

Frequently Asked Questions

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This document externalizes some knowledge about the Business Rules Approach (BRA), the European Business Rules Conference (EBRC) as well as about the organizing companies in this context. Its primary purpose is to express the common understanding about the subject among the parties involved in the organization of the EBRC. Such a common understanding is an important foundation for a consistent marketing message about the EBRC. Furthermore, this document may be used as a source of raw material for marketing documents about the EBRC such as the web site, the conference brochure, or flyers. Finally, this document may also be published as a standalone document to parties interested in the EBRC and/or the Business Rules Approach such as journalists, speakers or potential delegates.

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Questions and Answers to the Business Rules Approach

Q: What are Business Rules?

A: Two definitions are common: one representing the business perspective and one representing the IT perspective. From the business perspective, a Business Rules is "... a directive, intended to influence or guide business behaviour, in support of business policy that has been formulated in response to an opportunity, threat, strength, or weakness". From the IT perspective, a Business Rules is "... a statement that defines or constrains some aspect of the business. It is intended to assert business structure, or to control or influence the behaviour of the business". These two (complementary) definitions result directly from the duality of Business Rules, that on one hand influence and guide the behaviour of people (the business perspective) and on the other hand influence the information that is recorded in an IT system as well as restrict the modification of this information (the IT perspective).

Q: What is the Business Rules Approach?

A: The Business Rules Approach (BRA) is a combination of existing and new techniques and technologies in order to identify the knowledge required to run a business, to document this knowledge, to reason about it, to make it operational in a consistent way, to systematically adapt it to ever changing market forces and to automate this knowledge as far as possible. The Business Rules Approach is based on the Zachman Framework to ensure a holistic enterprise view.

Q: What is the Zachman Framework?

A: Originally, the Zachman Framework has been developed in the 80ies by John A. Zachman at IBM. It is a matrix that organizes information about an enterprise into the six dimensions (columns) **What?, How?, Who?, Where?, When?** and **Why?** and partitions these dimensions into the five perspectives (rows) **Owner, Business Planer, IT-Analyst, IT-Architect** and **Running Enterprise**. This matrix represents a comprehensive framework for holistic descriptions of the knowledge about a whole enterprise.

Q: Which principles form the base of the Business Rules Approach?

A: This question is best answered by the STEP-principle of Barbara von Halle (one of the BRA "gurus"):

1. **S**eparation of the business knowledge from components that are not relevant to the business knowledge (mainly in IT systems).
2. **T**raceability of the business knowledge, i.e. documenting the sources as well as the usages of every piece of business knowledge.
3. **E**xternalization of the business knowledge, i.e. making the business knowledge explicit.
4. **P**ositioning of the business knowledge to that is becomes easily changeable and adaptable.

Q: What are the benefits delivered by the Business Rules Approach?

A: As soon as the business knowledge required to run a business is made explicit, it becomes possible to

- talk and argument about it,
- change it and adapt it to new market demands,
- apply it in a uniform way across the whole enterprise,
- at least potentially automate it through IT systems.

Q: For which tasks is the Business Rules Approach especially successful?

A: Generally, whenever knowledge-intensive tasks must be carried out in a consistent way and this knowledge is subject to frequent changes, the Business Rules Approach is an optimal choice. As soon as decisions must be taken, such decisions may be formalized and may even be automated using the Business Rules Approach. Hence, typical applications are flexible pricing, tailored product configuration, flexible contracting, consistent law-application, or automated (intelligent) execution of business tasks.

Q: In which domains is the Business Rules Approach especially successful?

A: **Finance** where there are a lot of enterprises having business policies with respect to the offers one is allowed to give to customers. **Government** where there are regulations that need to be consistent and consistently applied for a fair enforcement of the law. **Healthcare** where best practices and procedures need to be distributed in a large community.

Q: What are typical success stories of the Business Rules Approach?

A: **Visa international**¹ uses a Business Rules Engine to validate complex global transactions exchanged with its 21'000 member banks in order to flexibly manage and maintain bank-specific business policies. **Zurich Insurance Group**² supports its more than 800 international insurance agents by a rule-based workflow managements system causing substantial increase of efficiency as well as minimization of error propagation. **Orange Denmark**³ achieved a productivity increase of 67% and a 50% increase of the service availability by using the Business Rules Approach for skill-based routing of service requests. An Internet-based system to provide customers with the ability to compare transportation rates, track their shipments, and manage their booking, payment and invoicing online developed by the **Canadian National Railway**⁴ using Business Rules Technology shortened the development by a factor of 3 down to 4 month. **Travelocity.com**⁵ the leading travel Web site and third largest e-commerce site needs to deploy global Web sites that are sensitive to both languages and locales preferred by its users. By using Business Rules Technology, Travelocity.com is able to launch major changes at least once per month and their time-to-market for new products around the globe has been cut in half.

Q: Where does the Business Rules Approach come from?

A: The Business Rules Approach originally comes from the "GUIDE Business Rules Project" carried out 1993 by GUIDE (the IBM User Group) in the Unites States. This project had the goal to formalize an approach to systematically identify and articulate business rules to define structures and control of business processes in an enterprise. 1994 this project became independent of GUIDE and the Business Rules Group (BRG) has been formed. The BRG published 1995 under the title "Defining Business Rules – What Are They Really?" a document that was very well recognized by the industry and led to the development of a variety of Business Rules products and services.

¹ www.ilog.com/corporate/releases/us/010205_visa.cfm

² www.sun.com/service/about/success/recent/zurich.html

³ www.nortelnetworks.com/corporate/global/emea/denmark/orange_denmark.html

⁴ <http://www.versata.com/customersuccess/highlighted/cp-canadianrailway.html>

⁵ <http://www.idiominc.com/us/customers/sstory.asp?ss=travelocity>

Q: How wide-spread is the Business Rules Approach in Europe?

A: In the European region the term "Business Rules" is not yet very well known. However, the individual techniques and technologies that comprise the Business Rules Approach are also very well developed in Europe. Among the European leader countries are The Netherlands and Belgium that developed the KADS methodology (Knowledge Acquisition and Design Structuring). Furthermore, rule-based technologies have a long tradition in Europe. Finally, the European Business Rules Conference held in Zürich, Switzerland in 2002 and 2003 (and 2004 in Amsterdam) helped to promote the Business Rules Approach in other European countries such as United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and Switzerland.

Q: What is the relation between rules and knowledge?

A: Rules are a certain form of Knowledge: they are small (and often simple) pieces of knowledge. They represent some kind of motivation behind a subject of the business (the "Why") and thus allow us (or machines running rule engines) to reason about this subject. This is in contrast to simple data, which transports only information, but no motivation. However, there are certain types of knowledge that are very difficult to express using today's technology and that are even difficult to make explicit for interchange between humans. A typical example of such "un-expressible" knowledge is tacit knowledge.

Q: What is the relation between BRA and knowledge management?

The goals of knowledge management are to

- organize the process of capturing and leveraging enterprise knowledge
- organize knowledge in such way to get the right answers the first time, every time
- encourage knowledge sharing and re-use in enterprises
- enable less experienced staff to use complex knowledge (of senior staff)

The knowledge management community has focussed on knowledge that is called implicit (or tacit) knowledge. This type of knowledge is tied to the knowledge bearer, for example, employees of the company. Once this knowledge is represented as business rules, the knowledge is not 'tacit' anymore and often may be automated using software systems.

In the knowledge management community there is a debate on the feasibility of objectifying (coding) knowledge, known as the 'flow' and 'stock' discussion on the nature of knowledge. Supporters of the 'Flow' group (Weggeman) argue that knowledge can not be 'objectified' because the knowledge bearer always gives a subjective interpretation to the knowledge. Supporters of the 'stock' group think that knowledge can be objectified and stored for later re-use. The BRA is a supporter of the latter group.

Q: Who are the best known "Gurus" of the Business Rules Approach?

A: Generally, **Ronald G. Ross** is referred to as the "father of the Business Rules Approach", since he published the first book on Business Rules under the title "The Business Rules Book: Classifying, Defining and Modeling Rules". Back in 1993 **Terry Moriarty** proclaimed Business Rules as the next paradigm and since 1998 organizes in collaboration with Ron Ross the annual Business Rules Forum in the United States. Another important member of the Business Rules community is **John A. Zachman**, who provided with his Zachman Framework a solid and holistic foundation for the approach. **Barbara von Halle** focussed her company on Business Rules consulting many years ago and provided very valuable contributions and publications in the context of the Business Rules methodology. As pioneer in the theoretic foundations of relational databases, **Chris J. Date** developed this foundation even further towards predicate logic and Business Rules. **Tony Morgan** coined with his "Extreme Non-Programming" a term that expresses the basic idea of the Business Rules Approach in a very concise way. Finally are the **BRG (Business Rules Group)** and the **OMG-BRWG (Object Management Group – Business Rules Working Group)** important standardisation bodies in the context of Business Rules.

Q: Who is and what does the Business Rules Group?

A: The Business Rules Group (BRG) was formed 1994 from "GUIDE Business Rules Project" run by GUIDE (the IBM User Group). This project had the goal to formalize an approach to systematically identify and articulate business rules to define structures and control of business processes in an enterprise. Since then, the BRG published the following pioneering documents that became a de-facto standard:

- 1995: "Defining Business Rules – What Are They Really?" (with revisions in 1997 and 2000)
- 2000: "Business Rules Motivation Model"
- 2002: "Business Rules Manifesto"

Currently, the BRG prepares the next document on a semantic model to organize a business vocabulary (working title "Organizing Business Concepts") and is a major partner in a submission team responding to the RfP (Request for Proposal) "Business Semantics of Business Rules" recently published by the OMG (Object Management Group).

Q: Who is and what does the OMG Business Rules Working Group?

A: The OMG-BRWG was formed in January 2002 as a special interest group within the OMG (Object Management Group) with the aim to integrate the Business Rules Approach into the existing OMG Standards MDA (Model Driven Approach) and UML (Unified Modeling Language) as well as to define a common framework, that supports the specification of any kind of Business Rules for later automation using OMG-relevant technology. In 2003, the OMG published two RfPs (Request for Proposals) on the subject of Business Rules: The "Business Semantics of Business Rules" RfP and the "Production Rules" RfP.

Q: Who are the most important vendors of Business Rules products and services?

A: Business Rules Engines: Computer Associates (USA), Corticon (USA), Expert Solutions International (Israel), Fair Isaac (USA), Haley (USA), Idiom Ltd. (New Zealand), ILOG SA (France), NESS/Usoft (The Netherlands), Pegasystems (USA), Sapiens Software (Israel), Versata Inc. (USA), Yasu Technologies (India).

Business Rules Management & Services: Business Rule Solutions LLC (USA), Everest (The Netherlands), Inastrol (USA), KnowGravity Inc. (Switzerland), Knowledge Partners Inc. (USA), LibRT (The Netherlands), Model Systems Ltd. (United Kingdom), Ptech Inc. (USA), RuleWise (The Netherlands), Semantec GmbH (Germany), SoftLaw Corp. (Australia).

Q: Which are the important events about the Business Rules Approach?

A: In 1998 the first conference solely dedicated on the Business Rules Approach took place in the United States: the "Business Rules Forum" (BRF, www.businessrulesforum.com). Since then the BRF is held in the United States every autumn with a continuously growing participation (more than 300 delegates in 2003). In June 2002 the very first European Business Rules Conference (EBRC, www.eurobizrules.org) took place in Zürich, Switzerland. One year later, the second EBRC (also held in Zürich) attracted more than 120 participants. To emphasize the European context, in 2004 the EBRC will be held Amsterdam from June 16 – 18. Finally, every November the ZIFA conference (Zachman Institute for Framework Advancement, www.zifa.com) takes place in Phoenix/Scottsdale, Arizona.

Questions and Answers to the European Business Rules Conference

Facts & Figures about the EBRC

Q: When and where does the EBRC 2004 take place?

A: The EBRC 2004 takes place June 16 – 18, 2004 in the hotel Okura in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Q: Who are the organizers of the EBRC 2004?

A: The EBRC 2004 is organized by a consortium of the following three European companies: KnowGravity Inc. (Zürich, Switzerland), LibRT BV (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), and Model Systems Ltd, (London, England).

Q: What is the structure of the EBRC 2004?

A: The main conference takes place on Thursday, 17 and Friday, 18 June 2004 and is organized into the following three parallel tracks: "Business Rules for Business" (addresses business rules in business, regardless of whether they are automated with rules technology), "Solutions" (presents case studies based on actual experiences with business rules and BR technology), and "Techniques and Technology" (focuses on methodology and tools that can be used in practice). The special one-day track "Knowledge Management" emphasizes the relation between the Business Rules Approach and Knowledge Management. Each conference day is opened by a keynote presentation. During the whole main conference, major Business Rules vendors show their products and services in the accompanying conference exhibition. On the evening of Thursday, 17 June 2004, the conference dinner takes place which provides an excellent platform to face-to-face experience exchange. The main conference is preceded by a tutorial day on Wednesday 16 June 2004 offering four half-day tutorials on Business Rules.

Q: Who is the target audience of the EBRC 2004?

A: The European Business Rules Conference focuses on the following target audience:

- Senior managers who want to find out about business rules
- Business and ICT managers using or considering using business rules
- Business analysts and consultants
- Application developers and architects.

Q: What participants are expected at the EBRC 2004?

A: We expect about 150 participants at the EBRC 2004, mainly from European countries. A large part of the audience is expected to come from the Benelux countries. Based on the experience from the previous conferences, we expect about 35% Business Rules users, 35% consultants, 20% vendors and 10% from academia and others.

Q: Who were the participants at the EBRC 2003 (in Zürich, Switzerland)?

A: At the EBRC 2003 we had 120+ participants, coming from the following countries: Switzerland (32%), UK (16%), Germany (15%), The Netherlands (10%), USA (8%), France (5%), Israel (4%), Norway (2%), and Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Scotland, Bulgaria, Poland (each less than 2%). These participants could be classified into the following categories: Business rules users (30.3%), consultants (39.3%), BR vendors (24.6%), academia (2.5%), unknown/others (3.3%). The participants came from the following companies (in alphabetic order): Accenture, addACUMEN, APG AG, ARCorp, AXA, Bleeding Edge Technology, Born Informatik AG, Brunel University, Business Rule Solutions, Business Rules Group, Business Semantics Ltd., Business Systems Modelling, Capital One Bank (Europe) PLC, CATISYS, Laval, Ciba Specialty Chemicals, Computer Associates, CSC, DHL, Effective Management, ESI, Everest B.V., Explicit Knowledge, Fair Isaac, Fahrner PR, FT&S Consultancy, Gartner Group, Hendryx Associates, Huber + Suhner, ILOG, Infoweeek, Innovation Wings, Innovations GmbH, Intercontainer-Interfrigo, KMD, KnowGravity Inc., Lanner Group, LibRT, Model Systems Ltd, Ness, Netzwoche, Norwegian public service pension fund, Owl Mountain, Pegasystems, Polska Telefonía Cyfrowa sp. a o.o., Professional Computing, Pulinco AG, Reengineering LLC, SAP AG, Sapiens, Semantec, SoftLaw Corp., Swiss Reinsurance Company, Swisscom, T-Systems SA, UBS, Unicable, Universiteit Brussels, University of Leuven, Versata GmbH, VNU Publitec, Weir Pumps Ltd, Whitestein Technologies, Württembergische Versicherung AG, Zachman International.

Q: Who were the participants at the EBRC 2002 (in Zürich, Switzerland)?

A: At the EBRC 2002 we had about 80 participants from the following countries: Switzerland (40%), Belgium & The Netherlands (15%), England & Ireland (15%), Germany (10%), France (5%), USA (5%) and other countries (10%). Primarily, participants came from the following companies (in alphabetic order): Allstate Insurance, AP Moller Group, AGP AG, Calleo Group, Born Informatik AG, Credit Suisse, FPSVoyager, Mettler Toledo GmbH, Semantec and Union Bank of Switzerland AG.

Q: Who will sponsor the EBRC 2004?

A: Besides the organizing companies KnowGravity Inc., LibRT and Model Systems Ltd, until now (End of December 2003) the following companies confirmed sponsorship of the EBRC 2004 (in alphabetic order): Computer Associates (The Netherlands), Everest BV (The Netherlands), Expert Solutions International (Israel), Fair Isaac (USA), ILOG (France), RuleWise (The Netherlands).

Q: Who were the sponsors of the EBRC 2003?

A: Besides the organizing companies KnowGravity Inc. and Model Systems Ltd, the following sponsors supported the EBRC 2003 (in alphabetic order): Expert Solutions International (Israel), Fair Isaac (USA), ILOG SA (France), Pegasystems (USA), Sapiens Software (Israel), Semantec GmbH (Deutschland), SoftLaw Corp. (Australia) und Versata Inc. (USA). Supporting sponsors were Born Informatik (Switzerland) and BRCommunity (USA).

Q: What are the costs for a delegate and how can I register?

A: The regular prices for an EBRC participation are as follows:

- Main conference and two tutorials: € 1300 (early bird € 1100)
- Main conference and one tutorial: € 1150 (early bird € 980)
- Main conference only: € 950 (early bird € 800)
- One day main conference: € 500 (early bird € 425)
- Two tutorials only: € 600 (early bird € 510)
- One tutorial only: € 300 (early bird € 255)

Online booking will be available at www.eurobizrules.org from February 2004. Early bird rates apply for bookings before April 15, 2004.

Questions, that will be answered in detail at the conference

For Business People

Q: How do changes on the market influence my business?

A: Changes in the environment of an enterprise are mainly caused by customers, suppliers, competitors, partners, but also by technological developments, legislation, and politics. The Business Rules Motivation Model (BRMM) published by the Business Rules Group (BRG) helps to systematically identify and evaluate these influences and to define appropriate means.

Q: How can I elaborate and define our business policies?

A: From a vision and its supporting goals and objectives one may derive a mission, strategies and tactics. The later are then supported and guided by business policies and business rules. The Business Rules Motivation Model (BRMM) published by the Business Rules Group (BRG) shows how these concepts relate to each other and how they may be identified and adapted to changing external influences.

Q: How may I quickly react on changes in the market?

A: As soon as the market influences, their assessments as well as the resulting strategies and tactics of an enterprise have been made explicit, these strategies and tactics may be deliberately adapted to new situations. The Business Rules Motivation Model (BRMM) published by the Business Rules Group (BRG) represents an excellent foundation to quickly re-evaluate and adapt these elements to new demands.

Q: How do I get optimal support by IT systems?

A: Business descriptions based on the Zachman Framework are on one hand an excellent base to systematically derive sensible functional requirements in the form of Business Rules. On the other hand, these functional requirements may be grouped according their volatility and often changing requirements may be realized by means of Business Rules Technology. Using this approach these requirements remain understandable by business people end users and may be quickly adapted to new needs without involvement of IT personnel.

Q: How can I enforce consistent application of our business policies throughout the whole enterprise?

A: As soon as business policies and Business Rules are made explicit, they may be distributed enterprise-wide to all relevant actors. Such actors not only include relevant business people, but also IT systems that automate parts of the business.

Q: How can I assess the quality of the rules and policies used in my organisation?

A: Establishing the quality of rules is important for every organization that needs to communicate and process complex regulations, expertise and guidelines. High quality business rules are consistent, complete, non-redundant and approved by members of the organization responsible for the rules. As soon as Business Rules are described in a formal language, a language in which each term has a well defined meaning and that conforms to a predefined structure, the rules can be verified and validated to assess the quality of the rules. Tools can support this verification and validation process.

For IT People

Q: How do I cope with unclear or often changing requirements?

A: When user or domain experts of a future IT systems do not want or cannot agree on some functional requirements of the system, these requirements are best implemented in a very flexible way. This means that it must be possible to easily implement or change these requirements after deployment of the system. Business Rules Technology offers a variety of such solutions that support changing functional requirements of an IT system (i.e. the Business Rules) even by the end users of such systems.

Q: How can I support user requirements in a flexible way and thus shorten or even eliminate release cycles?

A: By means of a Business Rules Engines large parts of functional requirements of an IT system become implementable or changeable even after its deployment. By expressing these requirements as Business Rules, these requirements remain understandable by end users and domain experts and may even be maintained by them. Thus, the functionality of a deployed IT system becomes "reconfigurable".

Q: Which technologies and products are available and how are they used?

A: Business Rules Technology may be classified into the following three categories: **Business Rules Engines** that execute Business Rules or monitor business activities in terms of Business Rules conformance at runtime, **Business Rules Development Environments** that allow convenient definition and verification of Business Rules and finally **Business Rule Management Tools** that support holistic and enterprise-wide management of Business Rules. In practice however, Business Rules products often offer a combination of these basic functionalities in an integrated form.

Q: Which strength and weaknesses do Business Rules Technologies have?

A: At the accompanying exhibition of the EBRC 2004, all important Business Rules related products are presented and demonstrated. Furthermore, they may be evaluated and compared based on the common case study "EU-Rent" which is provided by the organizers of the EBRC.

Q: How can I integrate Business Rules Technologies into my existing IT environment?

A: Today's Business Rules Engines are based on the fact that most IT projects are not "green field" projects but must deliver solutions based on a given legacy environment. Thus, these products usually offer a wide range of flexible interfaces to (relational) databases and middleware (such as CORBA, MOM, EJB, etc.). Specifically service-based Business Rules Engines may be very well integrated into legacy environments, since they offer "Business Rules Services" that may be invoked upon request.

Q: How can I decrease the time needed to evaluate and test IT systems with the business rules approach?

A: Establishing the quality of rules should be performed as early as possible in the development life cycle of an IT system. The costs associated with correcting functional errors or bugs in software increase exponentially when a system is in a later development stage. Business rules can be verified and validated before the business rules are implemented in a software system with the use of a verification and validation technology. Application of verification and validation technology at the business specification stage eliminates functional errors during test time of a system.

For Consultants

Q: How may enterprises holistically analyzed and any gaps identified early?

A: The Zachman Framework is an excellent means to analyze an enterprise in a holistic way. The framework and its cells may be interpreted as a checklist for enterprise-relevant information and knowledge that is or needs to be documented (or that is missing). If such missing information or knowledge is identified, one may ask whether this fact may be the reason for one or more problems in the enterprise. However, only if this is the case, the missing information and knowledge should be elaborated and documented in an appropriate fashion.

Q: How may business processes be designed efficiently and optimally mapped to organizational structures?

A: Using the Zachman Framework, the business model is organized into the six dimensions What?, How?, Who?, Where?, When? and Why?. Specifically, the separation between What?/How? (Tasks) and Who?/Where? (organisational units) supports a critical (re-)view of responsibilities. The When? dimension delivers valuable indications on potentially redundant processes whereas the Why? dimension critically questions the motivation for potentially obsolete legacy issues.

Q: How may I systematically derive IT requirements from business needs?

A: Based on the holistic business model developed using the Zachman Framework, on one hand functional requirements for IT systems may be derived in the form of Business Rules. On the other hand, these requirements may be systematically classified according to their volatility, which allows implementing the more often changing requirements using Business Rules Technology. The Business Rules Approach offers an excellent methodological support to identify and express such IT requirements that support the business processes of an enterprise in an understandable and traceable way.

Q: How can I bridge the gap between business people and IT people?

A: The Business Rules Approach emphasizes the formulation of business-relevant knowledge (the Business Rules) in a language that is understandable by the business people and domain experts. This basic principle is also supported by most Business Rules Engines, which usually express Business Rules in a form that is close to natural language. This allows business people to understand Business Rules and, if necessary, adapt those Business Rules to new situations on the market. As an extreme case, the role of the IT department is reduced to the provider of the necessary Business Rules infrastructure.

Q: Is the Business Rules Approach just another hype or is it more?

A: Actually, much of the Business Rules Approach is nothing new: it is simply a collection and integration of a set of proven techniques and technologies to a holistic enterprise-level paradigm. The Business Rules Approach mainly builds on techniques such as business engineering, requirements engineering, essential modelling and knowledge engineering/management. From the technological perspective it includes rule-based systems, distributed systems and middleware technologies. The fact that these techniques and technologies are not fundamentally new bears the advantage that the methodology and products of the Business Rules Approach are already very mature and powerful.

Questions and Answers to KnowGravity Inc.

KnowGravity Inc. in general

Q: Who or what is KnowGravity?

A: Headquartered in Zürich, Switzerland, KnowGravity Inc. was founded in April 2001 by a well established team of software engineers as a spin-off from a larger Swiss IT company. In addition to various Swiss partners, KnowGravity Inc. intensively collaborates with its international partner Model Systems in London, England and in Seattle, WA, USA. All employees of the company are specialized generalists with a holistic and interdisciplinary approach. This makes KnowGravity Inc. a competent partner for practical transfer and application of professional engineering.

Q: What is the mission of KnowGravity?

A: The primary mission of KnowGravity is to bridge the gap between man and machine. On one side, this mission is supported by increasing the abstraction-level on the machine side using programming paradigms that are closer to human thinking. On the other side, KnowGravity offers a wide variety of education services related to these higher-level abstractions. Finally, man/machine interfaces are designed by KnowGravity based on ergonomic principles.

Q: What is the core business of KnowGravity?

A: Know Gravity's main focus lies in provisioning of know-how in the areas of system and software engineering as well as software technologies. This know-how is provided via five different channels: training, consulting, application, brokering, and automation of knowledge.

KnowGravity Inc. and the Business Rules Approach

Q: What is the Role of the Business Rules Approach in KnowGravity?

A: Consultants of KnowGravity already emphasize for many years implementation-independent and business-driven specification of functional requirements. Thus, KnowGravity regards the Business Rules Approach as a natural extension of this notion, but also as just one of many complementary trends. For example the MDA (Model Driven Architecture) initiative of the OMG pursues similar goals and thus KnowGravity plays an active role in this area, too.

Q: Where does KnowGravity use the Business Rules Approach today?

A: On one hand KnowGravity uses the UML (Unified Modeling Language) in a very implementation-independent manner to precisely express business-level functional requirements of its commercial as well as technical customers. In projects, this approach is often combined with the Business Rules formalism to alleviate the limitations of UML. On the other hand, KnowGravity used the Zachman Framework to develop the enterprise architecture for one of its larger customers. Finally, KnowGravity's CASSANDRA platform is completely implemented in Prolog, one of the most powerful rule-based languages and includes an inference engine developed by KnowGravity.

Q: Where does the competence of KnowGravity in the Business Rules Approach come from?

A: Consultants of KnowGravity already emphasize for many years implementation-independent and business-driven specification of functional requirements based on methodologies such as SA, SSADM. Today, consultants of KnowGravity use the UML (Unified Modeling Language) in a similar way. In some customer projects these implementation-independent specifications were even made executable and thus verifiable by means of KnowGravity's CASSANDRA/xUML platform. And last but not least has KnowGravity more than 20 years experience in rule-based systems based on Prolog.

KnowGravity Inc. and the European Business Rules Conference (EBRC)

Q: What role does KnowGravity play at the EBRC?

A: KnowGravity in collaboration with Model Systems organized successfully the EBRC 2002 and the EBRC 2003. By employing its international contacts and relationships, KnowGravity plays the role of a broker for important knowledge and subject matter experts, which is one of its core business strategies. On the other hand, consultants of KnowGravity also act as speakers at the conference that present their own views and experiences on the Business Rules Approach.

Q: Why does KnowGravity help to organize the EBRC?

A: Consultants of KnowGravity believe that the Business Rules Approach is the right step into the right direction of implementation-independent and business-oriented specification. Since the Business Rules Approach is not yet very well known in Europe, KnowGravity is heavily engaged in organizing the EBRC. They also believe that declarative specification and programming will become an important market in the future and KnowGravity builds-up expertise in this area to be among the first in this market.

Q: Will KnowGravity also organize the EBRC in future?

A: KnowGravity in collaboration with Model Systems organized successfully the EBRC 2002 and the EBRC 2003. In 2003, the Dutch company LibRT joined the consortium to organize the EBRC 2003 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. These three partners are now the owners of the rights on the EBRC and this will remain so for the foreseeable future.

Questions and Answers to LibRT BV

LibRT in general

Q: Who or what is LibRT?

A: LibRT supports enterprise clients and software vendors with products and services targeted at effective rule management in business applications. Based in the Netherlands, LibRT does business throughout Europe and North America with a network of partners providing complementary technologies, services, and delivery channels. Among the company's innovative products and designs is LibRT VALENS, the industry's first independent product targeted at verifying and validating business rules created in third-party business rules management systems.

Q: What is the mission of LibRT?

A: The primary mission of LibRT is to support the delivery of high quality business rules. The company is a leading proponent and driver of rule qualification standards, with active participation in the business rules standardisation process (OMG) and in ISO certification requirements for quality assessment of rules and proper generation and selection of business rule test cases.

Q: What is the core business of LibRT?

A: The focus of LibRT is on the development of products and services that support the delivery of high quality business rules. The best known product, VALENS, is distributed as stand alone product, can be customized for specific needs or is distributed through third party channels where VALENS is integrated in another product. Besides product development LibRT provides training and consultancy on business rules in general, focussing on improvement of the efficiency and quality with which complex regulations and policies are handled in an organisation.

LibRT and the Business Rules Approach**Q: What is the Role of the Business Rules Approach in LibRT?**

A: The founders of LibRT have long been engaged in projects in which making rules explicit, using rules engines and maintenance of business rules by domain experts were important means to meet business objectives. The business rules approach is an extension of these activities. For LibRT the focus on the business perspective of the business rules approach is very important since we always emphasised that maintenance and quality assessment of rules is a business activity and not an IT activity. The consultants of LibRT are experienced with the learning curve of the business in taking this responsibility (again).

Q: Where does LibRT use the Business Rules Approach today?

A: The customers of LibRT using LibRT's verification technology VALENS already apply the business rules approach in their organisation. They want to make more profit of the investment in making rules explicit. By using the VALENS verification and validation product they need less effort in evaluating business rules or applying changes to existing business rules. For customers new to the business rules approach we provide awareness sessions and a business rules scan.

Q: Where does the competence of LibRT in the Business Rules Approach come from?

A: LibRT is the first company in the world with a focus on business rule verification and validation and a specialized product in this area. Among our achievements is the fact that within five years the awareness for the need for verification and validation has grown from none to a mandatory requirement for business rules engines and business rules modelling projects for many organizations.

LibRT and the European Business Rules Conference (EBRC)**Q: What role does LibRT play at the EBRC?**

A: Since LibRT is located in Amsterdam LibRT will arrange the location and other local facilities needed for the EBRC 2004. As organiser of the EBRC we hope that the visitors of the EBRC not only have an informative conference but also enjoy the excellent facilities of the conference location and the ambience of Amsterdam. LibRT will present a presentation on quality management of business rules and the VALENS product will be presented at the exhibition floor.

Q: Why does LibRT help to organize the EBRC?

A: LibRT believes that the Business Rules Approach, in combination with LibRT's products to assess the quality of rules, is the right step into the right direction to achieve efficient business rules management in organizations. Since the Business Rules Approach is not yet very well known in Europe, LibRT is engaged in organizing the EBRC and tries to inform as many people and organisations as possible about this event and this approach. Speaking at other conferences or for special interest groups, giving tutorials, writing articles and being quest editor is part of the activities LibRT performs to promote the EBRC. Besides these activities LibRT works together with the professionals of Hill & Knowlton, PR agency, to market the conference and attract media attention to the conference.

Q: Will LibRT also organize the EBRC in future?

A: LibRT has been a speaker and participant of the EBRC 2002 and 2003. In 2003, LibRT has joined the consortium to organize the EBRC 2003 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. These three partners are now the owners of the rights on the EBRC and this will remain so for the foreseeable future.

Questions and Answers to Model Systems Ltd.

Model Systems in general

Q: Who or what is Model Systems?

A: Blabla.

Q: What is the mission of Model Systems?

A: Blabla.

Q: What is the core business of Model Systems?

A: Blabla.

Model Systems and the Business Rules Approach

Q: What is the Role of the Business Rules Approach in Model Systems?

A: Blabla.

Q: Where does Model Systems use the Business Rules Approach today?

A: Blabla.

Q: Where does the competence of Model Systems in the Business Rules Approach come from?

A: Blabla.

Model Systems and the European Business Rules Conference (EBRC)

Q: What role does Model Systems play at the EBRC?

A: Blabla.

Q: Why does Model Systems help to organize the EBRC?

A: Blabla.

Q: Will Model Systems also organize the EBRC in future?

A: Blabla.