

BETTER BUSINESS PROCESS MODELING

A Comparison of IDERA ER/Studio Business Architect and Microsoft Visio

Business process models are not meant to be just a one-point-in-time documentation of business processes. They should be dynamic and flexible enough to change as needed. [Microsoft Visio](#) is a good tool for the capabilities it provides; however, its scope is limited as business needs mature and evolve. [IDERA ER/Studio Business Architect](#) provides a focused set of features for establishing a business architecture, offering deep functionality for conceptual modeling, business process modeling, and capturing the connections between process and data.

This document is meant to outline the business needs for Business Process Modeling (BPM) and compare IDERA ER/Studio Business Architect (ERBA) to Microsoft Visio to help you determine the relevant capabilities to fit your needs.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER WITH BUSINESS MODELING TOOLS

- **TRACEABILITY** - In the case of business processes, you need to know who is responsible for a task, why this task is performed, and how it is automated by the IT system infrastructure. You also need visibility to the effects that a change to the processes can have across the business.
- **INTEGRATED MODELS** - Documenting business data flows involves different types of models such as business processes, data models, etc. You need those models to be tightly integrated to be the most effective.
- **CUSTOMIZATION** - Every business is different, so the modeling solution you select needs to take that into account. Your business model should be able to adapt and change to reflect the specific details that make your business unique, while maintaining consistency across models.
- **COLLABORATION & SHARING** - Information that is in the model is important to all the people in your company. Your colleagues should be able to access the models as needed based on work roles and understand how their function contributes to the business goals.

TOP 6 BUSINESS PROCESS MODELING FEATURES YOU MAY NEED

Metadata Repository

MS Visio is primarily a tool for basic diagramming, and it cannot capture & organize metadata for further usage. IDERA's ERBA captures true metadata associated with business processes allowing you the ability to model the relationships between business processes and data models. Additionally, you can export the information into a variety of formats and organize models by project for more effective sharing across teams.

Expanded Task Properties

Organizations who mature beyond a high-level disconnected diagram need BPM with extended properties and categories within the model. ERBA has standard properties such as categories & assignments, task properties such as loops and more extensive support for objects and properties including extensive events, tasks, and gateways for documenting your processes with rich validation capabilities.

Change Impact Analysis

Often organizations need to understand data lineage and analyze the impact of changes made to the models. For example, "what does the data connect to elsewhere?" And, "How does the business process affect other data?" This objective requires complex version control and check-in that tracks any changes made between the models and data structures. This cannot be accomplished using MS Visio. With ERBA, you can not only track such changes, but you can create impact analysis reports that show interrelationships between process, data, stewardship, business rule, diagram usage, heritage, and connecting objects.

BPMN 2.0 Standards

For organizations that want to meet BPMN 2.0 standards, Microsoft Visio does little to help in this regard. ERBA provides automatic validation of process diagrams to ensure compliance with BPMN 2.0 specifications, plus you can view syntax violations against the specifications for further compliance control.

Compliance With Regulations

Some businesses need to comply with industry and government regulations (e.g. GDPR, HIPAA, PCI DSS, and SOX) by clearly documenting certain business processes. This is difficult to do effectively using MS Visio. With ERBA, you can assign stewardship roles as owners for specific processes. CRUD (create, read, update, delete) can be used as well to establish what you can do with the data like permissions to make changes. You can also designate which data is considered sensitive and personally identifiable, to ensure compliance with internal business standards and external regulations.

Data & Conceptual Model Integration

Many organizations evolve and need to integrate data models, conceptual models and business process models across the business and maintain consistency between them. This cannot be done within MS Visio. With ERBA, you have the capability to model the relationships between people, processes and data, and to export the information into a variety of formats for better collaboration and sharing.

EXAMPLES OF ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS FOR BUSINESS PROCESSES

- I need to model the data requirements and interactions for all our projects.
- Our company has gone through acquisitions and I need to streamline all of our business processes and data processes in one place. We need to get out of the chaos created by documents scattered in Sharepoint, Word, Excel and Access databases.
- Our organization has gone through a restructuring and our challenge is consolidating terms from the various departments and relating them to data objects.
- I want to identify the stewards who have access to the information via BPM.
- I would like a better perspective on our change management and data governance processes.

With ER/Studio Business Architect, you can achieve the above objectives. ERBA can access a scalable model repository for storing your business process and conceptual models to show a high-level visual representation of an organization, and share them with key stakeholders.

For BPMN 2.0 users, ERBA includes extensive events, tasks, and gateways for documenting processes, and rich validation capabilities. It also includes the ability to document complex conversations with choreography to provide visibility to touchpoints.

You can publish and view business process models, including BPMN 2.0 objects. Align business goals with regulatory requirements to enable a foundation for data governance and improve compliance to audits. Increase visibility of organizational processes and data usage to identify gaps in your processes through BPMN-compliant process modeling.

With ER/Studio Enterprise Team Edition (which includes ERBA), you can extend even further with business glossaries, collaboration tools and rich data modeling capabilities that help tie business process models into the data elements of an organization. These capabilities can help you fulfill even more business needs such as:

- I would like to look up business terms in a glossary and see various different perspectives and definitions.
- I want to drill in deeper and see who owns the processes related to the business term (for Data Governance).
- I want to see all related processes in the glossary and know what needs to be done to change the process. And I want to see the business rules associated with that process.
- I want to have a business capability matrix overlaid with our technology portfolios and I want to use our technology portfolios to dive deeper into business processes.
- I would like interconnectivity between terms, models and users.

TECHNICAL COMPARISON IDERA ER/STUDIO BUSINESS ARCHITECT VS. MICROSOFT VISIO CAPABILITIES

ELEMENT TYPES

	ER/Studio BA	VISIO
TASKS AND SUB PROCESSES	●	●
Loop Markers	●	●
Ad Hoc Task	●	●
Loop Task	●	●
Compensation Task	●	●
Parallel Multi Instance Task	●	●
Sequential Multi Instance Task	●	●
Task Markers	●	●
User Task	●	●
Manual Task	●	●
Send Task	●	●
Receive Task	●	●
Service Task	●	●
Business Rule Task	●	●
Script Task	●	●
Reference Task	●	
Sub Processes	●	●
Embedded Sub Process	●	●
Reusable Sub Process	●	
Transaction Sub Process	●	●
Event Sub Process	●	●

TECHNICAL COMPARISON IDERA ER/STUDIO BUSINESS ARCHITECT VS. MICROSOFT VISIO CAPABILITIES

ELEMENT TYPES

	ER/Studio BA	VISIO
Call Activities	●	●
Call Tasks	●	●
Call Sub Processes	●	●
Call Processes	●	
Task Properties	●	
Status	●	
Start Quantity	●	
Loop Condition	●	
Loop Counter	●	
Loop Max	●	
Loop Test Time	●	
Loop Ordering	●	
Loop Flow Condition	●	
Click to Expand Sub Processes	●	
Click Reusable Sub Process to Go To New Diagram	●	
EVENTS	●	●
Interrupting	●	●
Non-Interrupting	●	●
Catching	●	●
Throwing	●	●

TECHNICAL COMPARISON

IDERA ER/STUDIO BUSINESS ARCHITECT

VS. MICROSOFT VISIO CAPABILITIES

ELEMENT TYPES

	ER/Studio BA	VISIO
Start Events	●	●
None	●	●
Message	●	●
Timer	●	●
Error	●	●
Escalation	●	●
Compensation	●	●
Conditional	●	●
Signal	●	●
Multiple	●	●
Parallel Multiple	●	●
Intermediate Events	●	●
None	●	●
Message	●	●
Timer	●	●
Error	●	●
Escalation	●	●
Cancel	●	●
Compensation	●	●
Conditional	●	●
Link	●	●

TECHNICAL COMPARISON

IDERA ER/STUDIO BUSINESS ARCHITECT

VS. MICROSOFT VISIO CAPABILITIES

ELEMENT TYPES

	ER/Studio BA	VISIO
Intermediate Events	●	●
Signal	●	●
Multiple	●	●
Parallel Multiple	●	●
End Events	●	●
None	●	●
Message	●	●
Error	●	●
Escalation	●	●
Cancel	●	●
Compensation	●	●
Terminate	●	●
Signal	●	●
Multiple	●	●
Event Properties	●	
Add Multiple Triggers	●	
CHOREOGRAPHY	●	
MESSAGES	●	●
CONVERSATION	●	

TECHNICAL COMPARISON

IDERA ER/STUDIO BUSINESS ARCHITECT

VS. MICROSOFT VISIO CAPABILITIES

ELEMENT TYPES

	ER/Studio BA	VISIO
GATEWAYS		
Exclusive		
Exclusive with Marker (X)		
Inclusive		
Parallel		
Complex		
Event Based		
Exclusive Event Based		
Parallel Event Based		
Gateway Properties		
Incoming Condition		
Outgoing Condition		
POOLS AND SWIMLANES		
Vertical		
Multiple Lane		
Nested Lanes		
Multi Instance Indicator		
Set Participant		
Link Steward or Business Unit		
Remove Lanes (Black Box)		

TECHNICAL COMPARISON IDERA ER/STUDIO BUSINESS ARCHITECT VS. MICROSOFT VISIO CAPABILITIES

ELEMENT TYPES

	ER/Studio BA	VISIO
CONNECTION OBJECTS		
DATA OBJECTS		
Set Input/Output		
Set Collection		
Required for start		
Produced at completion		
EXTERNAL DATA OBJECTS		
Entity		
Table		
Data Store		
Data Feed		
Report		
Flat File		
REFERENCE OBJECTS		
Steward		
Business Unit		
Application		
Business Rule		
Business Element		
DRAWING SHAPES		

TECHNICAL COMPARISON

IDERA ER/STUDIO BUSINESS ARCHITECT

VS. MICROSOFT VISIO CAPABILITIES

	ER/Studio BA	VISIO
OTHER FEATURES	●	●
Search Diagram	●	●
Filtered View	●	
Tree View of Diagrams	●	
BPMN Validation	●	
Appearance	●	●
Fill Color	●	●
Font Updates	●	●
Alignment and Grouping	●	●
Grouping	●	●
Align	●	●
Snap to Grid	●	●
Standard Properties	●	
Set Categories	●	
Set Assignments	●	
Assign Links	●	
Include Description	●	
Include Notes	●	
Create AdHoc Properties	●	

TECHNICAL COMPARISON

IDERA ER/STUDIO BUSINESS ARCHITECT

VS. MICROSOFT VISIO CAPABILITIES

	ER/Studio BA	VISIO
DIAGRAM TYPES		
BPMN		
Conceptual Model		
Other		
Usage (CRUD)		
Impact Analysis		
Repository Checkin (add-on feature)		
Import Data Models as Conceptual Models		

CONCLUSION

ER/Studio Business Architect simplifies how business stakeholders and data architects document the way the company uses data and aligns processes to meet business objectives. MS Visio is focused on allowing users to draw pictures to show business processes. Although this is helpful, it can be quite limiting. ERBA goes a step above with mapping and modeling the relationships between processes, people and data to provide visibility into the business. With ERBA, both business and technical users can more effectively collaborate to ensure compliance with internal business standards and external mandatory regulations. ER/Studio Business Architect helps data professionals and business stakeholders communicate better and define a business-driven enterprise architecture.

ER/STUDIO BUSINESS ARCHITECT

- Design business process and conceptual models to align with business goals
- Map and model the relationships between people, processes, and data
- Easily export conceptual models to ER/Studio Data Architect to create logical models
- Quickly validate that business process models meet BPMN 2.0 specifications
- Comply with regulatory requirements by identifying sensitive data elements

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