# PROCESS MANAGEMENT AND BURNOUT PREVENTION

A Human-Centred Approach to Reducing Work-Related Stress







YEVGEN BOGODISTOV JÜRGEN MOORMANN



### **Process Management and Burnout Prevention**

"This is an extremely interesting and novel approach to burnout, exploring the link between business process management and burnout. This is a must-read for those interested in both process management and burnout. And the links between both."

—Sir Cary L. Cooper, CBE, Professor of Organizational Psychology & Health, Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, England, President of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, President of the Institute of Welfare, Co-Chair of the National Forum for Health and Wellbeing at Work

"In an era when AI and emerging technologies are reshaping work environments, this book presents a groundbreaking, human-centric approach to process management, vital for enhancing employee engagement and mental well-being. Its fusion of empathetic strategies with practical insights offers a transformative perspective on workplace efficiency and burnout prevention, making it essential reading for leaders and HR professionals in creating sustainable, healthy organizational cultures."

—Ganna Pogrebna, Professor of Behavioral Analytics and Data Science at the University of Sydney, Australia, and Lead of the Behavioural Data Science strand at the Alan Turing Institute, London, England. Executive Director of the Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Futures Institute at Charles Sturt University, Australia

"Blending rigorous academic research with real-world insights, this book is a must-read for anyone seeking to navigate the complexities of work efficiency and psychological well-being."

—Kurt Matzler, Professor of Strategic Management, University of Innsbruck, Austria, and Director of the Executive MBA programme at the Management Center Innsbruck, Austria. Author of The High Performance Mindset: Race Across America, listed in Forbes Ten Best Business Books of 2023

"Many of us are working very hard to make the world a better place, sometimes so hard that we risk falling into the state of burnout. Burnout may have various causes, but it most often results from how we organise our work and perceive our job demands. This book gives us guidance on avoiding burnout, with a touch of fun and magic on the side!"

—Petra Molthan-Hill, Professor of Sustainable Management and Education for Sustainable Development at Nottingham Business School, England. Co-Chair of the UN Principles of Responsible Management (PRME) Working Group on Climate Change & the Environment

"If we want to maintain a strong and healthy workforce, we need to change the way we work. This also means that we face the enormous challenge of training and developing employees and managers towards a people-centred working environment. The authors show us the way forward."

—Nils Stieglitz, President and CEO of the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management. Professor for Strategic Management, Frankfurt a.M., Germany

Yevgen Bogodistov · Jürgen Moormann

# Process Management and Burnout Prevention

A Human-Centred Approach to Reducing Work-Related Stress



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### **Foreword**

As the Vice President People & Organisation at the sporting goods company PUMA, I face many challenges ranging from individual to organisational issues that I have to respond to. We organised the work at PUMA in a very human-centred manner. On the one hand, this increases the commitment of individual employees, but on the other hand, it leads to very intensive work by the HR team. We are constantly looking for new ways to further improve our HR processes as there is no limit to perfection.

While looking for fresh approaches to organising work, we cooperate with several research institutions, such as the Management Center Innsbruck, known as MCI: The Entrepreneurial School. During one of my visits to Innsbruck, I was introduced to Yevgen and, later, to his colleague (and now co-author of this book) Jürgen. I must say, I was overwhelmed and at the same time inspired by the way they see human-centred work in a company. They talked about the synergy effect between (as we know it as less human-centred) process management and (as we know it as less process-oriented) HR management. Their idea was somehow simple but new—they argued for the necessity to organise work differently and, hence, avoid psychological strain in firms. Moreover, both argued not only that the strain will be prevented but engagement can be enhanced.

I travel a lot and I meet many people (be they employees, or middle and top managers) from for-profit and non-profit organisations around the world. I have found that burnout is one of the issues that is becoming more and more pressing. In the European Union, the European Agency for Safety and

Health at Work has launched a "Healthy Workplaces 2023–2025" campaign, and I know why: the new technologies that were originally intended to improve working life have created new causes of stress, constant distractions, and the "monkey mind"—a state in which employees jump back and forth between many tasks, trying to maintain a high level of effectiveness combined with constant availability. Employees have less time for themselves, forget the importance of sports, and fall into a state of complete exhaustion. While we at PUMA are succeeding in terms of employee wellbeing, I see other companies suffering from—let's face it—outdated methods of work organisation. In these times, Yevgen and Jürgen's concept seems to be an urgent call for a rethink in process management.

As you read this book, you may find that you have encountered similar problems. It doesn't matter if your background is in HR (like me) or organizing business processes, their thoughts could be very helpful to you. As Yevgen and Jürgen talked about the way they treat processes and their respective employees, it struck me how differently organisations would look and function if they implemented just 10 per cent of their suggestions. I believe that we wouldn't have to deal with problems like workplace burnout—they simply wouldn't happen!

This book is a great work by authors who not only have profound experience in research but also in practice in the two fields of process management and business psychology. Jürgen is not only a well-known professor of process management, he also advises large financial companies on how their processes can be improved or completely redesigned. Yevgen is a known professor in the field of business psychology and x-HR director who knows all the intricacies of working with employees and managers. Together, they have not only written a practical book on human-centred process management. They have created a comprehensive book that combines current research with simple practical suggestions. I think this book is exactly what all companies urgently need!

However, the book also states that human-centred process management is not an easy task. As both authors write (and I agree with them), people are "autopoietic" actors. They evolve and adapt their behaviour to each new step the company takes. Fortunately, the book delivers several suggestions in this regard. I especially like the detailed description of Design Thinking and how to apply it to the needs of employees. Equipped with this (and many other) tool(s), you will be ready to rethink your organisation and avoid psychological problems. Happy and satisfied employees are the best indicator of your company's success. At PUMA, we know that!

I am grateful for the opportunity to write these words for this book. I am pleased to have contributed to this work by sharing my thoughts and ideas. Now I hope you will enjoy this text and learn something new for your organisation, be it a non-profit or for-profit. Good luck on the journey that begins on the very next page!

Dietmar Knoess Vice President People and Organisation PUMA SE Herzogenaurach, Germany

### **Preface**

"Work hard, be kind, and amazing things will happen", said US-American talk-show host, writer, and producer Conan O'Brien and we disagree. First, working hard and being kind may go at odds with each other as you will learn on the pages of our book. Second, if you work hard and be kind the opposite can happen—you might end up in a state of burnout. Here, we say "might" and not "will", because there is indeed a way to be efficient, effective, remain kind, and achieve the most amazing thing—you will enjoy your work. It sounds like a utopia while, if you look around, our working life runs with an accelerating speed into a dystopia—a working realm that is undesirable and frightening. Look around and talk to your colleagues. How many of them have a vision of a happy working society?

Society appears to be split into two big groups—those who stick to the past talking about "how good things used to be", even though the 1980s will never come back, and those who live in the far future romanticising what we need, even though they have no clue about how to get there. This makes the book market either rather conservative, emphasising "business as usual" or very romantic, calling for more "mindfulness meditation, well-being, and positive psychology". Unfortunately, both streams lack a connection to reality. Of course, reality is subjective as we make sense of what we see, and our vision (of Yevgen and Jürgen) is also our subjective perception of the situation that deviates from the groups mentioned. If you also have this feeling of common sense being squeezed between yesterday and tomorrow, this book might be for you.

### x Preface

We are passionate researchers and, coincidentally, we both used to work for some time in the real world. We conducted plenty of studies in the fields of process management and business psychology. While Jürgen has a much longer process management history, Yevgen is a bit more into business psychology. During our cooperation, we conducted studies out of academic curiosity (and for fun). Once we performed a study because we could not agree on whether emotions play a role in process design (by the way, they do; we tested it). Such discussions led us to an interesting thought—what if process management is ready to come to the next stage of its evolution? Our experience and knowledge of business psychology enabled us to rethink process management and offer the next evolutionary step—human-centred process management. We found a way to apply and update our traditional tools and let them curate the occupational disease of the century—burnout.

If you, like us, want to understand how to update your tools and skills to be able to address psychological issues at work—this book is for you. You will learn about the aspect of work that process management has largely ignored hitherto. We build a bridge to some psychological (yet, commensurable) theories that finally allow us to address psychological issues in a systematic way. And there is not much to be relearned—most of the tools will be familiar to you from your process management, quality management, or Lean Six Sigma training courses. We'll just show you a small tweak to make your firm become really effective and efficient. We say "really" because most firms are not. What we learn about efficiency and effectiveness today lacks the understanding of psychological job demands and resources. The classical battle for increased performance is often at odds with the exhaustion of personnel, don't you think?

We have to state that this book is *not* for you if:

- You only rely on the old way of working. "Work hard, be kind, and the magic will happen..."— It won't!
- You believe in (magic) solutions that are simple and will curate a complex problem. "Try mindfulness meditation and your work will become better forever!"—It won't!
- You are already in a state of burnout. We can help prevent this state, but if you are in the state, you won't be able to objectively evaluate your situation.

This book is a result of fun from our research, practical work, and great discussions. It is positive and, let's be honest, we are not psychologists who consult patients in oak-panelled rooms. We don't write about how terrible burnout is, nor do we write about the magic of spiritual practices to cope

with the state of mental and emotional exhaustion. We focus on how not to get there. And, believe us, it is a lot of fun to make your firm remain efficient and effective while making your employees and managers happier. Ultimately, it is a game. This book will help you know the rules of the game.

When we started writing the book we thought about how great it would be to have illustrations to grasp the attention of readers. Indeed, we remember visual information better than letters and words. For instance, in our mind, we transfer words into images that we associate with networks of learned concepts. Thus, having pictures would be great. There was only one issue with pictures—none of us could draw in a convincing way. Looking for a professional artist was beyond the scope of our endeavour. Luckily, a friend of ours drew our attention to a new technology (at the time of writing) namely, the AI-based tool for creating illustrations based on text prompts called Dall-E from OpenAI. We tried it out and after some training, we produced illustrations of the desired quality. Don't get us wrong—for most pictures, we made several trials and made lots of modifications. Yet, we don't want to mislead you about using AI for this purpose. By the way, not a single sentence of this book was written by ChatGPT or similar software—which you will probably notice from our German-Ukrainian English.

Enjoy and make notes. Write between the lines. Reflect. Play with your own ideas and work situations. Scribble on the margins of the book. Make this book look heavily used. Yeah, and don't show your notes to others—everyone must form his or her own opinion about human-centred process management. Feel free to disagree. Disagree, criticise, and test it. And send us your (success) stories—we are eager to include them in the new edition of the book if we decide to produce one. Express your emotions: fear, anger, or joy. These are the reflections and emotions that will make you learn and remember!

Innsbruck, Austria Frankfurt a.M., Germany Yevgen Bogodistov Jürgen Moormann

# **Acknowledgements**

This book is not just a result of our work—many of our family members, friends, and colleagues made this project appear. We cannot mention all of them by name. This especially relates to our family members who tolerated our long hours spent at work and at home to write "just a few lines". Yet, some of our friends and colleagues we want to mention by name as without them this book would not have been possible.

Ganna Pogrebna, a rockstar in the field of behavioural economics, cyber-security, and AI, inspired us to start this book project. "You need to write a book about your research. Most people don't read your academic papers and they need to know what you have achieved", she said. Ganna planted the first seed of this project and with this book you can read the result. Thank you, Ganna.

Daniel Beimborn, our colleague and a passionate researcher, helped us concretise the topic of the book. He helped us shape the scope so that it is neither too broad nor too narrow. Daniel also helped us define the final audience and emphasised the need for a book for practitioners (as opposed to another book for theorists). We thank you.

Oleksandr Siryi is a friend of Yevgen, who helped polish the thoughts, provided us with ideas concerning illustrations, and helped us with some of the graphical issues. He is a multi-talented person who immediately understood the potential of our endeavour and supported us enormously. We are grateful to have Oleksandr as our friend and supporter.

### xiv Acknowledgements

Andreas Altman, the rector of the MCI: The Entrepreneurial School, supported us from the beginning. He saw the potential of our cooperation in research and joint writing. He not only found the topic appealing but he also helped us promote our ideas and draw attention to the topic of our research. He is a great person and we are proud to have him close to us.

Dietmar Knoess, Global Head of HR of Puma, is the leader who read our book in its early version and recognised how much it can change the business world. Dietmar is known for his employee-centric view and emphasises the "be yourself" value of Puma. This value, in particular, shows how important it is to develop organisational processes around people instead of "fitting notes into music". We have a great respect for him.

Also we would like to thank our students who elaborated with us on our ideas, shared their experience with us, and gave a broad spectrum of feedback for our homework. This includes students from our classes at the MCI ("Project, Process, and Quality Management" and "Business Psychology") and the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management ("Business Engineering" and "Process Management") who applied different tools from this book and/or even developed ideas on early burnout identification. As young individuals with less restrictions and path dependencies, they provided us with novel ideas and insights! We thank you all very much.

Moreover, we would like to mention several consultants from UMS Consulting GmbH & Co. KG, a consultancy agency in Frankfurt a.M. Special thanks go to our long-time cooperation partners, namely Stephan Lunau, Olin Roenpage, Thomas Reble, as well as Dr Dietrich Alexander Herberg (now freelance executive consultant). Several UMS senior experts showed us what is really demanded by firms. For this, we thank Jacek Korzewski, Emanuele Strada, and Kenneth Chan. Now, we return the favour with our tools that can expand your repertoire! Thank you very much for all the inspiration!

Finally, we would like to thank David Gilmour and Pink Floyd. Even if David doesn't know it, his music was the most listened to by both of us while writing this book! We wonder if artists like David Gilmour know how many scientific discoveries were made and academic papers written while listening to lines like "On the turning away ...". Thank you, David! Thank you, Pink Floyd!

As mentioned, our thanks also go to all those we have not mentioned by name—because there are many. They have all contributed to the publication of this book. Any mistakes are, of course, our own.

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### **About the Authors**

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Yevgen used to work at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder), Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences, and the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management (all located in Germany). Before his academic career, Yevgen worked in a medium-sized firm in Ukraine, where he obtained positions of a leading economist, HR specialist, HR director, and, finally, a Chief Operating Officer. Later, Yevgen was active in politics as a project coordinator at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Kyiv, Ukraine. Yet, driven by his intellectual curiosity and his wish to contribute to the common good, Yevgen joined a doctoral programme on dynamic capabilities and relationships organised by the European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder) and the German Graduate School of Management & Law Heilbronn, where he

### xxii About the Authors

received his Ph.D. degree (Dr. rer. pol.). He then met Jürgen in Frankfurt (Main) and joined Jürgen's ProcessLab—a research centre focused on process management and process innovation—where both developed a new view on human-centred process management.

**Jürgen Moormann** is a Professor of Bank and Process Management at the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management. The Frankfurt School is one of the leading business schools in Germany, with triple accreditation and an excellent international research record. Jürgen's teaching and research focuses on Strategy Development, Business Engineering, and Process Management, especially in the financial services industry. He is the author/editor of 13 books and has published around 300 articles in academic and practice-oriented journals. He has presented his research findings in numerous conference papers at national and international levels. Jürgen has been a Visiting Professor at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, USA, the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, the Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia, and the University of Hong Kong, China. He is a member of several academic and practice-related advisory boards.

Before his academic career, Jürgen conducted an apprenticeship at Commerzbank AG, one of the largest banks in Germany, studied business administration at the Universities of Kiel, Germany, and Zurich, Switzerland, and completed a Ph.D. programme at the University of Kiel (Dr. sc. pol.). This time was followed by five years of consulting work in several German banks. In parallel, he worked as an external lecturer at the EBS University, Germany, and the University of Liechtenstein. Jürgen is a process management professional who has always believed that problems in companies rarely occur because of flowcharts with depicted processes, but rather because of the "human factor", which is far too often ignored in the IS-driven process world.

### **Abbreviations**

AI Artificial Intelligence ANOVA Analysis of Variance

ARIS Architecture of Integrated Information Systems

BMC Business Model Canvas

CBI Copenhagen Burnout Inventory

CBV Capability-Based View
CEO Chief Executive Officer
CFO Chief Financial Officer
COO Chief Operating Officer

COPIS Customers, Output, Process, Input, Suppliers

C<sub>p</sub> Process Potential C<sub>PK</sub> Process Capability

C<sub>pL</sub> Process Potential for Lower Specification Limit

CPU Central Processing Unit

C<sub>pU</sub> Process Potential for Upper Specification Limit

CTO Chief Technology Officer CTQ Critical to Quality

CTQL Critical to Quality of Life
DCE Discrete Choice Experiment

DMADV Define, Measure, Analyse, Design, Verify

DMAGIC Define, Measure, Analyse, Generalise, Improve, Control

DMAIC Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve, Control

DNA Deoxyribonucleic Acid

DPMO Defects Per Million Opportunities

EI Emotional Intelligence

### xxiv Abbreviations

ERP Enterprise Resource Planning

EU European Union

EUR Euro

FAQ Frequent Asked Questions

GDPR General Data Protection Regulation

HoQ House of Quality
HR Human Resources
ID Identification

IS Information Systems

ISO International Organisation for Standardisation

IΤ Information Technology JD-R Job Demands and Resources **KPI** Key Performance Indicator LSL Lower Specification Limit **MBI** Maslach Burnout Inventory PIN Personal Identification Number QFD Quality Function Deployment R&D Research and Development **RAM** Random-Access Memory **RBV** Resource-Based View Resource Depletion  $r_{\rm d}$ Resource Replenishment  $r_r$ SAM Self-Assessment Manikin

SDG Sustainable Development Goal(s)

SIPOC Suppliers, Inputs, Process, Outputs, Customers

TAT Thematic Apperception Test

TIM WOODS Transport, Inventory, Movement, Waiting, Overproduction,

Overprocessing, Defects, Skills

TQM Total Quality Management
UML Unified Modeling Language
USL Upper Specification Limit

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### Introduction

**Abstract** In this chapter, we share with you our motivation for the book. First of all, we outline the latest developments in the field of process management and discuss whether it will disappear as a field of research (spoiler alert: it will not!). Next, we describe some observed issues with process management in firms. It seems that the field of study became way too technical leaving its most important element—the human—unnoticed. Finally, we explain the logic behind this book and its structure.

# 1.1 Why Does One Need This Book?

This book is the result of many years of research, academic thought, and observations from practice. Nowadays, we think that everyone is familiar with the concept of business processes and how to manage these processes. Going back even further, process management—in a rudimentary form—is several thousand years old, we argue. At the same time, we all have the feeling that the current state of process management is not what we would like it to be. While many scholars and practitioners search for new technologies that will shape the future of business processes and their management, such as big data, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and others, we would like to focus on a different aspect—the human being who is still not being seen as the core of a process but who actually is the core of a process. It is not about the customer, though. No, we don't want to underestimate the role of the customer—a customer has been and still is the Alpha and Omega of

a process-oriented organisation. Yet, our business world is "broken" if our process view neglects the human—employees and managers, isn't it?

Although the history of processes and their management accounts for thousands of years, the last hundred years massively changed the way we perceive this world. It was Frederick W. Taylor who introduced the scientific approach to organisations and who initiated a revolution in the manner business is performed. In his endeavour, he tried to split any work into the smallest chunks. On the one hand, he created the process as a series of activities brought in concordance in order to produce the final product. On the other hand, such an approach generated highly specialised spheres of operations that with time accumulated into what we call silos, i.e. employees thought about what was important for their operations and not about the bigger picture. Thus, managers caught in the world of Taylor thought about their set of operations as "kingdoms" that would rather see other kingdoms as intruders than elements of the same process landscape.

Moreover, Taylor's approach implied a big (societal) conflict that is reaching its culmination now. Burnout, boreout, disengagement, absenteeism, and other related symptoms quickly spread "diseases" across society. This is a sign for us that we should do something about it. This wave of psychological problems with organisational processes is not new and started rising shortly after the principles of work execution by Taylor dominated the business landscape. Have you asked yourself why the demand for motivational theories started growing in the 1950s? Wasn't it the time when business met the first negative consequences of the massive implementation of Taylor's approach?

If you look at the current state of our society, you will notice that plenty of things are "broken". For instance, all economic systems (be it communist, socialist, capitalist, or any other system) have one goal in common—growth! Growth implies increasing resource demands. The latter implies both higher resource consumption and higher waste generation. The whole world runs into global deterioration by constantly "improving" production, cutting down palm forests, and polluting the sea with plastic and other waste. Wouldn't you say that the ideas by of Taylor who taught us how to foster production accelerated this doomsday scenario drastically?

When we talk about doomsday, whatever form it might have, we immediately think of the sustainability discussion that has been and is a big issue in the economy and society worldwide in the last decade. Particularly in Western countries, sustainability has become a part of our lives as in almost each of our classes we deliberately include the topic of sustainability. And do

you know what is the issue with sustainability? First, we don't know what it is. We have 17 Sustainable Development Goals presented by the United Nations (UN) but they are rather vague and even misleading (Hickel 2019). As specialists in the field of process management, we know what "Garbage In, Garbage Out" (GIGO) means. May it be due to the necessity of the UN to compromise the interests of hundreds of national and international actors, it doesn't make the organisation of work much better. Second, as you have seen from the previous paragraph, growth implies resource consumption. For now, we cannot offer working models that do not imply growth. The recent developments in the field of circular economy are a promising approach but it is not clear whether researchers will manage to find a solution before it is too late. Finally, desirability for sustainability is the biggest issue. We all would like to live in a cleaner and healthier world, but are we ready to get rid of some habits such as driving cars, flying by plane, or buying unnecessary goods and services? With this constant contradiction between what is good and what we want, we keep living in a state of cognitive dissonance. Consequently, we either close our eyes on what is happening or we start legitimising ourselves. Both are perfect coping mechanisms for cognitive dissonance as it is way too stressful to live in a conflict with oneself. By the way, we have a similar coping mechanism for coping with burnout—we distance ourselves from other people and work, we start behaving cynically, and lose the feeling of respect with regard to others and, consequently, self. By "we", we mean the average worker born without free WiFi in the maternity ward.

At the same time the new generation, i.e. those who start their working lives in these years, becomes suspicious with regard to the traditional values of our society. Young people want to be different, they want to have more time for themselves, and they want to have more opportunities for realising themselves and achieving the maxim postulated by John Lennon when he said:

When I was 5 years old, my mother always told me that happiness was the key to life. When I went to school, they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down 'happy'. They told me I didn't understand the assignment, and I told them they didn't understand life. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> There is a debate about whether John Lennon said this phrase (O'Gorman 2020). You can read more about the discussion here: https://www.radiox.co.uk/artists/beatles/did-john-lennon-say-ringo-wasnt-even-best-drummer/.

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New generations are looking for happiness. However, we design the jobs as we have learned and as we are used to designing them. Thus, most of the jobs they would like to have are hardly concordant with the modern business management approach. With our vision of how organisations should work, we scare the young idealists. And what if the feelings of young people are not a matter of fashion (which according to movements such as Fridays for Future may indeed be the case)? Then the business life they will experience will ruin their dreams. It is just a question of time. Soon we will see a huge drop in happiness and a huge increase in burnout and depression. And, again, this seems to be the consequence of how we organise our work. By the way, have you thought that, in the end, you have spent a good third of your adult life at work?

Now, we would like to ask you a question: Will the new developments in the field of artificial intelligence, big data, process mining, or cloud computing ease the situation? Will these technologies motivate people to create value for all members of our society? Will a perfect analysis of human behaviour lead to new products and services that will make people happier? As you can imagine, we doubt it. Similar to Taylor, these new technologies will speed up this development that is actually moving us to the abyss. Do we need to accelerate?

We do not argue that the current process management is a completely wrong approach. On the contrary, we argue that it is process management that will help our society overcome difficult times. We just need to change the right set screws to bring about a fundamental rethink in our business world and get people to change their thinking.

And yes, this book is the result of several years of research in the field of process management and burnout. Do you know that burnout is not an illness but a work-related issue? There are no drugs against burnout. But as it is a consequence of the wrong organisation of work we can fight against it by organising our work in a human-centred way. And which field of study is responsible for the organisation of work? Yes, of course, it is the field of business process management!

In this book, we added two aspects to business process management. First, we extended the resources a process designer has to consider when developing or improving a process. In the next two chapters of the book, we show how important it is to add psychological and physiological resources of individuals