

CREATING INSIGHTS IN LONG-TERM PROCESSES

CONTEXT

A global investment bank wanted to add Process Mining to their Business Process Management tool stack and chose their “Idea to Project” process as their first project. These projects included values from hundreds of thousands to over multiple billions of dollars as investment.

CLIENT CHALLENGE

The client’s challenge was that they had just limited visibility in how projects were approved and if there is a relationship between investment volume and project cost. There was also a very structured, highly monitored process defined, which showed that almost no project followed this process.

We followed our six-step approach to Process Mining projects to deliver this first project, and found these opportunities:

- Data was captured inconsistently and not completely. You needed a lot of context information (hidden in codes or in the knowledge of people) to understand why one case resulted in a successful approval and another one with comparable statistics and process flow ended in rejection.
- The data was also incomplete which resulted in a significant data transformation effort to create an event log that was usable. This included for example missing end time stamps, so that the team had to calculate the duration of tasks approximately (and, depending on the way how it was calculated, led to slightly different results that could lead to different results).

SNAPSHOT



Process Intelligence



Global Investment Bank



Process Mining

PAIN POINTS

- Lack of performance insights
- Wonder why the standard process was not followed
- No predictability of project investment volume to project costs.

RESULTS

- Successfully created event logs for process mining, allowing the client to learn this new technology.
- Found inconsistencies in process execution that led the client to design a functional process.
- Created improved visibility for stakeholders, which then led to follow-on work within the bank.

- The underlying process was not as simple as the process designers initially thought. We found hundreds of variations and just a single digit of cases followed the defined process, even after we filtered down the data set to include just the start and end activities of each phase in the project lifecycle. This shows that there was no control over the process and explained why the traditional reporting activities that the bank did in the past did not deliver the necessary data base for predictions and planning.
- The presentation of the results was done in a presentation format. This was partially due to missing features in the process mining software (for example, the missing visualization of plotter charts to show investment value in relation to project cost), but also because stakeholders needed to be convinced to approve this new technology as standard. A good process mining project will apply data-storytelling principles and show all results in dashboards.

RESULTS & BENEFITS

The results of the Process Mining project were presented to the stakeholders, and they approved the continuous use of this technology going forward as the default monitoring.

The initial project allowed the client not only to understand the nuances and capabilities of process mining and learn how to use the tools, but it also created excitement about the possibilities to add this technology to any of their business processes, so that they get the “real picture” of what is done in process execution. This also included a larger focus on data capturing and data quality that is needed to allow for an automated analysis.

WORDS OF ADVICE

When implementing process mining technology in your organization for the first time, add not only additional time for learning for everyone involved, but also choose the right process as your first example. In the example above, the client had about 100 attributes to each project and there were thousands of relationship permutations possible. Keep it simple and choose 5-10 attributes at maximum, and rather look for a large number of cases (tens or hundreds of thousands if possible), so that the data set becomes “richer” and has more variations to analyze.

You also might want to implement a bunch of smaller process mining projects using “static” data exports after your first project instead of one large project that automates everything – you want to build momentum for your program and create excitement in your stakeholders about the new capability you are bringing in.