

2008 WebSphere System z Podcasts - 'Did you say Mainframe?'

TITLE: Streamlining existing processes using WebSphere Process Server for z/OS

HOST: Hi, and welcome to the "Did you say Mainframe?" podcast series. This is where we regularly interview IBM technical experts who can help you to understand important IBM mainframe hardware and software issues. I'm your host Sherrie Abshire.

Today we're going to talk about how to streamline your business processes on z/OS.

Our guest today is Rob Rowe from IBM System z BPM Marketing. Rob, it's great to have you here.

SME: I'm delighted to be here.

HOST: Before we begin, I'd like to mention to our listeners that there is a recorded teleconference expanding on the subject of our podcast today. I'll be giving out more information at the end of this podcast.

HOST: What is meant by streamlining your existing processes?

SME: Streamlining refers to automating your business processes, wherever possible, to reduce duplication of data, manual data entry and human delays. It's about the orchestration and integration of technology and human assets to achieve process and business agility. The benefits are that you can reduce manual data entry, which can introduce errors, omissions and resultant process delays. It provides escalation paths when a process is stalled, reduces delays due to manual operations such as using the telephone or fax machine and using paper-based forms to perform business operations. And it allows you to monitor your processes to see how they are performing in real time. Additional benefits are increased personnel productivity, shorter delivery cycles, increased customer satisfaction, increased revenue and being better positioned to react to changing business requirements and customer demands to keep you ahead of your competition.

HOST: How does WebSphere Process Server help to achieve this?

WebSphere Process Server is the runtime engine of Business Process Management. BPM is the method employed to streamline your business processes. BPM is a *discipline combining **software** capabilities and business **expertise** to accelerate process improvement and facilitate business innovation*

For **software**, we based the set of capabilities that we bring to market on discussions with hundreds of customers, and in-depth reviews with leading industry analysts, including Forrester Research and many independent analysts. The key capabilities include modeling tools with simulation and analysis, policies and rules, an integrated development

2008 WebSphere System z Podcasts - 'Did you say Mainframe?' environment, a graphical runtime environment, which is the process server mentioned in the title of this podcast, and a management environment which includes dashboards for monitoring your business processes against pre-defined metrics and key performance indicators.

For **expertise**, expertise includes knowledge about the business logic and processes, what the metrics or Key Performance Indicators need to be and the policies and rules that need to be applied to the business processes as a form of governance.

Expertise can also be in the form of services, such as knowledge about the engagement and knowledge about SOA and implementing BPM. IBM provides end-to-end service offerings - a comprehensive set of methodologies for planning, designing, modeling, simulating, measuring and optimizing business processes to achieve optimal operational effectiveness in an SOA environment. The offerings include industry methods and models, BPM Methodology, Component Business Model and the BPM Competency Center. IBM has over 1000 BPM consultants and delivery experts worldwide and is ready to assist any organization get started with SOA and BPM.

Getting back to the process server, the product is built on the WebSphere Application Server, but extends that functionality to perform the mediations required if a service isn't available, to map one kind of business object into another to allow different systems to transfer data and it provides management for same objects in different data stores (e.g. a customer record has a different identifier in SAP than in Siebel). It also provides the dynamic service selection that Fabric takes advantage of. We'll talk about that in a minute or two. In addition, it has service components to implement business rules as rule sets or if/then considerations, state machines, which are another way to model your business processes and human tasks which process server considers just another component of the business process. The human tasks capabilities are interesting: there is a human task editor and manager to support authorizations, dynamic assignments and escalations through email and notification tasks. This allows you to assign work using flexible staff queries, re-direct work to substitutes in case of absence, and create human tasks on the fly as needed.

This architecture and the supporting capabilities just mentioned highlight WebSphere Process server's involvement in streamlining your business processes.

There is one other item to mention here. While the process server can be deployed in a distributed environment, it makes better sense to deploy it on z/OS. You already have your other mission-critical applications running on the mainframe; doesn't it make sense to have you process server deployed there as well to obtain the proximity, QoS,

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HOST: I have a fragile IT environment consisting of fragmented, unconnected legacy systems from acquisitions and mergers and years of specialized, departmentalized application development. Does streamlining allow me to use my current legacy applications and back-end systems?

SME: Yes. Through BPM we promote the ability to reuse your existing legacy applications and back-end systems in an SOA environment. Composite applications are reusable, which is one of the foundational benefits of SOA. The idea here is to leverage your existing IT infrastructure and assets without having to re-write any of your applications. What we offer is the ability to wrap your existing applications into composite, reusable applications to streamline your operations and for additional business agility.

HOST: Once I streamline my processes, will I be able to change my process model after it is deployed?

SME: Absolutely. Responding rapidly to changing business conditions and customer demands is what BPM is all about. There is an entire life cycle to business process management. It typically starts out with documenting or modeling your existing processes. Many times they aren't documented at all, or only exist in a business analyst's mind. It is important to get these documented, so that you can actually see what the processes look like and see where there may be areas for improvement. One of the benefits of the WebSphere Business Modeler is that it contains simulation capabilities, to allow 'what-if' scenarios. This allows you to see what would happen if you altered the process. Changing a process in the modeling tool, bringing the changed model into the assembly tool to wire in the necessary services and then deploying the updated model into the process server is the method of making these changes.

Other changes can actually be done on the fly in the process server without even having to change the model or involve your IT department. This is where the WebSphere Business Services Fabric product comes into play. This product extends BPM by enabling greater flexibility and responsiveness in your business processes by offering *dynamic capabilities at run-time*, to deliver a personalized experience to the customer. It does this by separating the **process model** from the **business logic** for the supporting business functions. It uses the underlying Business Services to dynamically customize the business process based on context. That means Fabric customizes the business functionality in response to changing business contexts such as different user types (customers, employees), different geographies, product lines, organizations, etc. So for example, an Insurance company that is attempting to issue a policy quote can dynamically customize the business process based on the geography of the requester, the method of delivery (email, SMS, web browser), the desired coverage,

2008 WebSphere System z Podcasts - 'Did you say Mainframe?' the appropriate line of business (auto, home) and the type of requester (current policy holder looking to add coverage for another line of business, a new customer or an insurance agent). It provides an added layer of business agility and it's all automatic.

HOST: What tooling does IBM offer to support this initiative?

SME: We mentioned most of the tooling already. The IBM WebSphere BPM product set supports the entire lifecycle of your business processes from their creation in Modeler, to the services assembly in Integration Developer, to the deployment in Process Server, to the process monitoring in Monitor and the policy management in Fabric. The only BPM product that we haven't yet discussed is WebSphere Business Monitor. This product allows business analysts to observe the performance and health of their business processes in real time. Through customized dashboards, they can see how the processes are operating against pre-defined metrics and key performance indicators. The data obtained from monitoring can also be fed back into your model for historical analysis and to provide real and accurate data for better simulations. This final step completes the BPM life cycle, as it closes the loop from model design to assembly to deployment to monitoring to feeding data back into the model.

HOST: I see that there are a number of products and an entire life cycle involved in becoming SOA and BPM enabled. I can definitely see the benefits that this provides from a business point of view, but how can I move forward cautiously?

SME: I realize that we covered a significant amount of material with business process management, service oriented architecture, streamlining your business processes and the supportive IBM WebSphere tooling. For many customers, this can be rather overwhelming. The teleconference that Sherrie will be referring you to is designed to remove some of the apprehension that customers may have in adopting SOA and BPM. Please listen to this telecom to see how you can get started with SOA and BPM without disrupting your entire IT department.

HOST: Rob, that was really interesting.

SME: Thanks for giving me the opportunity to talk about streamlining existing processes using WebSphere Process Server for z/OS.

HOST: Well, that wraps up this podcast discussion. To find out more about the teleconference I mentioned earlier, please go to the description for this podcast at:  
<http://www.ibm.com/software/os/systemz/podcasts/websphereonz/>

Join us next time as we talk about another important

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mainframe topic. For now, this is Sherrie Abshire saying  
"Thanks for listening".