

AUTOMATING BUSINESS PROCESSES

TaskCentre®

BPM Software: The rise of next generation workflow applications



BPM Software

TaskCentre®

The Leading Business Process Management (BPM) Solution

Company

Orbis Software

Executive Guide Subject

BPM Software

Business Goals

Increased productivity through cross application workflow processes.

The knowledge you will gain from this paper:

- ⇒ Discover what Business Process Management Software represents and why it differs from workflow applications of the past
- ⇒ Learn about the 'my taskcentre' web portal and how it will help you and your trading partners to share information and increase productivity
- ⇒ Read about the most popular workflow processes to be automated for departments such as finance and marketing
- ⇒ Get a snapshot of the six capabilities that the TaskCentre Business Process Management (BPM) suite can provide for any organisation

Introduction

With technology increasingly playing a critical role in the success or failure of an organisation, very few will be surprised to hear that leading edge workflow applications are now being touted as key to commerce in today's information age. Indeed, some would argue that the demand for and popularity of workflow solutions never really went away. However there is something very different about the breed of workflow solutions appearing on the horizon today.

In the 1990's workflow applications were very much secretive projects, hidden away by the technical fraternity of a given organisation. The typical business user had no idea of how a task ended up on their desk or the steps it had gone through to get there. What's more, when users requested a change in a given workflow process, they were nearly always met with resistance from IT; and with good reason too. In terms of legacy processes it's a question of economics of course and to make a change it was often too complex, involving external consultants and developers, meaning that the costs often outweighed the benefits.

Notwithstanding the difficulties associated with change, we are today presented with an ever increasing array of information systems, portals and applications presenting us with more data than we can physically cope with and digest. The term 'information overload' is something that is certainly here to stay and is only set to increase.

Therefore the challenge is a question of filtering out information into manageable chunks, combined with the ability to swiftly and easily adapt as processes evolve. Quite some challenge considering the myriad of systems and services on offer, but one that is addressed directly by the TaskCentre's BPM Suite.

As a consequence of the above and the harsh lessons learned by software vendors and clients alike, a new breed of workflow solutions, BPM Software if you will, have appeared on the market.

BPM Software

To explain what BPM Software is you must first understand where it has come from. Historically,

traditional workflow applications were application centric and hard wired to customer requirements. They were also mainly form based in the early days and as a result workflow became increasingly associated with document management, much to the frustration of workflow purists.

The overriding problems associated with old school workflow applications were that they were expensive to deploy, reconfigure and use and invariably tied to one specific business application. In short, workflow applications of old were nothing more than bespoke development projects built around some core foundations and were by their very nature unable to evolve. Something needed to change for this product genre to become mainstream. That 'change' or 'transformational flux' came with the birth of Business Process Management (BPM) software applications.

Business Process Management (BPM) as an industry emerged in response to the lessons learned by early workflow software vendors and business users who wanted more control over their own business processes. Naturally, advancements in computing in general also facilitated the development of the Business Process Management industry but on the whole BPM evolved from the frustrations of workflow vendors and end-users alike.

BPM Software is an inherent capability of more advanced Business Process Management (BPM) solutions, as is Business Activity Monitoring (BAM) and Enterprise Application Integration (EAI) for instance.

BPM Software capabilities enable organisations to 'open up' business workflow processes not only to internal employees but other important stakeholders such as customers and suppliers. In short, BPM Software capabilities enable businesses to configure business processes that involve many different people and systems both inside and outside of a company's computing environment.

Business Benefits of BPM Software

The business benefits to be gained by implementing a BPM Software solution are numerous but commonly include:

- ⇒ A dramatic increase in employee productivity
- ⇒ A complete removal of compliance failure/risk
- ⇒ A reduction in operation costs
- ⇒ An environment that facilitates real-time decision-making
- ⇒ Greater connectivity with customers and other important stakeholders

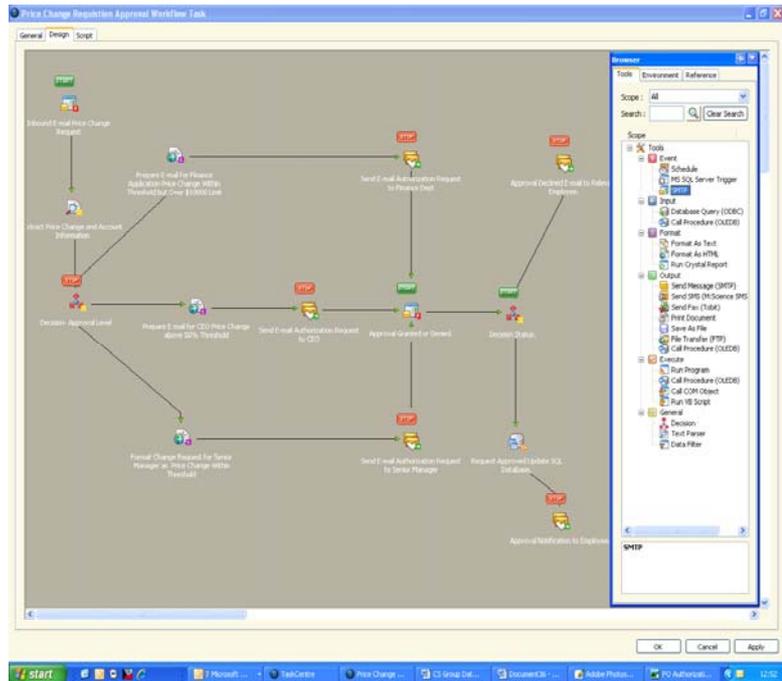
The business benefits detailed above are of course generic in nature and certainly not specific to a given industry or business function but to list examples like purchase order authorisations would be going against what BPM Software represents. Early Workflow applications did not 'loosely couple' with multiple applications whereas BPM Software applications do. This means that an infinite number of workflow processes can be created and recreated within minutes to the exact needs of the industry, business or indeed business user. This was simply not possible with workflow applications of the late 1980's or 1990's.

Return on Investment (ROI) is a term that is often over used within the software industry and ROI predictions have in the past been widely overestimated. Demonstrating an ROI from BPM Software applications is however very simple. Automating a business process and incorporating human interaction at key junctures within a given business process is very easy to quantify in time and money. Numerous qualitative and quantitative research papers have been written on this subject and can be found via the internet or research journals.

Reviewing the ROI of a BPM Software application from this 'myopic' perspective does however overlook another significant business benefit. Next generation Workflow solutions can pull and push information from and to multiple applications and therefore the organisation can extract additional

value from existing investments.

The vast majority of organisations are now at a stage in their IT lifecycle where they have many different business applications that cannot 'talk to each other' or 'play nicely.' This is a problem as

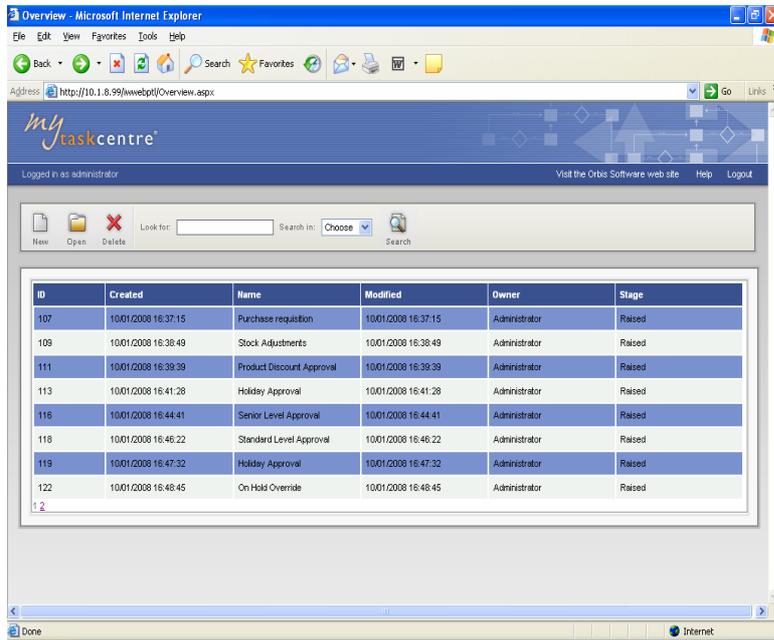


workflow processes can and often do cross business functions or units and lead to painful workload blockages or time lags.

BPM Software: Look and Feel

As one would expect every BPM solution has its own look and feel but there are two common elements of a BPM application that can deliver advanced workflow capabilities. The first common element is an intuitive "Graphical User Interface (GUI)" or "Process Modeller Interface." An example of the TaskCentre GUI can be seen to above.

These interfaces allow organisations to engineer and reengineer automated processes by simply dragging and dropping icons onto a GUI. A BPM solution automatically generates the code that workflow solutions of the past required many man hours of hard coding to achieve. This is a distinct competitive advantage for organisations as it enables them to quickly realign workflow processes to shifting competitive environments or changing internal procedures. The script generated by TaskCentre can of course be seen by pressing the script tab within the GUI environment.



Examples of the 'my taskcentre' portal in use

Financial Director

- ⇒ Purchase order approvals
- ⇒ Budget sign offs
- ⇒ KPI's

Managing Director

- ⇒ Sales reports
- ⇒ New employee approvals
- ⇒ Credit Limit approvals

Sales & Marketing Director

- ⇒ Timesheet approvals
- ⇒ Spend approvals
- ⇒ Discount approvals

TaskCentre can of course be seen by pressing the script tab within the GUI environment.

The second common element of BPM application that can deliver next generation capabilities is its ability to provide a unique business user portal that enables business process owners to view, manager and action workflow process. The 'my taskcentre' job manager portal can be seen above.

Portals can be deployed to any individual or stakeholder and security and permissions can be established for the type of user. These portals are in essence the business users 'job centre' in which they can centrally view, manage and interact with workflow processes in a logical and accountable manner without exposure to the BPM GUI.

Sophisticated portals such as the 'my taskcentre' client seen above are viewed by many as the future approach for business process management.

Having the ability to publish KPI's, authorise PO's, subscribe to information services or obtain comment/votes on a particular business subject is a powerful tool for business decision makers. However, the real strength of the 'my taskcentre' portal is the ability for the decisions made in this environment to then result in a database update or another automated business process being triggered by these decisions.

Stock Controller

- ⇒ Move into warehouse request
- ⇒ Stock purchase orders
- ⇒ Minimum stock level requests

About TaskCentre

To date over 4000 organisations worldwide use the TaskCentre BPM Suite to streamline their business processes. The product enables organisations of any size to add the following capabilities to their existing applications:

- ⇒ Workflow
- ⇒ Advanced Business Alerts
- ⇒ Document Automation
- ⇒ Web Content Publishing
- ⇒ Integration
- ⇒ Subscriptions & Requests

To learn how TaskCentre will improve the performance of your business contact your business partner now to arrange a TaskCentre demonstration. Alternatively, visit:

www.orbis-software.com

for a comprehensive overview of TaskCentre, existing customers and the solutions we provide.

About the Company | Orbis Software

Orbis Software provides the leading pure-play Business Process Management (BPM) solution, TaskCentre, enabling organisations to drive efficiency and reduce costs through collaborative process automation.

Founded in 1997, Orbis Software Ltd provides a scalable suite of applications to suit any size of organisation. There are more than 4000 organisations around the world already using Orbis products, including such names as Nasdaq, Telstar, BP, BDO Stoy Hayward, GE Capital Equipment, The Rank Group, Salomon Brothers, Zenith, BUPA, Jaguar, Lloyds TSB, and Rolls Royce.

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