

Methods for the specification and verification of business processes

MPB (6 cfu, 295AA)

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03 - Lifecycle

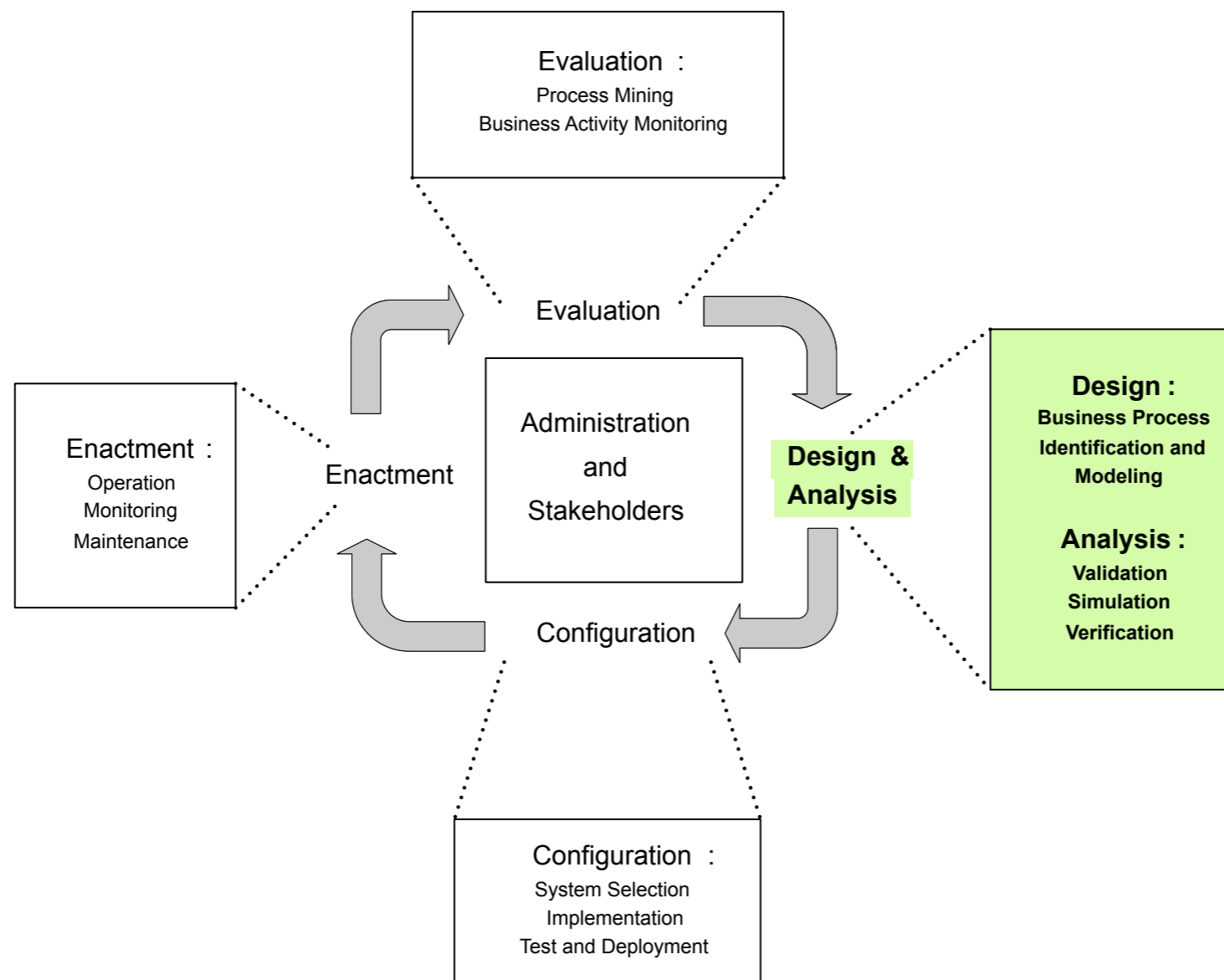


Business process lifecycle

Sect.1.2 of Business Process Management: Concepts, Languages, Architectures

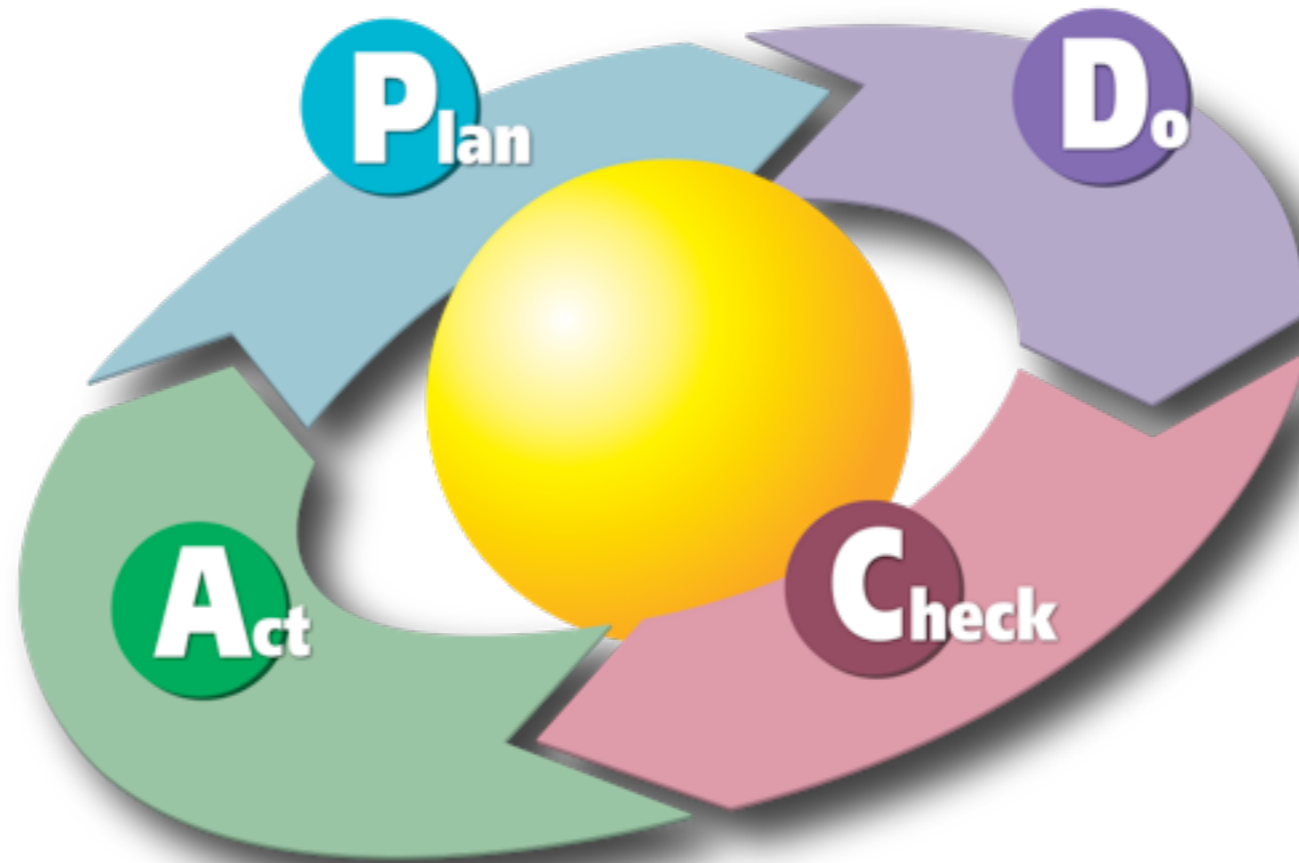
BP lifecycle

Five phases with logical dependencies,
organized along a cyclic structure

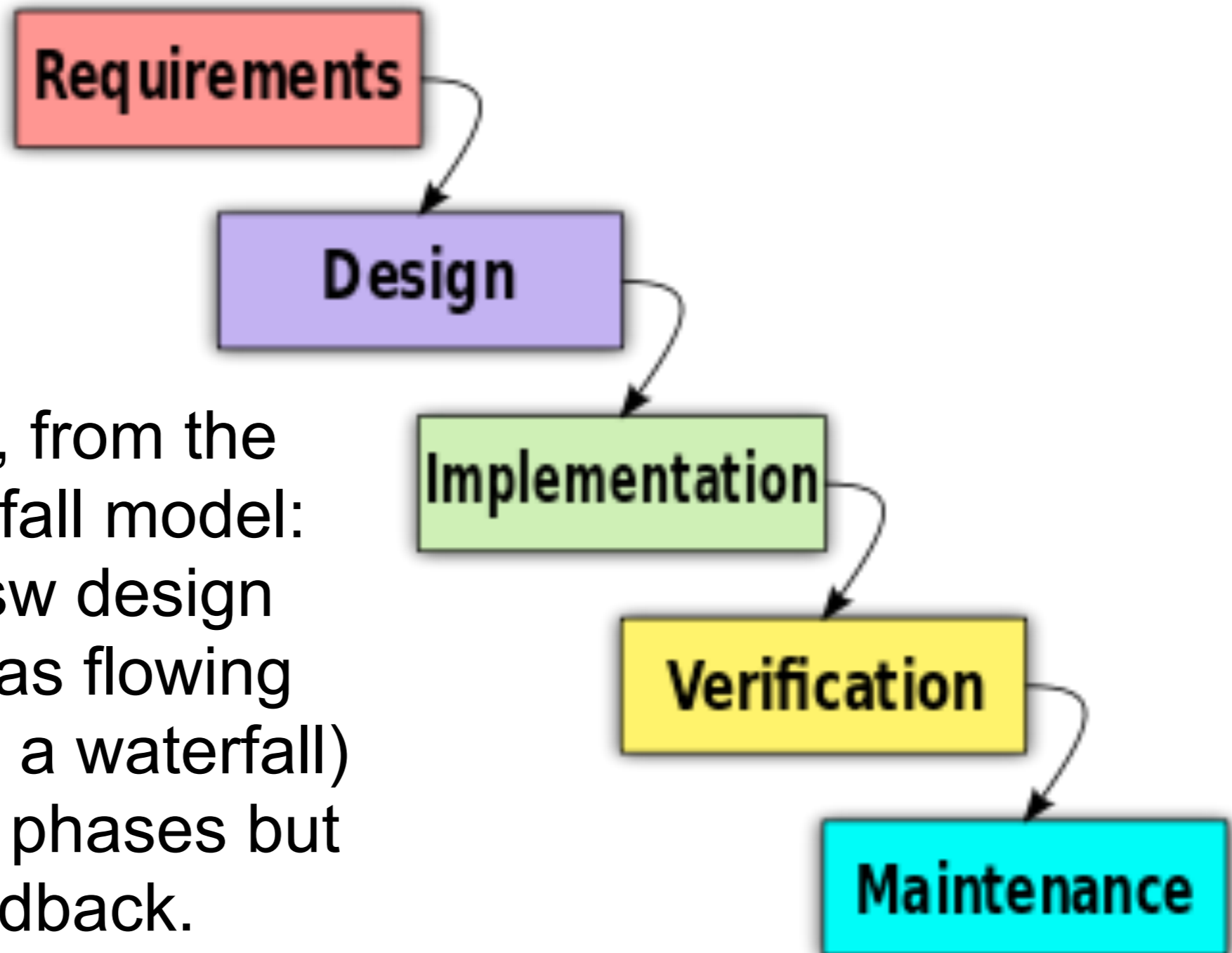


BP lifecycle

Similar to the PDCA scheme
(you may be more familiar with):
a management method for the control and
continuous improvement of products.



BP lifecycle vs waterfall



Different, e.g., from the classical waterfall model: a sequential sw design process seen as flowing downwards (like a waterfall) through various phases but without feedback.

BP lifecycle vs XP

Better structured than, e.g., extreme programming methodology: intended to improve responsiveness to changing requirements and productivity, advocates frequent releases, avoiding features until needed and a flat management structure

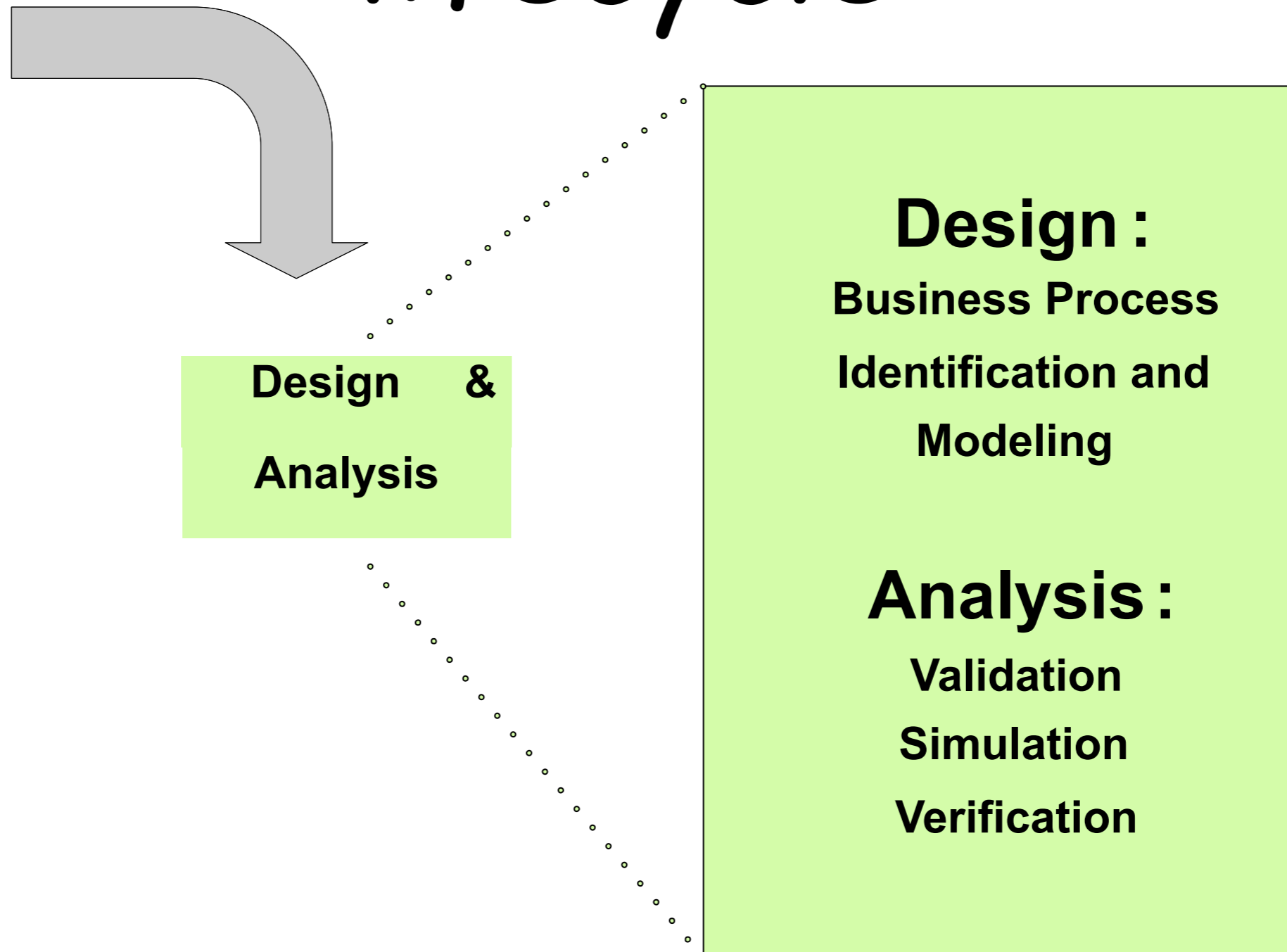


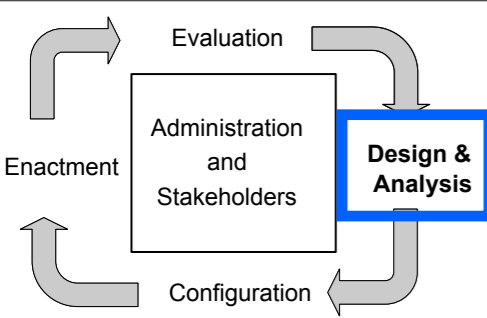
BP lifecycle

The logical dependencies between different phases do not imply a strict temporal ordering of their execution

Incremental and evolutionary approaches involving concurrent activities in multiple phases are frequently used

Business process lifecycle

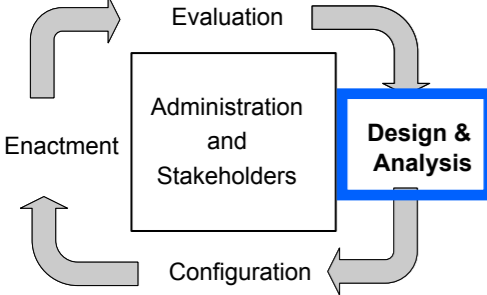




Design and analysis phase

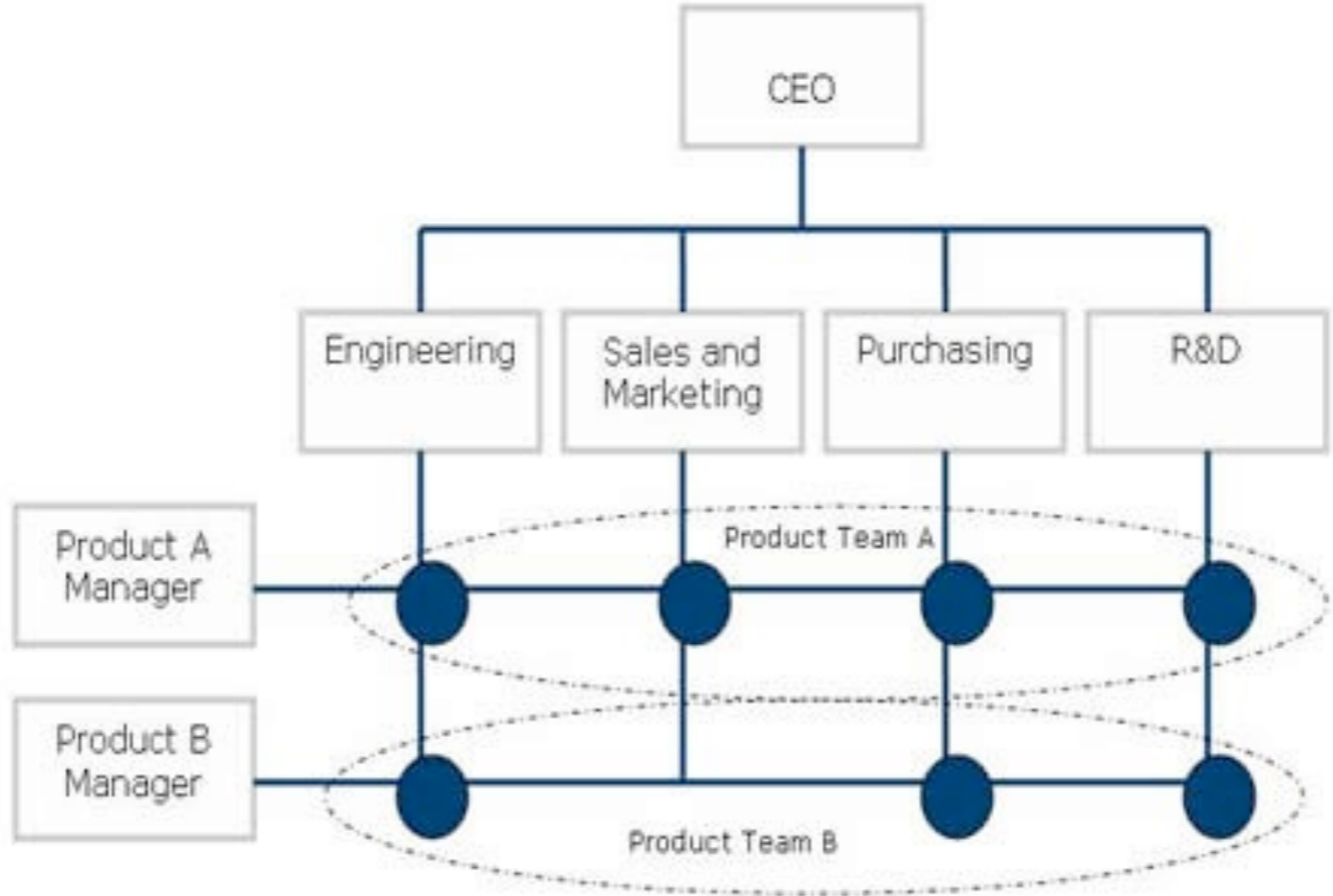
Require **surveys** on:
the business processes
their organizational environment
their technical environment

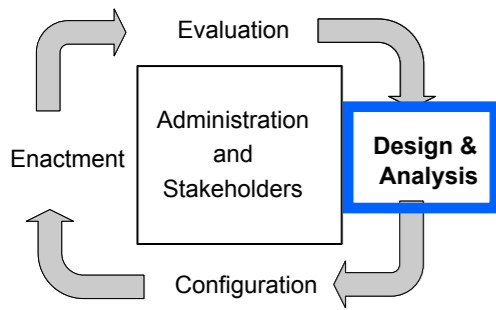
Based on these surveys, business processes are:
identified
reviewed
validated
represented (by business process models)



Design and analysis phase

Context: matrix organizational structure





Modeling

Core technical sub-phase

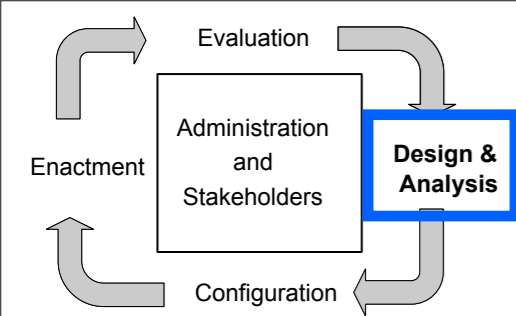
From informal descriptions
to a particular business process modeling notation

Explicit business process models expressed in a graphical notation facilitate communication about these processes so that different stakeholders can:

communicate efficiently

refine them

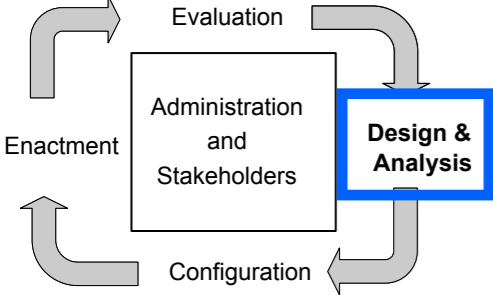
improve them



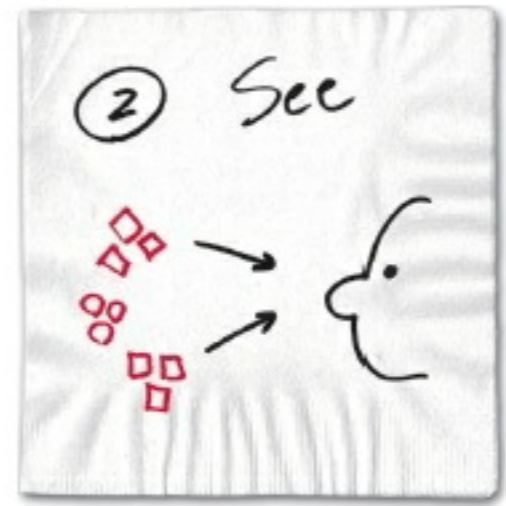
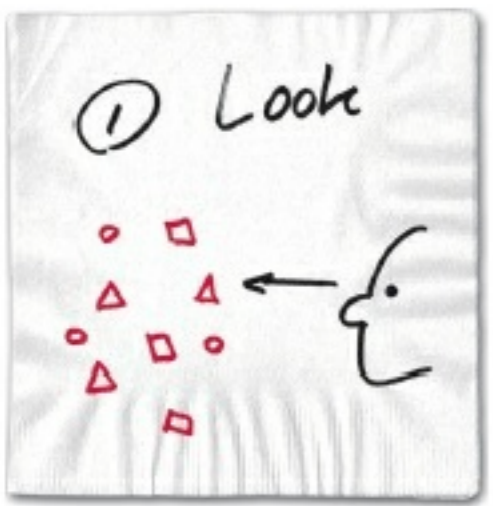
Validation

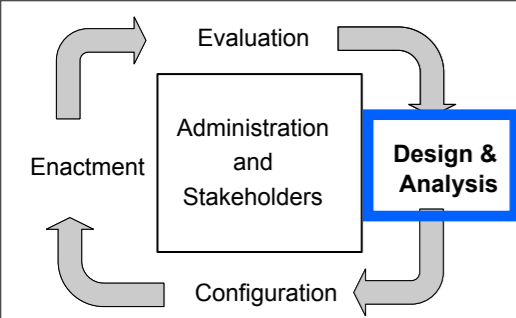
The initial design must be validated by checking that **all valid process instances are reflected** by the business process model

Useful instrument: a **workshop** where the persons involved can discuss the business process model



Look, see, imagine, show





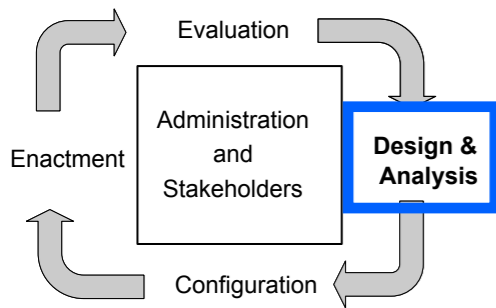
Simulation

Simulation techniques can support validation

Stakeholders can walk through the process in a step-by-step manner

Check whether processes expose all desired behaviour

Discover undesired execution sequences to show deficits in the process model



Verification

The business process model must be analyzed and improved to make sure:

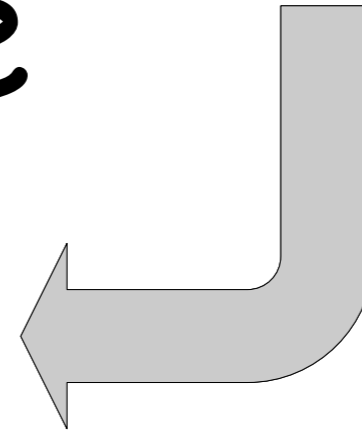
it actually includes all desired instances

it does not contain any undesired properties (e.g., absence of deadlock)

Error-prone activities, to be repeated several times, for which automatic tools are necessary

Business process lifecycle

Configuration

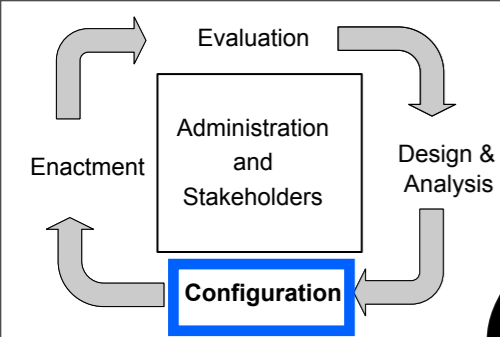


Configuration :

System Selection

Implementation

Test and Deployment

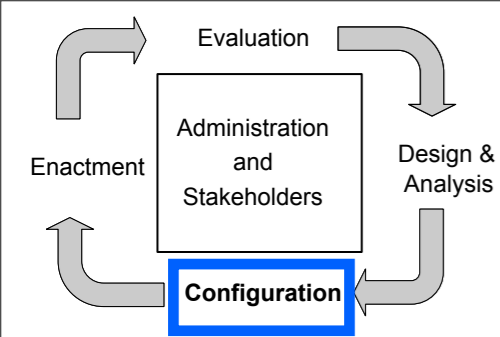


Configuration phase

From (verified) business process models to
implementation as

a set of policies, guidelines and procedures
(to be followed by employees)

a dedicated software system
(over a chosen implementation platform: a
business process management system)

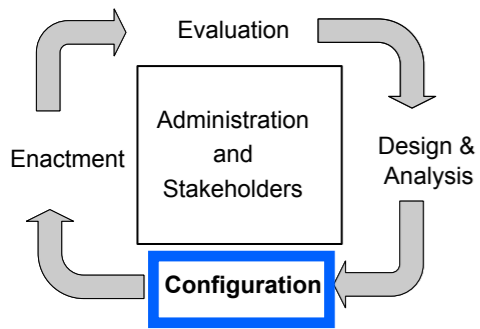


Enhanced models

Software systems usually require additional **technical information**

The model must be decorated with such data, to be exploited for configuring the system

Examples: interactions of the employees with the system, integration of existing systems, wrapping of legacy software



Testing

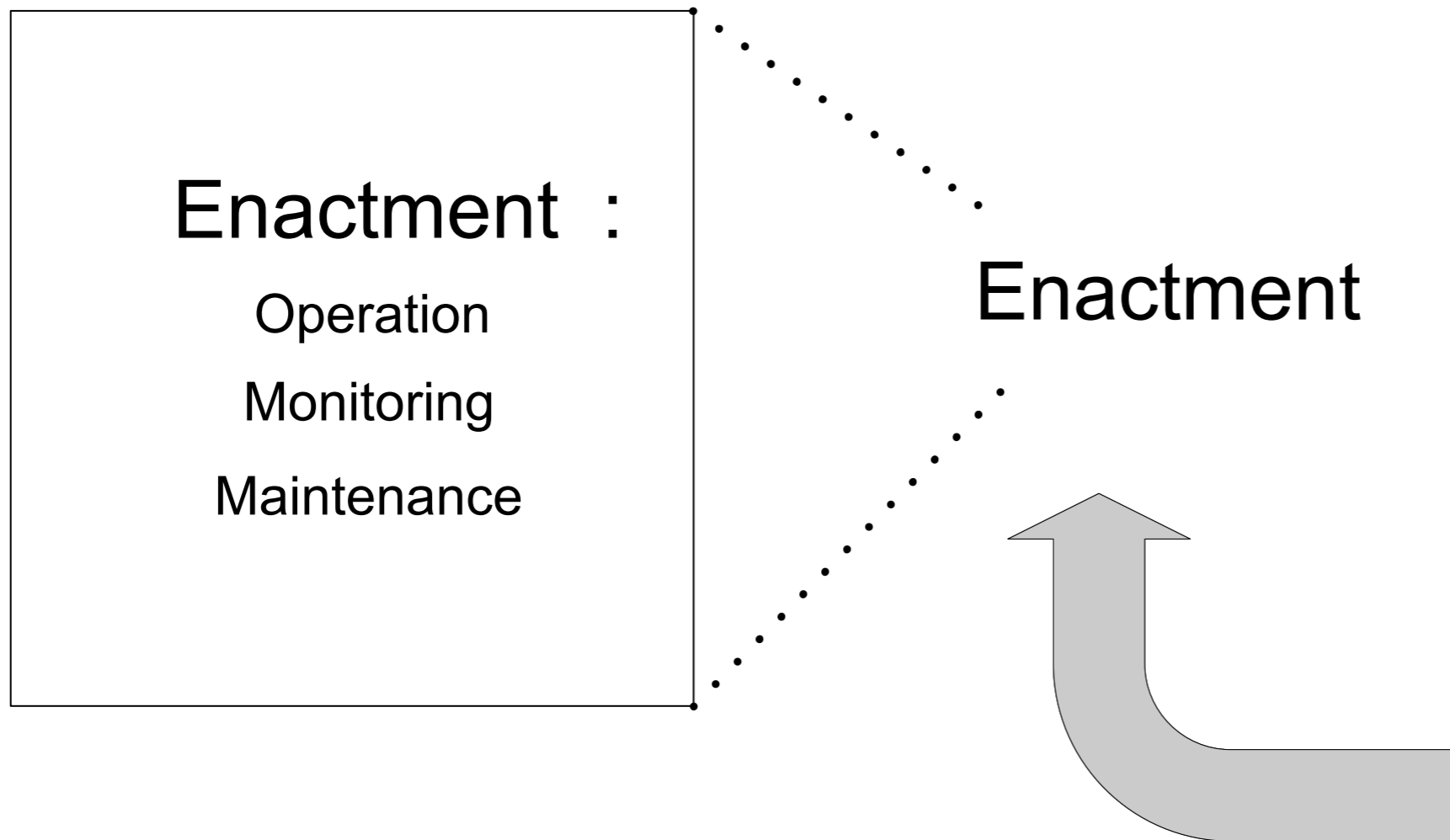
When the system is configured,
it must be tested before deployment

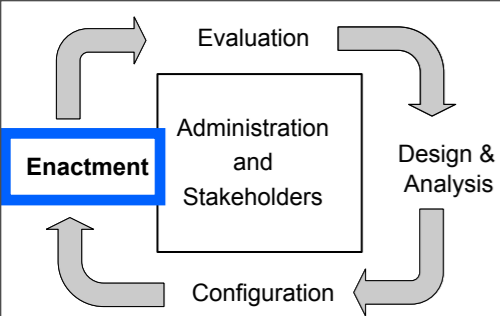
Usual testing techniques from sw engineering

Integration tests
Performance tests

Other possible activities: training of personnel,
migration of application data

Business process lifecycle



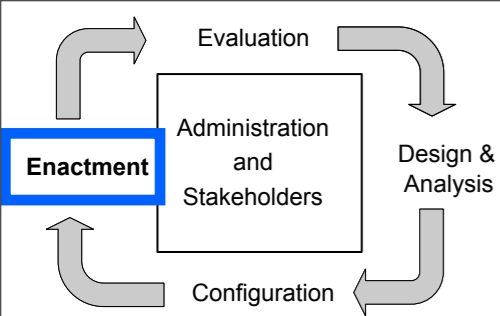


Enactment phase

When the system is deployed,
business process instances can be **enacted**

Typically, each process instance is initiated after
an **event** occurs
(e.g., the receipt of an order)

The system must control and monitor the
execution of all instances according to the model
to guarantee a correct process **orchestration**
(e.g., respecting dependencies)



Monitoring

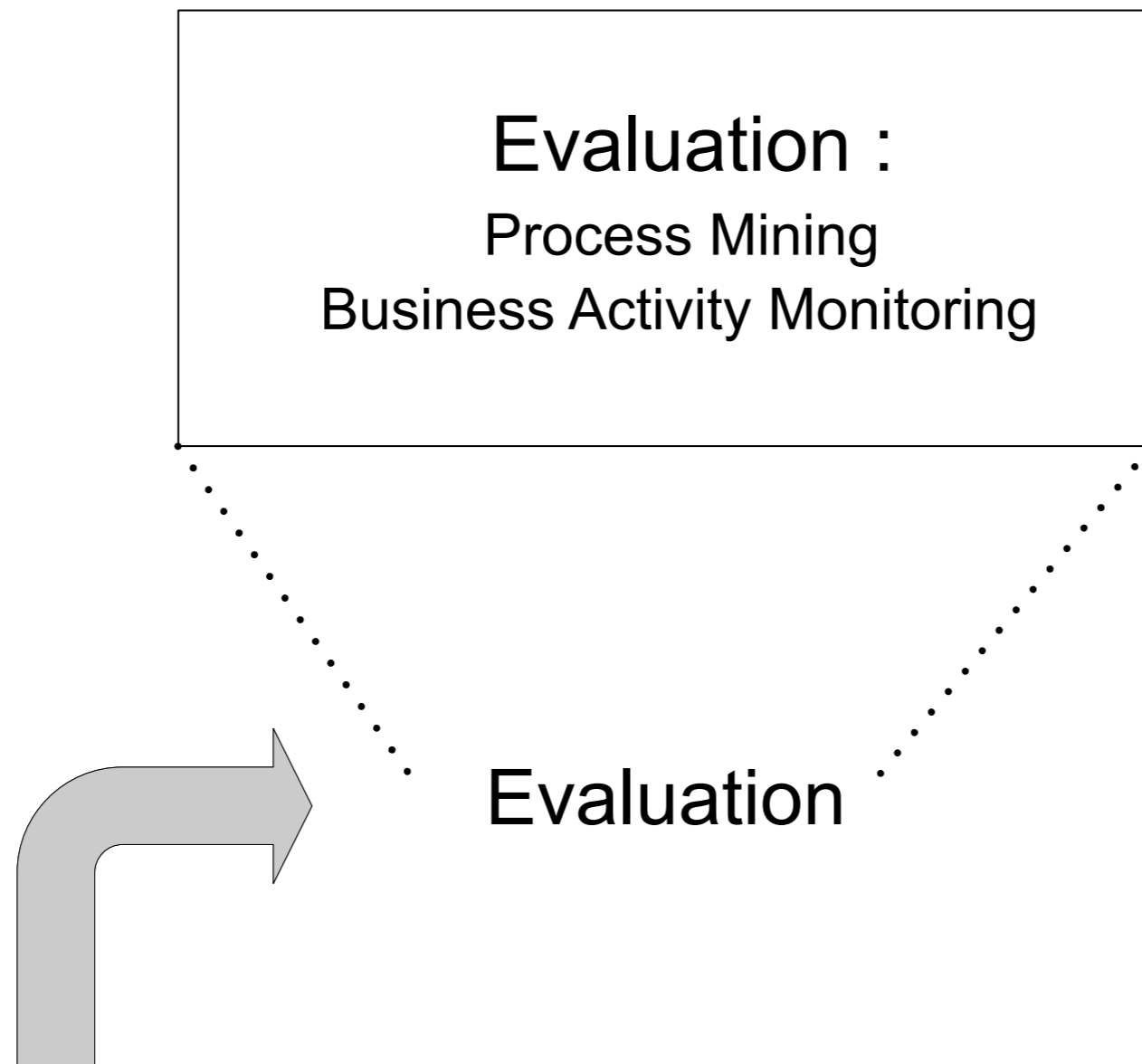
At each moment in time, the current **status** of any instance must be **known** (and **logged**) by the system as accurately as possible

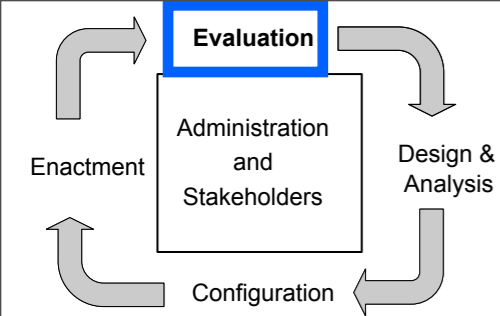
Both for process instances and activity instances

Fancy visualization techniques are usually provided by business process management systems (e.g., coloured activities)

Such information is highly valuable for customers (e.g., tracking of orders)

Business process lifecycle



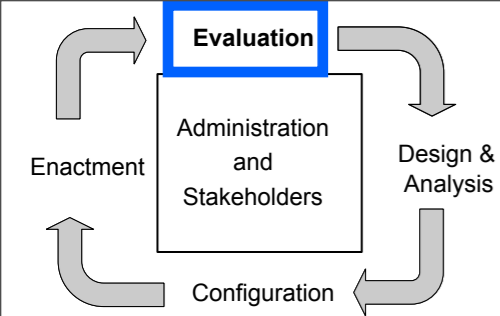


Evaluation phase

Execution **logs** are of fundamental importance

The information collected during instances enactment can be used to evaluate and improve business process models

Business **activity monitoring** and **process mining** techniques aim at identifying the quality of the model and the adequacy of the environment

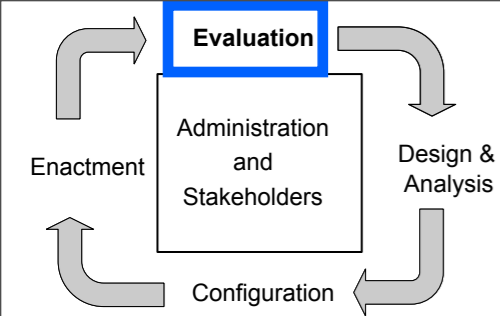


BA monitoring

Log files typically include information such as the start / end timestamps of activity instances

Activity monitoring serve to identify that certain activities take too long or need more resources

The same information can be also exploited in the simulation sub-phase of the design and analysis phase



Mining

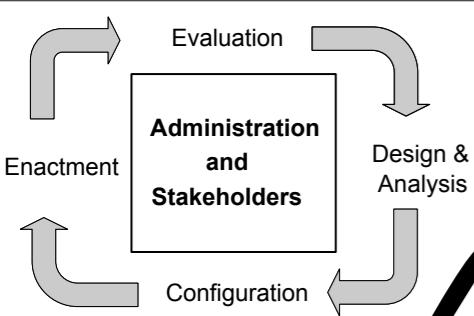
Process mining has recently turned into an active field of research

Thanks to mining techniques, execution logs can be used for the automatic generation of business process models in the design and analysis phase

They can also be used to assess and compare different models to see which fits best the enacted instances

Business process lifecycle

Administration
and
Stakeholders

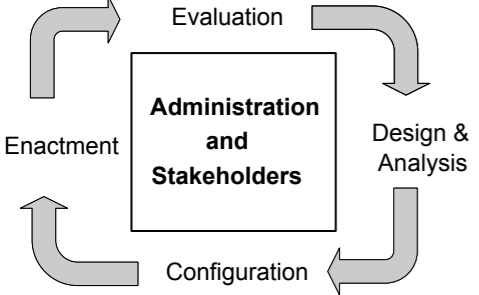


Administration phase

Business process management involves
numerous artefacts
at different levels of abstraction

Such artefacts need to be organized and managed
(storage, retrieval, disposal)

A well-structured repository is needed, with
powerful query mechanisms



Stakeholders

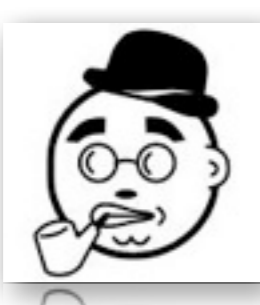
Several types of stakeholders co-exist in the process domain

They have different kind of educational background, knowledge, expertise, experience

Roughly, they can be classified into a few roles



CPO



BE



PD



PP



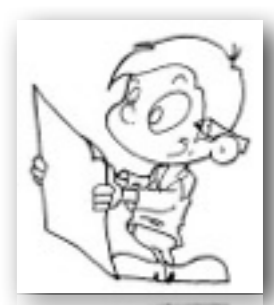
KW



PR



SA



Dev



Chief process officer

Top level management
(CPO reports directly to CEO / board of directors)

Responsible for defining rules, policies and guidelines and establishing control mechanisms

Responsible for standardizing and harmonizing business processes in the enterprise

Responsible of business process evolution in the presence of changing market requirements



Business engineer

Business domain expert

Responsible for defining strategic goals of the company and organizational business processes

Often equipped with non-technical educational background (mostly economics)

It is preferred to communicate with these stakeholders by means of simple-to-use process modeling notation



Process participants

Conduct the actual operational work during the enactment of business process instances

They are knowledgeable about the activities conducted and thus play a fundamental role for the modeling phase

Their information must be assembled by the process designer to compose an overall picture and put it in the process model



Knowledge worker

Process participants who use software systems to perform activities in a business process, often autonomously



Process responsible

Each business process model is assigned an individual who is held responsible for the correct and efficient execution of all business process instances of this model

Responsible for detecting inefficiencies and improving the process model

Close collaboration with process participants and the process designer is needed



System architect

Responsible for developing and configuring business process management systems on the information system infrastructure at hand



Developers

Information technology professionals

Responsible for creating the software artefacts required to implement business processes

Implementation of interfaces is a relevant part of the work done by developers