

## The Future of SOA - Part 1 of 7

Keith Harrison-Broninski

### Using business goals as a basis for process execution

Throughout the second half of 2006, concluding in January 2007, I published on bptrends.com a series of articles on the future of BPM, based on postings originally made to my ebizQ.net blog **IT Directions**. In this new series for bptrends.com, I will expand on the ideas in the first series, and provide practical guidelines on to how to implement a next-generation IT infrastructure – one that is based on the business goals of your organization, rather than on technical innovations as proposed by software vendors.

In particular, I will be focusing on **Service Oriented Architecture** (SOA), a set of technology principles now widely regarded as inseparable from BPM software implementation. I will show how best to leverage new technologies for true business advantage (rather than just technical advantage).

In this introductory article, I will start by giving an overview of the entire series.

From what I see, the BPM market is still not mature. People are starting to understand what you *can* do with BPM. And they are starting to understand what you *can't* do with BPM. But this understanding is not clear yet, and it's not widespread yet.

I talk to a lot of people who are deeply concerned about *collaborative human work*. These people come from a huge range of industries – telecommunications, engineering, IT, recruitment, marketing, education, the military, and more – even charities. But in all these sectors – probably in every sector – there are the same sort of problems: work that is either *non-routine*, so humans need to work together to innovate solutions, and routine work where you get a lot of *special cases*, where humans need to step in and work out what to do. The non-routine work includes things like research, design, marketing, sales, team leadership, managing organizational change, software development, and so on – any work in which humans interact to create and innovate solutions. The edge cases are things like staff issues, complex customer problems, unusual insurance claims, and so on. Some of this work is specific to a sector, but a lot of it is quite similar across sectors.

The people who come to me do so because they don't know what to do about this type of work, which I call "human-driven," and these people fall roughly into two groups.

The first group of people have already been through BPM projects, and have had bad experiences. They were made promises by vendors – but these promises never materialized. Instead, they often ended up worse off than before. Before BPM, they had a sort of semi-organized chaos, but at least it was a sort of chaos that the people on the ground knew how to deal with. OK, they weren't always as efficient as they would like to be, but at least the work generally got done! After BPM, humans found themselves trying to get work done via a rigid, inflexible system that didn't let them do what they needed to do. So they ended up fighting the system, or working round it. This only resulted in extra costs, extra stress. and less customer satisfaction than ever.

The second group of people I talk to were cautious enough to hang fire on BPM until now. Instead, they tried messaging, document sharing, content management, Web 2.0, and other tools – tools that I call point solutions - but found that they *don't scale*. There is no way to manage the work, or even to know what people are up to. So at this point, this second group of people is considering BPM, but in a much more limited way than BPM vendors would like. They know that BPM is the answer to some of their problems, but not all of them, and what they want to know is: What is the proper place of BPM, and how do I build an infrastructure that makes the right use of BPM tools?

## TAKE AWAY

What I say to people, is that to solve human work you must find a solution that works for the organization as a whole, and that such a solution has several stages. First, you need to work out what your *process architecture* is. This is not the same as a set of value chains, though you can use a process architecture to derive value chains. Next, you need to integrate the execution of these processes with organizational management – the org chart. You can do this via Human Interaction Management. Then you can look at process-based software tools – a Business Process Management System for routine processes; a Human Interaction Management System for human-driven processes. Finally, and only at this stage, you should work out which *services* they need to support these processes, via SOA.

Once you've done all this, you will have a complete organizational *system* that starts from *business goals* and ends with *optimized execution*, without sacrificing any *flexibility* along the way. I think it is quite possible to do this now. But I don't think many organizations are doing it yet.

In the remaining articles in this series, I will explain these views in more detail and make practical recommendations for becoming an effective process-oriented organization. I hope you find the series content useful. If you would like to know more now, please read the article, "The Case for Basing Your Processes on Business Models," published as part of the **SAP Business Process Expert** series on ebizQ.net:

<http://tinyurl.com/25784e>.

-----

**Keith Harrison-Broninski** is CTO of Role Modellers Ltd, UK. His current work focuses on the development of a free next-generation process support system for human collaboration – See <http://humanedj.com>. For more information about Keith see <http://keith.harrison-broninski.info>.