

Delivering business agility and service level management

MQSeries Workflow provides a unique solution for competitive differential

Key Topics

IBM MQSeries* Workflow is an industrial strength transactional business process management system based on the industry's leading middleware product, MQSeries. MQSeries Workflow provides true business integration of both system and human events.

Executive Overview

Behind the calm scenes of the web interface all is not what it seems. Often there is little to no management of the business processes. Faxes fly, paper copies of orders lie on someone's in-tray, customer order print outs are incorrectly rekeyed into different systems and when the customer contacts you for a progress update the last thing they want to hear is – "We have no record of your order." But it need not be this way.

IBM MQSeries Workflow gives customers the business agility to 'turn on a dime' by being able to rapidly change business logic at the process flow level rather than in the application code. It allows businesses to be flexible and adapt, while providing the appropriate and consistent service level management of the end-to-end customer processes. It also leverages the embedded knowledge held in the assets of an organisation – both applications and people.

Business Process Management is the way in which more new business applications will be created – it is the instrument that delivers the holy grail of 'business differential'. It makes business visible, auditable and measurable

"By 2003 more than 90 per cent of e-business will be exploiting process automation technology (0.8 probability)." – Gartner 2000

The Velocity of Change

The dynamics of commerce and e-business today demand that enterprises must have the Business Agility to 'turn on a dime' – they must be able to rapidly adapt to existing and new market forces and opportunities. Secondly, they must be able to provide appropriate Service Level Management to exceed customer expectations. They must be able to continually offer differential to their customers, on price, service or any other attribute that is key to their survival.

Multi-Channel Delivery

The Internet has proven to be a very important business channel for enterprises in reaching their customers. Lower transaction costs, global reach and pervasiveness into customers' businesses and personal lives are all very compelling.

For many companies, however, it is just one channel, albeit a very important one, to their customers. Companies must be able to provide consistent and appropriate service levels across all channels, so that all customers have a good experience – all of the time. This is achieved by deploying optimised, manageable and measurable end-to-end processes that touch your customers wherever they are – the process can be the same.

Taking Control

Whether a NetGen or manufacturing and distribution company operating complex supply chains, it is absolutely key that the business takes and stays in control of its objectives. Execution (business processes) must reflect the business objectives. But first you have to understand what is going on in your business. You need an integrated business view of your enterprise from the process through to the resources and assets that participate in them. Business Process Management leverages the knowledge embedded in your applications and the minds of your key asset – people. It aligns your I&T assets with your business objectives and puts you in control.

Why is all this key to your survival? Consider the following examples:

1. Example:

A key customer suddenly places an order for a large number of lawn mowers to your business and is demanding tight delivery times. You have to know which suppliers have got the components in stock and can deliver to your deadlines. You must be able to, or already have, effectively integrated your choice of potential suppliers so that they participate in your business processes. At the same time you must have full control of your business processes and your resources. You must, at a moment's notice, be able to inform the customer of the exact status of the order and deal effectively with the exceptions.

2. Example

Your business sells musical CDs and books. A competitor reduces the cost of their offering undercutting you. If you choose, you must be able to quickly counteract this threat by offering a more compelling deal such as a 'two for one' sale without having to change your application code. You should be able to do this in side your business process and rapidly deploy the benefit to your customers.

3. Example

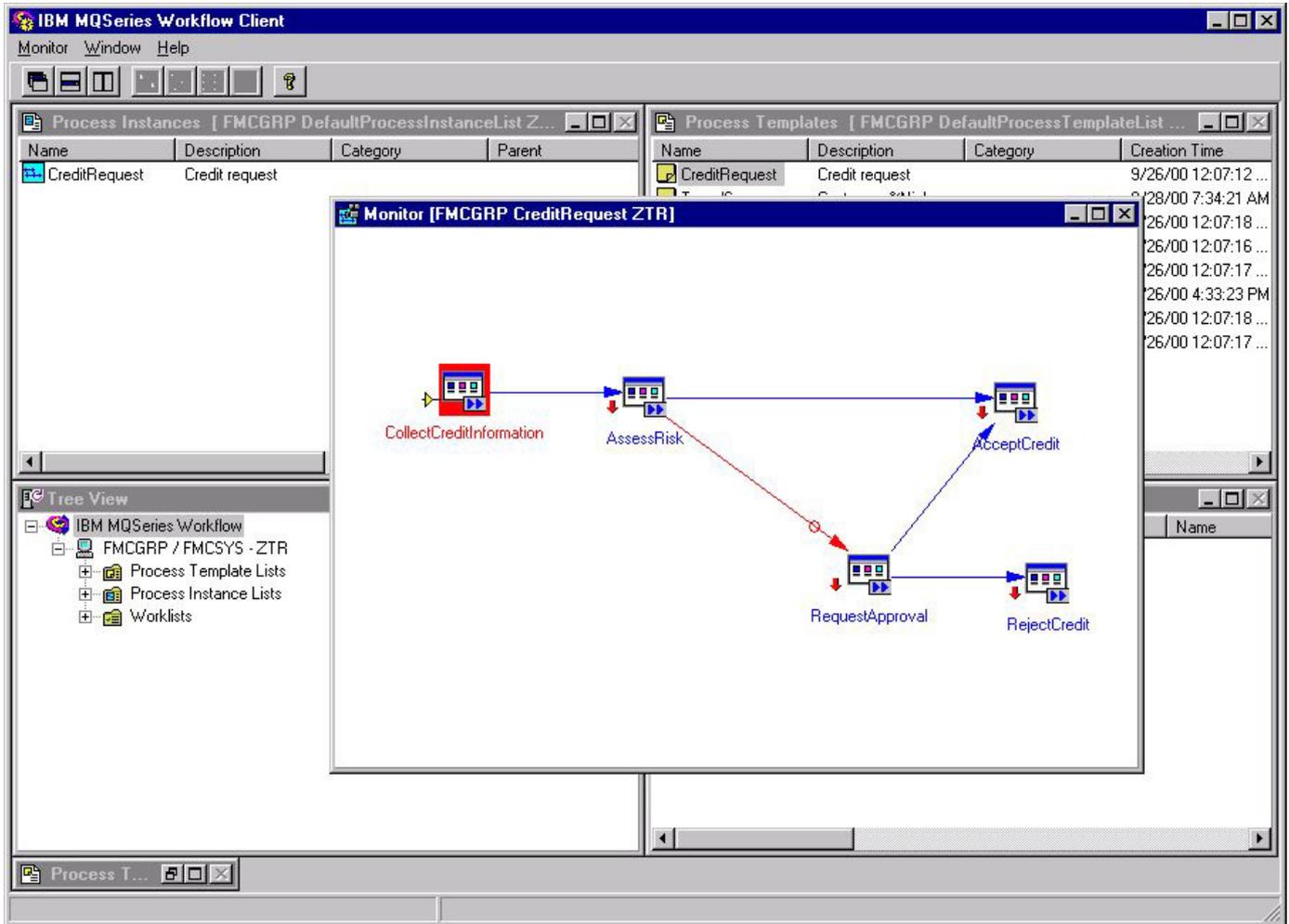
Demand for your product increases – You must be able to meet the required service levels to satisfy your customers. At the same time other companies want to act as distributors for you. You must be able to put the most effective processes in place and still maintain service levels

How IBM can help

Whatever your requirements whether Business to Business, Business to Consumer, intra or inter enterprise you need reliable, scalable business process driven solutions. IBM has a competitive, market leading solution regardless of your company size and business model.

IBM MQSeries Workflow – Empowering the Business

IBM is unique in providing a solution that delivers flexibility, speed and competitive differential. That solution is MQSeries Workflow. It puts business agility and service level management within your grasp. It provides everything you need from graphically defining the process to real-time management and monitoring of business process and the resources involved. It makes business visible, auditable and measurable.



Documenting and Defining the Process

Simple to use drag and drop visual tooling allows business professionals and analysts to define simple and complex process flow definitions separating the business flow from the underlying business and IT resources. Separating 'what' needs to be done from 'how' it is implemented provides Process Independence. Third party business process modelling tools can also be used such as HolosoFX, Adonis, Aris, etc.

These process definitions are stored in a shared repository so that all people that need to know, do know. You have just taken the first step toward capturing the 'corporate knowledge'. Next you need to deploy it for the benefit of all parties in your value chain.

Process definitions offer the key to maximising your competitive differential by providing the information you need to correct problems or recognise your company's potential. Process definitions allow the monitoring of your business effectiveness and the ability to optimise your processes. These definitions allow a business to disseminate the 'corporate knowledge' and information across all levels of the organisation. Pushing your processes out through all your channels provides a common service experience to your customers. By taking this one step further and publishing your interface processes externally even small companies can very quickly create virtual organisations that link for the necessary duration to trade with each other. Large companies can focus on their core processes while outsourcing their more common processes to potential suppliers along with a set of criteria that must be met.

Build, Test and Deploy

MQSeries Workflow allows rapid building of your processes and the linking of corporate assets into the business process flow definitions.

The design studio is where you visually specify process models as described previously. It contains all the properties of process activities, their data, the applications to be used and the work assignment rules for staff if required. .

Once completed, the definitions are registered with the process manager where processes are started and navigates through the process models. Applications are invoked and if necessary human intervention invoked via work lists or alerts.

Monitoring and Auditing

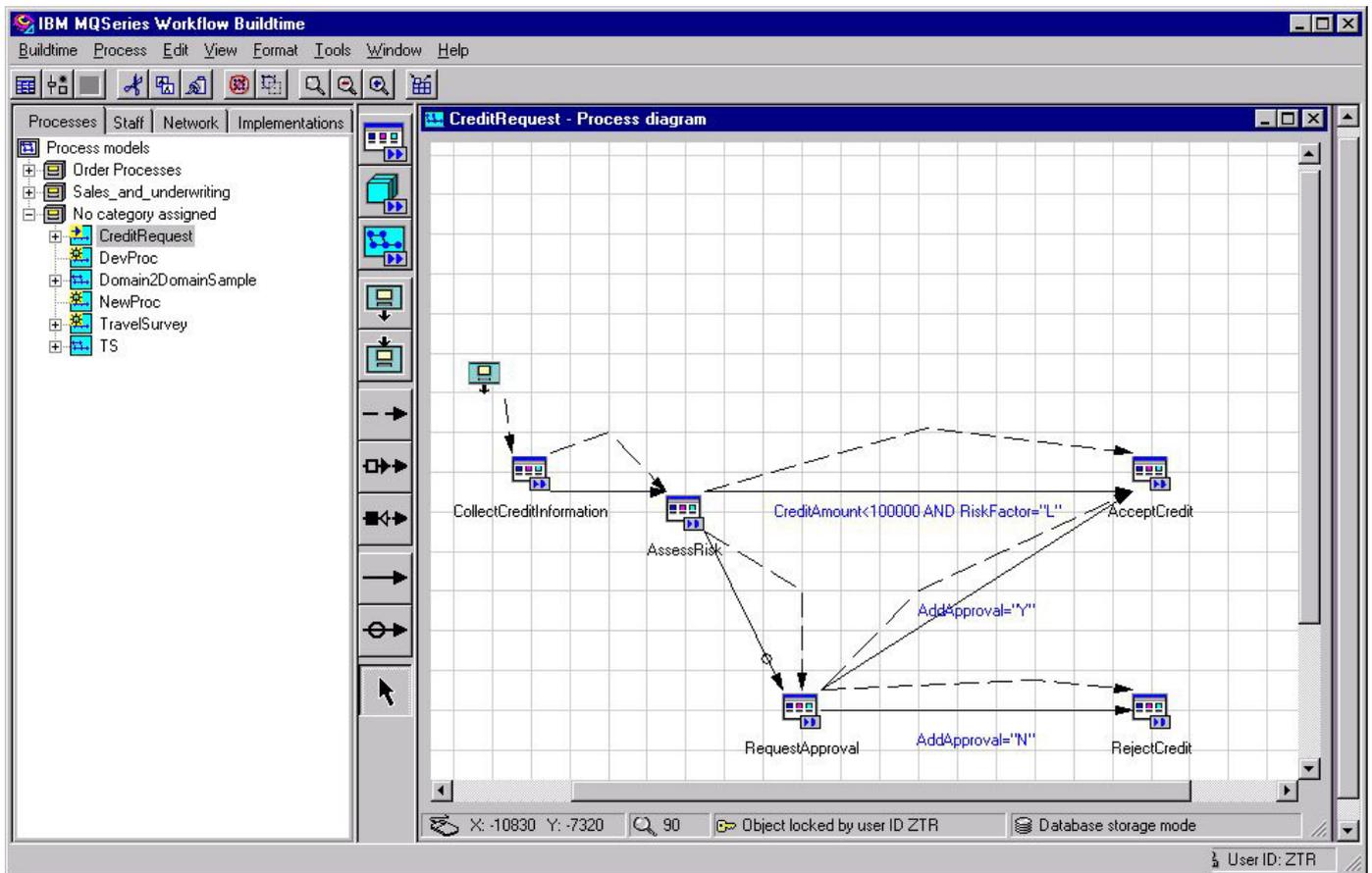
MQSeries Workflow keeps an audit trail of what or who, when and where activities took place and the resources involved. This provides real time performance monitoring and optimisation of your business to meet customer demands, consistently and to the services levels required. A web based process monitor allows the business / IT professionals and users to determine the current state of their business process, what activities have been completed and what is left to be done. In summary this means :

- Problems get fixed swiftly before the bulk of your customers start calling
- Bottlenecks are easily and visibly identified
- Improvement is quantifiable and measureable
- Performance of a process over time and its status is always known.

No Boundaries

There are no boundaries with MQSeries Workflow. It can be confined to addressing the needs of just a single department, or be pervasive throughout your entire enterprise, reaching across your business channels, trading partners and web customers.

Performance, High Availability and Transactional Co-ordination



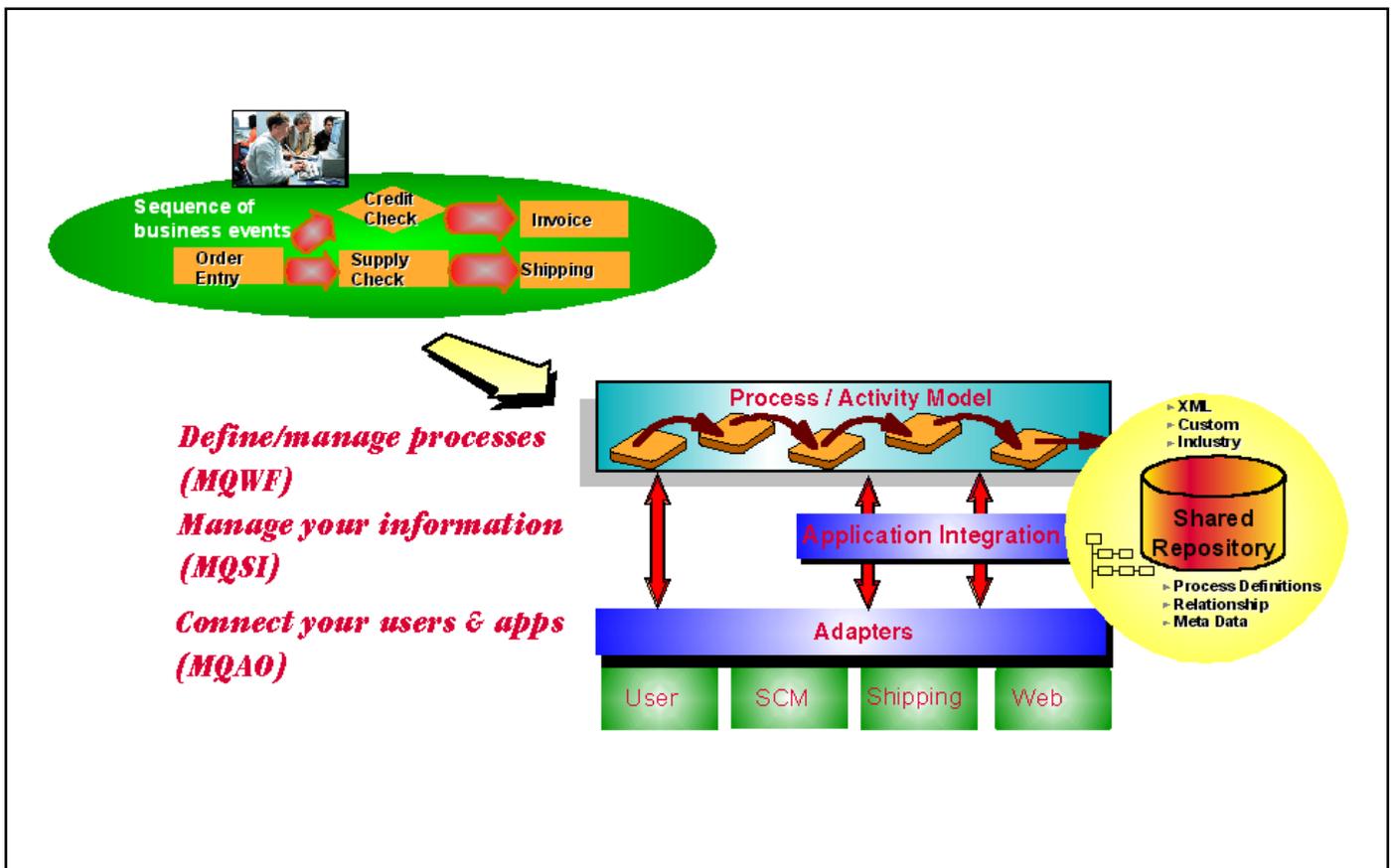
Consider two aspects to Business Process Management. A process may be required to execute in sub seconds and involve just applications and systems. Alternatively it may be an on ongoing process, running for several months, involving both human intervention and exception handling. The exception handling of the process is a key feature in MQSeries Workflow as it can transfer control to users informing them, that a particular problem or event has occurred at a particular point in the process. The user can then take the necessary action and then pass control back to process manager.

During the execution of a process, and in particularly long running processes, your systems could malfunction and even crash. But with MQSeries Workflow this is fully controllable through full transactional support. Each transaction can be committed or rolled back depending on the outcome of the attempt including database updates through XA compliance or through a transaction processing monitor such as CICS*. Clearly within a business process many activities / transactions may be taking place concurrently across multiple systems and it is the job of the process manager to maintain the state of all of these activities. In event of a systems failure, on restarting the process management system the process manager knows exactly the current state of all its activities, what data each of the activities requires and what should happen next. Users and administrators are aware of exactly what has been executed as part of their process.

A process may invoke or comprise of many applications functions. An application can in fact be as granular as a Java™ object on a Web Application Server; or it can be as all encompassing as another complete process domain running at one of your partner sites. Application functions can be invoked on desktops supporting users working on a work item, or as a back end application function in the network accessing a data store. So think of MQSeries Workflow as the business manager who controls and monitors the overall business processes and consistently and reliably integrates your enterprise resources.

IBM Value Proposition – The MQSeries Family for Business Integration

MQSeries Workflow is powerful business and IT tool in its own right. However, it is part of a family of integrated IBM products unmatched in the industry.



MQSeries Workflow

Helps to drive your business the way you want to. It provides you with a business view of your enterprise. It lets you know exactly what is happening across your enterprise at any moment in time. It allows a business analyst to define and manage business processes, involving both applications and people. It can extend outside your enterprises to your value chain partners and touch your customers.

MQSeries Integrator

A powerful information broker that leverages your company's information where ever it is, how ever its is stored. It provides visual tooling to quickly define message flows and manipulation of them, providing a business view of your data.

The MQSeries Adapters

Provides speed of build and deployment to any application that needs to interface to MQSeries. MQSeries provides transactional assured delivery of the data across more than 35 platforms and can traverse all the major protocols including http, IIOP, TCP/IP, LU6.2, NetBios, SPX, DecNet

Consistency and Standards

Consistency is provided across the MQSeries family in the following ways :

- Built around a shared repository containing the definitions for all business events, processes, rules, and information in your enterprise
- Ease of use through visual tooling and interfaces
- Speed of deployment and flexibility
- Full implementation and support of industry standards such as XML, RosettaNet, compliance with the OAG.

Conclusion

IBM continues to lead the industry in business integration. MQSeries Workflow is a comprehensive flexible, robust, scalable solution designed to provide businesses with competitive differential and is used in over 500 customer sites.

IBM is the only company that offers a fully integrated solution based on its own products while providing the extensive breadth of our partners' value added products and services. It provides all aspects of business integration from the process definition to the connectivity of systems across all major computing platforms.

For further information please visit our web site at ibm.com/mqseries.



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