WHITEPAPER

Process & Roles

A good organization is the be-all and end-all

Personal Foreword

If you follow and read our white paper series regularly, then you are probably familiar with the fact that they start with a personal foreword.

Today's white paper is about processes and roles in the IT environment for SMEs.

Of course, some of you will find this topic annoying or unpleasant. After all, processes and roles are something for the bureaucratic large companies and often make simple things complicated and tedious. You yourself have probably often suffered from tough purchasing processes or heard excuses that the process "just demands it".

In today's white paper, we want to try to dispel the prejudices and show you the advantages and convince you of the value of pragmatic handling of processes and roles.

We hope you enjoy reading the white paper and look forward to your comments and remarks – also directly via LinkedIn – Steinbeis-Industrial-IT.

Your team from Steinbeis-Industrial-IT, the IT-Health-Company.

Processes & Roles – good organization is everything!

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1. Introduction

Digitization is not only changing business models, but also the requirements for internal IT. Especially in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), IT has often grown over years – pragmatic, flexible, committed but not always structured.
The fact that processes and roles are also an important basic building block for the digitization of your company is reflected in the resultingorder, which also has an impact on the quality of your data, for example.
In the white paper, we describe how SMEs can use simple means to establish clear processes and roles to improve efficiency, security and reliability - without too much effort and bureaucracy, but with impact and sustainability.

2. Definitions of terms

⇒ What is a process?

A process is a **structured sequence of activities** with a defined goal. It describes *what* needs to be done, *how* it works, and *who* is responsible.
For example , the IT onboarding process involves provisioning equipment, setting up access, and onboarding new employees. As part of the employee lifecycle, the offboarding process ensures that computers, ID's and data of departing employees are deleted or archived and, above all, that it is ensured that the person no longer has any access to the company's IT systems (a relatively simple task to increase IT security!).

⇒ What is a role?

A role describes **tasks, responsibilities and decision-making skills** – regardless of the job title. It provides clarity as to who is responsible for what.
Example: The role "Support Coordinator" is responsible for accepting and controlling IT tickets, even if the person is usually-called "IT Technician". It is therefore independent of the position.
An important role in the company is, among other things, the approver of money. These employees often have the role of the so-calledcost center manager.
In this example, you will find the upper limit of the budget in the description of the role for which the cost center manager is allowed to carry out approvals independently.

Why processes and roles belong together

Processes and roles are inextricably linked:

- Processes need clear responsibilities → roles
- Roles need structured flows → processes

Case study:
In the "Data Backup & Recovery" process, the IT administrator is responsible for carrying out the individual activities, while the IT security officer is responsible for monitoring and documentation. Without this role assignment, the process would remain incomplete – or would not be implemented at all.

The documentation of the process mentioned can be followed very easily: either by describing individual work steps in a checklist or by a graphical representation that simply illustrates who triggers the process, who is executing it and how, and what the expected result should be.
In Chapter 6, we will go into more detail about these tools.

4. Typical roles in SMB IT

SMEs usually do not have a large IT organization. Instead, a few employees keep IT running with the help of external service providers. The whole team takes care of all tasks without any real specialization. This means that all tasks can be carried out by all employees in the event of absence. The whole thing only works if everyone can slip into different roles,i.e. in the role of the IT admin he takes care of the installation of the servers, in the role of the software manager he carries out a check of the licenses once a year.

Roles	Examples of tasks
IT Admin	Device provisioning, server installation, patch management
Support Coordinator	Ticket acceptance, escalation, feedback
IT Security Officer	Security training and audits
Software Manager	License review, release planning

Note: Roles can be taken on multiple times by one person – the important thing is clarity, not the number of employees.

5. Typical processes in SME IT

Processes	Goal
IT-Onboarding	Fast, secure start of new employees
Data Backup & Recovery	Data loss prevention
Software Sharing	License Compliance, Legality, Security
IT Support & Incident Management	Rapid response and resolution of faults
IT Security & Data Protection	GDPR Compliance, Access Rights
IT Budget Planning	Cost control and investment planning

Tip: Start with the processes that are common and have a high impact, not the most complex.
What would we suggest to you, which is the best and easiest process to start with?

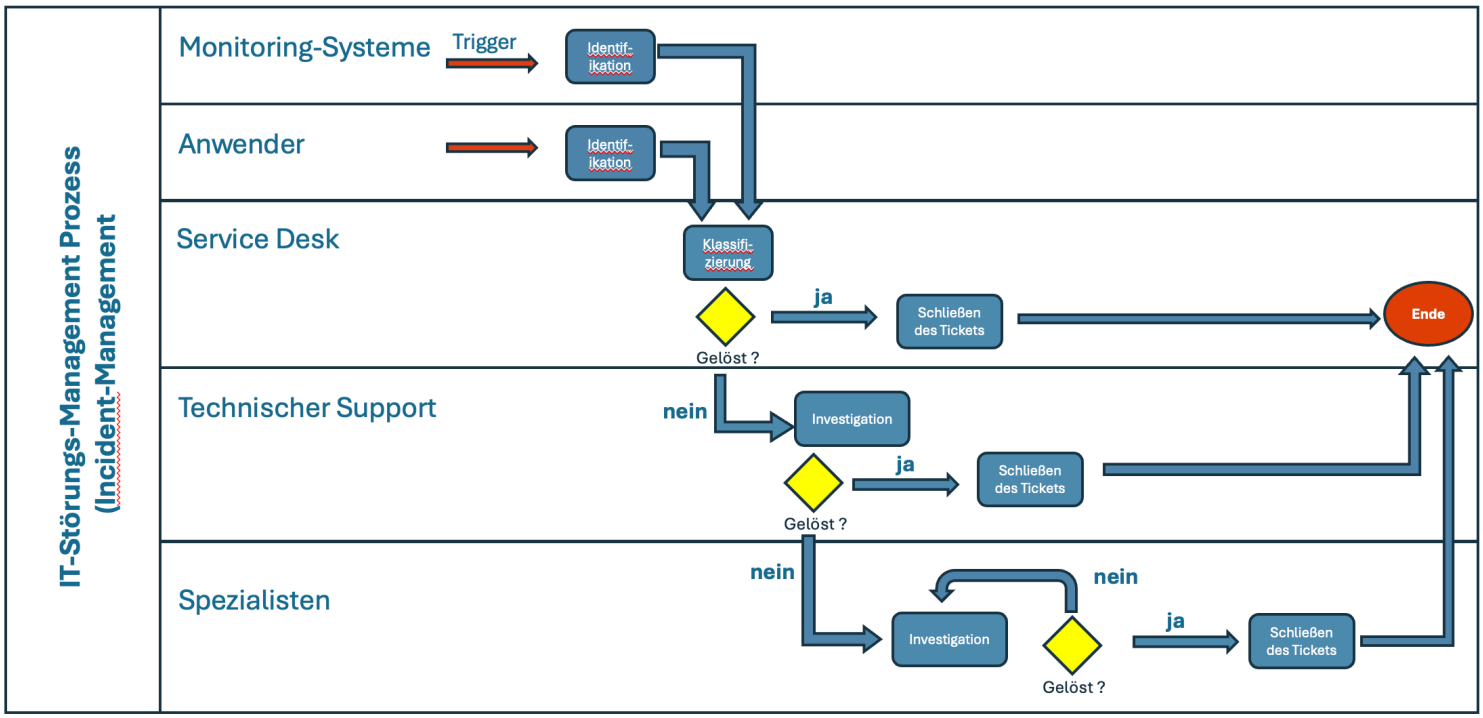
Our favorites are: access control to the company and systems, employee time tracking and billing – but we suggest IT incident management:

6. Practical example of IT incident management

Fault management is divided into the following steps:

1. Report a problem: the report is made either by a monitoring/alerting system or by a user who encounters a problem → create a ticket and enter the description.
2. Determine priority: Assess impact and urgency(how many users are affected, is production at a standstill?)
3. Initiate processing: Assignment to the responsible role "IT Support of the Service Desk" - if the employee of this role cannot find a solution, the role is forwarded to the role "Technical Support". If this role still does not find a solution, the role is forwarded to the role of "specialist".
4. At the end of the process, the solution is implemented and all those involved document the measures they have taken.
5. Feedback is sent to the users.
6. At the end, the ticket will be closed.

The graphical representation of this process can be seen in the following process diagram:



Process and roles in incident management

Tool tip: A simple ticketing system like Freshdesk or Zammad is often enough. The best way to do this is to read our white paper "Monitoring, Alerting and Ticketing"

Tools for process recording and optimization

Here we present a small selection of easy-to-use tools:

Tool	Purpose	Particularities
Miro	Visual Process Modeling	Ideal for workshops, collaborative
Lucidchart	Flowcharts & Diagram	Intuitive, good export functions
Trello/Jira	Tasks & Workflows	Good for operational implementation
Camunda /BPMN	Business Process Modeling	For structured process logic
Confluence	Documentation & Role Description	Can be combined with task management
Yed	Process Representation	Easy and fast

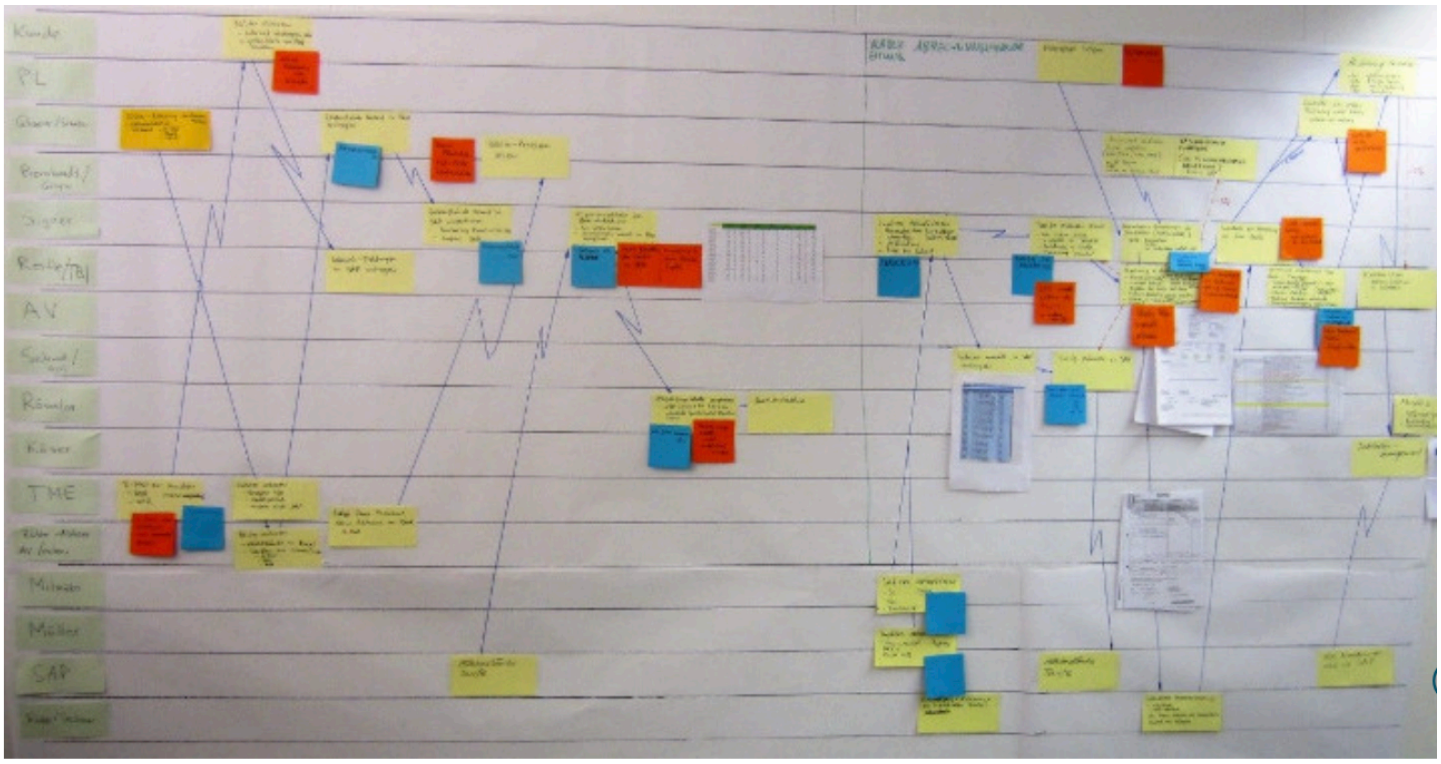
Recommendation for SMEs:
Start with yED, Miro or Trello – low-threshold, quick to use and easily scalable, not the most complex tool is the best – but the one that is used.

8. Introduction to practice – step by step

The best way to proceed is as follows:

1. Identify core processes → focus on 3-5 central processes.
2. Determining the current state → Which tasks are completed and how in a process?
3. Define roles → Who is responsible for what?
4. Document processes → visually, understandably, briefly.
5. Start pilot phase → testing, get feedback, adapt.
6. Anchoring in everyday life → communication, training, review.

Tip: Better 80% well implemented than 100% never started. The-best way to record processes is to record them on a large page of paper in which individual swimming lanes are drawn, representing the organisations involved. Each organization enters its contribution to value creation and refers to the next process step with an arrow. Uncertainties about responsibilities or expected results of a workstep are indicated by a flash when the actual assessment is taken. In steps 3 and 4, these ambiguities can be discussed and clarified.



Success Factors & Stumbling Blocks

Success:

- Managers as role models – only if managers adhere to processes and roles, respect them and do not seek the small official channels via connections, will employees apply the processes
- Employee involvement
- Employees must be involved in process design, nothing is more important to colleagues than being taken seriously. In the end, the employees are the ones who pay for the processes if they are poorly defined,
- Iterative approach
- No expectation of perfection! No one can always think about all the imponderables when it comes to process design, processes can always be improved
- Clear communication – Communicate the value and importance of the process to colleagues in simple terms, take criticism as well-intentioned feedback

Stumbling hazards:

- Roles and processes only on paper – If you define roles without practical relevance without involving employees, you have wasted a lot of time and money in order to be prepared for certification or an audit in the best case. But the company does not achieve any added value or success and each employee lives his work as he sees fit
- Processes too complex or not lived
  Too many security questions, approvals, which are more of a sign of mistrust of the colleague, are not seriously lived. In the end, processes that are too complex are only "clicked through" by employees via multi-selection, or the employees moan about the over-bureaucratization and the additional effort
- No regular review

Processes are constantly changing due to new technologies, machines and framework conditions. Therefore, it is important to check the definitions regularly every 1-2 years to see whether they still correspond to reality or whether they have potential for optimization.

Conclusion & Recommendations for Action

Processes and roles are not bureaucracy, but tools for clarity, efficiency and security.
SMEs in particular benefit from a lean, practical introduction.

Recommendation:

- Select 3 Processes (Chapters 4 and 5)
- Define 3 roles
- Use 1 Tool (Chapter 7)

➔ and start iteratively.

We hope that you enjoyed our article on the topic of "Processes & Roles".
If you have any questions or suggestions about our article, we look forward to hearing from you by e-mail. Feel free to follow us on LinkedIn and visit our website.

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