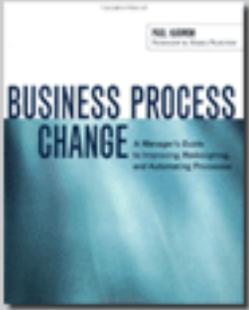# The OMG and BPMI

The Object Management Group met in Atlanta in the middle of September and completed its merger with the Business Process Management Initiative (BPMI) organization. (The board of BPMI had already approved the merger and during the Atlanta meeting the OMG's board did the same.) This is a major watershed in the evolution of the OMG. The OMG has merged with other organizations in the past, but none have had the potential impact on the OMG's overall position as a standards body as this merger will likely have. The "object" in the OMG's name will become, increasingly, an anachronism as the OMG finds itself involved in more and more standards issues that are considerably more abstract than object, component, or even software concerns.

One sign of the success of this merger is the fact that all of the companies that were members of the BPMI have already joined the OMG. This unheard of conversion rate suggests just how interested these companies are in BPM standards and how confident they are that the OMG will provide a good base for BPM work in the future.

Of course, the OMG had already evolved well beyond its roots in object technology. In the mid-Nineties, for example, when it established the Unified Modeling Language (UML) standard it defined a notational language for a variety of tasks that were well beyond the traditional concerns of object-oriented designers. The UML activity diagram, for example, is a workflow notation that has little to do with objects. More important, as the OMG began to develop its Model Driven Architecture (MDA) at the beginning of this decade, it emerged as the major source of standards for software engineering and as an emerging source of standards for a wide variety of specific industries.

During the past year, OMG task forces have been working on standards for a business process metamodel, a rules metamodel, and an ontology (vocabulary) metamodel, to name a few. Indeed, it is this work that made the merger of the OMG and BPMI such an obvious win for both organizations. The

merger with the BPMI organization will serve to accelerate the OMG's work in these areas. For example, the OMG voted in Atlanta to put the BPMI's Business Process Modeling Notation (BPMN) on an accelerated adoption track, assuring that it will be quickly formalized. Moreover, it has already begun work to extend the BPMN standard. At the same time, Jeanne Baker, the chair of the BPMI board, was elected a co-chair of the Business Enterprise Integration task force (BEIDTF), the group responsible for most of the OMG's current business process and rules standards. The other co-chairs are Fred Cummins and Stan Hendryx. At the same time, to emphasize their new scope, the group changed its name to the Business Modeling and Integration (BMI) task force. (Process was not included in the group's name to reflect the fact that the same group is actively working on business rules standards, which involve business modeling, but does not necessarily involve process modeling.)

At the same time, the OMG created a new body, the BPMI Steering Committee. The board of the BPMI Steering Committee currently consists of the former members of the board of BPMI and the co-chairs of the BEI task force.

This BPMI Steering Committee will be exploring a number of options for the future. At a minimum, it is committed to maintaining the BPMI website and to sponsoring the second Think Tank Conference. The first BPMI Think Tank Conference was held in the spring of this year and brought together a wide variety of individuals and groups to think about the future of BPM standards. This Conference can make a significant contribution to the BPM standards community by working to sort out which organizations will tackle which BPM standards. (There are already, for example, more than one business rules standard being developed, and there are multiple XML business process languages being developed.) An effective standards "clearing house" would benefit everyone by promoting cooperation and a reasonable division of labor among the various BPM standards organizations.

Lots of companies are engaged in business process management efforts. Some are just exploring options, some are offering software tools and some are offering consulting advice. All will benefit from better definitions and standards. The merger of the OMG and the BPMI guarantees that the momentum in BPM standards will accelerate in the years ahead. At the same time, OMG's commitment to the Business Process Steering Committee guarantees that it will put its considerable weight and expertise behind an effort to educate and promote the advantages of the BPM approach. Everyone will benefit.

'Til next time,

Paul Harmon