

SOA BPM Roundtable 9/27/07

[Slide 1]

BRENDA MICHELSON: Good morning. Welcome to the SOA Consortium's second hot topic round table. Today we'll be discussing the relationship between SOA and BPM. Our thought leader panel features Ashwini Ahuja from SDG, Sooraj Balgobin from The SOA Monitor, and Brian Erickson from Hitachi Consulting.

[Slide 2]

The purpose of our hot topic round tables are pretty simple. We just want to have a meaningful conversation on a hot topic related to SOA with some industry thought leaders and members of the consortium. So not only do we have our panelists, but as well the consortium members -- the attendees of the meeting -- will be participating in the roundtable discussion in both a questioning and an answering mode. And I'm sure, knowing the consortium members, there will be more answers than there will be questions. And that's just great.

[Slide 3]

The SOA consortium's position is that SOA and BPM are complimentary business strategies. When we think about SOA and BPM, we're not just talking about technology. We think about four different aspects:

(1) We're thinking about the business discipline, that really enables business process improvement, business performance management and business agility.

(2) We consider that SOA and BPM each today has a distinct methodology and that organizations really need to be able to design and implement BPM and SOA together, and how does that work. Can people actually start with BPM and get to SOA? Can they start with SOA and get to BPM? And certainly, can they do either or?

(3) SOA and BPM have distinct technologies. And while that's fine in many respects, what we need as an industry, and what organizations need, is to be able to have technologies that interoperate and tools that interoperate. And that if the business is working on a BPM type project and says "here are my models, here's what I want my business process to be", the SOA needs to be able to match that and implement the intent of what the business people are saying, as opposed to something that's more system or application driven.

(4) And then finally what we see a lot, and we talk about a lot in the consortium is that SOA and BPM have very different constituents and champions. And quite often it's an IT/business divide. And organizations really need to break down the walls between business and IT to really deliver business agility and process improvement.

[Slide 4]

So I've asked our panelists to each pick one of these topics to talk about. And what they'll do is they'll present their thoughts in five to seven minutes. And then we'll have a facilitated roundtable conversation that involves the entire group.

[Slide 5]

Starting off, it's going to be Ashwini Ahuja, who is going to be actually talking about business discipline. Ashwini, you can start.

[Slide 6]

ASHWINI AHUJA: Thank you, Brenda. To start with, I thought first thing we should do is look at a body of work that we were doing as part of the SOA Consortium, which is called the SOA Commandments. The SOA Commandments that we are trying to look at from C level executives, what would make sense to a CXO, be it a CIO, CFO, CSO, CEO – what would make sense to them? What does SOA mean to them? And what I did is because we're talking about business discipline here, I thought that we'd pull out some of those commandments, which were relevant from a business context. And some of these are fairly simple and a lot of us do hear about these all the time. But I thought it might be a good idea just to state the SOA consortium position on this.

That SOA is not something you can buy in a shrink-wrap package. It's not a technology. You do SOA because it's a business issue first. And it needs to start in that order. And again, SOA and good, traditional shared services architecture is almost the same thing, SOA can bring some more nuances to the table, but basically you're expanding on that thought of good, shared services architecture. There are a couple of others, but I think that ones that really we need to focus on are specifically around where SOA needs to start with alignment of business and IT, which is the biggest gap that we're going to address in this podcast. And really what this alignment brings is a set of governable services to the business. So that's where you really want to get to and hopefully by 2010, when the SOA Consortium has done our work, we would be there. So that's just setting the basis.

[Slide 7]

From my perspective -- and I think the SOA Consortium overall -- we believe that this is where we really need to get to, and where we think the business, the bottom cog, which is the business, is what's driving the BPM initiatives, the process improvement initiatives, of what they're trying to do. And that in turn drives the SOA or the technology side of the house in what solutions they're building. So out here, I think the problems that most of us try and get into are at least a problem that I've heard many of my colleagues, is that BPM is really not going to help us get there. And that's predominantly because BPM – the definition of BPM is very different in everybody's mind. It could be BPM, some people look at it as a workflow automation tool. Some people look at it as purely business process improvement project. In fact, some of them, there's a joke that I heard, "What is the life cycle of the standard BPM initiative? It's 2.5 CIO's."

So some of that is coming in and the IT community really does not value that side of the BPM proposition. What we're really trying to do as a predominantly SOA focused group is that the main benefit we need from the BPM crowd is that ability to articulate what the business process is, one. Second, articulate what they're trying to get to, and help us get that definition in terms of, for IT, get that process model in a manner that's understandable by both parties. And the analogy that I like to give that is like the building industry. They have, they call it the blueprint. And the blueprint is used to sell a 30 million dollar skyscraper, or a billion dollar skyscraper. It's used when the interior architect and interior designers are looking at what they do with it, how they can beautify the space. It's used by the plumbers and the electricians to see where the piping and the conduits need to run through it. They do have a lot of detail, and there is a lot of detail in that part of the blueprints; but they're all talking about one standard way of defining what is required, what needs to be built, how it needs to be built. I think that's the bridge that we're missing, and I think Brian's going to follow up with the bridge between the two. This is my depiction of how the different cogs needs to work together.

[Slide 8]

The next slide is again, being the SOA Consortium, I put a little more weight on the SOA side of the house. Otherwise truly if you look at the blocks that we have there, on the BPM side and on new product development, operational efficiency, focus on process of ownership, those could easily be on the SOA side. And even when you look at some sort of BPM initiative, things like reusable services, business and IT agility and remove duplication of effort— a lot of these I have seen BPM initiatives touting these as benefits of BPM projects. So the point is that both are trying to do the same thing. One is looking at it from a business standpoint; one is looking from a technology and execution standpoint. It's the same end goal, so the two are truly complementary. And it's not overlap, I think, the two tend to work together quite well.

[Slide 9]

Third slide here, this is just an example of a BPM driven SOA initiative, and it's just an example where we are trying to show how the process might work between the business process community and how the hand off might happen to the EA crowd. So, you help define business to business. The BPM folks, they analyze the business processes. They focus on process improvement and optimization. They look at business activity identification.

And I think that's illustrated using an example, say a business process called payroll. Now that's the business process. They might analyze what the company does right now. They might focus on, we have three offices that are doing payroll for the whole company. They're using three different systems. Potentially there might be some value in cutting up and making those processes more effective. They identify in the payroll process, what do we all do? We get the employee information, we figure out what their tax liabilities are. We pay the taxes to the government. We do the direct deposit. We calculate their benefits. Those are all business activities again. Now take each of those activities and further decompose them into functional services. That's the first part where this interaction between enterprise architecture SOA initiatives and the business process is really taking place. That's really where they're helping define what they do, what they're trying to do, whether it's consolidating

of systems, it's cutting out a chunk of business process. Today they're doing payroll in-house, and now they want to look at outsourcing payroll. That's where we come in, and help define what they can do for the business.

Now the enterprise architecture group that's focused on SOA really focused further than on decomposing the functional services into the technical services. Then the enterprise architects look at which of those technical services and sub-services are available in the enterprise already. Which ones need to be defined and built? That can be reused and then they build new services and finally the business gets the input.

The main difference here is that business analysis is taking into account business process leaders and what they're trying to do for business. That's really the goal here. And I think as part of the SOA Consortium, what they're trying to do is this fourth block, which is outlined in red, and figure out how that interaction takes place, what is a good standard or practice to use in making that communication very, very clear and understandable by both parties. That's the objective.

[Slide 10]

That's really the focus that I wanted to have and this is from a technology perspective, because I use terminology that I've heard – I've had these moments where I'm talking to maybe a CTO and they say ok, now I get it. The ones who are the more technology focused tend to get these ideas; think of SOA as an API for the business, things like that. It's more on the EA side. And think of BPM as a case modeling tool for the business, if you take it in the right context, it makes a lot of sense, but again, people tend to misconstrue what we mean. Our goal is to help the business people define and articulate what they want, clearly, in their tongues which are understandable by us. That's really what we're trying to do.

[Slide 11-12]

BRIAN ERICKSON: Thanks a lot. I think the whole BPM-SOA conversation goes back to the age-old challenge of how do business users communicate effectively with the IT people that are going to build the solution. And I think why you're seeing a lot of excitement and energy around it is because to be, the business guys who are deploying BPM have had a lot of initial success with it. I think they look at it as a very powerful tool to help them improve their business processes. I think on the other side of the fence, or the other side of the bridge, as I've depicted in my bridge metaphor here, the IT guys are excited about it because it also sounds like something that is a lot closer. But I think both sides are looking at this and saying hey, this is another opportunity for us to kind of solve that age-old problem of communication and making sure that we can communicate effectively.

Now, I use the bridge metaphor because I think there is a separation between the business on the, left and the business tools that they're using to improve their process; and IT on the right, and the tools they're using to solve the business problems, and primarily being SOA in this meeting, in this group.

I think that the question that we should be asking ourselves is what do we mean when we say BPM and SOA don't work together or do work together? And what is it that we're really trying

to achieve by having them work together? At the end of the day I believe it is to facilitate that conversation, so people understand better and more effectively and more efficiently how to bridge that gap between the business needs and the IT needs.

I think there are a lot of parallels between the different problem-solving techniques, if you will. And I've put those at the bottom of the slide. If you think about the business and trying to drive business transformation, and SOA is trying to drive systems transformation. We can go through all those. Again, I think that's why there's a lot of excitement around here around the integration of BPM and SOA because there are so many clearly available, clearly visible parallels between the two approaches and methodologies.

I think the challenge, however, is that there's still that gap in the middle of the bridge. Each side has built out, each side is getting closer. But the gap has not been closed. And in my humble opinion, I think it's the business that's going to have to drive a little more of the bridging than the IT side. I think most of us are IT practitioners and most of us try to push the string up the hill and it just doesn't work very well.

So rather than create that demand, or push that demand forward, I think we have to have a little bit of the supply drive, or a supply pull from the business. So that's why on this group, the business operations group, we're focusing a little bit on the business practitioners and having them help us create pull, that demand for how do we integrate these two together.

I think that the piece that I have in the middle there is – there's been a couple, because of the implementation of BPM so far, there's been a couple of things that have started to create some of that pull. And one of the things that BPM has done is help identify process prioritization, so which processes should we be automating and developing into services first? I think that's one of the benefits that we've seen in the integration of BPM and SOA.

The second is modeling. Just the process of developing process models and structuring those in a structured way, again, aligns it much more closely to how you go about building a system using SOA. And then finally I think what it's starting to introduce is the abstraction of process logic away from the technology aspect of it. And I think if we can continue to separate those two things out, they'll be more effective and more efficient for people to understand how the business needs to work and then how IT can build solutions to support it.

As I said, there's a lot of parallels between the two and I think the real power comes not when they just come together, but when we integrate the two together. So think about it as a rope. Each piece of rope is combined with multiple strands. And so if we can get those two strands of BPM and SOA truly integrated together, that's where I think the real power comes from. As I was putting this slide together, I was reminded of the movie "Ghostbusters." If you remember at the end of the movie, the four ghostbusters were fighting the big Stay Puff Marshmallow Man, right. And they all had their independent beams of power. But they couldn't defeat the Stay Puff Marshmallow Man with their independent beams of power; they had to bring the beams together, combine the beams together before they had the real power to defeat Stay Puff Marshmallow Man. Now remember in that movie, they said if they crossed the beams, it may mean the end of the world. I don't think if we cross the beams in BPM and SOA that means the end of the world here. But I think that's where we're going to

get the real power from, is crossing the beams. I think that's what we need to do in this group, figure out how to cross those beams and integrate those beams more effectively.

BRENDA MICHELSON: Thanks, Brian. I'm curious as to know who exactly in that analogy is the Stay Puff Marshmallow Man?

[Slide 12]

Sooraj, please share with us the human element.

SOORAJ BALGOBIN: Before I go to the next slide, I only have one slide. I'll just share with you a story from yesterday. I had a prospecting call with a large company here in Jacksonville. So I walk in there, I say I'm going to the SOA meeting in Jacksonville and I'm going to be on a panel about SOA and BPM. And he goes you know what? I was at this conference last week, an analyst conference last week. And you know you cannot do SOA without BPM. And I'm going wow, this is a great meeting. This could not start any better. This guy agrees with me.

And then spends the next hour talking me through his unbelievable, SOA platform vision. He brings this huge piece of paper, colorful, with all the pieces figured out. I was really impressed. This is probably the one company that I've seen that has put a lot of horsepower, a lot of thinking into what does it really take to make that platform work? So he has a modeling tool at the front end. He has his registry/repository tool. He has his ESB in the middle. And they've really tackled the big technical issues that many other companies even haven't thought about, like for example, how do they integrate all these different tools together, the environment together, etc.

I was there like wow. I was looking to maybe sell him something, but this guy, he could teach me something. So we talk. And then I go what have you done? And they had already spent 18 months at this. And guess what? They've done nothing. And I go – does your software factory buy into this. I'm not really sure whether they're really buying into this. What about the business units? Well, we're trying to work that right now. We've really been doing this under the covers. This is – he was very proud of this, because he feels he's getting a lot of support. But this is a classic example of what I call the field-of-dreams archetype. And I will come back to archetype afterward, because when I talk about human element I usually talk about archetypes and how you need to identify them.

So this is a very classic example. Some of you may have heard of these stories. But this is really, to me, it is very simple when it comes to SOA and BPM. It really comes down to this two by two matrix.

[Slide 14]

And it's really no harder than what this is. On the one hand, BPM provides you the process flexibility. The ability to not create the static one-off use of your business process, but really gives you the power of really doing this such that you can change to process analysis which we do with some customers. And you also do IT processes from SOA. And really you want

to go through this upper right hand quadrant. This is where I want to go. And I think there's general agreement that if you plan these two together, this is where you go.

The one thing that this slide is missing -- because I couldn't figure out how to do this in three dimension -- is really the human element. The adaptable organization. What's the point of really doing all this really cutting edge business process analysis, business process modeling, creating these really flexible business processes if the business users just don't want to change? What's the point? What's the point of developing all this high end SOA platform, doing all this cutting edge thinking about SOA if guess what, you can't get your programmers on board and they'd rather do -- creating code than reusing other people's code. What's the point of doing BPM and SOA or even talking about it if you can't get IT and the business to work together? So those are some really fundamental issues.

Now the good news and the bad news. The good news is on the business users, they've done business process improvement. BPM is nothing really new to them, and they understand the importance of change management. But the bad news is as follows. They understand change management, but they usually look at it with a very narrow view which is, I heard some of that yesterday a little bit, communication plan, training, and job design.

That's a very narrow view of change management. The good news with SOA, one, SOA governance. Right, SOA governance has really helped companies to appreciate the need for what? There is a huge change going on here. People are going to have to start thinking differently, you are going to have to put some new structures in place. Governance is all about driving new behaviors. The bad thing, SOA governance, because a lot of people will think SOA governance is going to cure all their change management ills. This is a big problem here.

So the challenge that we're seeing really in the marketplace is really now what we call, it's more around just change management. Change management a lot of people think is process. It's what you have to make happen. And if you look at it from a very static view of communication plans, training, job design or SOA governance, you're going to face some significant hurdles. Companies that we are finding amongst our customers are ones who talk about the need for SOA governance right from day one. I think you really need to get organizational acceptance right from day one. And those companies who are doing, getting that right from the very get go, they're making tremendous progress, because they may not have figured out how their whole SOA platform fits together, but they're doing things that really add value to the business.

BRENDA MICHELSON: Thank you. I have a bunch of questions for you guys. I don't know which one to ask first.

I guess, Ashwini and Brian both talked about the bridge with SOA on one side and BPM on one side, and the assumption that business is on the BPM side of the bridge and IT is on the SOA side of the bridge. And I'm wondering, are you -- do you see people meeting in the middle of the bridge, or do you see people crossing the bridge? I understand exactly what you were doing with your slide, about saying, here's the process to get from a business idea, a business process to a technical services implementation, and here's the square where it

intersects. But is that a hand-off or is everybody playing together the entire time? And Brian, do you see the people as well, are they crossing the bridge or meeting in the middle?

BRIAN ERICKSON: I don't know that they completely – they are meeting somewhere in the middle, but I think it's – business has to push more of their bridge, or build more of the bridge to the IT side than the IT side to the business side. And I think there has to be as I said, kind of the mixing of the beams. It can't just be where they reach a point and hand off.

And that's the challenge we've seen in a lot of IT things, is there's always been this throwing over the wall mentality, I'm going to build it to this point. I'm going to throw it over the wall and give it to the IT guys, and then they're going to go build it and create it. I just don't think that works. I've seen years of experience and frustration where that didn't work. I think that's probably one of the excitements of BPM SOA. Is that I think it will integrate and allow that kind of continual conversation and interaction together.

ASHWINI AHUJA: Depending on the company culture and depending on what kind of – how the company is structured in terms of some companies may have formalized BPM initiatives in place. They might have people focusing on business process improvement and actually documenting their business processes. Some companies may not really have a formalized BPM initiative. We are not trying to say they don't need to stay involved with this process. But really what we want is business leaders who are focusing on business processes, working with IT – depending on the company culture, either enterprise architecture and the business analysts from the technology side would need to get pulled into some of those earlier boxes, or if they are very well designed, well thought out, well formulated in BPM crowd that's doing a good job, they're actually on their way to having good processes that they define. They will actually thinking on automation, thinking on going down the path much more. So their side of the bridge is much, much more developed. Then the meeting point can be somewhere in the middle.

I think most companies, the meeting point would be that they help define why they're doing it, that they help define what are we trying to do with the business, and then engage IT in a more exact manner, because I think it will take more time for both sides to agree upon saying ok this is the way we will define things. This is the way we will define processes. This is the way we work off this one blueprint document or this process definition document. I think it takes some time to get there.

BRENDA MICHELSON: So what are they actually talking about in the middle? Who's language are they using? I know that historically in IT, we've taught our business users to talk to us about SQL and tables and systems and then people actually start -- the business starts giving requirements in terms of tables and SQL and systems as opposed to really thinking about what they can do with their business. They almost constrain themselves, because we say you know what, we (IT) only understand Spanish. So now you (business) must talk Spanish. Now, to me, I'm thinking that what I'm hearing is that once you get to the middle of the bridge, that you have some kind of shared language or shared perspective, and I'm wondering is that true? Is the IT person talking more business? Is the business person talking more IT?

ASHWINI AHUJA: I think the further down the SOA and BPM path, we want the business to talk less IT because the problem that we have, we're trying to change the mindset for business people like you said, they're defining that they want it to look like this. I want this new table created. I want this data to be in there. They really don't know, that particular business person really might not know these services exist, that this work has already been done elsewhere. As we have better services defined, as our maturity level with our SOA infrastructure, actually gets to a point where we have shared services, I think we should engage with the business to understand what are they trying to do. From a business standpoint, not defined how they want to implement it, because that's really what the enterprise architecture groups can do really well is if they have a small catalog of services to pick up from, they know what needs to be re-used, they know what needs to be built. Do not talk technology, talk more business. I think we need to make that transition.

BRENDA MICHELSON: Maja, do you want to add something?

MAJA TIBBLING: I did, and I'd like to go back just for a moment to the question about where do you meet the business. And we talked about this yesterday in the workgroup, is that I agree, we need to pull from the business, but in my view, it's done by going into the business and then going arm and arm back, in the way that what we do is we help them with their BPM initiatives. In our case, we're currently doing value stream mapping initiative, and what it allows us to do with the insight of what has to be implemented down the road, we can marshal their thoughts in such a way that we define the processes to the right granularity that we can do exactly what Ashwini was talking about. And decompose it into functional services later on. So I'm very appreciative of all that's been said. Thank you.

ASHOK KUMAR: Can I add something to it? I totally agree with you that all the BPM initiatives need to be driven by business. The real world is that I can't go to business and tell them would you like to drive my BPM initiative? Business will need to do things that is worthwhile of their time and effort to be part of it. And that's why the enterprise architecture probably could help. If we were to develop more business capabilities within the – in EA 2010, and we win the trust of our business side of it, then I think we have overtaken these business initiatives and aligning them with our SOA and IT initiatives. That's my thoughts.

ASHWINI AHUJA: I agree with you. You can't have the enterprise architecture group just talking back. You need to get smarter on the business side, for us to speak the same language. So they're speaking Spanish and we're speaking German. When we all need to speak English before we start communicating.

BRENDA MICHELSON: Victor, do you want to add something?

VICTOR HARRISON: Yes. I have a question for the panel, and anybody else who's brave enough to take it on. The question about building a bridge is really ultimately a question about choosing the right seal, the tension, the torsion, and the bizarre details that are necessary to cross over that bridge. And continuing on the metaphor path, SOA plus BPM equaling real business flexibility implies that the modeling that the business people are doing, although it's going to take advantage of and utilize business flexibility. So the question is this. If you're going to do real business flexibility across that bridge, in the context of an SOA environment, how would you change a business process modeling session to take

advantage, or to realize that business flexibility? Because one could assume that the business folk will model things and think about things in the context of how they have always thought about things. And therefore, you short-circuit the definition of, and the possibility of flexibility. So what would you insert into BPM to make sure that flexibility would be derived? Thank you.

ASHWINI AHUJA: In fact, that's one of the deliverables that we've been trying to bring out, and defining exactly what that process needs to be. And the way I look at it is at the very simplistic form, that process needs to be a very good process to document. If you analyze document and design for what business folks need. At the very best, and this is where some confusion comes in when BPM is looked at as a huge, big initiative, quite scary to complete, is that BPM these days, you have the BPM suite available that you actually model, and document and keep your business processes in real time that are actually used when that workflow is actually happening.

Let's say you're shipping, taking an example of a company, say Staples. They have a huge order that they've got online for – they're going to carry out that whole process, taking that order and shipping it to their end customer. And their business process that's documented right now might have – it might be a swimlane, any other form of documented business process. And when the business people are – it could get to that point of maturity where that process resides in a fairly automated BPM suite, which in turn is those objects, those different process modules that has been designed, they accept the order, they get the payment, they figure out inventory, they figure out how we need to ship it. They send out their shipping trucks. They get it delivered, basic business process.

Now when BPM folks use that same tool, they say okay, we no longer want to have our own shipping and tracking operation. Staples decides, they are going to go with UPS or FEDEX and cut that portion out, or any other transportation company. So if they decide to do that, then from the business process folks, the ideal – the blue sky picture is they really looked at that process model, they changed that process. Shipping is not happening internally; it is happening with this external third party. Which in turn kicks off either certain automated, or certain manual tasks they're doing within the enterprise architecture group to say, ok now, how can change our business systems without having to recode all of the code that was there in our system? How can we stay agile and how can we keep our solutions agile? That's really where we want to get to.

That can happen with one modeling tool that you're using, where business people do everything, they do their optimization, their process identification, to figure out what they need to do. That same language is used by the SOA folks and the enterprise architecture folks to understand what changes they need, what can be done by configuration, what needs to be custom built. And it's no different than the building industry again. If you say to an architect – we don't need a three foot door here; we need a six foot door to because they want to maybe drive a car into this room once in awhile. Sure, you can buy a six foot door, maybe from Home Depot or building site. You have some custom work that needs to be done. So, the coding is never going to go away. The automation is never going to be complete, but at least this whole idea of modeling what they want, and us understanding what those models are, and hopefully getting some level of proclamation where those models can trigger off some

level of changes and configuration changes of the underlying services is what we're trying to target, in the future. Right now we're at a very early stage for any of that to happen.

BRENDA MICHELSON: Thank you, Ashwini. I have a question for Sooraj. I love your slide (Slide 14), and I'm looking at your slide, and it says here we're trying to get to real business flexibility. And you also talked about the importance of organizational change and change management. And it seems to me that we're actually moving to a corporate environment, where change is continuous. We're going to continuously change and continuously adapt to change. So I'm wondering if in your customers or in your practices – are you starting to see centers of excellence that are more around continuous transformation, continuous change? And are those the people that are then kind of working with the SOA and BPM folks? Or is that a discipline that we're yet or should it be one?

SOORAJ BALGOBIN: Well, let me step back here, before I move forward. I think it's a good question. This is one of the things you find with organizations. When you think about change management, I talk about the things, why the narrow view of change management. And there's a broader view out there of organizational acceptance. And in that view, there is a preponderance of really good techniques and approaches when it comes to how to apply change. Different people adhere to different schools of thought. But there are some very good techniques out there. And the point is when you look at BPM and SOA, what – success factors on an organizational acceptance really comes down to understanding the archetypes. And I mentioned that first archetype first. It's not about just understanding okay, we're going to change a process here. So we're going to do things differently. You have to really step back and really understand what are those organizational roadblocks? And then you have to peel the onion, the layers of the onion, understand the motivation behind it. At the end, change is all about emotions. You really need to dig deeper into those emotions and really understand those. Then don't just take a hammer. Everything looks like a nail to that hammer. So you have to be careful. That's where some of those approaches – and I will just throw out one approach here, which is I don't know how many of you have heard about positive deviance, that many organizations have this whole theory about – and many companies, very large companies, have used this approach very successfully. But invariably in organizations, there's always one, or there's a couple of people who always do things differently. And they usually outperform the norm, right? Now think about SOA governance in a very decentralized organization. You are putting a governance structure in place. Governance means govern. There's an element of governing, there's an element of control, right? So what do we need to do? Again, every situation is going to be different so find those people. Find those people, as the positive deviance do, and fire their flames, because when you're doing that, the governance is not coming top down. It's really coming from those people and the resistance is likely to be a lot less.

Now for your question, Brenda, around organization, we have a more fluid organization. Organizations naturally are adaptive systems. They continuously change, they continuously morph to new changes. And we have this static view of this hierarchical structure of what's already happening. And what we need to do as a change agent is understand really what all those mechanisms are, right? And then you need to piggyback on those mechanisms to really drive the change you want. So again, it's a matter of analysis. Now to your question, are these always the people who are driving change? The answer is not necessarily. Because the person who is leading BPM, the person who is leading SOA in the organization,

it may not be the right people. But with the right guidance, you can find those mechanisms and those avenues, and then you can use those to really drive change throughout the organization.

BRENDA MICHELSON: Excellent. I have a question for the panel and/or the audience, and that is what advice would you give to SOA practice leaders today, which are typically IT people, to approach and make that connection with the people in their organization that are leading business process management?

BRIAN ERICKSON: I think you have to look at it as those people are trying to improve their processes, so how do you take their process improvement to the next level? The sales point is you're trying to improve these processes, just improving it on the business side of the house is not going to really help you achieve your objectives to the maximum state. Let's work together and figure out how to integrate your initiatives with mine and achieve those objectives on a broader scale.

ASHOK KUMAR: If I can add, and go back to what Ashwini was saying, I totally, totally agree with him that we tend to underestimate that the human aspect of the change and so my advice would be to do exactly what Sooraj was saying, identify those people that are in a position of influence, understand what their motivations are, and use that to your benefit to introduce change and to do – then it's a lot easier to talk a different language and get them to understand, as long as they're playing with you. You'd be amazed how much time you spend – at least I've spent – trying to convince a number of these people until you kind of figure out whether or not they are [].

SOORAJ BALGOBIN: I'd agree with that, and I think to your question, Victor, I don't know whether you got the answer you wanted to your question. But you talk about how do you drive – what do you change to really drive that process flexibility? I think often you get bogged down in models. You get bogged down in things that really don't matter. It's all about having the right conversation with the right persons in the room, and you'll go much longer, further than real models and real tools. And I think that's what people often underestimate. And I think with SOA, I think the big danger that I'm finding with SOA and BPM right now, companies are very willing to spend a lot of money on infrastructure, very willing to do a lot of things. But they're not investing enough in really figuring out what's it going to take in the organization to make this transition happen?

SUREKHA DURVASULA: I heard the term centers of excellence from one of the panelists. I totally agree with the fact that centers of excellence have a great way of motivating people to share openly in almost unstructured formats, because these are discussions that happen with peers, not necessarily with hierarchic structures. The one thing that we've noticed is having the business be part of those centers of excellence. Without having the business partners in those kinds of formats, you are going to have a problem trying to break down the barriers. It's a two-way process, because the business can share their frustration, their case studies, and IT tends to pick up the terminology without even realizing it. There is no additional training. It's not formal, very informal, so conversations are very open.

The other thing that we also realized is to kind of congratulate the business for making the effort to participate, showcasing some of the case studies that they'd done on portals or wikis or whatever the format of communication model is within your corporate environment. Use

that, because we've had great success in actually encouraging others from other lines of business and departments as we call to it, to be open to sharing. So you start to break down the barriers, starting with the innovative business users, the ones that are little more tech savvy and less worried about talking to IT. And then you suddenly start seeing that there's a lot more – many more business users willing to share their story because they're not intimidated.

VICTOR HARRISON: To Brenda's question about SOA, IT people and practice leaders bridging back over to the business, two techniques that I've found that have worked reasonably well is the actual establishment of a formal political map, that understands who the stakeholders are, who the power brokers are, and who has the money. And if you understand those kinds of things, then you can understand where their visions and their strategies and their tactics are. This is not anything different than what the business will do when they're going after new business opportunities.

So in many regards, I believe that the opportunity that we're in is not any different than any other business opportunity and that we have to utilize the same kinds of rules to establish those focal points, so that we can actually make a difference. In many regards, even if a business entity is saying that we need to be transformational, they are indeed limited by their vision of what is possible. And so identifying those power brokers is a necessary first step in finding out how to use the tools.

BRENDA MICHELSON: It sounds like what you and Ashok both said is really that as IT professionals, we need to develop business tactics in how we approach influencing and getting our agenda across. But I say our agenda in the context of promoting the business. It should never be our agenda in the context of doing cool technology. It is our agenda in helping advance the business. I think is what I'm hearing.

Did anybody in the audience have any other questions or comments?

MAJA TIBBLING: I would like to just comment a little further on the how you work with business and ensure flexibility going forward. Because it is true that when you're talking with the business, they are often most comfortable telling you what they do currently. They are often not – how do I say it - they're not often trained to articulate why. And this is something that I feel that well-trained IT professionals can really help with that conversation, because they can help them tease out the motivations for what it is they're doing. If you can do that, if you can actually identify the actual tasks that they perform, then the business rules that string them together, and also the events that cause those tasks to be performed, if you can identify the sequence of events that they perform at that level of granularity, then you have the opportunity to introduce flexibility going forward. It becomes very easy now to leverage technology then to put that in a different sequence, change the rules. And still have the services define the actual tasks.

BRENDA MICHELSON: I think that's a great point and I think it's pretty easy for people to think in terms of business events, from both the business and the IT side. If something happens, right, the package left the fulfillment center. That's what happens. And then what's the next thing that happens...

BRIAN ERICKSON: Well, it really goes back to Victor's question, a couple questions back, how do you get that built in? And it's the human element. It's allowing people to do that, it's encouraging people to do that. It's training people to think beyond the box, to think about how things are going to work, not only today, but how things are going to work tomorrow as well. And I think that's the most important aspect of it.

SUREKHA DURVASULA: I agree with the fact that the human element is key. It's probably the most important thing. But there a couple of things, I guess, on the IT side and maybe even the product side we could do or we could leverage. Going back to a comment that Maja made, in terms of teasing out information, oftentimes having a simulation suite, business process optimization suite, that allows web scenarios to be performed without actually affecting real systems, real processes, would be a great way of kind of teasing out alternative ways in stringing those tasks together to make a process more optimal, without going to the business and say that hey, I'm going to try and help you with optimizing your business process. And they would be like well, you don't really know what we do. So I think tools and tool vendors would really help in that space.

ASHWINI AHUJA: And I think, to add to what Surekha just said, in some companies, in my experience, some companies have done that quite well. They've tried to actually have people that focus mostly on trying to improve processes for example. And they are all the larger companies, like GE for example. They are famous for their six sigma black belts. That could be from the business side, they could be from the technology side. They identify the space, they chunk it up into small pieces, and never try to boil the ocean. They look at one process at a time. They look at what they're doing. It's taking too long. This particular task isn't performing, it's taking too long. And they have a person who has a black belt and some people focusing on it from the business side, if that's where the problem is, or from the IT side looking at process optimization. And they have this pattern, I know many years, like almost 8, 9 years back, that the rule of choice used to be Visio. Then it expanded and it became better and better and started using more lean tools, scenario tools. So they have gone down that path and it has matured to quite an extent. So I think again, depending on the company culture, and whether they have a tendency to actually invest in process identification improvements or they don't. I think that's the big difference.

And truly, SOA is not a technology. I think of it as literally a new religion, of building systems, of doing things. And if you want to convert people, it's really not an easy job converting people to a new religion. And I was joking about this at dinner, maybe call it the – don't call it the SOA Group or an SOA center of excellence, call it the SOA church in the company.
[Laughter]

Because it gets the mindset across, that's why the SOA Consortium calls it a commandment. Even the top five things a CXO should know, let's call it the SOA Commandments. Because what this does is try to get at least the message carried out that this is a fundamentally different way of doing things. Which means IT will change, yes. But if you want IT business agility for business, you also need to start thinking about changing and working better together. The biggest pushback that I've got from fairly large companies is that IT is not here – they can't even keep the systems running. How can we involve them in being more agile and getting better at business? I think whenever IT tends to have that kind of – they have potentially a bad name or they're looked at as a backend service, keeping the systems

running. There it's a much tougher proposition to try and get engaged with the business. And there you need to struggle a lot more. Where companies truly feel that IT is an enabler, and it depends on what kind of business they do. Financial industries are very, very aware of the fact that between business and IT is what's enabling them. So there's a different tendency depending on the kind of work you're doing, what kind of business you're in, of how easy it is to make that connection.

BRENDA MICHELSON: Thank you, Ashwini. I think now that we've gone and broached religion, before we dive into politics, that perhaps we should thank our panelists. Thank the meeting attendees.

[Laughter and Applause]

[END OF ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION]