



**Bruce Silver Associates**  
BPM and Content Management Specialists

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# THE BPMS VALUE PROPOSITION

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# THE BPMS VALUE PROPOSITION

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Pain Points

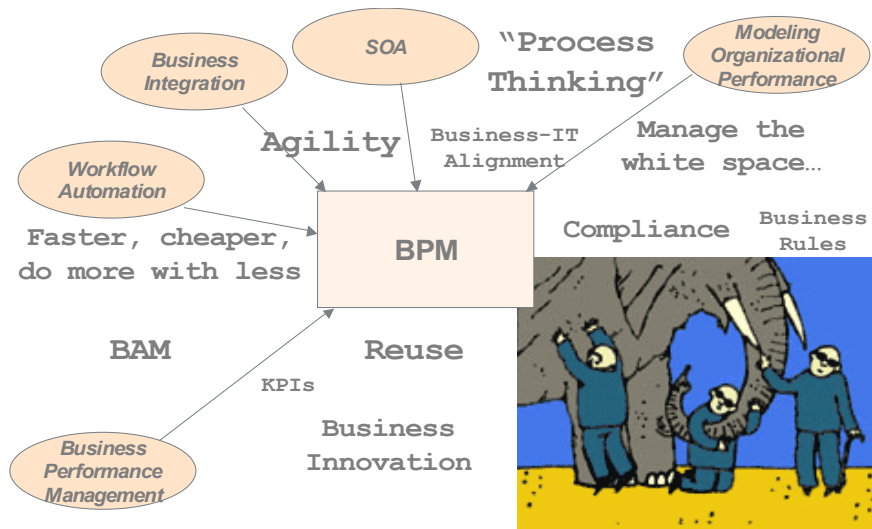
It seems the more technology transforms the way you run your business, the higher the bar of customer expectations is raised, and the faster the pace of change accelerates. You're doing things faster and better than ever, at lower cost, and on a more global scale, but you still feel you're falling behind. Your twenty-first century pain points make you long for the days when the biggest worry was Y2K:

- **Satisfying customers, “on demand.”** The term *e-commerce* is already archaic. What other kind of commerce is there? The Internet connects you to your customers and suppliers 24x7, and lets you customize your business like never before. But at the same time, it has revolutionized the expectations of your customers and trading partners as well. Convenience is not enough. Satisfying customers means everything you do has to be fast, and right the first time, or they'll go somewhere else.
- **Getting a handle on the business, end to end.** You just spent ten years investing in technology to automate and streamline your core business functions: CRM, ERP, HR, ECM, etc. Within each department of your business, the work is smooth and automated, and internal data is largely integrated. But suddenly that's not good enough, because how your customers and trading partners see you no longer depends on operations confined within a single department. Your externally facing business processes cut across those boundaries, and that's where the problems start. The handoffs between departments mean delays, errors, incompatible data. Often you have no way of even *measuring* business performance end-to-end, much less managing or improving it.
- **Enforcing compliance with policies and best practices, across the enterprise.** Five years ago your company had three offices in the US. Now you have seventeen across the world, many of them the result of mergers and acquisitions. The operations are similar from one to the next, but each one does the same things differently. You'd like to bring more standardization across the enterprise. For compliance with regulations and corporate policies you *have* to do it, and simply to save money with common best practices you'd *like* to do it even more. But how?
- **Innovating in response to accelerating change.** In the face of all these challenges, one looms higher than the rest: The requirements are continually changing. And the pace of change is getting faster. You can't simply plan ahead. Today you need to embrace continual change and harness it to your competitive advantage. That means your business has to be able to continually innovate in the face of changing demands.
- **Doing even more with even less.** With every advance in technology and the pace of globalization, you've had to do more with less. But there seems to be no end point where you can say, Enough! Today you have to do even more with even less. However much we talk about customer satisfaction, innovation, and agility, taking cost out of operations is need that never goes away.

These are the problems business process management addresses. In this paper, you'll learn how BPM delivers value to both business and IT, and how BPM continues to evolve in response to the next generation of business demands.

## What Is BPM?

If you go to a conference on BPM, you might come home with your head spinning. One speaker talks about it strictly as a way to manage business performance, while another talks about it as a technology, and still others make it sound like a new paradigm of business-IT collaboration and alignment. You're reminded of the fable about the blind men and the elephant.



**Figure 1. BPM has many faces, making it easy to focus on one and lose sight of the whole.**

The answer is that BPM really offers all three of those things. You don't have to use them all, but you should, in order to get the maximum benefit. Let's take a closer look.

## A New Management Discipline

First of all, BPM represents a new management discipline, a new way to look at your business and measure business performance. Historically, companies have been organized around discrete functional units, like sales, engineering, and finance. Each unit manages to its own internal goals, and has used technology to make its internal processes highly automated and efficient, thanks to enterprise applications like ERP and CRM. But traditional business metrics and goals focused on individual functions – both organizationally and from an IT perspective – fail to measure performance the way a customer or trading partner views it. That is because externally facing business processes cut across functions, departments, and IT systems. Often there is no way even to measure performance end to end.

BPM brings that end-to-end perspective. As a management discipline, BPM emphasizes *modeling* the business from a cross-functional process perspective, and establishing *performance goals* from that perspective as well. Years ago, Geary Rummler called this “managing the white space in the organization chart,” and it remains central to the process perspective today.

Process modeling – documenting the steps of the process end-to-end in a way that can be understood across functional units, across geographic units and divisions in the enterprise, and can be analyzed for potential performance improvement – is a key feature of BPM as a new management discipline. Process modeling is inherently a business function, and modeling tools empower the business – not IT – to define the steps, the performance metrics

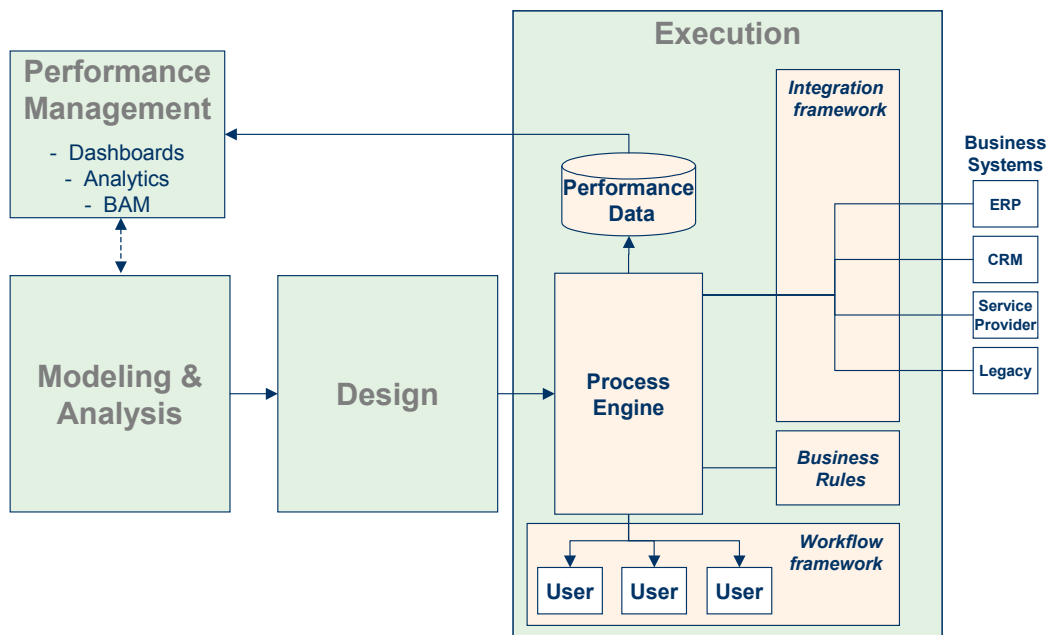
## The BPMS Value Proposition

and goals, and the business rules, both in the current (as-is) and any future, improved (to-be) business process.

## A New Technology Platform

To some management consultants, BPM starts and ends with modeling, but there's much more. That's because BPM also provides a new technology platform that takes the model and metrics defined by the business and turns it into an executable implementation. This platform, called a BPM Suite (BPMS), actually automates the human workflow, integrates data between disparate backend systems, and executes the business rules, controlled by the process model. And while it's executing the business process, the BPMS continuously records snapshots of data that allow the process to be not only measured end-to-end, but monitored in real time, and corrected easily when the need arises.

The BPMS is not an application. It does not replace your existing enterprise applications. It merely automates the process logic that connects your application systems, databases, and human tasks in the cross-functional business processes that you need to manage and improve. A BPMS provides an integrated suite of components (Figure 2) that provide analytical modeling, executable design, workflow automation, business rule management, application integration, and performance management, also called business activity monitoring, or BAM.



**Figure 2. BPM Suites provide an integrated technology platform for modeling, automating, integrating, and monitoring end-to-end business processes.**

The BPMS supports a process lifecycle enabling continuous performance improvement. That cycle can begin with modeling, or in some cases, with simply instrumenting backend systems directly and measuring an end-to-end performance baseline. Without implementing anything, process improvements can be proposed “on paper” in a to-be process model, and then converted into an executable implementation in the BPMS design environment. The process design is deployed to the BPMS process engine, which routes the human tasks, executes the business rules, and integrates IT systems across the enterprise.

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As each process activity or milestone completes, the process engine records snapshots of instance data in the BAM database. The BPMS's performance management (BAM) component correlates that data to calculate the end-to-end performance metrics, aggregate them into counts and means and other key performance indicators, and then monitor those KPIs continuously with rules that look for problem conditions, or simply deviations from established norms. When a problem is detected, BAM can flash alerts to a management dashboard or trigger automated remediation using the BPMS.

The process logic executed by the BPMS process engine is essentially an automated flowchart, so changing it is easy. BPMS assumes change. It is designed for change. After changing the process logic, a new version of the process can be deployed without shutting down the system. New business rules can often be deployed without having to redeploy the entire process and related services. By making non-intrusive governance part of change management, BPMS reduces the risk of deploying unapproved or rogue processes. Thus BPMS truly enhances agility, the ability to respond more quickly to changing business demands.

## A New Implementation Style

Beyond its merits as an integrated platform for process execution and performance improvement, BPMS also represents a new paradigm of business-IT collaboration, one that is sometimes misunderstood by IT. The essence of this new paradigm is that the executable implementation of the business process – often a mission-critical solution – is directly business-driven. The process model and its associated end-to-end KPIs, both defined by the business, actually drive the process implementation. They don't merely create a book of business requirements to be interpreted by IT the best they can. The model is actually a part of the executable design.

Obviously, this can be tricky, since business analysts are not professional programmers, and these are mission-critical implementations. Different BPM Suites address this problem in different ways. In some, the model generates skeleton artifacts that are imported into an IT-oriented BPMS design tool. In others – and this approach has additional potential benefits – the executable design environment is used collaboratively by business and IT. In this collaborative paradigm, the model created by the business describes the process “abstractly”, without specifying the technical details of the systems that implement various steps of the process. That technical detail is layered on top of the model by IT, while retaining a business-oriented view into the actual implementation design.

A general characteristic of implementation design in BPMS is that it involves little or no code. We described earlier how the process logic design is entirely graphical, like a flow chart. But the BPMS ideal is that other parts of the implementation design – human task user interfaces and worklists, application integration, and business rules – are also point-click or wizard-driven as well. The code is generated automatically under the covers and deployed to the process engine; it is not edited directly by process designers. This increases agility and allows business and IT to work collaboratively on the process solution.

## The Business Value of BPMS

You can get business benefit out of process modeling alone, but to get the full value of BPM, you really need a BPMS.

### 1. Innovation Through Analysis

BPM lets you think about the business from an end-to-end process perspective, and analyze potential performance improvements *before* you commit to implementation. One key to that is modeling. Process modeling is part of a BPMS. Standalone modeling tools exist, but having a single data model for analytical modeling, automated execution, business rules, and BAM saves time and money.

Modeling is business-driven, so modeling tools are geared to the skill sets typical of business analysts. In a BPMS, the modeling tool lets the business document the as-is process and define the improved to-be process, without needing to understand the technical details of the implementation. That leaves the analyst free to analyze and innovate on paper, and predict what the expected performance improvement will be.

In some offerings, such as the webMethods BPMS, the end-to-end measurement of the current process can be implemented even prior to modeling, both to establish a baseline for current operations – remember, many companies cannot even measure performance end to end – and to help analyze where the biggest opportunity for model-driven improvement lies.

### 2. Customer Satisfaction

BPMS addresses that number-one pain point: customer satisfaction. Why are customers and trading partners unsatisfied? Usually it's either the process takes too long, or the expected completion date is unknown, or it is not completed correctly. BPMS addresses all of these problems in a way that traditional functional systems, each focused on just one part of the process, never could.

Delays typically occur at the handoffs between the functional stovepipes in the enterprise. BPMS automates the flow across those boundaries, and tracks the current state of all instances in progress. Uniquely, webMethods BPMS uses predictive modeling, based on BAM data, to project when those instances will complete. And, because everything is rule-based and auditable BPMS reduces errors.

### 3. Operational Efficiency and Cost Reduction

Customer satisfaction is great, but at what cost? Operational efficiency – the ability to produce the most with the least cost – is always a requirement, even if unstated. BPMS addresses that as well. Workflow automation greatly enhances the productivity of work teams by automating task priorities, task assignment and delegation, deadlines and escalation procedures. It allows certain human tasks to be replaced by automated business rules, and others to be replaced by outsourced services. BAM and modeling give you the analytical tools to see where those alternatives makes business sense, and the BPMS retains control of the end-to-end process regardless of where any individual step is performed – inside or outside the firewall.

### 4. Standardization and Compliance

With a BPMS, the process model does not simply *describe* the process. It actually *runs* the process, via the process engine. All process logic is explicit, controlled by specific rules or auditable human decisions. Moreover, both the abstract business-level models and the executable implementation artifacts they generate can be reused by various departments across the enterprise. In addition, a common set of business rules, representing established policies or compliance requirements, can be centrally managed and shared by different processes.

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These two fundamental features of BPMS, rules and reuse, let you take control of the inefficient and inconsistent implementations across the enterprise, where each division or geography does the same thing a different way. Today, M&A is a fact of life, and BPMS lets you simplify and rationalize the inevitable result. Also, as regulatory compliance has become increasingly important, BPMS not only ensures your processes are executed in accordance with the policy, but that every step is auditable.

### 5. Agility

BPMS accelerates the implementation of business process solutions, allowing you to introduce new products and services more quickly, and respond more nimbly to continually changing business demands. Initial implementation types are typically 45 to 90 days, not the many months required using traditional development tools and methodologies. The keys to BPMS's agility are flowchart-like process logic design, code-free task design, facilitated component reuse, and real-time problem resolution.

Process logic, the flow of process activities – including exceptions – is designed like a flowchart. Changing it is simple – you just redraw the diagram. In the favored collaborative design paradigm, the executable design and the business analyst's original process model share a common flow diagram, ideally using the Business Process Modeling Notation (BPMN) standard from OMG.

The “work” in BPMS is done by the process tasks, which typically represent either human tasks performed using a web application created by the BPMS or integrating with an existing backend application or web service. With traditional development, creating those web applications and integrating external systems required code, lots of it, with its attendant debugging, testing, and other things that get in the way of agility. BPMS contains form design tools – in the best products, full web application design – based entirely on drag-and-drop components. Moreover, integration uses special middleware components called adapters that are also configured using point-click wizards. And as companies increasingly adopt service oriented architecture, integration gets even easier – you just bind process activities to reusable services found in the enterprise service registry.

BPMS's BAM component provides a management dashboard that displays process performance in real time, and issues alerts when something is amiss. In the best products, you can drill down from a high-level alert to discover the root cause of the problem. The BPMS then provides a platform to resolve the problem then and there, before it becomes critical to the business. All of these features make BPMS an essential tool to promote agility in the enterprise.

### 6. Performance Visibility and Optimization

Beyond agile problem resolution, the BAM component of BPMS delivers strategic business value. Many companies today have no way even to measure business performance at the

#### Proof Points

With BPM, a leading life science company reduced new product development time by 88%, order fulfillment errors by 20%, and order fulfillment time by 67%.

An international grocery store chain used BPM to build a fully unattended automated supply chain and integrate 720 stores, resulting in a 5% reduction in operating costs and 1.5% increase in market share.

When a large US commercial bank needed to handle increasing transaction volume, BPM helped them achieve a 50% reduction in client onboarding time, 65% decrease in customer service response time, and 80% re-use on their services.

One of the world's largest healthcare companies relied on BPM to reduce problem resolution time by 75%, and increase end-to-end order performance to 99%.

Source: webMethods

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end-to-end process level. BPMS's BAM component provides that visibility. With a few BPMS offerings, it's not even necessary to model and execute the process in order to measure performance. You can "instrument" the various backend systems, the way they work today, and capture a performance baseline. Many companies actually find this a good place to start, since it identifies the key problem areas to attach with modeling and an improved to-be process.

As part of a BPMS process solution, BAM puts KPIs in a process context: *where* is the problem occurring, under what conditions? BAM lets you define rule-triggered actions, ranging from user notifications to automated escalation procedures, to resolve problems in real time. Moreover, BAM provides a comprehensive dashboard of KPI charts and gauges, allowing process owners to continuously monitor the health of the business, visualize operational performance trends or breakdowns by any number of dimensions, and drill down from high-level measures to selected subsets, or even individual instances, to resolve problems.

Beyond fixing problems at runtime, this comprehensive performance visibility lets you iteratively improve the process design. Because BPMS assumes change and implements it easily, performance visibility leads naturally to continuous performance optimization, the key to competitive advantage.

## The IT Value of BPMS

BPMS's business-driven implementation and code-free development appear to challenge traditional IT practices, but BPMS actually provides great value to IT as well, while respecting IT's most important concerns.

### 1. Business-IT Alignment

IT's traditional complaint is that business requirements are vague or incomplete, and business frets that the implementation is not what they requested. BPMS promotes business-IT alignment by directly linking the model (business-produced) with the executable implementation (IT-produced). In BPMS's collaborative implementation paradigm, both business and IT share a common process model, in many cases based on a common modeling tool. That doesn't mean business analysts and developers sit together, but a business view of the implementation is always available, and key features of the implementation can be described by the business in terms that are unambiguous to the developer.

Collaborative design does not mean business analysts are making changes to critical systems. In BPMS, the business view of the model is in abstract terms of process activities. How those activities are implemented is defined by IT, so proper separation of concerns is preserved. The key thing is that the two views of the process design are inextricably linked.

### 2. Reduced Programmer Backlog

The ability to create human tasks without code, or integrate backend systems easily without code, or to continuously monitor process state and performance without code are not really threats to IT's livelihood. In most shops they're a welcome relief from the overwhelming developer backlog. In order to cope with ever-changing business processes, today the programmers are needed most to transform backend systems and applications, both new and legacy, into sets of robust reusable *business services*. The BPMS's role is to orchestrate

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those services into end-to-end process solutions – i.e., to implement the process logic that interconnects those services, without changing the internal logic of the services themselves.

### 3. The Business Face of SOA

This leads to what is probably the key strategic value of BPMS to IT: Business process solutions are what deliver business value out of SOA. SOA is fundamentally an IT initiative aimed at managing the complexity of IT assets in the enterprise, allowing them to be reused easily, but also to be changed or consolidated easily without affecting business solutions that rely on them. The extensive SOA infrastructure – registries, repositories, brokers, and enterprise service buses – by themselves don't deliver value to the line of business. It's the business processes that rely on SOA, and benefit from the reuse, agility, and loose coupling that SOA provides, that represent ROI to the business. BPMS, in effect, becomes the business face of SOA, creating the return on that infrastructure investment.

## BPMS: The Next Generation

The first generation of integrated BPM Suites, as first articulated by Gartner, is now about three years old. The main accomplishment of these offerings has been to combine a diverse set of technologies and features – modeling, workflow, application integration, business rules, and BAM – into an integrated platform that generally supports BPM's iterative model-execute-measure-optimize cycle. Today, second generation BPMS offerings such as webMethods Fabric 7 are building on the experience of the first generation to fill in the usability gaps and support true enterprise-scale deployment layered on SOA.

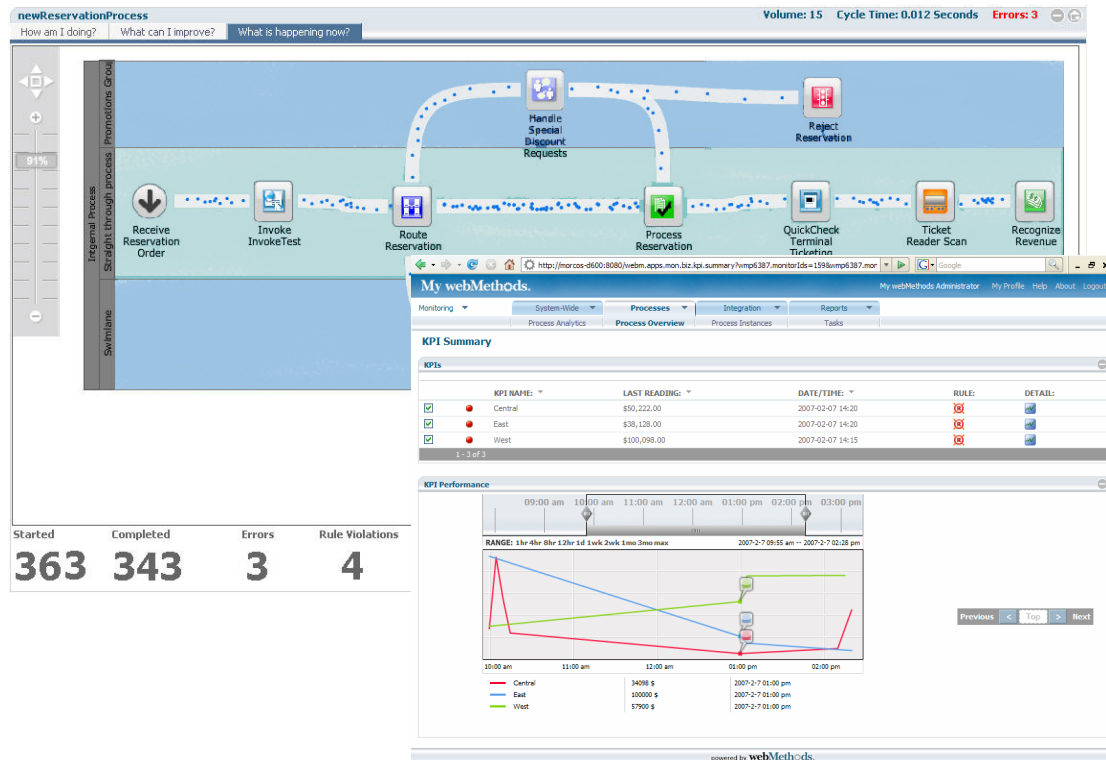


Figure 3. Measurement-driven modeling using webMethods Optimize. Source: webMethods

### 1. Measurement-Driven Modeling

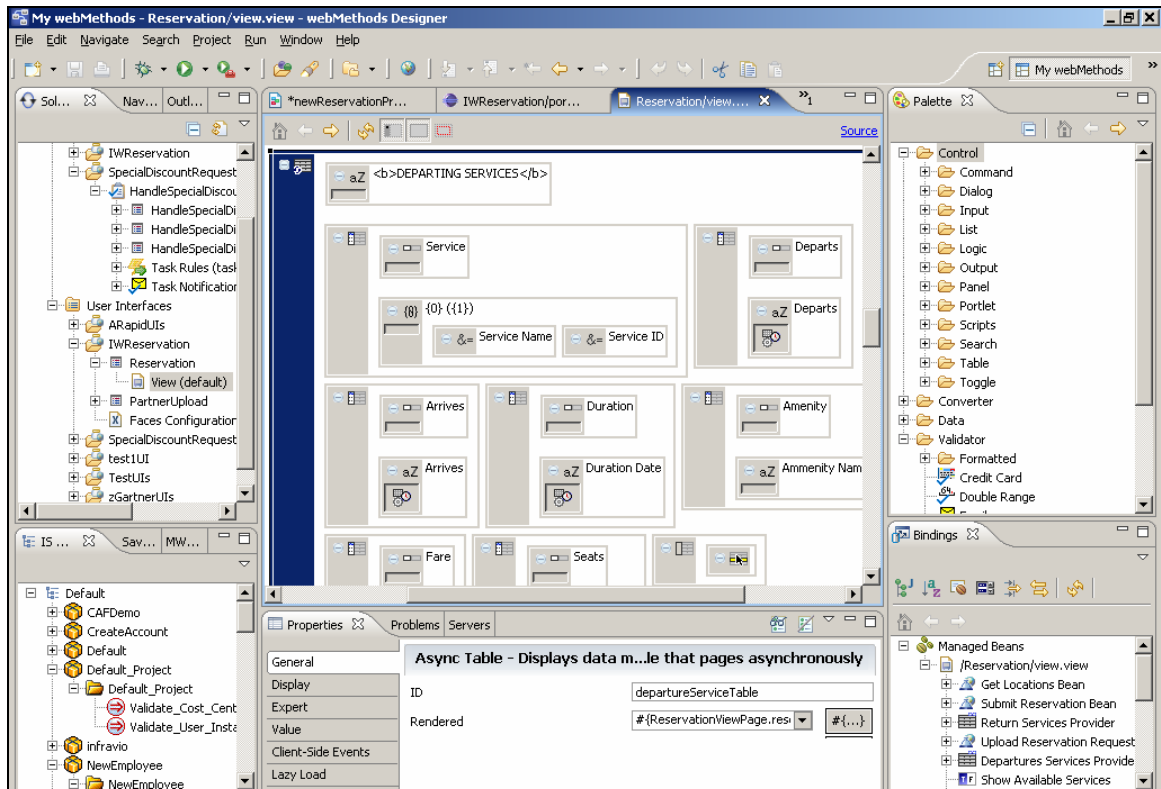
A central tenet of BPM is you model to measure, and measure to improve. But many organizations, when starting out in BPM, have a hard time deciding where to start. Modeling all of the company's business processes is an overwhelming job. It would be easier to start with a single process, one that gives the biggest bang for the buck. But which one?

For such organizations, webMethods BPMS offers an alternative: instrument the current process and measure end-to-end performance first, *before* you model. WebMethods Optimize for Process automatically creates performance baselines and trend analysis, even without modeling first. Based on those quantitative metrics, you can analyze in which specific process performance needs to be improved, or where improvement would have the greatest business value. Then you can begin to model with a purpose. The ability to offer BAM first and add BPM later – while not the only way to do it – offers an easier path to BPM for larger enterprises than the standard model-first paradigm.

### 2. Unified Design Environment

First-generation BPM suites focused on completing the collection of design tools – modeling, process design, integration, task user interface, business rules, BAM – required to build real-world process solutions. Second-generation BPMSs like webMethods Fabric 7 raise the bar by providing a truly unified design environment. That means a single design environment for all aspects of process modeling and design, including the composite applications and web user interfaces that drive human interaction in the process. It also means a single data model, and a single repository for all design artifacts. By leveraging the popular Eclipse environment, process design can be integrated with other developer tools as well.

## The BPMS Value Proposition



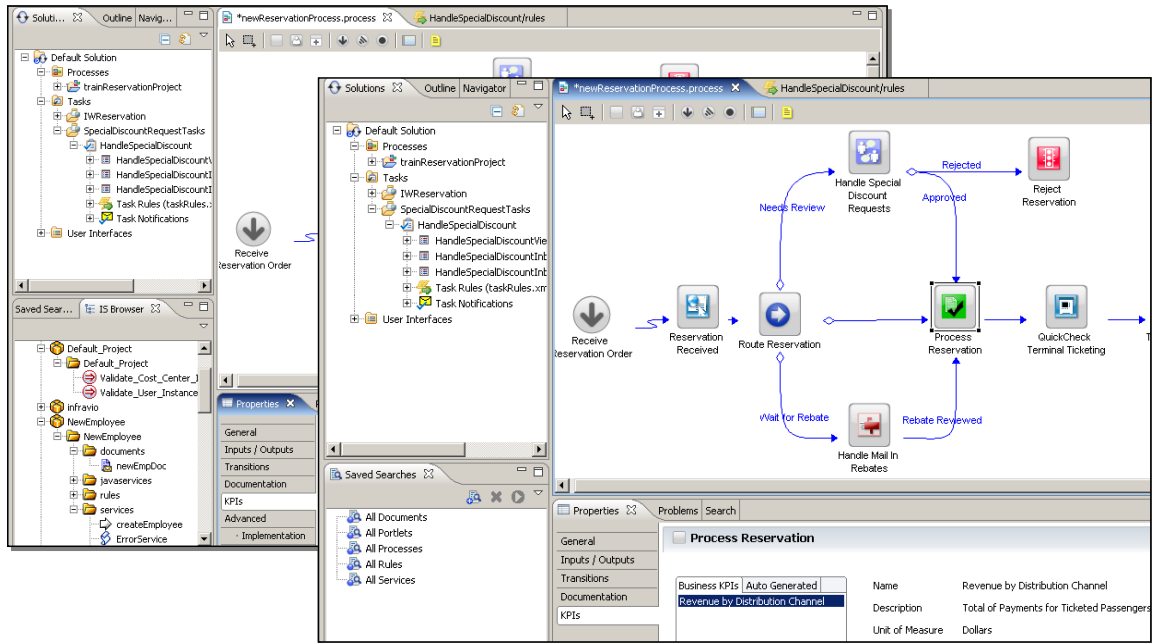
**Figure 4. Eclipse-based design environment unifies all aspects of business process design.**

Source: webMethods

### 3. Empowering the Business

Empowering the business means that modeling does not simply create “requirements” for a process solution, but is part of the solution implementation. Part of it is providing tools meant to be used by business analysts, for process modeling, business rule design, BAM design, even task design – all without code. Empowerment also implies a single environment that can be shared by business analysts and developers, so that executable design is layered on top of the model, not duplicated in a separate tool. However, that doesn’t mean overwhelming business analysts with a tool meant for programmers. Eclipse-based BPMS environments like webMethods Fabric 7 allow different “perspectives” or views appropriate to each role involved in the project. Modeling and executable design leverage distinct perspectives, but the same model is manipulated under the covers.

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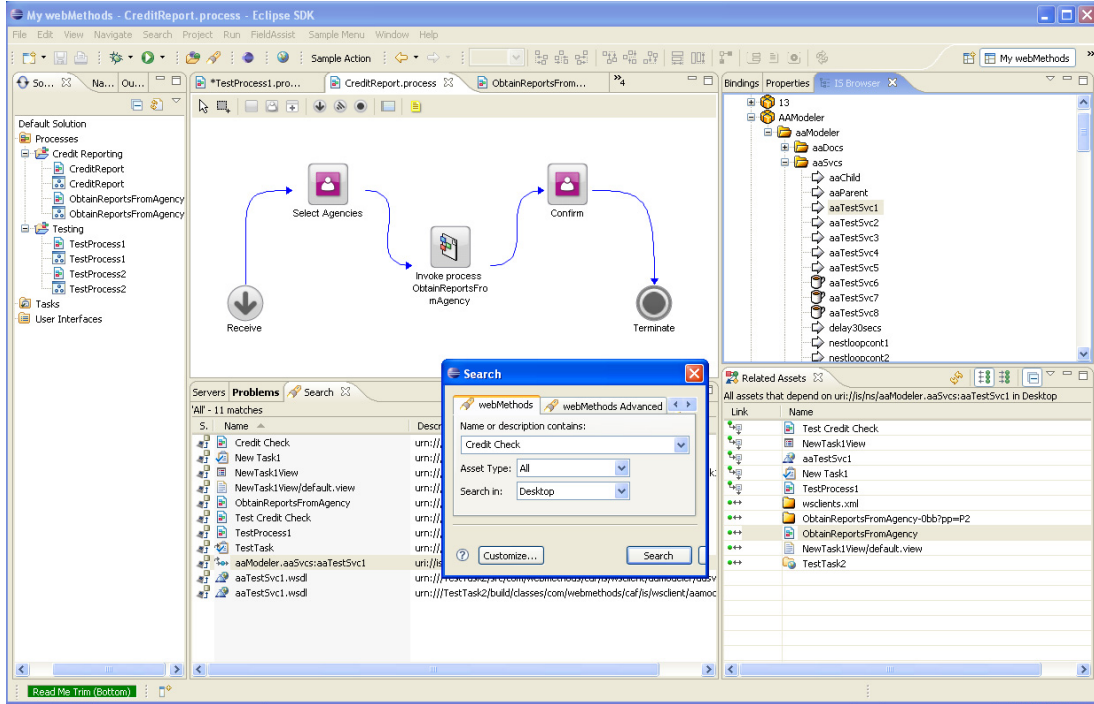
**Figure 5. Empowering the business means Business analyst view (right) and Developer view (left) share a common process model. Source: webMethods**

### 4. Governance and Impact Analysis

BPMS is inherently built for change, in that process logic can be modified easily and redeployed in a new version. But a next-generation BPMS like webMethods goes further, in addressing true governance of all components of a process solution. Governance requires an enterprise repository in which components of a business process solution can not only be managed individually, but linked to the processes or higher-level components that depend on them. For example, if you revise a process task or form or business rule, what are all the processes or process tasks that are affected?

Impact analysis of this type is especially hard to do for business rules, which typically cut across business processes, especially when a proven business rule engine is involved. Business rule management systems frequently provide their own rule repositories in which the dependency of rules on other rules can be tracked, but not the business processes or process activities affected by a rule change. Second generation BPMSs need to provide this level of governance and impact analysis. For example, webMethods Fabric 7 integrates FairIsaac's proven Blaze Advisor business rule management system in a way that provides complete process impact analysis of any proposed change to a business rule.

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**Figure 6. webMethods Metadata Library improves governance through dependency analysis for any process component. Source: webMethods**

### 5. Engaging User Interface

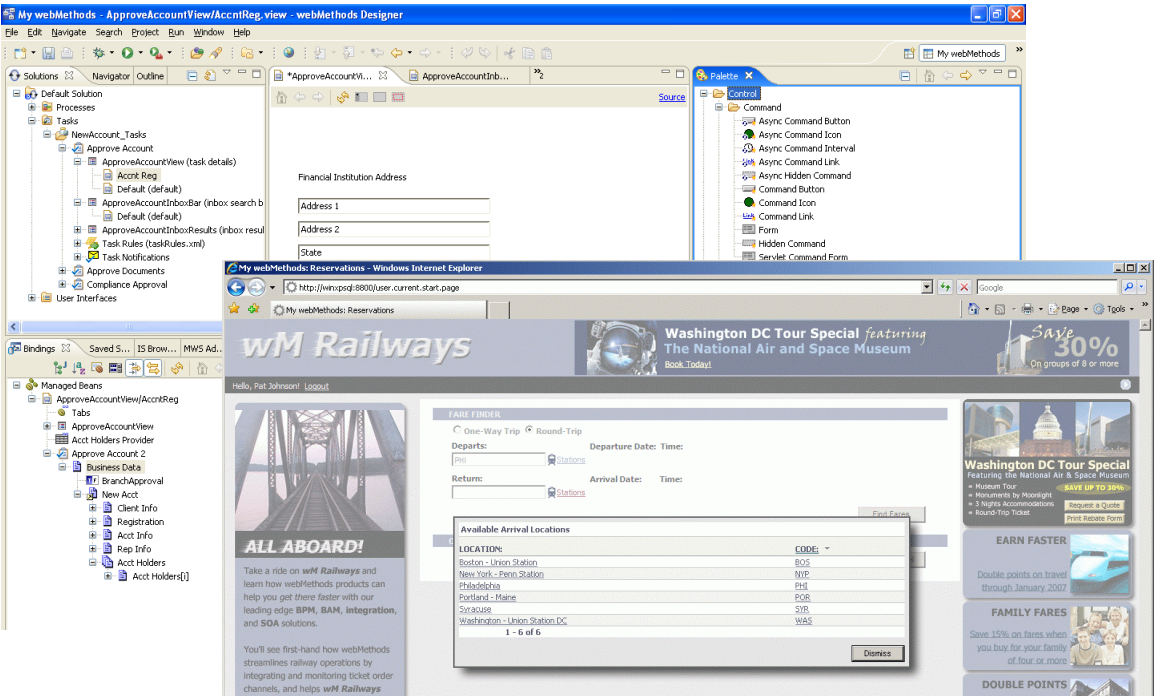
The web is currently in the midst of a revolution – sometimes called web 2.0 – aimed at making the user experience more engaging. The technology behind this revolution, known as Ajax, allows information presented on web pages to change dynamically based on user interaction – without the cumbersome reloading of the entire page. Ajax also allows data from multiple sources to be combined in a single view, sometimes called a “mashup.”

In BPM portals and process-aware web applications, users already increasingly expect the engaging user interfaces that Ajax allows, but this dynamic web content typically requires programming. To support agility and the BPM goal of code-free design, webMethods Fabric 7 provides over 150 out-of-the-box Ajax-enabled design components that allows workflow tasks and BAM charts and reports to be built and customized by non-programmers.

### 6. Real-World Human Task Management

For mission-critical processes, BPM has to do more than simply route work to task queues. Second-generation offerings like webMethods Fabric 7 support real-world requirements like dynamic task assignment based on properties of the work itself – who is the customer, or what is being ordered – as well as properties of available staff, including their work calendars and skills. In addition, it allows tasks to be delegated to other users, or escalated for special processing, with everything based on documented and auditable business rules.

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**Figure 7. Engaging Ajax user interfaces (right) can be built with simple drag-and-drop components (left). Source: webMethods**

Support for real-world human tasks also implies built-in document management functionality, missing in most first-generation BPMS, including check-in/check-out and version control.

## 7. Enterprise-Class SOA

Almost all first-generation BPMS offerings provide integration middleware that links the process engine with backend applications, databases, and files without programming – but



**Figure 8. webMethods BPMS is built on top of enterprise-class SOA and integration infrastructure. Source: webMethods**

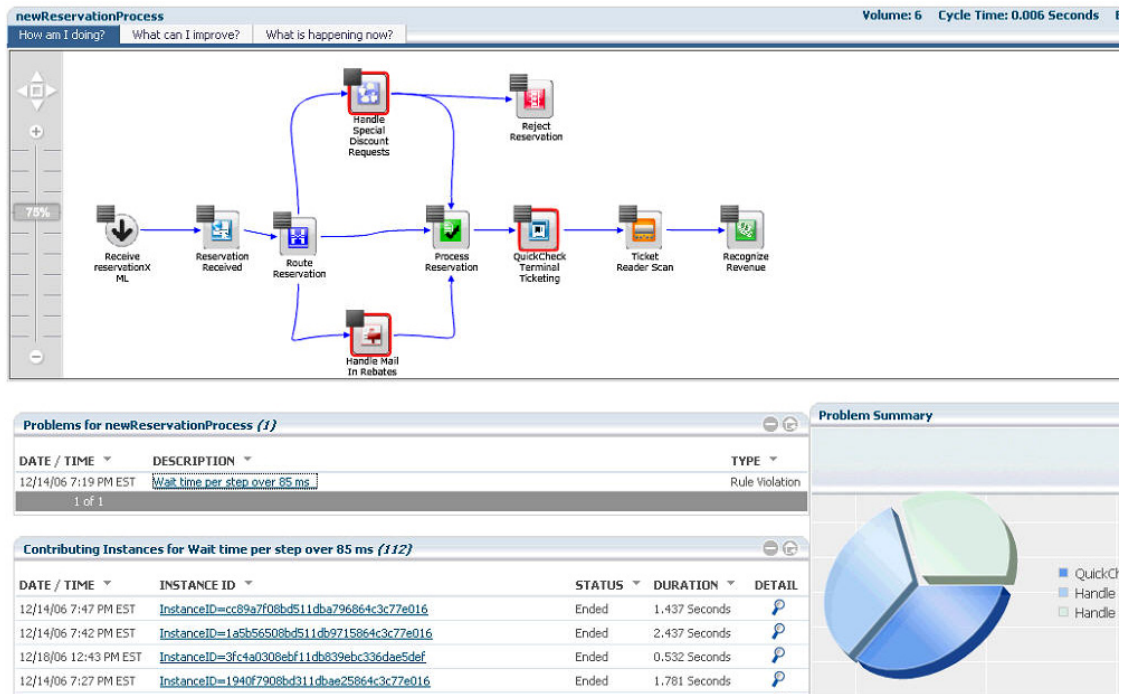
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typically only through direct, synchronous connections. Enterprise-class integration today demands a more flexible and robust architecture known as an enterprise service bus (ESB), a central component of service-oriented architecture. ESB supports high-performance, reliable asynchronous integration throughout the enterprise, and in conjunction with other SOA components like service registries and repositories, shields business processes from ongoing changes in IT infrastructure. While many BPM vendors pay lip service to SOA, very few actually provide direct support for service registries, repositories, and ESB functionality from the BPMS design environment. WebMethods Fabric 7 provides the full complement of SOA infrastructure and leverages it extensively in the BPMS.

### 8. Guided Process Analysis

BPM's BAM component promises performance visibility and optimization, but it's easy to overwhelm process owners with a flood of performance data. Just making sense of it can be a challenge, much less harnessing it effectively. Once you can measure your processes, you still face basic questions: Is this performance "normal"? What's causing the problem? What users really need is system-provided guidance.

In its BAM component, called Optimize for Process, webMethods Fabric 7 provides just that. The system itself establishes baselines from actual measurements, so it's easy to tell if things are running normally or not. Built-in logic automatically tracks volume, velocity, and errors, adds predictive analysis, and provides drilldown from high-level problem conditions to discover root causes and fix them (Figure 9). BAM provides the visibility into process performance end-to-end. BPM provides the platform to adjust and improve on the fly.



**Figure 9. Guided performance analysis automates detection of problems and directs users to their root cause. Source: webMethods**

## The Bottom Line

BPM is the solution to many 21<sup>st</sup> century business pain points. In addition to the time-honored goals of faster-better-cheaper, it delivers on strategic objectives like agility, compliance, innovation, and business-IT alignment. BPM measures and manages the business the way your customers and suppliers see it – as end-to-end processes, not as discrete functional units. It harmonizes the disparate ingredients of a business process – human tasks, backend business systems, business rules – integrating them in a common design and runtime environment. And it leverages a new implementation paradigm, one based on business-IT collaboration, development with little or no code, and the built-in assumption of continual change.

Now second-generation technology like webMethods Fabric 7 is extending BPM to meet the needs of high-volume mission-critical processes and enterprise deployment: a firm layering on SOA, a metadata library supporting reuse at the enterprise level and impact analysis of changes to business rules and process components, advanced workflow management, and BAM that provides performance baselining and guided analysis automatically out of the box.

BPM is good for business. As we head into the second generation, it's getting even better.

*Bruce Silver*