Project Remedies Inc.

Reduce Costs and Improve Service Quality by Implementing Effective Processes

Bug and Defect Reporting.
An example of how incident, problem and change management, and ActionProgram Manager can work together to implement a cross-organizational process.

A White Paper from Project Remedies Inc.

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Abstract

One way to lower IT costs and improve service delivery quality is to implement more effective and automated processes. Frequently, processes cross organizational and application boundaries. Disparate application solutions, because they do not easily interface with each other, often hinder the implementation of effective processes within IT. However, an integrated set of applications that run on the same platform facilitates the automation of cross-organization and cross-application processes.

This paper describes the process most companies use to handle bug / defect reports from users. It is an excellent example of a process that involves multiple applications and multiple organizations: incident management and problem management, change management, and program management. These applications are most often and incorrectly thought of as being standalone. Incident, problem and change management are normally managed in Operations while program management is normally managed in Development. However if you understand that there is one resource pool, and consider IT as one organization, numerous benefits can be quickly achieved.

What are the key business benefits?

- Higher availability of critical business applications.

- Proactive remedies to protect client/customer satisfaction.

- Moving beyond resource-intensive silo management of the enterprise.

- Reducing the workload and demands placed upon limited IT and business human capital.

Project Remedies' ActionProgram Manager can be very quickly combined with your organization's existing BMC Remedy Action Request System-based Incident, Problem and Change Management applications to form an integrated solution. This is the least expensive, fastest and easiest way to implement an effective bug / defect tracking system because, just like your existing Remedy-based applications, Project Remedies' ActionProgram Manager was developed with the Action Request System (AR System) platform.

To learn about ActionProgram Manager and the benefits ActionProgram Manager and ActionPortfolio Manager can bring to your company, please call Stan Feinstein, President of Project Remedies at 310-230-1722.

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Situation Overview

One of the most effective ways for IT management to stabilize or reduce costs is to implement more effective and automated processes. This saves time, reduces the number of people required, and prevents errors from occurring. As a result, costs decrease and service delivery quality improves.

Three major applications within an IT organization handle requests and generate tasks to be performed by IT resources: Help Desk (frequently divided into Incident and Problem Management), Change Management, and Program Management. Often, companies think of these as separate applications to be used by different departments within IT. Companies will usually buy the "best" product for each of these applications. Unfortunately, they realize too late that these applications must work together, that different types of requests result in similar tasks to be performed, and that there is, in fact, a single resource pool, not three.

The typical process for handling bug reports from users provides a good example of the need for applications to work together. It works because all of the applications run on the BMC Remedy Action Request System (AR System).

1. Problem reports come into the Help Desk from Users and are classified as bugs.

2. Because they are classified as bugs, they are assigned to the Change Control Board.

3. The Change Control Board reviews each bug and decides whether it is a change request or a project. For this example, let's say it is a project.

4. The person responsible for the project is notified. They set up a project plan in ActionProgram Manager using the Bug Fix Project Plan template. (This can also be done with workflow.) The project plan is approved, and people begin working their assigned project tasks to fix the bug.

5. The last task in the Bug Fix Project Plan is to "Implement the bug fix." This task is performed in Operations and launched with a Change Request. With our approach, The AR System uses workflow to automatically create the Change Request, and it uses workflow to notify the person in Operations of the new Change Request.

6. The person in Operations implements the fix and closes the Change Request.

7. When the Change Request is closed, the AR System uses workflow to close the project task.

8. Because this is the last task, AR System workflow is also used to close the project.

9. Because the project is closed, AR System workflow is used to close the original Help Desk task, and workflow is used to notify the original caller that the bug has been fixed.

We have 4 questions for you:

1. Is that cool or what? Cool is in the eyes of the beholder. Could your IT organization and business applications benefit by improving your service quality without the risk associated with enterprise integration and software development?

2. With what other program management system could you do that? The answer is: None.

3. Isn't this everyone's bug/defect reporting process? Is it yours?

4. How long would it take you to implement this process with your current suite of products, and how much would it cost? The first time only took us two days and cost two days worth of consulting time. Since the client had already licensed all the software, there were no additional software costs.

The Solution: ActionProgram Manager and the BMC Remedy Action Request System

The ideal solution to the business problem detailed above has several characteristics:

▪ Rapid implementation and lower risks

- Leverages previous investments in software, hardware and training

- Offers a Central Repository for data, including tasks, people and assets

- Presents a consistent user interface

- Has workflow functionality

- Uses the same communication mechanisms

- Supported by an existing team

The BMC Remedy Action Request System

Although it's been marketed as a help desk system and frequently thought of as a "trouble-ticketing" system, Remedy's Action Request System (AR System) is, in fact, a robust development environment and workflow engine.

As a workflow engine, the AR System allows the administrator to embed the company's business processes within it. As a development environment, the AR System can be used for all kinds of applications that generate tasks and involve workflow. Some IT professionals call it a "great request management" system, while others think of it as a "great task generator." Whichever way you think about it, the AR System is successful because its users have been successful in defining their business processes within it.

As previously mentioned, there are three major task-generating applications: Help Desk (Incident and Problem Management), Change Management, and Program Management. BMC Software has developed and markets both Help Desk (Incident and Problem Management) and Change Management applications, which interface with the BMC Remedy's Asset Management application. In addition, many users create their own applications with the AR System, hire consulting firms to build applications from scratch using this tool, or modify existing Remedy-built applications.

ActionProgram Manager – the Only PM System Built on a Workflow Engine

This is where Project Remedies enters the picture. Because of our depth of experience in program management systems in general and the unmet needs of AR System users in particular, Project Remedies decided to create ActionPortfolio Manager (PPM) ActionProgram Manager (APM), a program management, resource management, and time and expense tracking system built using the AR System.

APM is designed to be flexible. It can be used as a stand-alone application; as an enterprise-wide program management, resource management, and time and expense tracking system; combined with BMC's Remedy applications; or

combined with custom-built applications using the AR System. APM can be used to create a work management system, or to implement processes that span organizational and application boundaries such as the bug-tracking process in our example.

APM can interface with Remedy's Asset Management system. ActionProgram Manager is the only program management system that interfaces with an Asset Management application. It has a robust interface with Microsoft Project, so project plans created in MS Project can be imported into APM for approval, management, and time tracking.

The Easiest, Fastest, Cheapest Way to Implement a Bug Reporting Process

For an organization that's already using the AR System for help desk and change management applications, implementing this bug tracking process can be completed in hours or days, not weeks and months.

For example, a software company in San Diego acquired ActionProgram Manager to add "rigor" to their internal planning processes and to do time tracking for all IT staff across all IT tasks. Implementation was scheduled for a Monday. The previous Wednesday, they sent their definition file to our implementer. He arrived at the client on Monday morning and met with the client's technical staff. At 11:00 AM, he and the client's AR System administrator went into their lab to install APM on their existing AR System test / development server. By Noon, the software had been implemented. They tested it Monday afternoon and had a training class Tuesday morning. Tuesday afternoon, they said: "Can we talk about our process for handling bug reports from users?" Customizing their system to add this workflow and implementing the customizations took several days.

Conclusion

From a business standpoint, an automated system has long been needed that lets an organization implement processes across organization and application boundaries. Implementing better processes improves service delivery and lowers IT costs. Clearly, the ideal solution is one that could leverage an organization's existing investment in the Remedy AR System and take advantage of the AR System's functionality.

ActionProgram Manager is the only PM system built on the AR System, which is a workflow engine. AR System workflow functionality can be used to quickly implement companies' business processes to improve service delivery and lower costs. Bug reporting from enterprise wide users is a wonderful example of a process which requires automated workflow between applications and

organizations, and which can be implemented fastest and at lower risk by using commercial strength products based on the AR System.