



Semantics of Business Vocabulary and Business Rules (SBVR), v1.5

Annex F - The Business Rules Approach

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Annex F - The Business Rules Approach

(informative)

F.1 General

SBVR provides a formal foundation for business rules. It also defines what they are. Much of the thinking in this area arose from the work of the Business Rules Group, which has been working exclusively in the area since the late 1980s.

Key notions of the business rules approach are presented succinctly by the BRG's *Business Rules Manifesto*. An extract from the Manifesto is presented below, to assist readers in positioning some of the central notions of SBVR. This brief extract is followed by a figure providing an overview of SBVR support.

A brief word on the BRG follows, along with citations to its work products. The full text of the Business Rules Manifesto¹ can be found in numerous languages at: <http://www.businessrulesgroup.org/brmanifesto.htm>

F.2 Extract from the Business Rules Manifesto

Primary Requirements, Not Secondary. Rules are essential for, and a discrete part of, business models and technology models.

Separate From Processes, Not Contained In Them. Rules apply across processes and procedures. There should be one cohesive body of rules, enforced consistently across all relevant areas of business activity.

Deliberate Knowledge, Not A By-Product. Rules build on facts, and facts build on concepts as expressed by terms. Terms express business concepts; facts make assertions about these concepts; rules constrain and support these facts. Rules are basic to what the business knows about itself — that is, to basic business knowledge. Rules need to be nurtured, protected, and managed.

Declarative, Not Procedural. Rules should be expressed declaratively in natural-language sentences for the business audience. A rule is distinct from any enforcement defined for it. A rule and its enforcement are separate concerns.

Well-Formed Expression, Not Ad Hoc. Business rules should be expressed in such a way that they can be validated for correctness by business people. Business rules should be expressed in such a way that they can be verified against each other for consistency.

For the Sake of the Business, Not Technology. Rules are about business practice and guidance; therefore, rules are motivated by business goals and objectives and are shaped by various influences. The cost of rule enforcement must be balanced against business risks, and against business opportunities that might otherwise be lost.

Of, By, and For Business People, Not IT People. Rules should arise from knowledgeable business people.

Managing Business Logic, Not Hardware/Software Platforms. Rules, and the ability to change them effectively, are fundamental to improving business adaptability.

1. [BRM].

F.3 An Overview of SBVR Support for Key Business Rule Ideas

A core idea of business rules formally supported by SBVR is the following from the Manifesto: “Rules build on facts, and facts build on concepts as expressed by terms. Terms express business concepts; facts make assertions about these concepts; rules constrain and support these facts.” This core idea, originating in the BRG’s seminal 1995 white paper [BRG2002], has been called the business rules “mantra.” It is often abbreviated for convenience to simply: “Rules are based on facts, and facts are based on terms.”

Figure F.1 provides an overview of how SBVR supports the “mantra.” It requires separation of viewpoints as follows:

- **Business Rule “Mantra.”** An approximation that simplifies explanation for business people and others new to the approach.
- **Representation (in SBVR terminology).** The SBVR notions that classify the words that people use to express their vocabulary+rules.
- **Meaning (in SBVR terminology).** The SBVR notions that classify the underlying meaning of the words that people use in expressing their vocabulary+rules.

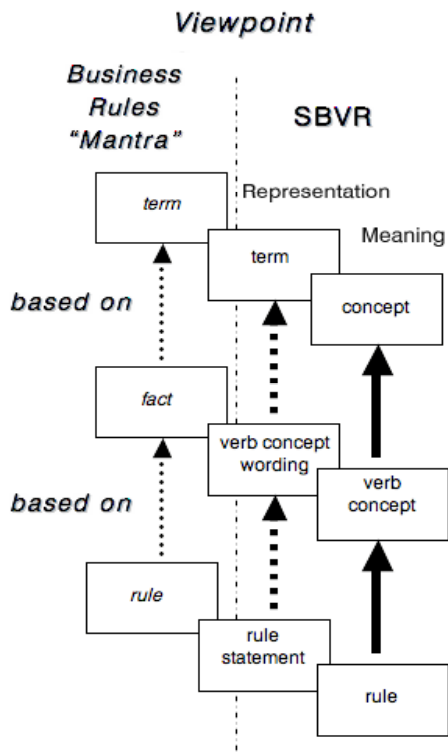


Figure F.1 - How SBVR Supports the Business Rules “Mantra”

F.4 About the Business Rules Group (BRG²)

Background. Information Systems analysts have long been able to describe an enterprise in terms of the structure of the data the enterprise uses and the organization of the functions it performs. Unfortunately, there is often neglect of the rules (constraints and conditions) under which the enterprise operates.

Frequently these rules are not articulated until it is time to convert them into program code. While rules that are represented by the structure and functions of an enterprise have been documented to a degree, others have not been articulated well, if at all. The Business Rules Group was organized to carry out that articulation.

The BRG Charter. Originally a project within GUIDE International, the Business Rules Group has been an independent organization since the 1990s. Its membership comprises experienced practitioners in the field of systems and business analysis methodology who work in both the public and the private sectors.

The charter of the BRG is to formulate statements and supporting standards about the nature and structure of business rules, the relationship of business rules with the way an enterprise is organized, and the relationship of business rules with systems' architectures.

2. [BRJ2005]

