



Business Rule Governance  
Claye Greene, Principal Consultant  
March 31, 2009

**Claye Greene** is the Principal Consultant for Technology Blue, Inc.

Claye has been implementing Decision Management solutions around the world for over 10 years.

Throughout his career Claye has taken numerous roles including Architect, Developer and Strategist.

Claye can be reached at [clayegreene@technologyblue.com](mailto:clayegreene@technologyblue.com)

## Introduction

Business Rules Management Systems (BRMS) enable companies to make smarter, well-informed and more consistent decisions.

A BRMS enables rules to be changed and moved into production very efficiently. However, this efficiency can come at a price. For a true BRMS environment to thrive, we need to have policies and processes in place that dictate ownership, documentation requirements, traceability and key decision makers. Without these necessities, a BRMS implementation can cause more harm than good.

This paper discusses Business Rules Governance as an approach for managing a BRMS implementation.

## Business Rules: Dual ownership

Business Rules at the heart, is an approach for separating business decision logic from IT constructs. The implementation of Business Rules, unlike traditional IT implementations, requires ownership from both the business and IT communities. Each group has a distinct set of responsibilities throughout the rule development life-cycle, a few of which are:

- The IT community has responsibility of the business rule decision services within the application architecture.
- The business community maintains the logic within those services that drives and directs the actions of the business day-to-day.

Both groups need training to learn how to properly analyze, document, architect, develop and implement the various entities that comprise a business rule decision service. The good news is that this type of training is not impossible to obtain. The majority of Business Rule Management System vendors provide adequate training for members of both communities.

- How the technology works? Check.
- What the technologies can do? Check.
- Who, why, where and when? Unfortunately, that requires a bit more.

## IT Governance

First, let us establish a useful definition of governance from an IT perspective.

IT Governance is a subset of the Corporate Governance policy. It defines the decision rights of IT entities and investments within the organization. The primary goals of IT governance are to ensure that IT investments generate business value, and to mitigate the risks associated with IT investments and initiatives.

## Business Rule Governance

Business Rule Governance is also a subset of the Corporate Governance policy. The common characteristics of Business Rules Governance are:

- Broader than IT governance because it must also include the business resources as well.
- Defines the resource rights of BRMS investments within the organization.
- Shares the same goals as IT governance – ensure business value and mitigate risks.
- Inclusive of the people, processes, technology and services related to the BRMS implementation.

A Business Rules Governance approach should be developed at the beginning of the implementation. At a minimum, it should include:

- Clear definitions of the roles and responsibilities of resources.
- Definition of a repository for documenting business rules for traceability.
- Identification of key personnel to oversee and manage the governance policies - often organized in the form of a Center of Excellence (CoE).
- Identification of the stakeholders
- Definition of a Rule Development Life Cycle (RDLC) for maintaining and deploying decision services.

Without Business Rules Governance, a BRMS cannot truly deliver on the promise of smarter, well-informed, more consistent decisions. However, if done well, Business Rules Governance enables a BRMS implementation that is controlled, cooperative and responsive.

Contact Technology Blue to learn more about establishing your Business Rule Governance practice. Together, we can ensure the success of your BRMS implementation.

## Technology Blue, Inc.

Enterprise Decision Management  
Business Process Management  
Enterprise Strategy  
J2EE Integration

One Oxford Centre  
301 Grant Street, Suite 4300  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
+1.412.255.3799  
[info@technologyblue.com](mailto:info@technologyblue.com)

[www.technologyblue.com](http://www.technologyblue.com)