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Business Process Standards

The world of business process standards is vague and confusing. Many would disagree, for example, about whether the Balanced Scorecard is a de facto BPM standard, a personnel evaluation standard, or simply the name of a popular approach to aligning metrics.

Figure 1 provides an overview of some of the standards that we would consider if we were talking to a company about BPM standards. It is by no means comprehensive, but it does identify most of the currently popular standards.

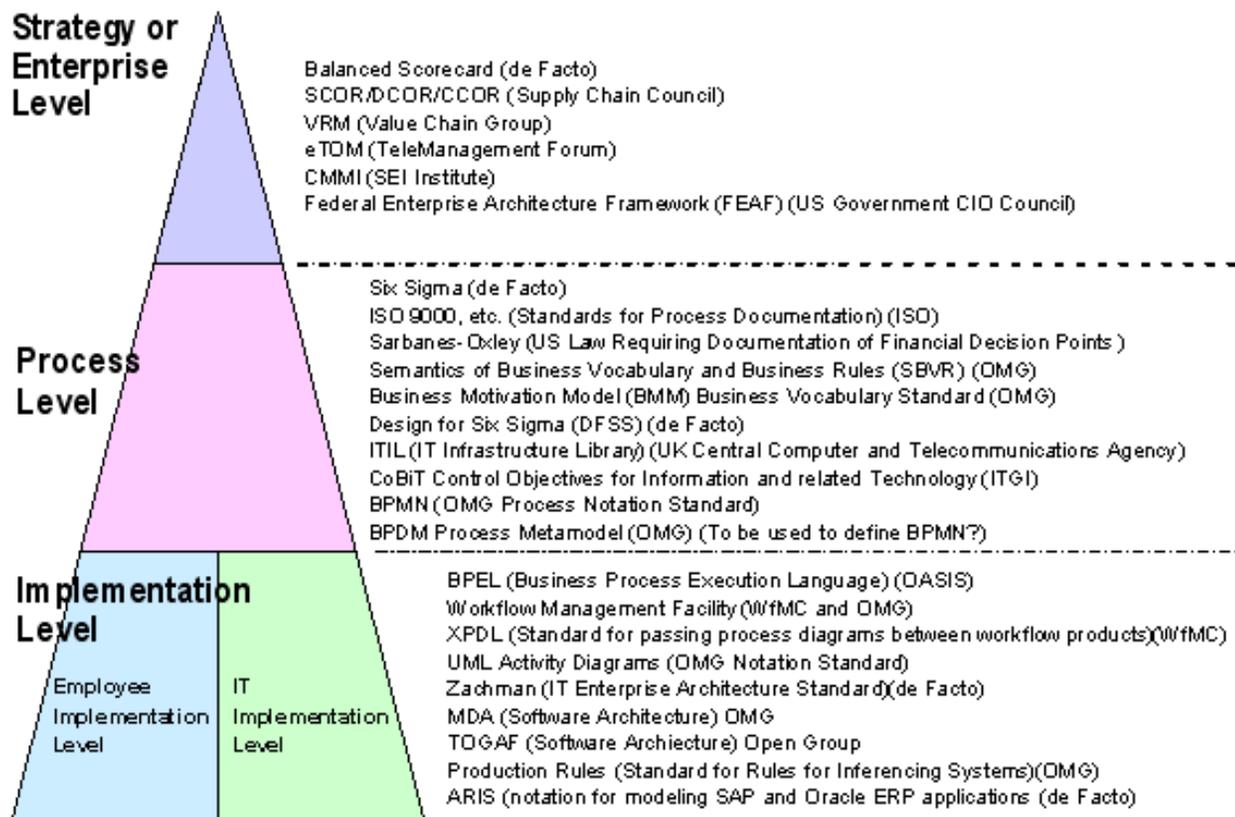
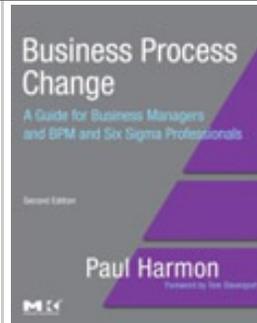


Figure 1. Some BPM standards



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In Figure 1 we have divided the standards into those that are primarily used by organizations working on the enterprise level, those used by organizations doing process projects and those used by people engaged in IT or HR implementation efforts. Some of the standards, like BPMN, or ISO 9000, are used by a wide variety of organizations, while others, like FEAF, are only used by the US government. Similarly, ITIL is primarily used by IT organizations.

In our latest BPTrends worldwide survey, conducted in December of 2007, we asked organizations to tell us what BPM standards were important to them. Table 1 provides a summary of the results for the more popular standards.

Standard	Worldwide	
ISO 9000	104	40%
Sarbanes-Oxley	86	33%
CMM/CMMI	73	28%
BPEL	67	26%
XPDL	15	6%
BPMN (Notation)	106	41%
UML (Notation)	78	30%
OMG Business Process Metamodel	19	7%
OMG Business Rules Metamodel	10	4%
OMG Business Process Maturity Model	26	10%
OMG Model Driven Architecture (MDA)	21	8%
Other	61	23%

Table 1. Standards organizations thought were most important

A quick glance at Table 1 suggests that ISO 9000 and its derivatives - which specify how an organization should document its processes - are very important. This standard has been around since the Nineties and is required by many leading European companies, making its use mandatory by most vendors. Thus, its importance is obvious.

What's more interesting is that the BPMN notation is as important to most organizations as ISO 9000. BPMN was only officially adopted in 2007 and is used for process modeling. Indeed, BPMN is more important to the individuals responding to our survey than UML which is the dominant software modeling standard. In a similar way we expect Sarbanes-Oxley to be important to US companies as its use is mandated by the US government, but the importance of CMMI and BPEL is more interesting. Without going into any detail, suffice to say that leading organizations are aware of the importance of business process standards and are increasingly embracing standards - like CMMI, BPMN and BPEL - that are specifically designed to help process practitioners standardize

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their efforts.

At the enterprise and process level the motivation for standards is usually clear communication. At the implementation level the motivation is more likely to free companies from dependence on any given software product or vendor.

Although it isn't listed in the table, it's worth noting that Microsoft and Oracle have recently embraced the ARIS notation for describing ERP implementations. Clearly, SAP's dominance in the market and its extensive use of the ARIS notation has convinced both Microsoft and Oracle that they are better off making it possible for companies to move from SAP to their ERP modules than erecting barriers.

Understanding standards involves at least three considerations. For business people there is a concern with what benefit the standards offer and what is involved in using them. For practitioners and implementers there is a need for a deeper understanding of the standards in order to assure compliance. And, for all, there is a concern for the exact status of the standards and the degree to which the various vendors' products actually support the standards. Over the years we have tried to publish articles on all aspects of standards and will continue to do so. Meanwhile, here are some of the articles we have already published that provide information and insight into the various standards.

ISO 9000

[Time To Trigger A Transformation?](#) Peter Fraser - September 02, 2003

Most companies have used ISO 9000 Standards to define procedures. Today, driven by the new interest in business processes, the International Standards Organization is readying a new, more process oriented set of standards, ISO 9001:2000. In this article, Peter Fraser considers how ISO 9001:2000 can be integrated into a business process effort.

BPMN

[MDA Journal: Requirements for BPMN 2.0](#) David Frankel - June 03, 2008

As the Object Management Group (OMG) gets closer to releasing BPMN 2.0, David Frankel examines the main issues to be addressed in the new release. Read his timely and engaging Column for interesting insights into the issues and solutions proposed by the two groups working on the new release.

[BPMN Modeling - Who, Where, How and Why](#) Jan Recker - May 06, 2008

Jan Recker of Queensland University presents the fascinating results of a global survey of process modelers conducted from May to August of 2007. Read his Article to learn more about BPMN and its users as well as the author's speculation on the way forward for this system.

[Using BPMN to Model a BPEL Process](#) Stephen White - March 01, 2005

Stephen White, IBM's BPM architect and the Chair of the BPMI's BPMN task force, walks readers through a step-by-step example of exactly how a BPMN model can be used to generate BPEL code.

[Introduction to BPMN](#) Stephen White - July 06, 2004

Stephen White, the Chair of the BPMI's BPMN Task Force, provides readers with an introduction to the new business process notation that BPMI has recently developed. In our opinion, this is the best introduction, to date, to this new notation, and every reader who is interested in learning about BPMN will want to read this overview.

[Process Modeling Notations and Workflow Patterns](#) Stephen White - March 02, 2004

Stephen White, the chair of the BPMI's Business Process Management Notation (BPMN) task force and IBM WebSphere BPM Architect, presents a paper that describes each of the 21 workflow patterns that Wil van der Aalst and associates have identified. He models each, first in BPMN and then using UML Activity Diagrams, showing the strengths and weaknesses of each.

Business Rules Standards

[Business Rule Solutions: Rules vs. Process \(Again\)](#) Ron Ross - May 06, 2008

Ron Ross recently reviewed ongoing Standards work in business process modeling and found that some fundamental confusion remains over the difference between processes and rules. Have you, like many of us, confused those concepts? Read Ron's Column to clarify what each term does and does not mean.

Financial Process Standards

[MDA Journal: Semantic Interoperability and Convergence in the Financial Industry](#) David Frankel - October 02, 2007

This month, David Frankel continues his examination of semantic interoperability and its primary importance in reducing integration costs. Read his Column to discover how Standards organizations in the financial sector are dealing with this issue by converging around a single standard known as Universal Financial Industry Message Scheme (UNIFI).

[MDA Journal: Semantic Interoperability Roadmap](#) David Frankel - February 04, 2008

David Frankel continues his discussion of semantic interoperability problems this month with a focus on financial institutions. In a clear and concise fashion, he outlines the approach being considered by the expert panel convened to revise the standard. Read his Column to gain an understanding of the urgency of the problem and possible solutions Standards groups are working on now, or will be in the near future.

Misc. Reflections on Standards

[The OMG Moves Ahead on BPD, BPMM, and a Finance Framework](#) Paul Harmon - May 29, 2007

The OMG Technical Committee met in April and launched several new business process initiatives, including a new effort on notation and the BP Metamodel, a BP Maturity Model and a business process framework for finance. In this BPTrends Advisor we will discuss the OMG's existing and evolving Standards and the OMG's upcoming BPM Conference: BPM Think Tank 2007.

[BPM Standards](#) Rashid Khan - May 03, 2005

Rashid Khan, the CEO of Ultimous, reviews the opportunities for business process standards, notes some de facto standards, but concludes that the complexities of the current BPM market mediate

against the current efforts to formalize BP modeling languages. Khan's article provides a thoughtful counterpoint to numerous articles we've published that argue that Standards will lead to an expanded BP market.

[eTOM and ITIL](#) Jenny Huang - January 04, 2005

Jenny Huang, an OSS Architect and Standards Strategist at AT&T Labs, describes how AT&T is using the best of the TeleManagement Forum's eTOM and NGOSS Standards and combining that framework with the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL), a British IT service delivery and support standard that is rapidly becoming a de facto international standard.

[BPM and Standardization](#) Antoine Lonjon - December 07, 2004

BPM standardization has been a hot issue throughout the course of 2004. In this White Paper, Antoine Lonjon, the Chief Architect of Mega International, who has played a major role in many Standards efforts, reviews where the various BPM Standards are today.

Till next time,

Paul Harmon, Executive Editor

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