

What is specific about the BAT model? Why are not the original LAP approaches (Action Workflow, DEMO) sufficient? The BAT model is an exchange model. In every phase there may be an exchange of actions between the business parties, not only actions going in one direction. The BAT model acknowledges that business interaction consists not only of communication, but also of an exchange of value. The third phase comprises physical delivery and payment. The BAT model is not a general coordination model. It acknowledges that interorganizational coordination and interaction between independent business parties will have partially another character than coordination within one single organization.

The exchange character of business interaction is emphasized in the BAT model. Such an emphasis on exchange also entails a symmetric view of customer and supplier. This view means that both business parties should be acknowledged as active business parties. All their relevant business actions should be taken into account. This does of course not entail that the power balance between the business parties is symmetric or that they perform the same type of actions.

This symmetric view on suppliers and customers may be contrasted to the one-sided view in many marketing models. In such models the supplier is considered the active party and the customer is a passive party that should be influenced through different means.

AN INSTRUMENT FOR CO-DESIGN OF BUSINESS INTERACTION AND SOFTWARE

The BAT model is to be used for analysis and design of interorganizational interaction. BAT is a reference model for business interaction. This means it can be used as a template for investigating interaction between customers and suppliers. It also helps inquirers direct their attention toward important aspects, such as how proposals are made, how customers and suppliers come to agreements through negotiation and contracting, how agreements are fulfilled in delivery and payment processes, how both customers and suppliers get satisfied through a

business transaction.

The BAT model can shape our understanding of complex business interaction. It can be used for several purposes. BAT is used as a conceptual instrument when evaluating existing business interaction. It guides the evaluators to focus different important aspects of the business interaction. Such an evaluation functions as a basis for redesign. The BAT framework has been used in several cases for modeling and designing different business interaction

patterns. One example is that it has been used to identify hidden business opportunities when modeling and comparing different business processes of a supplier [8].

LAP and the BAT model are pragmatic frameworks in two respects. They both emphasize action, directing our attention toward the action character of coordination and organizational performance;

what people do when engaging in business transactions. These frameworks not only direct our attention toward pragmatic features of business interaction, but should be used as pragmatic instruments to change coordination and business interaction. LAP and BAT are not just philosophical reflections about the world. They should be directly useful in creation and recreation of a business world.

IT AS MEDIA FOR COMMUNICATIVE ACTIONS

The BAT model should thus be a support mechanism for a co-design of business interaction and software. This means it should be an integrated design of business processes and supporting software. However, the description of the BAT model so far (see Figure 2) does not say anything about the use of information technology in the business interaction. How can IT shape the business interaction? The answer to this question will go through an exploration of the role of software in organizational coordination and action.

According to LAP, IT is an instrument for performance of communicative actions [4, 12]. IT makes people communicate and thereby coordinate their actions. Communicative actions can be expressed through IT, which means IT has expressive powers. An IT application has a capability for enabling certain communicative actions, for example placing orders.

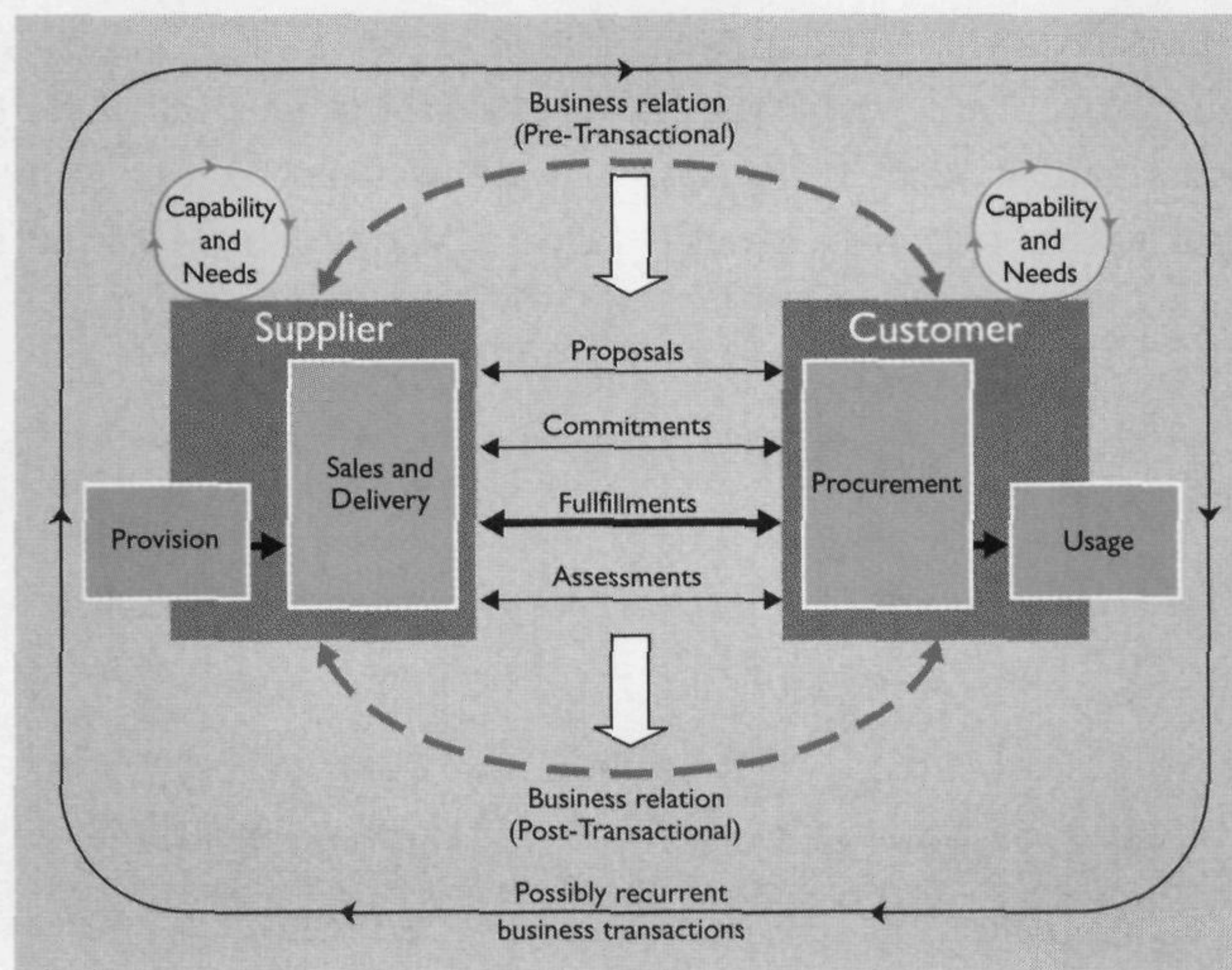


Figure 2. Business interaction, within a business transaction, between a customer and a supplier (the BAT model).