Welcome!

On behalf of SAP Asia Pacific Japan, welcome to this issue of SAP Innovation and Growth Series, a newsletter designed for senior executives and leaders who are passionate about driving business innovation in their organisations by harnessing the power of information technology.

Together with the analytical minds at Gartner, we hope to deliver to you relevant, timely and more importantly, mind-opening ideas, to map out the next-generation innovation paths you’re growing organisation needs.

In this issue, we would like to introduce you to the next big thing in business: the Business Process Expert (BPX) – a hybrid of the suit-and-geek – or more widely known as the Enterprise Architect.

These enterprise architects are the bridge between business and technology in organisations today. As companies evolve their IT platforms, this group will take on a more critical and prominent role early in the analysis and design phases. The growing importance of an enterprise architect within a company’s IT organisation is becoming crucial to the overall success of migrating toward enterprise service-oriented architecture.

SAP began the industry’s first BPX community last year, and is one of the first companies to offer model-driven tools as well as modeled composite applications for this group of professionals. Since the community began, it has seen an exponential rise in the number of members in this community with over 100,000 members globally and more than 45% of these members come from Asia.

Membership to this community is free, and I highly encourage you to sign your team up, to get the latest updates, downloads, news and information on how to drive innovation effectively in your business.

Finally, we hope you will enjoy reading and welcome the opportunity to further discuss the delivery of innovation in your business. Simply drop me a line with any input or comments you may have, please feel free to email me at s.dale@sap.com

Until the next issue, happy reading.

Best Regards,

Simon Dale

Simon Dale

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Successful businesses are agile ones, so enterprises need experts, savvy in both business and IT, who understand business processes and the best practices to get these processes changed, deployed and executed in real-time. Many business analysts, process consultants, application consultants, business process architects and other business process professionals have all found themselves filling this new role, a role that now has a name: business process expert (see Figure 1).

So what makes you a business process expert? And what exactly does a BPX do? BPXs specialise in looking at a business problem and modeling a solution that can be implemented through the use of technology. I've found that many people are BPXs and may not even know it. Consider the following scenario:

It's Monday morning and you're faced with a new task that must be completed by the end of the week. Your mission? To evaluate an existing business process in need of some redesign and to produce documented recommendations for new technology that will support the process. How do you get the job done?

This is a common scenario for the business process expert – a situation that requires high- to mid-level business-side analysis and a quick but comprehensive set of solution recommendations as output. Be they consultants or integrated parts of an organisation, business process experts face the same fundamental challenges.

Quickly Develop Trust
A BPX may come into situations where the client – either an internal or external client – has no prior knowledge of the BPX’s profile and history. In order to devise both the technology and business recommendations needed, it’s incumbent on the BPX to become a trusted advisor as quickly as possible.

A face-to-face relationship is imperative for increasing the productivity of any interaction. To do this, BPXs should consider employing the following tactics:

• Listen attentively to the client’s business needs
• Ask questions for clarity
• Demonstrate forthrightness: clarify that you do not have a hidden agenda and that you are working for them
• Outline your own experience in two minutes or less, focusing on other occasions where you were a trusted advisor. This openness will typically precipitate a comfortable, receptive

![Figure 1](https://example.com/figure1.png)
The evolution of the business process expert

Source: SAP
A business process expert (BPX) is the glue between business and technology.

A BPX is not only competent in business practices and able to prescribe solutions for key business issues, but can guide the correct use of technology to solve these issues. Some BPXs are adept at solution configuration, too.

Sort Through Business Issues Despite Limited Information and Time
It’s easy to feel like a fish out of water in an unfamiliar environment, but a surefire way for a BPX to gain an understanding of a business environment is by capitalising on past experiences. As you listen to the business needs, you’ll often find that situations radically different in exterior application can be very similar at their core.

By establishing a thorough understanding, often through key stakeholders, of the organisation’s business priorities and areas of greatest pain, a business process expert can quickly get a sense of where the most urgent concerns exist.

Analyse the Technical Environment and Know Where It is Headed
At the end of a project, no one likes to discover that a complete application built for one area of the business, which executes the exact requirements of the assignment, already exists but simply lies outside the main landscape. Work with IT to ensure that you have a complete view of the technical landscape, including forward-looking plans for technical upgrades. With this view, you can adjust the suggested timing for implementing your recommendations.

Design a Set of Alternate Solutions
This step typically involves your own personal style. Generally speaking, recommended solutions will become apparent during your discussions with stakeholders. As you sort through the business issues and identify the pain points, possible solutions often naturally fall out of your analysis.

Business Process Expert FAQs

What’s a typical day in the life of a BPX?
Depending on the phase of a project, a typical day is spent between strategy mode and configuration design. Early in a project, the BPX’s primary influence is on management and the business, shaping the organisation into a redesign of existing processes or crystallising the solution to a business problem. As the project life cycle progresses, the role becomes more that of a translator between business requirements and technology. Some days, a BPX may be heavily involved in configuration or troubleshooting, while other days a BPX may be evangelising the new solution to the business through presentations or road shows.

Who are the key players a BPX interacts with on a project?
Day-to-day, a BPX may interact with anyone from C-level or VP-level management to project managers, from business users to technical and configuration team members. The BPX involves management in the early stages of problem definition and solution design, particularly to garner support for the solution and secure a champion.

During the implementation of the solution, the BPX exchanges ideas with both the business and the configuration/technical team to ensure robust solution design and implementation.

What are the key skills of a BPX?
In addition to wide-ranging business experience in a specialty area, certain “soft” skills are critical for a successful BPX.

These include:
• Excellent communication skills to deliver concise, focused messages in the language each stakeholder understands; while management requires crisp, cost/benefit responses, technical or configuration teams need answers in the language of the technology and software to learn exactly what needs to be configured
• Strong facilitation skills to clearly articulate business issues and the effective solution design to the relevant players
• Big-picture focus to identify the impact of the issue and the solution on the business and to link the solution to the current business and technical landscape
• Modeling ability to model a solution that meets the business requirements within the confines of the technology
Again, past experience and intuition can be very useful for best-guessing on high-level project timing or phasing in a solution. You can use solutions you may have designed in the past to help estimate the implementation path for your current project.

**Create and Document Business Process and Technology Recommendations**

All your analysis efforts may go unused without a carefully crafted recommendations report. Typically, a recommendations document should include the following sections:

- Introduction, including why you are creating this document
- Scoping summary, explaining when this exercise occurred and its outcome
- Detailed business process information for the specific scope reviewed
- Alternate recommendations
- Organisational impact assessment
- Required interfaces
- Security, authorisations, and roles
- Integration points
- Training requirements
- Description of improvements and business benefits
- Resource estimates of the main actions to be taken to implement the solution
- Key success factors
- Project assumptions conclusion

Enterprises are looking to business process experts to have the knowledge, expertise, ability and confidence to competently liaise between business and IT. By sticking to the basics of analysis and design as discussed above, you have excellent odds of success. Honing your skills through experience is the key to mastering quick situational analysis.

And while the role is relatively new, you’ll find that there are already resources specifically available to the BPX. In fact, there’s a whole community of business process experts sharing best practices, methodologies, and techniques at http://bpx.sap.com. I strongly encourage you to join the Business Process Expert Community today and become an active participant.

Source: SAP

**BPX Part 1 – What is the Problem Today?**

**Summary**

This article discusses the current status, problems and challenges, as well as the stereotypes and clichés that we encounter between technology and business professionals. Having understood this, it will carve out the role of the BPX community, the skills needed and how you can get on a BPX career path.

**Introduction**

Every year in the United States more than US$60 billion are lost due to unsuccessful IT projects.

There are many reasons for failed software projects, but one of the most important seems to be the communication gap between IT and business. Technology professionals (“geeks” [1]) on the one side and business professionals (“suits” [1]) on the other side do not only have a different vocabulary, but also different attitudes, view points, goals and they even dress differently. What they do have in common is that they do not communicate well with the other group and they do not respect and trust each other.

This article tries to work out the differences between those groups, explains the common misunderstandings and demonstrates how the Business Process Expert fits in and can help to make IT projects more successful in your company.

**Roles**

The strengths that any successful organisation needs can be reduced to two factors:

1. Resolving problems
2. Influencing people

Alas, in many organisations the people with these two skillsets do not work together as they are supposed to, do not communicate well and in the worst case even sabotage each other. And all this, while both have the best for their organisation in mind. In order to understand how it comes to this situation, we will take a closer look at technology and business professionals, what drives them, what they expect and what their common misperceptions are.

**Technology professionals**

Technology professionals – also referred to as “geeks” [1] or “engineers” – are people who administer, maintain and build the IT infrastructure of an organisation. In order to understand geeks, we need to learn how they think, how they see themselves, and what they fear or dislike. Only this way we can learn what drives and motivates them.

**How they see themselves**

The following list is an attempt to summarise the most common factors of the view on themselves:

1. Substance over style (buzz word bingo)
2. Drive innovation (geeks=technology=evolution)
3. Play with technologies in order to stay at the top
4. High loyalty to other geeks
5. See themselves as artists (programming is a creative process)
6. Technology is fun

**How they are seen by non-geeks**

Now that we explored of how technology professionals see themselves, we take a look
at them from outside. How do others see them? Here is a list of the most common opinions about them:

1. Technology professionals don’t want to understand anything about the business they work in
2. Love technology for its own sake
3. Demand suits to understand technology
4. Need to meet the deadline and stay within budget
5. Think that rules should not apply to them
6. Bad with people
7. Wear shorts, t-shirts and ugly Birkenstocks
8. Lose interest as soon as development is finished
9. Reject changes when they come from business

How to win them
And what’s the best way to win them over?
- Show honest interest in their work
- Learn the basics of the technology (your business runs on it)

Show interest in their work and the technology. Even if you do not understand and need to understand every little detail, showing interest is a sign of respecting technology professionals.

And don’t forget: this is the technology on which your business runs. That should make it your professional duty to understand the fundamentals.

How they see themselves
This description is the basis for what skills and talents they see as important for their job:

- Communicate well with people
- Work professionally
- Give a trusting impression
- Use tools only if they help them with their work
- Drive innovation

How to alienate them
If you do not want to have a working relationship with them, then do the following:
- Consider them stupid and illogical
  
  The only smart guys are geeks, but don’t ask from where the money comes that covers your paycheck.

How to win them
- Show honest interest in their work
- Learn the basics of the business (your technology helps to run it)

How they are seen by non-suits
- Refuse to learn anything about technology
- Don’t understand technology but nevertheless insist on making technology pronouncements
- Don’t value technology
- Care only about money
- Resist innovations (suits=policy=status quo)
- Value image over substance
- Wear suits

Business professional
Business professionals – also known as «suits»[1] or business people – are people who do the business, that means interact with customers and employees, sell services and products, organise the projects and timelines, manage employees, administrate the organisation, etc. Depending on their exact roles, they either keep the money coming in the organisation, and/ or create an environment where the employees actually manufacturing the services and goods can fulfill their job.

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Related Content
[1] Pfleging, Bill; Zetlin, Minda: The Geek Gap – why Business and Technology Professionals Don’t Understand Each Other and Why They Need Each Other to Survive; Prometheus Books, 2006

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BPX Part 2 – How Can the BPX Solve the Problem?

Summary
This article discusses what can be done to bridge the gap between IT professionals and business professionals. The definitions and elaborations are the consolidated result of multiple articles, books and the discussions in the SDN and BPX forums.

Introduction
The gaps between IT and business professionals are not easily bridged. The role of a “mediator”, “translator” or “marriage counselor” is needed. That’s what SAP calls a Business Process Expert (BPX). While the former two roles have clearly specified profiles and job descriptions, the latter one seems rather blurry, fuzzy and undefined. This article aims to define the Business Process Expert and its types, the skills needed, and the career path to it.

Definition
Business Process Experts (BPX) are individuals or groups of people in an organisation, who bridge the gap between information technology and business professionals.

The BPX on the one hand is tech-savvy and knows sufficiently enough the implications of the business process’ requirements on factors like performance, data volume, network traffic, existing landscape and the criteria for selecting adequate technologies like user interface, programming language, application platform, security, etc. On the other hand, the BPX also understands the business process, the organisation’s strategy and legacy, drives innovation within the organisation and uses best practices that go beyond the scope of single departments and the organisation. For this the BPX needs soft and hard skills, must be fluent in both tech and business terminology, as well as a deep modeling knowledge. This way the BPX is able to map business scenarios to information technologies, realise them, nurture innovative topics, and think strategically.

The following will dive into each of the requirements.

Skillset
The basic task of a BPX is to understand both business process requirements and technologies sufficiently enough to map them, model and get the business processes implemented within a reasonable budget, timeframe, quality, usability, performance and functionality, while considering at the same time the existing and if possible, upcoming technologies, system landscapes and strategies, and keeping these applications viable for a foreseeable future. To achieve this, a BPX needs internal and/or external experience, good communication skills and modeling knowledge.

Experience
Business Process Experts typically start either as IT or business professionals and slowly grow into the role of a BPX, by participating in multiple projects involving members from the business and IT sides. The following skills are the fundamentals for a BPX to get things done and gain the respect and trust of the parties involved.

Communication Skills
A BPX has to be able to translate information into the terminology that each group is familiar with, without compromising the facts for decision making and implementation. The skills needed include fluency in technological and business terminology, the skill to reduce complex facts to simple, yet accurate definitions by use of appropriate translations, metaphors and comparisons.

Modeling Knowledge
Certain basic principals and theoretical concepts need to be mastered and understood by IT and business professionals. For IT professionals, these are things like object oriented programming, entity relationship diagrams, markup languages, network protocols, etc. For business professionals, this is the knowledge about market mechanisms such as demand and offer, inventory management principles, like FIFO or LIFO, KPI-models, and so on. All these concepts and principals are independent of actual business processes, industries or software. The same is true for a BPX. Not only does a BPX need to have an idea of some of these aforementioned concepts, but he also needs to know modeling. Now what is modeling exactly?

Modeling is the art of describing objects, rules and roles and relating them in processes with a descriptive language from a particular viewpoint.

As the writing of code for a developer is a creative process and influencing customers in buying a product requires highly creative techniques for a sales person, the same is true for modeling. When talking about modeling, multiple elements have to be considered in the modeling process.

These are:
• Business Objects
• Business Roles
• Business Rules
• Business Processes
• Enterprise Data
• Standards & Methodologies
• Metadata

Tool Knowledge
A BPX is not just “another guy” writing requirement documents and praying that IT folks will deliver something that comes as close as possible to what she specified, a BPX’s role will be much more involved in actually building the business processes. Contrary to the situation in the past, more and more model-driven tools are hitting the market that go beyond the classical diagram-drawing type of tool, but actually generate
persistency, code, user interfaces and so on out of such a diagram.

Some of these tools are the Composite Application Framework (CAF), Visual Composer (VC), ARIS, BI & BEx Suite, Exchange Infrastructure, Guided Procedures (GP), Master Data Management (MDM) and of course many non-SAP tools.

What is required for impact is the level of granularity or modularity of models described in a model with such a tool, to scale from high level to deep detail and not only display the model but implement it within the same tool environment.

**BPX Types**

When organisations look for developers, they specify what type of skills this person should have. This might be a certified Java or ABAP Developer, a database administrator, a data warehouse specialist or a network specialist. The same is true for the business professions. You look for a key account manager, an SVP for marketing and so on. There is also not only one single type of BPX, but multiple types. A BPX might be leaning more on the technology side with specific knowledge in tools, like modelers or architects, or more from the business side like a Business Analyst, or their focus may be more on reporting by implementing complex score cards, or they may specialise in certain industry processes, or they may serve as devil’s advocate, question the status quo and fall into the category of Zero-Gravity-Thinkers [1]. A BPX will have to have a combination of skills and experiences from each area:

- Industry
- Technology
- Tool
- (Modeling) Methodology

Whatever type the BPX is, they should be more or less hands-on to define, model, streamline, analyse and pro-actively improve business processes. In the next articles I will try to better describe types of BPX.

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**Parting Thoughts**

Similar concepts of «go-betweens» are pursued in innovative organisations, where you include people from different areas like technology and business experts and add a Zero Gravity thinker [1] (a person who can make associations and lift from the floor without worrying at this point about feasibility) to evaluate and work on new ideas and innovations. Make that talent a part of a BPX to evaluate and work on new processes. A BPX can only have as much impact as the support she receives from the organisation she is working with. Do you have support from the following stakeholders?

- Board
- Process Owners
- Technology Owners

Besides these, ask yourself the questions, whether the projects are broken down into manageable sizes and whether there are KPIs to measure success? Sounds trivial, but as with most things in life, it’s the underestimated things that are the “flapping wings of butterflies in England, which create a hurricane in China” or can kill your project.

**Bibliography**

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Author: Mario Herger, SAP Labs LLC / November 13th, 2006

Mario Herger started with SAP as a developer in 1998. He worked for 3 years in the BW Content team. From 2002 on he was with the xApp / CAF-team, from the very beginning as developer and product manager until 2004. From 2005 until 2006 he was a development manager for the Analytics team in Palo Alto, California. Since Oct. 2006 he is in the BPX team.
Planning for 2010: Key Issues for Managing Business Processes

The definition of a business process has traditionally been embedded in packaged applications; however, it is becoming independent and open to modification and adaptation in a different way. Gartner’s Key Issues explore this change, how users exploit processes and how the software market will respond.

ANALYSIS
The influence of service-oriented architecture (SOA) and the promise of the separation of business processes from the underlying technology have made “process” the watchword for technology users. Hype about process definition, manipulation and the agility process provides business users continues to be a key topic for technology leaders. Business applications encapsulate the control points on data that enable users to make decisions. The nature of how data is captured from the process is also changing and is another driver for the separation of process definition from process execution.

As users begin to understand how business processes are no longer an explicit part of the architecture of the business application, they will begin to explore alternative ways to model, manipulate, measure, analyse and improve processes through new technologies. Eventually, the definition of process will change as users recognise that the definition should encompass the enterprise and the individual user. This will be a primary area of research for Gartner because we believe that process will guide many software technology decisions.

Why the Focus on Process and Why Now?
Business applications have traditionally been used by business users to manage process flow, maintain transactional accuracy, make management and operational decisions, enter important business-related data, and manage interactions between business partners and customers. However, for many enterprises, they also are the most inflexible technology to change because the definition of process is embedded in the application code. Business change (at the point of the process and in the business model) is inevitable, and the likelihood that change needs to affect applications (because of embedded processes) is high. Business users want the ability to change the process definition without affecting the process or data accuracy. The ability to change processes while maintaining confidence and accuracy is the most likely place for IT to show significant value to the business.

The trend of separating business processes from the underlying architectures:
• Affects all technologies used by enterprises to manage business processes – for example, packaged business applications, business process management and application development stacks
• Invites other technologies to control enterprise processes – for example, collaboration tools, personal productivity tools, monitoring tools and measurement tools, such as business intelligence (BI).

Many vendors will enter the process dominance battle with claims that their technologies are the best. The primary issue for most users will be understanding how to get through the vendor and market hype to decide how this new development in technology (the separation of the process definition) can benefit them the most. For some users, it will be in application development; for others, it will be in the use of BI. Many will continue to use packaged applications to manage processes as they have done for years, and will augment their use with a secondary environment to manage the most important processes.

Key Issues that Gartner Will Cover Regarding Processes

1) Which technologies are best suited to define and explicitly manage business process definition and ensure the accuracy of the process and the resulting data?

Traditionally, packaged business application vendors have dominated the software market because they have enabled organisations to offload a majority of their custom-developed applications. However, no packaged application vendor can provide everything an enterprise needs. For years, enterprises acquired packaged applications from many vendors and then used integration middleware to ensure that business processes and data accuracy were achieved. However, enterprises now find that users have too many vendors and technologies to manage a single business process. In covering this issue, Gartner will provide ongoing information on many types of vendors that will emerge with tools and solutions to manage business processes. We will also address the benefits and risks of using a specific type of technology in a specific process.

2) Given that the vendor will battle for a dominant position in helping users get the most of explicit representation of business processes, how should users decide the role that each type of technology should play in helping to manage their business process needs?

Because many types of vendors will emerge to claim process dominance, Gartner will assess the ones that are more suited to help users manage their particular business process. No single vendor or vendor type will dominate. Users and vendors must be able to evaluate where and how to use the different...
technologies. The vendors will learn how to cooperate through business relationships and technology to provide value to users. Some users may find that returning to a “build” scenario for creating business applications is more suited to their enterprise environment, while others will continue to select packaged applications and extend their current environment.

In this Key Issue, Gartner will:

• Track the vendors that are vying for leadership in the management of processes
• Assess the best types of cooperation among the vendors to benefit users
• Help users understand the risks and benefits associated with each type of vendor.

Many vendors will build ecosystems to help them encapsulate the control of many technologies to help users manage business processes. Users will need to evaluate ecosystem vendors much as they have evaluated single vendors in the past. Gartner will also track vendor ecosystems and assess the strengths and challenges by vendor.

3) Will the movement to manage business processes independent of the business process delivery vehicle be driven by content or by tools/frameworks? How should organisations select and use content and tools/frameworks to their advantage?

In this Key Issue, we will explore the differences in user and vendor strategies, and how content (the definition of the business process) and tools/frameworks will emerge, to help organisations build and manage business processes. By making processes more explicit, we will begin to see open repositories of “services” that model processes. These open repositories will encourage users to participate by adding more services and using ones that other customers and partners have built. Yet, there will be risks and limitations to this type of content-driven movement. Not all services are created equal, and not all services will be suitable for use in many processes.

To exploit the services that will become more pervasive in the market, users will need tools and frameworks. SOA platforms, Web services platforms, application stacks and business process management systems are all examples of tools and frameworks in the market that help organisations manage and build applications from services. These tools will evolve to be less development/IT-only tools and become more usable by business analysts and users.

4) How will the definition of processes evolve to encompass individual processes as well as the most complex multienterprise business processes?

As we discuss process manipulation, measurement and management, we begin to understand that not all processes are created equal. Technology pundits and business users alike typically define processes in the traditional manner of business processes (for example, order to cash and prospect to cash). Often, we don’t consider “individual tasks” as part of the process, nor do we discuss differences between simplistic processes (for example, order entry and printing checks) and complex processes (for example, multienterprise processes). As process definitions are extracted from the underlying technology, process types will emerge and then merge again to serve many constituents. Individual and business processes will combine to enable users to manage the complete process more effectively. Processes that support multiple enterprises are not the same as enterprise-specific processes and, therefore, the technology underpinnings for successfully designing the process are different. Gartner will explore process types and how users should segregate and design processes to meet specific needs.
Focus on the BPP: Key Issues for Using IT to Support Process Innovation

Understand key issues for the business process platform – a model that helps users take advantage of technology advancements, such as service-oriented architecture and Web 2.0, which promote process flexibility and business model agility.

**ANALYSIS**

At the same time that business leaders are increasing their demand for business model innovation and process flexibility, technologies that support business processes are evolving. Business applications are being transformed by service-oriented architecture (SOA) and application development and business process technologies are becoming more user friendly.

The paradigm shift surrounding the creation of business applications will result in a new breed of employees who display hybrid characteristics of being business process (and model) savvy, as well as having a keen understanding of application development technologies. Define a business process platform (BPP) model to take advantage of evolving technology to bridge the gap between IT and business end users. By using the BPP model, users will build business models and process innovation into their technology decisions – ultimately enabling the buy vs. build environment that exists for sourcing IT to support business applications to include composition and sourcing.

The BPP model is separated into three parts: composition technologies, content and the governance/management/security that surrounds these areas. Composition technologies (integrated composition environments) will emerge from products that are available in the market – integrated service environments (ISEs), application platform suites and business process management suites (BPMSs) – which will evolve to become more integrated and designed for a business-level user. The content will include the services and tools to manage the life cycle and rules of use for the content. This part of the model that helps to house, govern and manage the life cycle of business/user services is called a business services repository.

The emergence of the BPP enables organisations to decide how to source, buy, build and compose applications based on the needs of the enterprise. Key areas, such as Web 2.0 and “mashups,” will help users develop an aptitude for developing applications that enable community, people and enterprise collaboration.

Understanding the holistic needs of the enterprise process environment is a key first step. Because no single vendor can provide all the process needs of an enterprise, users will begin to focus on buying from BPP-enabled ecosystems rather than single vendors. Business application and infrastructure markets will merge as vendors exhibit leadership in both markets, as well as the ability to support a user’s BPP model. Few vendors have these capabilities, but early contenders are the top four software vendors: IBM, Microsoft, Oracle and SAP. As these vendors make the transition to support the BPP model, they will form an ecosystem of business partners that extend BPP-related offerings.

As a result of the emergence of the BPP model and the changes that will occur in the application and infrastructure markets, Gartner will deliver research and advice in different areas.

**Key Issue 1: How should IT managers use the BPP model to source and manage a holistic process environment to meet business requirements of more-agile, flexible, business- and user-focused processes?**

Business users have been in the position to provide demands to IT, but with little interaction beyond providing requirements of how they want the business processes to operate. The result has been a business application environment dominated by “business-focused” processes that have been acquired from application vendors or lists of outstanding development projects to build what users need. Users who adopt a BPP model will open a new world of possibilities to business users, unleashing new possibilities of process flexibility and processes that include the person-to-process interaction cycle.

Reviewing your business process needs holistically is important to the success of process-sourcing decisions (buy, build, compose, outsourc). Changing the nature of “business processes” to include “process of me” will result in enterprise and information worker agility. Bridging the gap between IT and business users is not easy, and each will have to learn more about the other’s world. Success will depend on a new breed of employees who can use the new form of composition to model and execute business
needs through IT. Understanding how to create a model that separates processes into types – those that need to be flexible and those that don’t – and create a continuously changing view of that process model will be a key activity we explore.

Research on this key issue includes:

• “Achieving Agility: Implement a BPP Model to Support Static and Dynamic Processes.” This document focuses on segmentation of the process environment into processes that need to be static and those that need to be dynamic. Dynamic processes are those that you need to have content defined to support through the BSR.
• “Findings From the 9 March 2006 ‘All Company Research Meeting: Focus on Business Process Agility Misses the Individual.’” Although users are focused on process agility demanded by changing business models, most users will miss the opportunity to redefine processes to include “people” interactions with the processes.
• “Person-to-Process Interaction Emerges as the ‘Process of Me.’” This document focuses on person-to-process interaction that is typically missed during process definition. Understanding where people processes need to be included in business process agility is important to information workers and competition in the future.

Key Issue 2: How will IT managers and business users collect, refine (adapt), catalog and govern business services that can be used to orchestrate business processes?

The BSR is emerging as a concept and technology to help users control the content necessary for business process composition. The definition of users in this context not only includes the enterprise but also constituents of the enterprise (suppliers, customers and partners). Vendors and users are using SOA methods to transform business application logic into usable components of business logic. The ability to combine and recombine these “services” is the primary enabler of the BPP model.

Also key is the container that is used to control the content, as well as the life cycle management of the content. Vendors will provide the container and populate some of the content. Users who populate the BSR from multiple vendor products will use EIM technologies to maintain information integrity. Understanding how to source/ build the tools necessary for a BSR, manage the content of the BSR, use the content in building new business processes and populate the BSR will be explored.

Research on this key issue includes:

• “A Business Service Repository Provides the Foundation for a Business Process Platform.” Understanding what the BSR is and how you build/populate it is key to success in building your BPP. This document defines the elements of the BSR tools, methodologies and content.
• “Your Business Process Platform Needs an Enterprise Information Management Strategy.” The IT landscape is littered with legacy, packaged and developed applications, coupled with multiple data warehouses and uncontrolled, unstructured data across the enterprise. One key design consideration that makes up the BPP strategy is to use information independent of any specific analytics or business application to be used by all stakeholders. Business applications and services, including business intelligence, and users and trading partners need to be assured that information is semantically understood at all times.
• “Findings for Service Exchange Marketplaces: Buyer Beware.” Vendors in many markets are creating service exchanges where the partner (ecosystem) vendor can “sell” its Web service through a centralized marketplace. These exchanges can be used to provide content for a BSR, but users should understand that the services provided have little or no guarantees or governance mechanisms.

Key Issue 3: How will business analysts and process-centric developers use business domain knowledge to compose services into usable and valid business processes?

Composition will be a new form of development, but one that will depend less on developers and more on business people who understand processes and technology. Technologies such as portals, integration brokers, application development suites, ISEs, Web service platforms and BPMSs assist developers in building and integrating applications. These technologies have been merging into a platform marketed by many vendors, but more will have to be done to advance them to the point where business analysts have the ability to build composite applications. This advancement, combined with the emergence of the BSR, is a primary element of BPPs. Understand which technologies are important, which vendors have the best tools and how ecosystems leverage this composition environment to provide value-added enhancements.

Research on this key issue includes:

• “Application Development Suites Will Be Critical to SOAs.” A new generation of application development will involve a substantial decrease in solutions that use a manufacturing paradigm — that is, planning, analysis, design, construction and deployment of a set of requirements (whether using waterfall or iterative methods) into an application. Instead, business services and components will increasingly be deployed into the established application portfolio ecosystem using an assembly of purchased and established data and applications to respond to new business demands.
Key Issue 4: How will vendors’ strategies change to support users’ BPPs and how will this affect software market dynamics? To support business models and process innovation, change the way you think about managing and sourcing business application functionality. One of the most important technology transitions happening in the business application world to support business model innovation is the movement to an SOA to support BPPs. This technology transition happens during the transition to client/server or relational databases and, as a result, the transition substantially affects how users buy technology and how vendors structure their offerings.

Because the BPP requires a combination of assets delivered by business application vendors and application development vendors, these markets will collide and create a new type of combined vendor. These vendors will attract business partners that adopt their technologies and application code, and ecosystems will evolve as a result. The impact on users will be profound, because the decision to acquire business applications or application development technologies will merge into a single decision around an ecosystem.

Research on this key issue includes:
- “BPP Changes Infrastructure and the Business Application Vendor Landscape.” This note provides key elements vendors should be providing to help users build their BPPs. It also evaluates the top four software vendors in their efforts to enable a BPP
- “Large Infrastructure Providers Move Toward Composition Portfolios”
- “Findings from the SAMA/ERP Research Community: A Framework for Evaluating Vendors’ BPP and WOA Strategy.” Users need a framework to evaluate how well different applications in their portfolio will fit into their envisioned enterprise BPP. This evaluation should also be applied to all packaged application purchases.

Key Issue 5: As a result of the BPP model, users will form ecosystems of vendors to support their process needs. How will major vendors support these ecosystem needs and how will vendors evolve their own ecosystems?

The role of ecosystems will be important for users to consider when sourcing functionality and technology to support the BPP. In many cases, users default to their primary business application vendor to help with sourcing functional innovation in an ecosystem.

Model your ecosystem’s needs by first understanding the current and future process needs – fitting the vendor and its ecosystem partners into that model, rather than vice versa. Innovation in business processes will be more likely to occur in “compose and build” process environments rather than in sourced or acquired environments. Understand how vendor ecosystems are evolving and how to select the right model(s).

Research on this key issue includes:
- “Innovation Shift for Business Applications: Major Suite Providers to Dominate.” Web services, SOAs and user BPPs will reshape the market for business applications. The prime driver will be user demand for application innovation and backbone capabilities. Major suite vendors will shape ecosystems that will provide business model innovation.

The research associated with this set of BPP key issues will help you:
- Understand the dramatic market shifts in business applications and application development technology markets, and how to take advantage of those shifts before they negatively impact your process environment
- Build the right sourcing strategy for a combined buy/build/compose/source business process environment
- Align yourself with the vendors that are best-positioned for survival, because these market shifts will change the positions of many vendors in the market
- Develop best practices for managing your holistic business process environment.

Gartner Research Note G00144595, 18 December 2006, Yvonne Genovese
When developing a business process platform strategy to coordinate IT resources across business intelligence, business applications and business process management, an enterprise information management program will manage the information across all these domains for the benefit of all.

ANALYSIS
The business process platform (BPP) represents the approach that the IT department and business process owners should follow to manage better and reduce the costs of an ever-increasingly complex IT stack. These requirements coincide with the added business need for a more-responsive IT resource to support market-differentiating business processes. One of the most important requirements of the BPP perspective is a fundamental change to the way information is managed, recognising it as a strategic asset. The value of viewing IT assets as a BPP comes from the opportunity to orchestrate software services to support complex and changing business processes – but without an enterprise information management (EIM) capability, the costs of doing this will be prohibitive, particularly for large, complex and fast-changing environments.

For the most part, information today is managed in silos. The IT landscape is littered with legacy, packaged and developed applications, coupled with multiple data warehouses and uncontrolled unstructured data across the enterprise. This complex web makes managing information as a strategic asset very difficult. One key design consideration that makes up the BPP strategy is to use information independent of any specific analytic or business application to be used by all stakeholders. Business applications and services, including business intelligence, and users and trading partners need to be assured that information is consistently semantically understood – at all times. EIM represents the organisational commitment to achieve this end.

EIM is an integrative discipline for maximising the strategic value of information assets. It is operationalised as a program and is delivered through a reference model. The EIM reference model includes data integration services, master data management and metadata management. Metadata management, in particular, is important to the BPP. Here is where semantic issues (buried among application silos) get resolved. However, metadata management is not itself a new technology; with EIM, these technologies are aligned with master data management, and it is here that a holistic information management service emerges that ensures semantic understanding across the enterprise. The issues of semantic reconciliation and data quality are where most data integration projects fail. This EIM reference model supports this semantic layer by:

- Applying master data management technologies and services to create “single versions of the truth” and consolidated views of internal (master data) and external (reference data) information
- Creating snapshot views through federated query technology (also known as enterprise information integration)
- Providing transparency and semantic resolution through unified metadata and master data management

Through the rollout of an EIM program, a new project-independent information management capability will be formed. The focus of this information capability is not moving data, or managing messages (message bus), or cleaning (ETL, data quality) but it is certainly newly focused on manager master data and semantically reconciling different interpretations data across the enterprise. This new semantic layer is recognised in Gartner’s representation of the integrated composition platform as part of the BPP (see Figure 1).

There are three primary elements needed to support a new business process within the BPP: the user experience, delivered via portal and other user interface (UI) technology; the process management itself; and the information that supports and enables those processes. That information management is where the benefits of EIM are delivered. The actual implementation of much of the technology that enables EIM is contained within the other major element of the BPP model, namely the business services repository (BSR) (see Figure 2).
Figure 1. EIM Within the BPP

Source: Gartner (April 2006)

Figure 2. BSR: Content and Management of Content

Source: Gartner (April 2006)
The BSR contains not only the reused services that are orchestrated to support a business process but all the information (metadata and master data) that is required to define those services, their information needs, the rules that define consistency of service invocation and of semantics. EIM specifically delivers:

- Data integration services and associated technologies (such as ETL and EAI data federation), which are rationalised across the enterprise for the rapid access, delivery and movement of information, instead of deployed “one project at a time.”
- Data quality services, such as profiling and cleansing, allowing data stewards to perform data integrity functions for their own applications
- Master data management services to enable publishers and subscribers to develop or exploit a “single version of the truth” for shared data assets, and for data stewards to review data quality performance and to report infringements as part of the ongoing data quality programs
- Metadata and master data management services to support transparency, lineage, semantic reconciliation and reusability of information assets. Many of these artifacts – master data objects as well as metadata objects – must be managed and coordinated to support the BSR
- Security and role-based services to ensure proper access to information.

Since the BPP is the framework in which all stakeholders within the enterprise will now consume IT resources, they will all share in the value derived from EIM. Users of analytics (via business intelligence) and business processes (via business applications) will be able to exploit information assets across the organisation since the data is now semantically assured, thus breaking through information silos and stovepipe systems maintained by complex and costly point-to-point interfaces. IT costs are thus lowered (by eliminating redundancy, achieving process simplification and minimising service handoffs), and business agility is achieved. Consumers of information will no longer have to incur the duplicate costs of integration each time a new process or analysis is developed.

**Enterprise Semantics in the Business-to-Business World**

The BPP is an enterprise-level model. As such, it respects enterprise boundaries and will not respect disparate needs defined by users outside the enterprise. In the business-to-business world; much data is shared in terms of trade, commerce, collaboration and others. Within the BPP framework and specifically the EIM program, there exists a semantic layer for the enterprise use; but as data is exchanged with other enterprises, another type of EIM program is required – one that enables semantic reconciliation across enterprises and across BPPs. The framework Gartner uses for this is Global Data Synchronization (GDS). GDS was developed as a metaphor for explaining how high-volume, industry-level volumes of data can be semantically reconciled across large, complex, even global, supply chains. In effect, GDS is “EIM for many trading partners all at once.” GDS is larger scale and more complex than EIM, and there are many different industry initiatives related to GDS, some of which have been going on for five years or more. EIM strategies must, therefore, support the industry standards for data, message and business process interoperability. There are some examples where this is taking place today.

**Bottom Line**

Enterprises continue to manage information in silos. In seeking to improve business agility and the coherence of the IT infrastructure, the BPP model should be adopted as the process framework that enterprises need to build. Success in applying this model will depend on EIM to maximise the value and usefulness of the enterprise information assets.

Gartner Research Note G00139332, 26 April 2006,
Andrew White, Yvonne Genovese
Company Profile

About SAP

SAP is the world’s leading provider of business software*. Today, more than 38,000 customers in more than 120 countries run SAP® applications – from distinct solutions addressing the needs of small businesses and midsize companies to suite offerings for global organisations. Powered by the SAP NetWeaver® platform to drive innovation and enable business change, SAP software helps enterprises of all sizes around the world improve customer relationships, enhance partner collaboration and create efficiencies across their supply chains and business operations. SAP solution portfolios support the unique business processes of more than 25 industries, including high tech, retail, financial services, healthcare and the public sector. With subsidiaries in more than 50 countries, the company is listed on several exchanges, including the Frankfurt stock exchange and NYSE under the symbol “SAP.” More information at http://www.sap.com/asia/

SAP NetWeaver Facts & Figures

Among numerous business benefits, SAP NetWeaver:

• Enables flexibility in business strategies and change in the IT infrastructure, including outsourcing, centralisation or decentralisation, consolidation, and integration of IT following mergers and acquisitions.
• Unifies integration technologies into a single platform, enabling companies to deploy innovative business processes while making use of their existing IT systems.
• Aligns IT practices with business processes, paving a clear path for deploying Enterprise Service-Oriented Architecture (Enterprise SOA), SAP’s business-driven approach to services-oriented architecture.
• Reduces the need for custom integration as the platform is based on industry standards and preintegrated with business applications. SAP NetWeaver can be extended with commonly used development tools such as Java 2 Platform, Enterprise Edition (J2EE), Microsoft .NET and IBM WebSphere.

Key Statistics

• Market adoption of SAP NetWeaver continues to grow, with more than 13,760 customer deployments in production.
• SAP has delivered 1,000 enterprise services for the SAP Business Suite applications through the Enterprise Services Workplace site on SAP Developer Network (SDN).
• More than 2,000 independent software vendors actively building applications on SAP NetWeaver.
• More than 150 active members of the Enterprise Services Community
• Eight industry value networks (IVNs) launched to support banking, chemicals, consumer products, high tech, mill products (forest and paper), oil and gas, public sector, retail and professional services.
• Since the creation of SDN in Sept 2003, more than 650,000 registered members worldwide have joined the community, helping to drive adoption of SAP NetWeaver.
• More than 80,000 registered Business Process Expert community members
• More than 10,000 consultants are trained to support customers using SAP NetWeaver.

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