Task Types in BPMN 2.0

Good e-Learning's complete guide to BPMN 2.0 by Gregor Polančič

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Task Types in BPMN 2.0

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What is a Task?

A task is an atomic activity within a process flow.

A task is used when the work in the process cannot be broken down to a finer level of detail.

Generally, a user and/or application are used to perform the task when it is executed.

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Task vs Activity?

An activity is work that a company or organization performs using business processes.

An activity can be atomic or compounded.

A task represents an atomic activity.

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Different types of task are identified within BPMN, each with different inherent behaviours.

A task with behaviour that has not been defined is called an abstract task.

This list of task types may also be extended, along with corresponding graphical indicators.
User Task

A user task is a typical “workflow” task.

A human performer will perform the task with the assistance of a software application, and the task will be scheduled through a task list manager.

Examples of a user task:
- Update an input form
- Accept or reject a request
- Print a report
- Mark order status as sent
Manual Task

In contrast to a user task, a manual task is a task that is expected to be performed without the aid of any business process execution engine or application.

Examples of a manual task:
- Prepare a package
- Deliver package
- Negotiate with a business partner
- Go to lunch

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Service Task

A service task is performed automatically, without any human interaction, by using an IT service, such as a web service or automated application.

Examples of a service task:
- Perform payment by credit card
- Save file into an online folder
- Read data from a temperature sensor

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Script Task

A script task is also performed automatically, without any human interaction. However, in contrast to a service task, a script task is executed by a business process engine.

Examples of a script task:
- Inform a coworker about a finished task
- Calculate delivery time
- Back-up data
- Change status of a service desk request

BPMN symbol for a script task

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Business Rule Task

A business rule task is a special type of a service task, which operates by executing complex decisions in a business rule engine.

Examples of a business rule task:
- Calculate customer discount
- Accept or reject a loan
- Calculate insurance risks

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Send Task

A send task sends a message to an external participant. Once the message has been sent, the task is completed.

A send task is similar to a throwing message event.

Examples of a send task:
- Call service desk
- Send money to customer
- Inform customer about sent package

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Receive Task

A receive task waits for a message from another participant. Once the message has been received, the task is completed.

A receive task is similar to:

- Receive an invoice
- Obtain refund from online store
- Receive monthly salary

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Summary

A task is the most fundamental process element in BPMN, defining a unit of work in a business process.

Aside from an abstract task, which can be used in all generic circumstances, BPMN defines 7 special task types:

1. User task
2. Service task
3. Manual task
4. Script task
5. Business rule task
6. Send task
7. Receive task

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