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The Association of Business Process Management Professionals

There is widespread agreement that there has been a major revival of interest in Business Process issues in the last two to three years. There are several different business process change initiatives that are receiving attention. They range from corporate Six Sigma initiatives and new workflow initiatives (WSDL) to the US government's efforts to create enterprise architectures that define the business processes used by government agencies. There is the Supply Chain Council's SCOR framework, the OMG's new Model Driven Architecture initiative, the various efforts to create XML standards for modeling and controlling business processes (BPEL, BPMN), and several new initiatives to establish guidelines for business process outsourcing (BPO), to name only a few.

Similarly, there are a number of organizations that support one or another of these efforts. For example, there is the Workflow Management Coalition (WfMC), the Supply Chain Council (SCC), the Object Management Group (OMG), the Sourcing Interests Group (SIG, a BPO association), and the Business Process Management Initiative (BPMP). Each of these organizations, however, is an association of vendor or user companies. Until recently, there hasn't been a professional society that is focused on bringing together business, government and academics to discuss how business processes can be analyzed, improved, and managed.

Now there is. The Association of Business Process Management Professionals (ABPMP) was formed earlier this year and is beginning to gain some recognition.

The association describes itself this way on its website:

"The Association of Business Process Professionals is a non-profit, vendor independent professional organization dedicated to the advancement of business process management concepts and its practices. ABPMP is practitioner-oriented and practitioner-led."

"The mission of the ABPMP is to engage in activities that promote the practice of business process management, to develop a Common Body of Knowledge in this field, and to contribute to the advancement and skill development of professionals who work in this discipline."

What can an organization like ABPMP do for its members? First, of course, it can provide business process professionals with a forum in which they can network with others who are focused on common issues. Members can share information about their problems, about new technologies, successful solutions, and best practices. Initially,

ABPMP is focused on establishing local chapters in the US and abroad and creating a website. As membership grows, the organization will undoubtedly host an annual conference and provide various other member services such as newsletters, directories and workshops.

There are several professional societies in other areas of business or IT. Most work to define a discipline, promote recognition of the profession, establish guidelines for professional behavior, and promote the recognition of outstanding practitioners. Many also develop certification programs, conduct workshops, and issue certificates to members who achieve a specified level of proficiency. Many companies recognize certification programs and reward employees for achieving professional certification. The ABPMP is discussing all of these things and will undoubtedly establish committees to pursue them as its membership grows.

The ABPMP was established by a group of individuals in the Chicago area. They have already established an international organization as well as several local chapters. The individuals making up the board come from a range of companies including Allstate Insurance, BearingPoint, McDonalds, CSC and Motorola. The president is Brett Champlin of Allstate.

Several local chapters have already been formed in the US. If you would like to join an existing chapter, would like to start a new chapter, or are simply interested in learning more about the ABPMP, visit their website @www.abpmp.org or contact Brett Champlin directly at president@abpmp.org.

It's clear that there is a need for an organization like ABPMP. Most of the BP standards work is being done by teams of vendors with little input from those who will actually have to adhere to the new standards or use the products tailored to support them. A professional association of individual business process change practitioners could function as an independent voice for best practices and useful standards, and would provide an environment where individual practitioners could exchange views, share information and organize to promote reasonable standards and policies.

We established Business Process Trends to provide business managers with a comprehensive source of information on business process change. But a news and information portal like BPTrends isn't a substitute for face-to-face interaction and collaboration made possible through active participation in a professional association. If you are an individual BP practitioner, we urge you to contact ABPMP and begin exploring how ABPMP can benefit you and your organization.

Til' next time,

Paul Harmon

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