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## Preface

The use of modern information technologies has become so pervasive in today's society that we no longer perceive it as a novelty. It's simply there, continuously within reach as we navigate our world, inform ourselves about our current circumstances, and conduct our business transactions.

While the use of information technologies has also become overwhelmingly important to enterprises as they strive to automate their processes and achieve ever higher degrees of efficiency, the accelerated development and the growing diversity of these technologies represent a growing challenge. Enterprises repeatedly find themselves struggling to make major IT investments with no guarantee that the implemented solutions will really deliver the expected advantages. This is why IT is often an uncomfortable subject and why those responsible for it are most of the time under pressure.

Owing to the strategic significance of information technologies, it is important to establish a well-functioning IT organization. The crucial first step towards this goal is to introduce greater transparency by carefully defining the IT processes that are necessary for the enterprise. This, however, is naturally easier said than done. What IT processes are currently in use? Where does each one begin and end? What are the relationships between the various processes? Difficulties in obtaining answers to these questions often end in discouragement and decisions to postpone the matter.

It is precisely at this juncture that the process model featured in the present book is meant to help. The model offers a convenient framework that is based on systematic analyses and years of practical experience. The origin of the model is actually a bottom-up approach to the development of standard IT processes that is then converted at the end to a top-down approach. Seventeen core IT processes are carefully defined and the numerous dependencies between the various process areas are illuminated. Visualizations of the processes and dependencies as well as clear information structures are used to minimize the resulting complexity.

It would be naïve, however, to assume that the mere representation of IT processes will be enough to solve all of an enterprise's IT problems. Other factors such as a heightened awareness of the processes on the part of employees and a commitment to process implementation are also keys to success. Furthermore, improvements will not happen overnight. Indeed, it may take a number of years before enterprises begin to reap the full rewards of

the standardized processes. Nonetheless, nurturing the right enterprise culture and instilling certain process principles in the minds of the many stakeholders will help to guarantee an IT organization's capacity to make the valuable contribution it is expected to make.

In other words, enterprises will wind up with the IT they deserve, either a source of perpetual complaint or a strategic instrument that propels the enterprise forward.

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