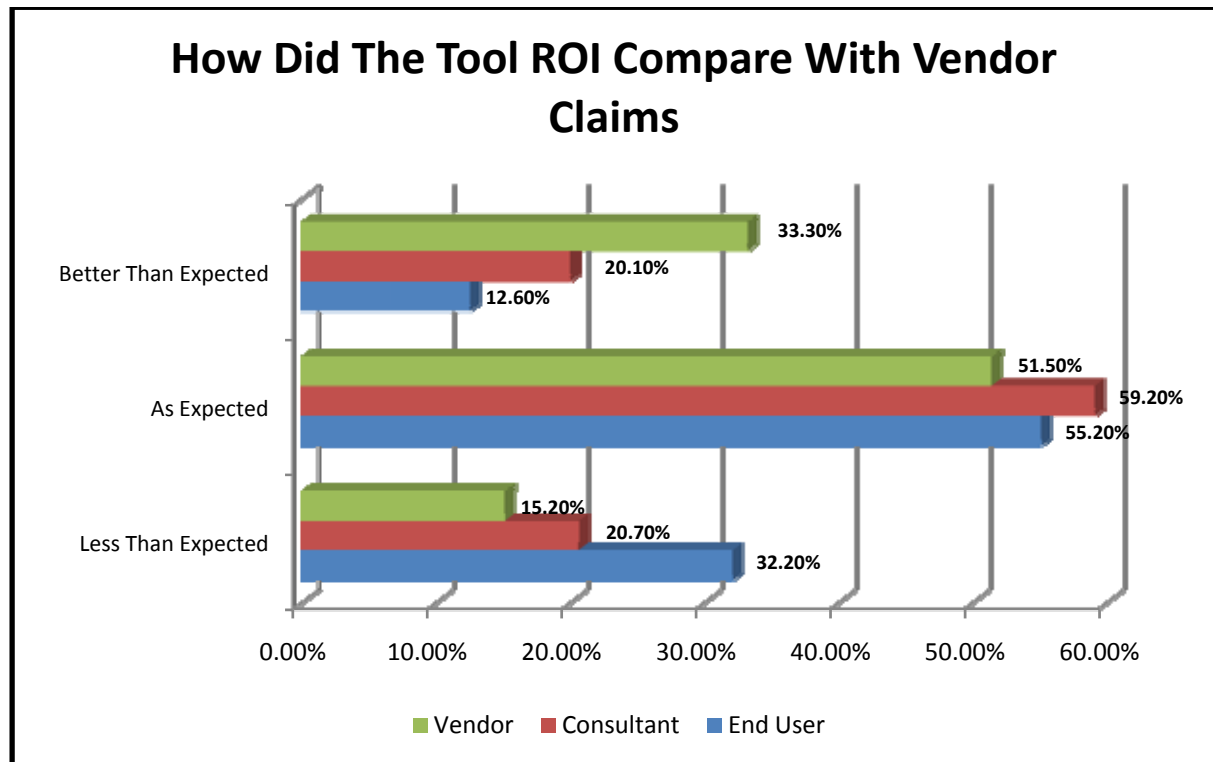
It seems from the results that perhaps vendors may have an inflated view of the perceived value of their offerings! While consultants, who are very much seen as the target market for many vendors, are definitely only using lower cost tools. (Over 80% of consultants use tools costing less than £2,000, while over 60% actually use tools less than £1,000.) So if vendors want to seriously target the consulting market, then some price changes need to be seen, or better volume pricing deals need to be struck.

Although a high proportion (36%) of end users have paid over £2,000 for a tool, again it is also interesting to see that 48% of them still believe that £2,000 is a ceiling point.

The number of people using free tools was interesting - around the 14% level. It is too early to say whether this represents a move away from paid tools, as the options have not been available for long enough. In the end it is likely to be the functionality of the free tools that decides their fate. If they start to offer much of the richness of the paid products, then certainly they will gain greater traction. However if they stay at the level of simple mapping then it is unlikely that they will seriously distort the market.

How Did The Return on Investment (ROI) of the Tool Compare With Vendor Claims?

Modelling tool vendors, as with any other type of product, make great claims about the amount of time it will take to generate a real return on your investment. But, how do peoples' experiences compare with the claims and expectations?



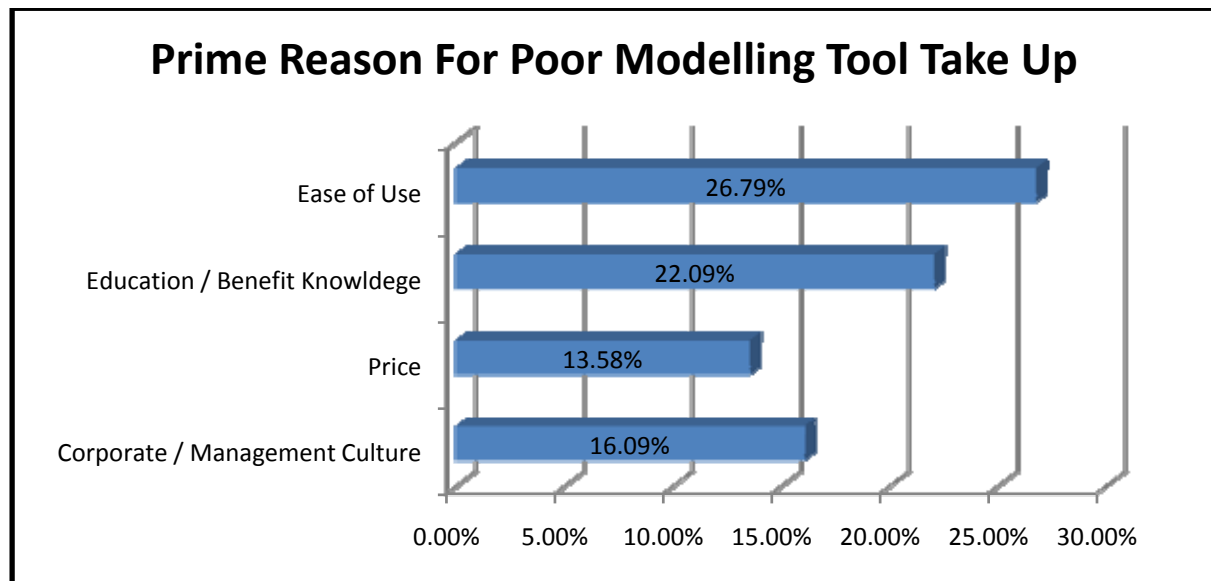
It would be easy to make a great deal of noise about the fact that over 32% of users found that the ROI of the tools did not live up to the expectations. However, this may be a little unfair, given that over 50% said that it was as expected.

What we can reveal though is that, for those who responded with paying over £2,000' to the previous question, the percentage of less than expected soars to nearer 60%. This suggests that peoples' views changed quite considerably depending on how much they paid.

No surprises here that vendor's perception of the value of tools was somewhat different to those of the people who actually paid money for them!

It would seem that the "sweet" spot for ensuring that people are getting 'as' or 'better than expected' value appears when the tools are around the £1,000 to £2,000 range. Those who were using free or less than £1,000 tools were pretty random in their impressions. Not surprising really, given that people who use "free" do not very often perceive value as a result.

What Do You Think is The Prime Reason For Poor Modelling Tool Take Up?



This question was asked in free form mode and so required some work to try and categorise the literally hundreds of responses. We took the most popular answers and then categorised those into the four categories cited above.

The ease of use, as expected, came top of the list. More surprising, though, was the issue of education and benefit knowledge that came second. The detail of these answers varied. However, most were talking about their own organisations here and suggesting that their own company or management do not appreciate the benefits of wider tool usage. They also suggested that vendors and consultants could do more to help them educate their own managers and executives.

Perhaps of greatest concern were the responses around culture. It was incredible to read the comments around managers and the company being unwilling to address problems in a structured way; several even referred to a lack of competency within management circles. This may be less surprising, though, if we remember that these managers have a functional responsibility and with process we are taking about cutting across functions. The real reason is more likely to be that people are just out to protect their empires. Within the process community, much as we might like to, we can't actually blame them for that. We are just as bad in terms of protecting our way of doing things and not wanting to take on other peoples' ideas. In business, as in process, things have to change. Truly successful organisations long ago made the structural changes and reward changes to ensure people were rewarded for working together to serve the customer – the only thing that actually matters in any of our businesses.

Conclusion

As we might expect the nature of the mapping and modelling market is still very confusing. Over the past couple of years we have seen some consolidation (Metastorm acquiring Proforma and IBM acquiring Telelogic which in turn had acquired Popkin Software) and some suggest that we will see further acquisitions in the next year. This will likely be by other automation vendors as they seek to add richer products to their portfolio. Even with this consolidation the market is still likely to remain very fragmented.

Throughout this exercise and the other conversations that I had with people while going through the process we must remember that the vast majority of potential users do not in fact use tools. This means even those companies that are seen as the dominant market players are actually still only dominant among the minority of players and users in the space today.

As we have read, the reasons for the fragmentation are many. Not least the variety of methods and purposes behind process improvement. We can also see that there are still massive opportunities for vendors who can deliver the products that companies want, rather than what they wish to develop. There is also a salutary lesson for all of those in the profession that we are still not getting our messages across in a manner that makes the idea of modelling for all a practical reality. So whether from a vendor, consultant or analyst perspective we probably need to look at hard at the language we use and the messages we convey.

The hope would be that as organizations continue to focus on waste and effectiveness they increasingly realize that in the end it is probably cheaper for most of them to switch to making use of modelling as opposed to continuing with mapping alone. Although the initial overhead may be higher, the payback over time will be much greater.

For these opportunities to be truly realised and for those who do not use tools to come to the table then the most important thing would be that the tools have to be genuinely usable by a wider range of people. For the most part the tools of today are still too much like software development workbenches and too focussed on automation solutions.



Corporate Modelling enables organisations to more effectively model, manage and monitor their business. They achieve this through the delivery of a range of software products and high end bespoke development services. The products provide extensive coverage of the business and application development cycle from process analysis and design, through to application generation and delivery. Corporate Modelling is a pioneer in the area of Cloud computing and a founding member of the financial services grid initiative (www.fsgrid.com).

Through the use of Corporate Modelling's products and services their clients are able to:

- Reduce costs in a more effective manner
- Increase operational efficiency
- More easily manage & monitor risks and opportunities
- Adapt faster to changing market and economic conditions.

Corporate Modelling's software product offerings include:

Enterprise Improvement 2

Combining the power of a high end modelling tool with the simplicity of Visio, EI2 is a flexible modelling toolkit that adapts to suit your environment. Out of the box it delivers a rich set of analysis tools to ensure that the process models you build can be properly tested and optimised. This validation is essential in order to reduce and manage the risks associated with change. EI2 supports a wide range of deployment options including cloud based modelling, networked operations and single user. With an underlying SQL repository and full support for the industry standard BPMN modelling notation, EI2 is an ideal choice for organisations who want to introduce rigour without overhead.

EI2 is an affordable Modelling, Analysis and Design Tool that works the way you want it and is at a price point that makes it practical to ensure that everyone who needs the tool can have access to it.

EI2 supports a range of installation options including:

- Remote Cloud based Operation
- Local Cloud based Operation
- Network Installation

Business Processing Grid

Organisations are increasingly looking at ways to lower their mainframe processing costs. The Business Processing Grid delivers a cost effective alternative by providing mainframe computing power on networked PC's. Corporate Modelling, who are seen as thought leaders in the area of HPC, have partnered with Microsoft and Dell to deliver a complete grid based solution

Applications for the innovative Business Processing Grid are many and varied, some of the key application areas clients find it particularly useful for include:

- Improved processing for real time risk management
- Utilising Intel technology to deliver higher throughput at lower costs
- Meeting solvency standards more efficiently
- Reducing costs through increased throughput via nodes
- Reduce model runtime using Business Processing Grid
- Improved reliability and scalability of systems

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The Life & Annuity Group (TLAG) specializes in Business Migration, Conversion and Application Integration. Our staff of experienced consultants gives you the upper hand to jump start your project utilizing best practices and experience. We know what works and what doesn't. We work with you to establish an appropriate development and implementation approach to achieve your business goals and objectives.

TLAG has a successful track record of over 40 business migrations & conversions. Our staff averages over 15 years of experience with all types of products, all major insurance systems and every size project. We understand the insurance business and provide a disciplined approach to support your migration or conversion. At TLAG, we recognize that successful projects start by understanding the business; technology is simply the means to deliver the business solution.

Using our proven methodology, we deliver an end-to-end solution and eliminate the guesswork and uncertainty of business migration. Our measurement of success is being On Time, Within Budget and Exceeding your Expectations.

At TLAG we believe that business knowledge and experience are the keys to making any initiative successful. Frequently, projects are costly and time consuming, returns on investment come much slower than anticipated and strategic windows of opportunity disappear.

We understand the importance of doing it right the first time; delivering business functionality on time and within budget.

Success is assured when the road map for implementation is well defined, the expectations are established and proven methodologies are applied. Our experience and discovery process quickly identify key program metrics, scope, cost, gaps, risks and milestones. To position your project for success, we offer a complementary workshop and consultation.

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The Lab focuses exclusively on “self-funding” business operations improvement. Founded in 1993 by alumni from leading consulting firms, The Lab was designed from the beginning to address a glaring problem with most business improvement projects; whether one refers to such projects as “operations improvements,” “productivity improvements” or “process reengineering,” the vast majority of these initiatives fail to achieve the desired benefits. The Lab delivers to clients real, measurable benefits within a time span measured in months, not years. By “self-funding,” we mean that the value of our services exceeds our fees, usually several times over.

Two-thirds of operations improvements available to businesses do not require any new technology. That largely overlooked fact is the basis for The Lab’s structured approach to achieving rapid benefits. That does not mean that The Lab is “anti-technology,” it simply means that we focus on the people-related processes where the majority of improvement opportunities exist. Commonly, the “non-technology” improvements generate such large savings, that they fund, partially or totally, clients’ technology-based initiatives.

The Lab’s clients realize the benefits of our high performance approach along a number of meaningful and measurable dimensions:

- Performance guarantees...Based on our first-hand experience, The Lab is able to accurately predict the scope and nature of non-technology improvements and benefits.
- Self-funding benefits...The Lab’s methodology ensures discovery of near-term, “hard dollar” financial benefits, sufficient to pay the costs of both improvement discovery and implementation – typically, many times over.
- Increased speed...The Lab’s standardized templates and tools allow us to analyze and implement activity-level improvements in a fraction of the time (one-third or less) required by internal teams or traditional consultancies.
- Fixed pricing... The Lab takes the guesswork out of budgeting and avoids cost overruns by performing each step in the improvement process for a fixed fee that includes all expenses, including travel.

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