



Technology Roundtable T-10

Articulating Business Strategy and Operations with BMM

Practical applications and future needs for the Business Motivation Model

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Background

The Business Motivation Model (BMM) was developed by the Business Rules Group (BRG):

- First published November 2000, last updated September 2005.
- Available free from BRG web site (www.businessrulesgroup.org). No requirement to log in, so no records kept of who has downloaded.
- Adopted by OMG Business Modeling and Integration Domain Task Force in December 2005, scheduled for finalization as an OMG Specification in 2006.

What is the BMM?

A simple, compact (meta)model for business governance - approximately 40 concepts, less than 4,000 words of definitions.

At its simplest, a standard vocabulary¹ for major concepts of governance - influence, assessment, risk, course of action, business policy, strategy, tactic, goal, objective, etc.

In its early use, the basis for a simple passive tool for recording governance decisions - what objectives and courses of action were decided upon, based on what assessments were made of what influences.

In the OMG Business Modeling Space:

- Introduction of governance concepts
- High-level framework for connecting detailed² models that define distinct³ but related aspects of the business - business process, business rules, organization roles and responsibilities (and maybe others in future - resources, geography ...)

Using the BMM

The BMM (or a tool that implements the BMM) supports reaction to change.

The model is neutral with regard to methodologies for dealing with change (how you decide which influences are important enough to monitor, how you make assessments, how you set objectives, etc.), but it does assume a flow of activity:

- Monitor influences for changes that affect the enterprise
- Assess the impact of the changes
- Decide what to do - desired results, business policies, courses of action
- Carry the effects of those decisions into the operational detail of the enterprise - business processes, business rules, organization responsibilities.

A repository based on the BMM will capture the results of these activities, and provide you with two-way traceability:

- From the change management perspective, what operational changes you made in reaction to change.
- From the operational perspective, why you do what you do the way that you do it.

Useful for Regulatory Compliance

There is an obvious application for the BMM in Regulatory Compliance, for decision making and traceability. The OMG RC Domain Special Interest Group is already building on the BMM for development of RFPs.

A big issue here is Assessment. There is so much regulation, from so many regulators who don't talk to each other, that it's hard to make assessments. And you have to assess new or changed regulation, not just against other regulations, but also against what you have already done in reaction to them.

One of the RC DSIG RFPs is about the metamodel that would be needed to support this. An aspect of this is the capability to import partial solutions from external advisors. Regulation is so big and wide-ranging that most companies, especially small and medium companies, cannot cope by themselves. They need to rely on trade and industry associations and paid advisors (consultants, lawyers) to provide solutions that they can adopt.

Mainly for Regulatory Compliance?

RC has a high profile at the moment. But responsibilities to shareholders, to customers, to employees, etc. require the same kinds of activities and decisions as responsibilities to regulators. The BMM is about good business practice and governance.

Issues

The BMM is in the OMG finalization process. Essentially this means that the Finalization Task Force need to take on issues from all interested parties, resolve them, and prepare the BMM for publication as an OMG Specification.

Some high-priority issues are:

- The BMM needs to include resources - probably as references to elements of more detailed operational models, in the same way as it references business processes, business rules and organization units.
- The BMM needs to include Critical Success Factors. Could this be handled by categorizing Desired Result (or perhaps Objective) as critical / non-critical?
- The BMM needs a lot more attributes. Currently it simply has identifiers and text descriptions. Lots of suggestions here for what would be useful.

¹ Following SBVR principles, the important thing is to get consensus on the definitions. It's a relatively simple tooling requirement to substitute local terms for the standard BMM terms, if required

² The BMM assumes simple references to things defined on more detailed models of the operational business - business rules, business processes, organization units - but vendors may choose to implement more sophisticated interfaces.

³ These kinds of model are expected to be linked by associations and interface artifacts, rather than tightly integrated. It should be possible to change business rules without restructuring business processes, to reassign responsibilities while keeping the same logical business activities, etc.