Record of BPMI.org members meeting #10

June 2003, Bonn, hosted by IDS Scheer at *Process World 2003*

The following is a short information report from BPMI members meeting #10. We thank IDS Scheer for hosting our event in Bonn, Germany at *Process World 2003.* As keynote speeches from Professor August-Wilhelm Scheer and Michael Hammer confirmed, process is "back in the board room" and Process Management is now a major driver for significant new investments in information technology. The evidence was clear. Attendance at *Process World* was up again this year, with over 800 attendees. Many attendees held senior positions with respect to their companies' objectives to achieve process redesign and optimization. The new role of Chief Process Officer was discussed, which combines IT strategy and business strategy, centered on business processes.

For reasons of travel restrictions, cost constraints and the focus we each have on closing new business within our respective companies in what remains a very difficult climate in the IT industry, many members were unable to travel to Bonn for the meeting. We understand that. Taking time out to focus exclusively on standards development is a serious commitment. Nevertheless, BPMI #10 was productive with several important matters being decided. A short summary follows.

Many of the members present urged the board to seek convergence between BPML and BPEL and to ensure that BPEL would meet the future needs of the BPM industry and all interests. To this end, the board is considering several possibilities, as well as defining the future road map for BPML. While some may view BPEL and BPML as competing, there is every opportunity for convergence, at least in some base execution semantics. Some members noted the legal restrictions, possible patents and licensing issues that surround BPEL. For example, it appeared to some that it is still a requirement to obtain licenses from multiple BPEL authors in order to implement BPEL, possibly even extending to customers of BPEL-based technologies. They were worried that it would be the implementer's responsibility to ensure that patents are not violated within implementations themselves. Members should make direct representation to OASIS if they have concerns on these issues.

BPMN Draft 1.0 is nearing completion. A public review version should be available within one month. This will be followed by a public review period of three months. A BPMN 1.0 Final specification is possible by October 2003. Popkin's Martin Owen reported that BPMN would be implemented in their product within 6 weeks. The chair of the BPMN working group, Stephen White of IBM, stated that he was in communication with the OMG regarding liaison with respect to their process meta model activity and UML 2.0.

It was noted that it is a critical time for BP standards, and members felt that publication of a reference model for BPM, BPMS and process virtual machines was something the initiative should take forward over time. A general shift in the marketplace towards process orientation, and process oriented architecture (POA) was noted, encompassing everything from business strategy to technology architecture and impacting several different technologies, not only the emergence of BPMS as originally conceived by BPMI.org in its founding charter. Members felt it was crucial for BPMI.org to paint a broad picture of the trend towards process orientation, starting with the business themes (Scheer, Hammer, Smith), extending to enterprise architecture, to software engineering and to various different "process" execution environments. A set of basic tenets were documented, including:

- BPMI.org believes that there are multiple benefits to process orientation
- Process orientation implies putting process "at the center"

- To put process at the center implies a focus on the process representation meta model and the process lifecycle management (from discovery, to design, deployment, execution, operations, interaction, optimization and analysis)

- Some business and technology disciplines will evolve or transform to process orientation at different rates and in different ways -- some have already embraced process orientation

- Different approaches to process orientation will provide different degrees of agility, flexibility and mobility in process systems

- There is theoretical work that shows that “process” is a genuinely new concept in computer science and business systems, perhaps as significant as the emergence of "objects" and that many things that we previously thought of in one way are in fact "processes". Processes are the unification of computing and communication.

Members felt the need for BPMI.org to develop a BP industry map, showing the relationship of different standards groups and standards and clarifying the objectives of each group.

During the joint meeting with the WfMC, end-to-end BPML process models were shown which demonstrated a unification of process modeling over several of the following types of processes and their combinations:

- Automational, eliminating human labor from a process
- Informational, capturing process information for purposes of understanding
- Sequential, changing process sequence, or enabling parallelism
- Tracking, closely monitoring process status and participants
- Analytical, improving analysis of information and decision making
- Geographical, coordinating processes across distances
- Intellectual, capturing and distributing intellectual assets
- Disintermediating, eliminating intermediaries from a process
- Computational, performing distributed calculations as part of a process
- Collaborative, allowing participants to manage sets of shared work processes
- Conversational, allowing participants to exchange information among themselves

To illustrate further, a sophisticated BPML process model was shown that models one class of processes: workflow processes. The participants in such a process are users, tasks, task lists, job schedulers and other elements of the workflow model. Such a model is not the code of a workflow engine, but a schema for a BPMS that enables the creation of instances of workflow processes that can participate in other processes.

Jeanne Baker, BPMI.org board member and director of product development at Sterling Commerce, reported nearly 200 customers now running on Sterling Integrator, Sterling’s new BPML based integration product.

The process for development of BPQL was discussed. It was noted that some BPM vendors would have implemented aspects of BPQL already, but that broader participation would be required, notably from vendors of business intelligence, business activity monitoring, data warehousing, XML database and workflow analysis. A public announcement of the intention to develop BPQL is planned, to assist with recruitment to the working group and for the identification of requirements. A minimal schema for persistent processes will be needed. BPQL will be able to query the past and present of the persistent state across participants across process instances. BPQL will focus on the time dimension and will provide statistical functions, a standardized time

model and may need to define a standard URI model to address specific nodes in process instances. Predictive query to future state, using simulation, was discussed.

The BPMI.org board is currently developing its Phase Two plans and objectives. Members are encouraged to communicate requirements to the board.
The next F2F meeting – Member Meeting #11 - is provisionally scheduled for November 18-19 2003, co-located with DCI's BPM Conference in Orlando, Florida. Please mark your calendars now. Working Groups will continue to progress by teleconference in the interim.

Questions should be addressed jointly to the chairs in all cases, Howard Smith (hsmith23@csc.com) and Ismael Ghalimi (ghalimi@intalio.com)