February 25, 2011

Best Practices: Developing An ECM/BPM Strategy

by Craig Le Clair
for Business Process Professionals

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February 25, 2011

Best Practices: Developing An ECM/BPM Strategy

Business Process Improvement Also Requires Improved Content Management

by Craig Le Clair
with Connie Moore, Stephen Powers, and Emily Fowler-Cornfeld

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past two years, we have synthesized best practices for developing an enterprise content management (ECM) strategy from 20-plus in-depth ECM strategy reviews, numerous workshops, and more than 500 ECM inquiries from our business and government clients. While it's possible to deploy ECM from an infrastructure/technology perspective — many companies do just that — best practices start with using the business context, not the technology perspective, to determine how content gets used across the enterprise. Once you take a business process (BP) perspective, BP pros — working in conjunction with content and collaboration (C&C) pros — can envision comprehensive ECM service packages, identify gaps, and create a consensus road map. This BP/C&C team can implement and align governance with shared services and specific business processes. Looking beyond best practices, next practices include bringing emerging information workplace technologies and mobility into ECM/BPM strategy development. By adding a BP perspective to your well-constructed ECM strategy, BP pros can provide a solid foundation for business processes to succeed.

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NOTES & RESOURCES

Forrester drew on its extensive experience and engagements with clients and vendors for this report.

Related Research Documents

"The Forrester Wave™: Dynamic Case Management, Q1 2011"
January 31, 2011

"Dynamic Case Management — An Old Idea Catches New Fire"
December 28, 2009

"The Forrester Wave™: Enterprise Content Management Suites, Q4 2009"
November 12, 2009

"Business Context: A Better Way To Define An ECM Strategy"
December 27, 2007

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AN ECM/BPM STRATEGY IS HARDER THAN IT LOOKS

The drivers for ECM/BPM strategy initiatives are a mix of compliance, infrastructure, and process improvement (see Figure 1). When an organization's current approach isn't sustainable, the pressure for compliance and better efficiency stays on business process (BP) pros and content and collaboration (C&C) pros until they get it right. Sometimes, this can take a long time, particularly if the project team looks at the problem through a technology lens.

Reducing Infrastructure Chaos Usually Ranks As The Primary Goal

Most enterprises source ECM/BPM technology from large vendors such as Microsoft (63%), EMC (35%), and OpenText (29%). Fifty-nine percent of ECM/BPM decision-makers say they want to standardize on an ECM/BPM suite rather than allow tactical point products for business process needs; yet 51% of enterprises actually have three or more ECM/BPM solutions in place, and the goal of a single ECM/BPM suite is not a reality at most enterprises.[1] For example, one large pharmacy has 29 ECM/BPM solutions; at the same time, it is considering a cloud-based ECM/BPM system to support new drug certifications that interacts with R&D partnerships and labs in other time zones — so even more chaos is likely. An ever-increasing number of enterprises are now trying to:

- **Rein in out-of-control ECM/BPM costs.** Enterprises feel locked in to their ECM/BPM providers and are trying hard to reduce the number of systems and license costs spread across the organization. For example, one midsize insurance company has seen ECM/BPM and related license and maintenance costs skyrocket from $4 million a year in 2002 to a projected $19 million in 2011. Enterprises are placing more value on the management of unstructured content — but this value still pales in comparison with what is routinely spent in the structured world.

- **Put SharePoint in its place.** SharePoint has moved from offering simple team worksites that allowed better document sharing to being a legitimate ECM/BPM platform.[2] Enterprises look to use SharePoint more but don't know where to draw the line. One large Canadian utility wrestled with whether to integrate SharePoint or Oracle's UCM suite into its Oracle E-Business app. SharePoint was weak in document imaging (capture, OCR), had no implementations with E-Business Suites, would require more custom development, and needed to support concurrent users and volumes at the upper limit for SharePoint 2010. Oracle UCM supported better archiving, security, and had a packaged integration, but the business and IT staff preferred the Microsoft environment. The enterprise used Forrester's framework to select UCM for this core business process.

- **Resolve ECM/BPM platform upgrade/migration decisions.** Many enterprises installed ECM/BPM tactically to support a specific line-of-business need — resulting in them maintaining many diverse platforms once this syndrome multiplied across the organization. Enterprises realize this siloed approach can't continue and are looking to consolidate systems. For example, one large credit card company is trying to migrate more than 20 platforms to two systems, with

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an estimated cost between $5 million and $7 million. Similarly, a midsize insurance company used IBM Content Manager to support claims processing and faced significant upgrade costs. It also had a version of IBM FileNet Image Services — with no upgrade path at all. It will migrate these two IBM systems to FileNet P8, SharePoint, or another ECM/BPM platform — at considerable expense.

- **Decide where to fit noncore ECM-related technologies.** ECM/BPM is unique in the sheer number and complexity of technologies involved and the vast number of use cases to support. In addition to the core technologies of ECM and BPM, companies often have special requirements for specific technologies to support specific processes, like outbound customer correspondence or check imaging. Collaboration, enterprise search, e-forms, digital signatures, document output for customer communications, and enterprise content integration could all play a role in ECM/BPM at your organization.

Yet Top-Down Compliance Issues Still Drive Many Initiatives

Recent history now shows what the cost can be of *not* using content management for important business content. Courts regularly hand out multimillion-dollar fines to organizations that can't produce content in response to a discovery request or that claim not to have the content, only to have forensic experts find it.[3] Amendments to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (FRCP) have pushed many BP and C&C pros to help legal organizations tackle solutions to manage, retain, and dispose of content — namely emails and documents. Top compliance drivers include:

- **Getting control of content for compliance and regulations.** Public scrutiny of companies and accelerating litigation efforts show no signs of slowing down.[4] Enterprises struggle with strategies for records management, eDiscovery, and the ability to document how decisions are being made. The business context for risk also includes the need to proactively keep the organization and its people out of hot water by locking down content to prevent it being used incorrectly. The October 2010 "robo-signing" for mortgage foreclosures and subsequent freeze on foreclosures will only accelerate these trends. Foreclosures nearly came to a halt while the entire industry reviewed its business processes for reviewing mortgage documentation.[5]

- **Proactively reducing the probability of fines.** The cost of not addressing risk shows up in the fines regularly imposed on organizations that fail to comply with agency requirements or that just poorly manage their content. Many enterprise legal departments and corporate executives know that they face substantial fines if they don't define and support sound content management and retention policies.[6] Fines and legal exposure continue to drive the ECM market.

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Figure 1 Top Drivers For ECM/BPM Strategy Initiatives

Company profile	Primary drivers	Top recommendations
Canadian utility	Oracle Universal Content Manager (UCM) versus SharePoint for integration with Oracle Siebel CRM platform	• Recommended Oracle due to required security features and more production examples • Create iWorker segment and promote SharePoint for collaboration. • Create life-cycle governance for SharePoint content and migrate to UCM for long-term management.
Credit card processor	Reduce costs, improve search, records management, and reduce the number of repositories	• Reduce from 20 repositories to two (IBM P8 and IBM CMOD). • Develop enterprise content integrator "factory" in-house. • Select systems integration to jumpstart effort.
Large European bank	More than 20 ECM projects being proposed in uncoordinated fashion. Bank initiative to move toward "corporate" solutions. Increased need for better access to information.	• Create five segments: transactional, advisory, corporate services, outreach, and foundational. • Pursue transactional segment to improve imaging and account servicing. • Accelerate governance and competency centers around segments.
US federal regulatory agency	Decentralized implementation of diverse ECM solutions. High eDiscovery costs and inability to find information.	• Create five segments. • Road map should pursue foundational segment first with enterprisewide record management. • Plug gap in enterprise message archiving to create foundation for eDiscovery.
Midsize insurance company	Control ECM license costs and improve compliance. Standardize document output for customer communications management and electronic forms.	• Create six segments. • Replace IBM Content Manager, and IBM Image Services with Hyland On Base. • Select SharePoint InfoPath for transactional segment component and HP Extreme for "outreach" segment component. • Delay full records management and eDiscovery initiative.
Canadian federal agency	Poor success with ECM infrastructure effort. Reset ECM initiative to increase adoption and engage stakeholders.	• Establish governance at process owner level. • Provide content management from within business-critical applications. • Leverage SharePoint for collaboration with OpenText as primary repository.
International assistance NGO	More than 20 departments independently developing solutions	• Create online survey process for stakeholder departments. • Use data to categorize departments into five segments. • Develop shared services approach, with first segment rollout targeting rapidly deployable ECM support for mobile field units.

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Figure 1 Top Drivers For ECM/BPM Strategy Initiatives (Cont.)

Company profile	Primary drivers	Top recommendations
Midsize engineering firm	Determine best vendor for integration with ERP and fit within engineering management firm	• Niche ECM product and SharePoint back the integration with required enterprise app and poor support for Lotus E-mail. • Evaluate OpenText and IBM P8. • SharePoint should be an option for collaboration but not for full ECM needs.
Federal agency	Too many repositories with inconsistent archive, storage, and disposition procedures.	• Move to segmented shared service approach. • Look to standardize on Documentum Suite but upgrade to Version 6.
Oil and gas exploration	90% of unstructured information on shared drives. Inability to find information. Information handling quality dependant on manual behavior. Lack of categorized content; keyword search is the only information retrieval method.	• Use segment approach to support all business areas and processes. • Develop information classification and retrieval processes with business-relevant metadata and hierarchies.

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BEST PRACTICES WILL MAKE IT EASIER TO SUCCEED WITH ECM/BPM STRATEGY

For two years, we've interviewed BP and information management professionals, senior IT professionals, and C&C pros about ECM/BPM. We have also interviewed document-processing service providers and leading consulting companies to find out how successful ECM/BPM strategy projects went. Like all good ideas, the best practices that we surfaced sound quite simple, but many of the BP and C&C pros in leading enterprises have spent years working toward these goals, and even the groups that have successfully implemented these practices still constantly struggle to maintain the ground they've gained. The four hard-won best practices that surfaced during our interviews are:

- **Take a business "context" view as opposed to a technology perspective.** Too often, strategy efforts start with issues around vendor tools — to deploy this one or convert to that one; the discussion has little to do with how content gets used by businesspeople and within business processes, many of which may be quite complex. Keeping how content is used within the business process front and center is the first and most frequently observed attribute of successful ECM/BPM planning.

- **Use the contextual view to segment your content use cases.** The days, if they ever existed, of having one ECM/BPM solution meet all needs are long gone. Today, enterprises have deployed many solutions that support their wide-ranging needs — from web content management

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(WCM) and digital asset management to the capture of inbound electronic forms, email archiving, and eDiscovery. And, of course, SharePoint is spreading deeper and wider into the organization, driven by the business looking for quick solutions and higher productivity. Segmenting your ECM/BPM needs by how content is used will not get you to one infrastructure solution, but it will provide much better clarity, strategic focus, and the ability to align the organization for governance.

- **Create segment-based ECM/BPM services.** Identifying gaps and developing a road map allows IT and lines of business to work together to define ECM service packages for each segment identified. Services defined for a segment align technology to multiple lines of business. This allows the lines of business to make better use of limited IT resources and moves IT from a reactive to a proactive support attitude. BP and C&C pros can form governance based on a service segmentation to create cross-group synergy and take a process focus rather than a technology one. As if ECM/BPM were not complicated enough, an ECM/BPM strategy now incorporates several adjacent technologies, such as e-signature solutions, document output for customer communications management, electronic forms, and social media.[7]

- **Align governance with ECM shared service segments.** Governance roles and accountability create tension in many organizations. Identifying who owns or "governs" a segment must be clear and supported by the wider group of business stakeholders. Governance is critical for maintaining service levels, avoiding poorly adopted solutions, and stopping content chaos. A large international bank, a major US government agency, and several other Forrester clients have implemented ECM governance approaches specifically to control rampant ECM rogue projects, with strong success.

BEST PRACTICE NO. 1: TAKE A BUSINESS "CONTEXT" VIEW INSTEAD OF A TECH PERSPECTIVE

Tangible needs — such as IT cost reduction, system and server consolidation, and keeping the enterprise out of hot water due to the mismanagement of content — drive most strategies. The missing piece and root cause of most ECM/BPM woes is a lack of understanding of business context — how people and business processes consume, modify, process, and output content. When IT organizations force technology upon businesspeople without much knowledge of how the technology can benefit them, businesspeople often refuse to use it. BP and C&C pros have found out the hard way that implementing ECM/BPM changes the way people work. For example, a new ECM/BPM system may force users to take additional steps to manage or access their emails. As a result, businesspeople constantly come up with workarounds that help them avoid using ECM/BPM systems altogether. To address this real need, BP pros — working in conjunction with C&C pros — should:

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- **Understand the business context.** This starts with documenting how businesspeople and business processes create, consume, and use content. This use can focus on the tangible — such as the cost savings from improving new account openings in retail financial services by infusing content into the business process. But numerous intangibles can also define business context — such as the soft benefits associated with helping people more quickly find documents as part of a task or activity or improving how people collaborate on a document.

- **Understand how better use of content within context will improve business objectives.** People in operational roles understand what makes a particular line of business, department, or function tick. With that knowledge also comes a good understanding of how better use of content can help the organization achieve its objectives. For example, according to an IT director at a consumer packaged goods company, a line-of-business VP understood the importance of content, but the directors in marketing operations supporting different brands knew exactly how the use of content would affect specific business objectives.

- **Use questions that get to context for categorization purposes — not requirements.** Therein lies the challenge: How can you determine the business context for all of the unstructured information within your organization and not drown in a protracted requirements definition cycle? To address this problem, we developed a list of questions based on our interviews and worked with dozens of enterprises and systems integrators to help build better ECM strategies based on business context (see Figure 2). Use these questions to improve current ECM/BPM initiatives or to redefine your ECM/BPM strategies.[8]

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Figure 2 Questions To Help Understand Business Context

Business orientation	• What are the business unit's (function, department, line of business) primary business objectives for the coming year? The next three years? • What roles are within the business unit? • What are the primary business objectives of each role within the business unit? • Does the role primarily interact with and support other internal constituents? Or does the role primarily interact with and support external parties (customers)? • How is content used in these internal and external interactions? To make decisions? Share ideas? Drive task/project completion? Execute processes? Influence people's behaviors?
Work style	• What's the role's work style? More ad hoc or process-oriented? If process-oriented, what business processes does the role participate in? • Is there one or more structured workflows, processes, or timing that influences the work activity? • To what extent can work only be completed if the content's available? • What metrics does the role commonly use to measure and monitor aspects of its job? • What is the average person's technology aptitude in this role? Are they tech natives? • What metrics does the role commonly use to measure and monitor aspects of its job? • What technology (line-of-business systems, email, calendaring, and collaboration tools) does this role use now to get the job done?
Content orientation	• What type of content is used by the role (e.g., business types such as contracts, collateral, deals, business cases, financial models, engineering documents, etc.)? • To what extent, right now, does the lack of ability to manage or use content impact the role's primary business objectives? • How should these types of content be consumed by the role? As a research activity? Just-in-time? Guided? Proactively delivered? • Is the role a net consumer or creator of content? • What type of content is created by the role? • What issues are expressed by those responsible for creating the content? • What tools are used to create content?
Content volume	• What's the estimated volume of content sent to other employees or business groups within the organization? • What's the estimated volume of content sent outside the organization to customers and/or partners? • What's the volume of inbound content (emails, papers, facsimiles, office documents, etc.) received by the role?
Content process characteristics	• How is content approved? • What's the life cycle for the different types of content? • How should changes to content be tracked and audited? • Are there needs to define and enforce policies around how the content is used? • What are the legal requirements and risk mitigation concerns?
Environment	• Is there a need to localize for language, laws, or other location-specific issues? • Where does the role work? Remote? Office? Home? • What legacy content needs to be considered? • Are there special security needs? Accessibility needs?

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Pitfalls To Avoid: IT Teams Failing To Understand The Business Context

Forrester answers numerous inquiries each year from BP professionals trying to understand how the business uses content. For the majority of those we spoke with, understanding the business context takes a back seat because ECM/BPM project teams often:

- **Do not find the right audience to ask.** Most BP and C&C pros claimed that while they interacted with business peers to develop their ECM/BPM strategies, they most likely interacted with the wrong people. Department heads, line-of-business VPs, and C-level executives often make the interview shortlists, but individuals in these roles do not always have the insight, input, or time needed to help ECM/BPM teams understand how the business uses content.

- **Do not know which questions to ask.** "Even when we were talking with the right person, we were never comfortable that we were asking the right questions," claimed an IT program manager for a North American manufacturer. The questions most often focused on what types of content businesspeople managed and what their pains were in managing this content. Few project teams asked questions related to how businesspeople use content in their day-to-day tasks.

- **Do not have interview skills or the ability to analyze findings.** One CIO for a UK-based consumer packaged goods company stated that his ECM/BPM team likely didn't have the skill set needed to analyze what they discovered in business interviews. He noted, "I'm afraid we'll just focus on basic needs and not the finer points." Others said that part of their reasoning for using outside professional services was to complement their IT teams' interview and analysis skills.

BEST PRACTICE NO. 2: USE BUSINESS CONTEXT TO SEGMENT YOUR CONTENT USE CASES

While the content and process needs of different roles, lines of business, and functions may vary, they are not all unique. Analyzing collected information for similarities across roles, for example, will help ECM/BPM teams develop a model that places different roles in the enterprise into segments that share common characteristics. The more diverse an organization's roles, lines of business, and functions are, the greater the number of segments they may identify (see Figure 3). The best projects create content segments to provide a "divide-and-conquer" approach and allow an incremental road map to emerge. Segments will differ based on industry and organizational maturity, but typical segments include:

- **A transactional or operational segment that manages content for core business processes.** This segment supports content usage for business processes that tend to be structured, with predictable, high-volume tasks that use transactional content and have a strong need to integrate with other systems and processes.[9] In one retail banking enterprise, the primary target for this segment was high-volume and lower-value retail transactions.

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- **A corporate services segment to capture "lighter" ECM/BPM tools and requirements.** This segment captures the needs of departments that exist across all business units. These departments typically include HR, accounting and finance, and contract management. These departments are classified as a separate segment because a more departmental-class content/BPM solution can often meet their needs. In addition, the business case for standardizing platforms across these shared business services is strong.

- **An outreach segment that organizes persuasive content applications.** This segment supports business processes that have an external — outside-facing — business orientation. They involve creators and net exporters of content and often require creative support. This segment creates and distributes "persuasive" content used in marketing, promotions, and campaigns through print and interactive channels.[10]

- **An iWorker segment that supports business content.**[11] Getting people to stop managing content in email or on the dreaded network drive pushes many organizations to seek the Holy Grail of ECM/BPM — a low-cost, lightweight technology that they can deploy to large groups of people. An iWorker segment looks to satisfy the lowest common denominator of needs — such as version control, check-in/checkout, workflow, and retention management — without much regard to how different groups vary in their use and management of content.

- **An advisory segment that's collaborative and leverages internal and external research.** High levels of intuitive and tacit interaction depend on email and personal productivity apps like Microsoft Word and Excel, as well as advanced decision-support tools like business intelligence (BI). One large retail bank created an ECM/BPM strategy to support processes such as mergers and acquisitions, underwriting, trade services, and small business private banking relationships. While primarily focused on the wholesale banking line of business, several other departments, including private, corporate, and investment banking, were expected to deploy aspects of the advisory services segment.

- **A foundational segment that cuts across other segments.** The foundational segment generally includes ECM/BPM capabilities that provide a strong foundation for compliance, such as a centrally developed records management policy and technology. This segment, for example, may include a corporate approach for message, report, and image archive. E-signature solutions, which cut across internal and external business processes, often become part of the foundational segment.

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Figure 3 Content Characteristics Of Typical Use Case Segments

Research and advisory
- Business content
- Highly collaborative
- Net content contributors
- Use internal and external content
- Serve internal constituencies

Outreach
- Persuasive content
- Structured workflow
- Net content contributors
- Use internally created content
- Serve external constituencies across multiple channels

Administrative
- Transactional content
- Highly structured, process-driven
- Net content consumers
- High volumes of externally originated content
- Have dedicated line-of-business systems

Field
- Business content
- Ad hoc, somewhat collaborative
- Net content consumers
- Use internally created content
- Live in email and calendars

Foundational
- Used by all segments
- Meets compliance needs
- Meets infrastructure needs

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Pitfalls To Avoid: Failing To Enlist Stakeholders In ECM/BPM Segment Definition

Segmentation, or identifying use cases, requires strong input from the business. In addition, the major challenge of the segmentation approach is the failure to align core business processes with each segment and to validate the complete list with the business stakeholders. Segment definitions should contain a list of business processes that resonate with the business (see Figure 4).

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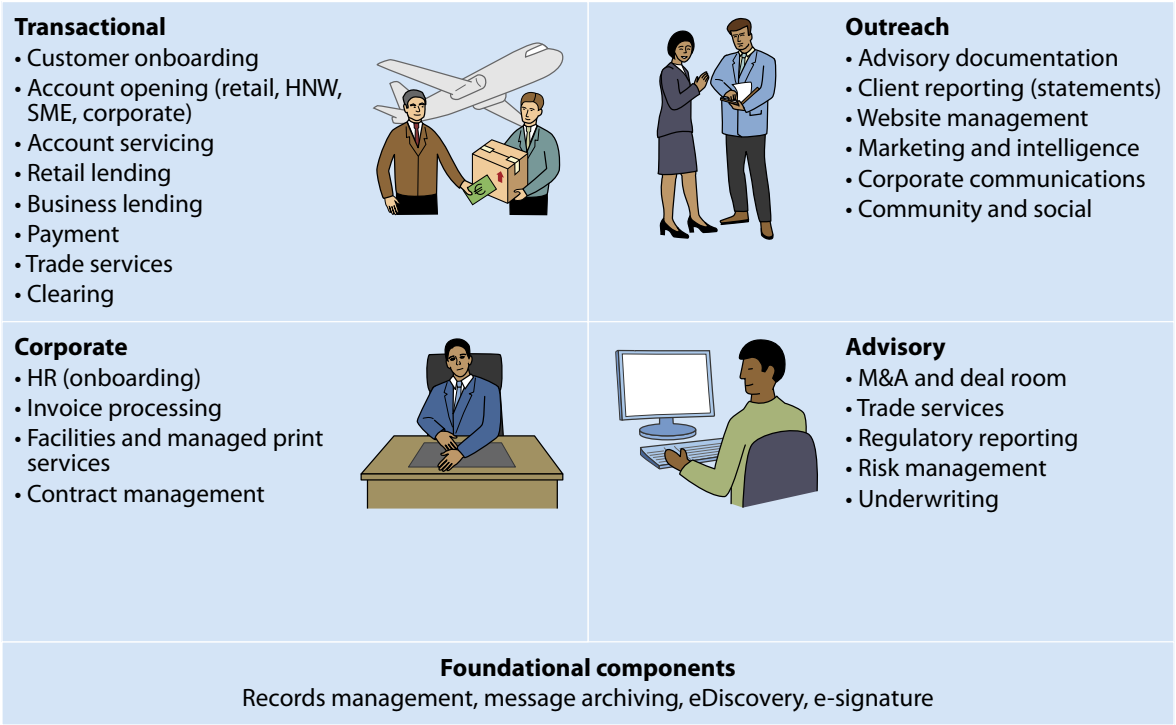
Figure 4 Financial Services Alignment Of Business Processes With ECM Segments



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BEST PRACTICE NO. 3: CREATE SERVICE SEGMENTS; IDENTIFY GAPS AND A ROAD MAP

After completing the segmentation exercise, ECM/BPM teams can more confidently identify, from the superset of the transactional, business, and persuasive ECM/BPM technologies in the market, which most appropriately helps address each segment's business context (see Figure 5). Segments provide the first step to shared services. BP pros can align specific ECM/BPM technologies with segments that allow governance, service-level management, and focus. The service packages help identify which existing solutions should be brought forward, which tools should be phased out, and which new tools need to be acquired — and form the basis of an enterprise strategy road map. Shared ECM/BPM services allow:

- **Multiple lines of business to share ECM/BPM service capabilities.** IT and lines of business work together to define the ECM/BPM service for a segment. As ECM/BPM services are deployed, lines of business can make better use of limited IT resources. Plus, governance can be formed based on segmented and standardized offerings to create cross-group synergy and take a process focus rather than a technology focus.

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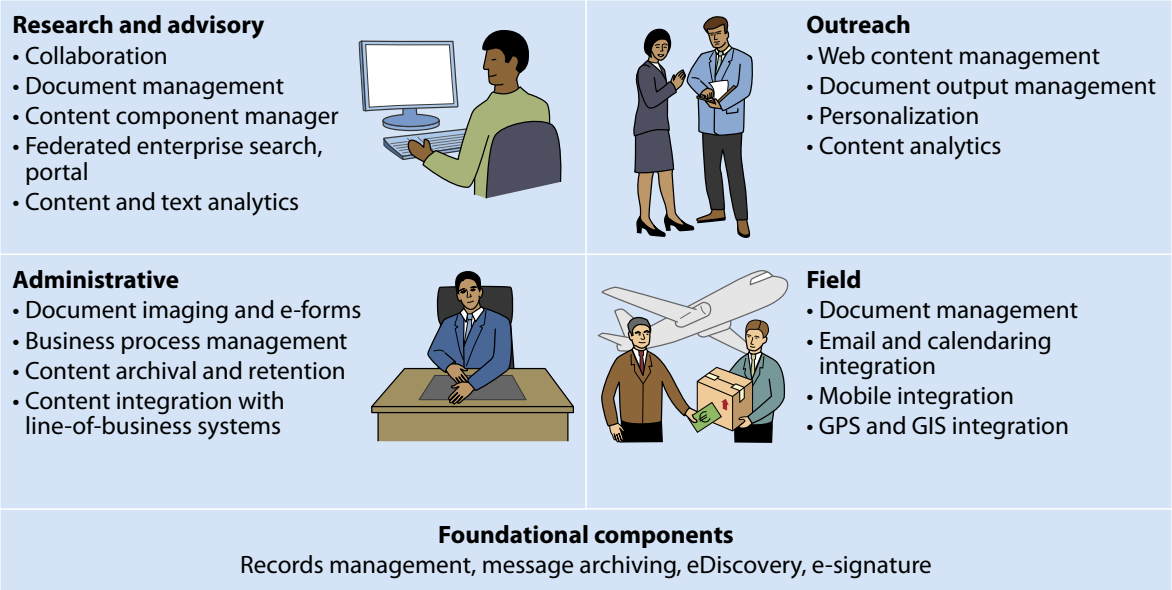
- **Enterprises to look beyond traditional ECM/BPM technologies.** This step helps BP pros look beyond core ECM/BPM technologies — such as document imaging, document management, WCM, records management, and content archiving — and take into consideration other technologies that help address business context, such as collaboration, enterprise search, predictive analytics, and BI.

- **Information architecture and taxonomies to be better categorized.** After compliance and costs, BP professionals we speak with cite the ability to find information when needed as the leading driver of their ECM/BPM strategy initiatives. Most organizations reach a low level of maturity in terms of information architecture.[12] Segmentation can help improve information architecture by focusing efforts on a particular segment. As an example, for any given segment, BP pros can study and document information types, key attributes, and what is needed for improved search.

Figure 5 Alignment Of ECM Technology With Typical ECM Segments



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ECM/BPM Is Becoming Even More Complicated

As if ECM/BPM alone was not complicated enough, several new solutions are now being incorporated into ECM/BPM strategies. Electronic signature usage is on the rise, helping enterprises streamline customer onboarding processes, save costs, and improve transaction security.[13] Document output for customer communication management is becoming more critical to solve multichannel output problems, and dynamic case management is also part of the emerging ECM/BPM story. And, finally, enterprise content integration to help consolidate and federate ECM infrastructures should not be overlooked.[14] Other technologies frequently used in conjunction with the core ECM/BPM system include:

- **Dynamic case management.** Case management automates new business process tasks — from collecting data to creating, sharing, and tracking information as work moves from the customer through account support staff, production staff, and transaction systems. Passing information among front- and back-office systems with BPM can significantly increase the "speed to revenue."[15] Dynamic case management's particular strengths lie in automating work that has high variability and low predictability and that requires a significant amount of flexibility.[16]

- **Document output for customer communications management.** ECM/BPM tools like document output for customer communication management can assemble the correct form set, automate requests for supporting documentation, create the correct forms and supporting documents, and provide a single point of entry to reduce paper handling.[17] The system can generate customized cover letters using the latest template-based authoring approach to drag and drop personalized content into a cover letter template with the appropriate compliance language.

- **Enterprise content integration.** Transforming business processes depends on access to information from an increasing number of systems, with a wider range of formats, and in greater volume. Organizations should use content integration software, frameworks, and strategies — enterprise content integration (ECI) — to consolidate archives, federate access, and/or synchronize content.[18] ECI is becoming a growing part of an ECM strategy. One large credit card processer needed to convert to just two systems from more than 20 as a first step before addressing new ECM/BPM initiatives.

Identify Gaps And Create A Road Map

With the required technologies in place for each segment, the team can look at areas with redundant solutions — such as EMC Captiva and Kofax for production capture, EMC's eRooms and SharePoint for collaboration, or image repositories in FileNet, Mobius, and OpenText (see Figure 6). While not easy, try to select the "best-of-breed" product as the go-forward solution and then develop a strategy for decommissioning or federating others.[19]

While many areas of duplication exist, gaps also occur in areas like records management, eDiscovery, content analytics, and e-forms (see Figure 7). Gaps and redundancies form the basis of your road map development. The road map will compare the degree of investment required to fill a gap with the business value and prioritize the development of that shared services segment.

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Figure 6 An Example Of Required ECM Components

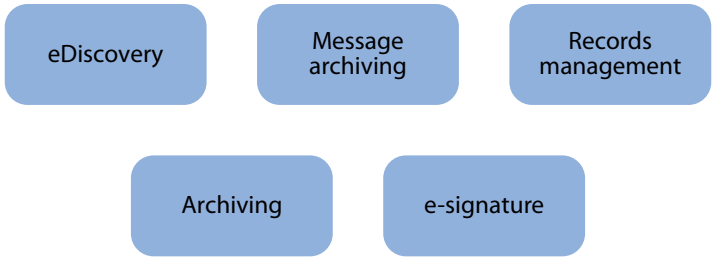

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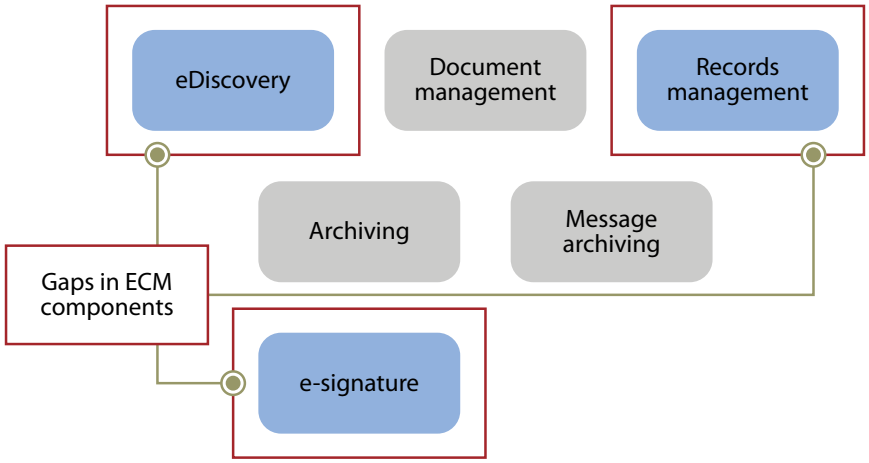
Figure 7 Identifying Gaps In A Hypothetical Foundational Segment



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Pitfalls To Avoid: Overlooking Existing ECM Solutions That May Help

Most companies we talked with have multiple ECM/BPM technologies and initiatives. Many of these can be used or deployed in the shared services model, applying better management and organization. We answer hundreds of inquiries each year from BP, C&C, and enterprise architecture professionals trying to decide on the right ECM/BPM tools. IT professionals should:

- **Categorize existing ECM/BPM tools with an eye to reuse.** Everyone falls victim to the common impulse of buying something new. It always seems better before the deal closes than after it's actually deployed. But the ECM/BPM tools you already own may plug into a particular segment and be used effectively.

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- **Look to leverage current initiatives while migrating to the shared service approach.** In the rush to get a specific project going, many do not take the time to examine how to leverage current initiatives. This comment from the VP enterprise architect in a major insurance company may resonate with you: "It turned out we had five different projects doing imaging. We asked ourselves whether we should do it the same way as some of these other projects but decided not to slow down our efforts. In retrospect, we should have spent more time on this."

- **Avoid using SharePoint for transaction segment applications.** Microsoft's SharePoint 2010 unleashed a host of improvements for lines of business, security and compliance, developers, and the data center. Microsoft continues to improve business process support, and thousands of lightweight, collaborative work processes can benefit from Microsoft's broad and affordable platform, which can mix and match components such as e-forms, e-signatures, collaboration, and BI. Yet the SharePoint 2010 platform is not a business process management suite (BPMS), and it does not provide the needed infrastructure for continuous improvement or dynamic case management. It also lacks support for core transactional needs such as capture.[20]

- **Connect to business processes in nonstandard ways.** Enterprises have several options for connecting unstructured content to business processes. Many enterprises have developed custom solutions or used nonstandard methods, such as creating intermediate repositories or file shares that provide batch updates for synchronizing or passing information. XML and web services support — common in developed ECM/BPM solutions — will ensure that upstream applications can process content in consistent ways.

BEST PRACTICE NO. 4: DEVELOP GOVERNANCE AROUND SEGMENTS

BP pros, working in conjunction with C&C pros, should take a leadership role in developing ECM governance. Several approaches have been developed for ECM based on the organization's maturity (see Figure 8). These range from a more process-oriented approach for mature organizations to one that foster's technical competency centers and that IT largely manages. Whatever approach is taken, the primary value of an ECM segmentation approach is aligning governance around the segments.

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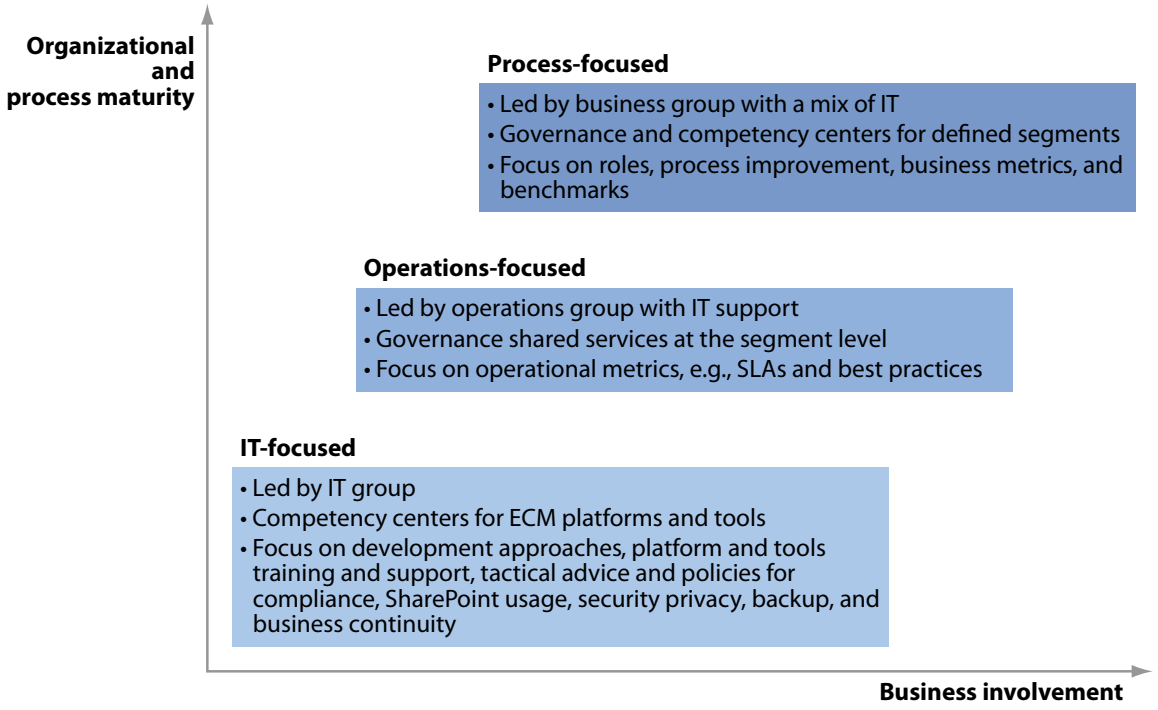
Figure 8 The Governance Approach Depends On The Process Maturity Of The Enterprise



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Governance Will Help Avoid Isolated Islands Of Information

Without proper governance, independent ECM/BPM solutions often lack a common search index, navigation, records management, backup and recovery, information rights policy, or security scheme. Rogue installations pose problems for regular maintenance activities, such as backing up and restoring data and installing product updates. Others report capacity and performance problems as sites exceed recommended volumes of content and users, affecting performance and backup times. To avoid these problems, be sure to:

- **Define clear governance around segments with clear responsibility.** Governance roles and accountability create tension in many organizations. Identify who owns or "governs" a segment. Clarity will ensure support from the wider group of stakeholders. Alignment works best when one IT group or line of business serves as an early adopter or user for a segment. Lack of clear responsibility for a shared service is a recipe for poor service levels, poorly adopted solutions, and chaos.

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- **Use governance to drive information architecture.** Getting the right information to the right people at the right time and managing it consistently requires a strong information architecture.[21] Each governed segment should have primary responsibility for analyzing, modeling, and setting up organizational schema for unstructured information in that segment. Ensuring common metadata attributes requires some central coordination, but distributing the ongoing management to segments will leverage specialized process and content knowledge.

- **Make sure SharePoint governance is covered, too.** SharePoint governance should be part of one of the defined segments — usually the iWorker or corporate services segment. Most organizations are moving toward offering three to five sanctioned SharePoint site types, with different life-cycle content management rules and definitions of approved user-generated apps. The ECM/BPM strategy should define which parts of the SharePoint platform support which segments; for example, InfoPath forms may be fine for internal applications and part of the corporate services segment but unsuitable for external forms used in the transactional segment.[22]

Pitfalls To Avoid: Not Getting Stakeholders Involved Early On

Successful ECM/BPM deployments that balance productivity, risk, and cost have three things in common: well-understood requirements, strong governance, and thorough systems engineering that ensures performance and availability. Governance pitfalls to avoid include:

- **Putting the wrong team together.** Several projects we reviewed left the implementation to tactical teams that did not have links to and support from senior management. This resulted in improvement to only one channel or product, poor leverage of in-house technology, and only a modest improvement to the customer experience.

- **Trying to go it alone.** Successful ECM strategy projects always reach out to influential process stakeholders to seek advice, counsel, and support. These include BPM centers of excellence and performance management initiatives, such as Lean Six Sigma and Balanced Scorecard, that focus on cross-divisional process improvement and transformation.

FORRESTER'S ECM STRATEGY NEXT PRACTICES

ECM/BPM strategy is a work in process for most. Few enterprises that Forrester speaks with have an ECM/BPM strategy that can keep up with the explosion in content types, content volume, process innovation such as collaboration, increasing regulatory demands, mobile workers, cloud computing, and the growing gap between consumer technology and the iWorkers that support customers in their jobs.[23] Dealing with these emerging trends requires BP pros to focus not just on best practices but also on *next* practices (see Figure 9):

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- **Concentrate less on technology and more on people, process, and change.** Culture and politics top the list of barriers to successful ECM/BPM strategy programs.[24] A next practice for IT is to spend less time with technology and more with the people they serve. Further, with core ECM/BPM technologies like content management, search and collaboration, and enterprise content integration quickly reaching maturity, making these various tools work together will require less time and investment.

- **Include dynamic case management in strategy development.** Interest in case management will climb rapidly throughout 2011. Business drivers include: 1) an increased need to manage the costs and risks of servicing customer requests, like loans, claims, and benefits; 2) a greater emphasis on automating and tracking inconsistent "incidents" that do not follow a well-defined process; 3) new pressure on government agencies to respond to a higher number of citizen requests; 4) new demands that regulators, auditors, and litigants place on businesses to respond to external regulations; and 5) the increased use of collaboration and social media to support unstructured business processes.[25] The convergence of BPM, ECM, business analytics, and event processing will require ECM/BPM strategy efforts to include these platforms to support content segments in the enterprise.

- **Don't let imaging and compliance dominate the conversation.** In the past two years, the 20-plus ECM strategy initiatives that we've been involved in center around legacy platform issues, such as upgrading or replacing Documentum or FileNet, converting to SharePoint, consolidating systems, embracing holistic records management, and renewing or replacing a capture system. This is understandable given the large investments that these solutions require and the importance of transactional content. Yet, increasingly, these requirements form only part of the story. Future initiatives will soon be driven by data quality, unified communications, email/IM/webconferencing, smartphone applications, and text and predictive analytics.[26] Next practices will focus more on these emerging areas, which will drive the next iteration of productivity and innovation.

- **Take a greater role in mobilizing the enterprise.** An increasing number of BP pros are involved in mobile strategies, and we expect that to continue. Our data shows that interest in smartphone support among information workers will soon require access to ECM/BPM repositories and related workflow apps.[27] As these devices achieve greater acceptance among IT departments, information workers will also demand access to all of the information and collaboration tools with which they've grown familiar within the enterprise, like intranets, knowledge repositories, search tools, and more.

- **Incorporate emerging information workplace technologies into ECM/BPM strategies.** With continued adoption of consumer tools and services like social technologies and video, Forrester expects that BP professionals will increasingly adapt consumer-born innovations to enterprise use cases. ECM/BPM strategies should include tools for business that will continue to drive productivity for their enterprises.

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HOW TO GET STARTED: IDENTIFY YOUR CHALLENGES

Where should you start? Use this diagnostic tool to assess your current capabilities — and opportunities for improvement — and see how you stack up against your peers (see Figure 10). Scores will calculate automatically for online readers. All scores remain anonymous.

Figure 9 ECM/BPM Strategy Best And Next Practices

Best practices	Next practices
• Take a "context" view as opposed to a technology perspective. • Use the contextual view to segment your content use cases. • Create comprehensive ECM service packages: Identify gaps and road map. • Align governance with ECM shared service segments.	• Focus less on technology and more on people, process, and change. • Include dynamic case management in strategy development. • Don't let imaging and compliance dominate the conversation. • Take a greater role in mobilizing the enterprise. • Incorporate emerging workplace technologies into ECM strategy.

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Figure 10 Forrester's Self-Diagnostic Tool For ECM/BPM Strategy

Part 1. Take a "context" view as opposed to a technology perspective.	**Yes**	**No**
Have you secured the cooperation of the business to help with the segmentation exercise?		
Have you reviewed Forrester's recommended questions for gathering business context and augmented them with your own?		
Do you have a draft list of business processes that align with preliminary segments?		
Total		

Part 2. Map technical components to use case segments.	**Yes**	**No**
Do you have a good inventory of existing ECM and related tools?		
Do you understand what tools are needed to meet each segment's needs?		
Are technologies grouped to align with defined segments?		
Are the gaps in ECM tools well identified?		
Are tools identified in the foundational segment relevant to all segments?		
Total		

Part 3. Create comprehensive service packages: Identify gaps and road map.	**Yes**	**No**
Are solutions for e-forms in the shared service technology component?		
Are solutions for eSignature in one of the shared service categories?		
Are solutions for document output for customer communication in one of the shared service categories?		
Is there an approach for enterprise content integration?		
Have you identified gaps and redundancies for each?		
Do you have a road map that is easily communicated to management and the business?		
Total		

Part 4. Develop governance around segments and create a road map.	**Yes**	**No**
Have you created a governance structure from a process, operational, or technical perspective?		
Is governance for SharePoint clearly covered in the approach?		
Have you identified gaps in each segment by comparing adequate as-is technology with the required technology for each segment?		
Does the road map emphasize foundational components such as records management and eDiscovery?		
Has the road map been shared with all relevant stakeholders?		
Total		

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SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Online Resource

The online version of Figure 10 is an interactive self-diagnostic tool that helps clients assess how their current practices stack up against those of their peers.

Methodology

Over the past two years, Forrester has contributed to 20-plus ECM/BPM strategy projects, working with business process, content and collaboration, and enterprise architect professionals and senior IT professionals, including the Canadian provincial government; one of the top three French banks; a US-based major credit card processer; a regional utility company; three midsize insurance companies; a US defense contractor; and several major US federal agencies. We have also fielded more than 500 inquiries on ECM/BPM strategy during this period. In addition, we interviewed nine vendors specializing in ECM, BPM, e-forms, systems integration, strategy consulting, dynamic case management, and document-processing services.

Companies Interviewed For This Document

Adobe

DocuSign

EMC

Hyland Software

IBM

LaserFiche

OpenText

Oracle

Perceptive Software

ENDNOTES

[1] Forrester recently surveyed 170 information and knowledge management (I&KM) professionals with decision-making roles in enterprise content management (ECM) about their plans for the coming year. For a review of these results, see the December 8, 2009, "Collaboration, Search, And Compliance Drive 2010 ECM Investments" report.

[2] Despite Microsoft's best attempts to position the SharePoint platform for content and collaboration, many people still see it as a business process management (BPM) platform. The process management features of SharePoint 2010 are better than MOSS 2007, but they're more limited than most modern BPM suites. For a review of this distinction, see the March 31, 2010, "SharePoint And BPM — Finding The Sweet Spot" report.

[3] Demands to meet regulatory requirements and to ease eDiscovery burdens are driving 2010 message archiving adoption. Effective message archiving programs can go a long way in achieving IT operational objectives, like lowering storage costs and mitigating legal risk associated with eDiscovery. Yet stakeholders report customer satisfaction concerns and significant gaps in current solutions. To succeed with message archiving, information knowledge and management professionals will need to navigate complex eDiscovery requirements, internal organizational demands, changing solution models, and other key considerations. See the March 17, 2010, "Regulatory And eDiscovery Demands Drive A Growing Message Archiving Market" report.

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[4] The next phase of compliance that affects ECM is the movement to more "transparency" in operations and business processes. For a review of this trend, see the August 28, 2009, "Transparency Is The Next Step In Compliance . . . Bring On Enterprise Content Management" report.

[5] What began as scattered accusations of shoddy paperwork and fudged documents is mushrooming into a full-blown crisis threatening to derail the foreclosure process across the country. Bank of America became the first big bank to temporarily halt foreclosures in all 50 states while it reviews hundreds of thousands of cases for potential paperwork errors. Source: Jeff Harrington and Leonora LaPeter Anton, "Robo-signing controversy could derail nation's entire foreclosure process," *St. Petersburg Times*, October 9, 2010.

[6] Increasing regulatory requirements and onerous eDiscovery burdens are forcing enterprises to design strategies to mitigate legal risk. Effective records and retention management programs play a big role in these strategies. For a description of how to avoid risks, see the September 3, 2009, "Records Management: User Expectations, Market Trends, And Obstacles" report.

[7] Electronic signature usage is on the rise and can help enterprises streamline customer onboarding processes, save costs, and improve transaction security. Document output for customer communication management is becoming more critical to solve multichannel output problems; BPM and particularly dynamic case management are also part of the emerging ECM strategy. And finally, enterprise content integration helps consolidate and federate ECM infrastructures and should not be overlooked.

[8] Defining and executing an enterprise content management (ECM) strategy can be frustrating. Tangible needs, such as IT cost reduction, system and server consolidation, and keeping the enterprise out of hot water from the mismanagement of content, drive most strategies. Yet information and knowledge managers often describe their ECM initiatives as too costly, poorly adopted, or just unused. The missing piece and root cause of most ECM woes is a lack of understanding of business context — how people and business processes use content. See the December 27, 2007, "Business Context: A Better Way To Define An ECM Strategy" report.

[9] The technology landscape for ECM cannot simply be looked at as the collection of document management, imaging, web content management, digital asset management, content archiving, and records management. Instead, a superset of technologies can be looked at to address an enterprise's transactional, business, and persuasive content needs. For a description of content types used in this research — transactional, business, and persuasive — see the December 21, 2005, "Transactional, Business, And Persuasive Content: A Better Way To Look At Enterprise Content" report.

[10] For a description of persuasive content, see the December 21, 2005, "Transactional, Business, And Persuasive Content: A Better Way To Look At Enterprise Content" report.

[11] For a description of business content, see the December 21, 2005, "Transactional, Business, And Persuasive Content: A Better Way To Look At Enterprise Content" report.

[12] Many enterprises lack a framework to ensure business alignment with their information management (IM) strategies. Yet sound strategy is critical for prioritizing IM investments. See the August 11, 2009, "Refresh Your Information Management Strategy To Deliver Business Results" report.

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[13] E-signature transaction volumes continue to increase as firms see the value of eliminating paper in transactional business processes and as e-signature vender solutions mature. For a review of current trends, see the January 15, 2010, "Market Overview: E-Signatures In 2010" report.

[14] Forrester developed an overview of enterprise content integration issues and top use cases. See the October 7, 2010, "Take A Process View Toward Enterprise Content Integration" report.

[15] Forrester recently reviewed BPM suite products and used criteria that compared venders in terms of meeting enterprise needs. See the August 24, 2010, "The Forrester Wave™: Business Process Management Suites, Q3 2010" report.

[16] Forrester recently reviewed DCM platforms. See the January 31, 2011, "The Forrester Wave™: Dynamic Case Management, Q1 2011" report.

[17] DOCCM is emerging as an important technology to meet the needs of customers who expect communication to be fast and in their channel of preference. For a review of the trends in DOCCM, see the September 2, 2010, "Empower Customers And iWorkers With On-Demand Customer Communications" report.

[18] Enterprise content integration has becoming an integral part of ECM strategy as enterprises try to consolidate, federate, and migrate repositories in order to gain better control of content and prepare for increasing volumes and content types. Forrester just reviewed this market; for a complete description of ECI from a business process perspective, see the October 7, 2010, "Take A Process View Toward Enterprise Content Integration" report.

[19] For a description of migration and federation strategies and their pros and cons, see the October 7, 2010, "Take A Process View Toward Enterprise Content Integration" report.

[20] Forrester reviewed Microsoft SharePoint 2010 in terms of BPM improvement. Microsoft 2010 was a strong improvement in areas like SharePoint Designer and Business Connectivity Service but fell short for complex BPM initiatives. For two comprehensive write-ups in this area, see the January 13, 2010, "SharePoint 2010 Unites Collaboration With Processes — But Significant BPM Gaps Remain" report and see the March 31, 2010, "SharePoint And BPM — Finding The Sweet Spot" report.

[21] Forrester defines information architecture as a framework providing a structured description of an enterprise's information assets — including structured data and unstructured or semistructured content — and the relationship of those assets to business processes, business management, and IT systems.

[22] Forrester developed specific governance recommendations for SharePoint. See the January 9, 2009, "Governing SharePoint In The Enterprise" report.

[23] Groundswell technologies — social, mobile, video, and cloud — put tremendous power in the hands of customers. Only empowered employees can respond at the speed of empowered customers — and they're often information workers outside of IT. See the June 18, 2010, "The HERO Index: Finding Empowered Employees" report.

[24] Putting senior managers in place to lead content and collaboration initiatives for their organizations is a

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growing imperative. Our ongoing work with Forrester clients indicates that the skills mix required to deliver and scale up enterprisewide workplace solutions, like enterprise social tools, infrastructure for engaging web experiences, and content management, is changing. Raw technology skills are of lesser importance than they once were. Now the ability to influence stakeholders across IT, legal, communications, marketing, and HR is of utmost importance. See the November 3, 2010, "A Snapshot Of Today's Content And Collaboration Professional" report.

[25] We define dynamic case management as a highly structured but also collaborative, dynamic, and information-intensive process that is driven by outside events and requires incremental and progressive responses from the business domain handling the case. Examples of case folders include a patient record, a lawsuit, an insurance claim, or a contract, and the case folder would include all the documents, data, collaboration artifacts, policies, rules, analytics, and other information needed to process and manage the case. See the December 28, 2009, "Dynamic Case Management — An Old Idea Catches New Fire" report.

[26] Putting senior managers in place to lead content and collaboration initiatives for their organizations is a growing imperative. Our ongoing work with Forrester clients indicates that the skills mix required to deliver and scale up enterprisewide workplace solutions, like enterprise social tools, infrastructure for engaging web experiences, and content management, is changing. Raw technology skills are of lesser importance than they once were. Now the ability to influence stakeholders across IT, legal, communications, marketing, and HR is of utmost importance. See the November 3, 2010, "A Snapshot Of Today's Content And Collaboration Professional" report.

[27] The staggering rate of mobile device adoption today gives content and collaboration (C&C) professionals a good reason to plan ahead for offering mobile access to enterprise content. Demand for the devices today likely means demand for access to enterprise content tomorrow. C&C pros must frame mobile strategies around business, transactional, and persuasive content. While a few enterprise content management (ECM) and third-party vendors have developed mobile support, options remain immature, leaving many firms to develop customized applications for mobile ECM. C&C pros will face several challenges when mobilizing enterprise content strategies: addressing fragmented mobile device support, tailoring content delivery to device form factors, and navigating ECM. See the November 17, 2010, "Mobilize Your ECM Strategy" report.

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