

Enabling actionable process intelligence

Understanding how your processes operate is the first step towards improving them

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Something is not right. Your leading performance indicators tell you that your core business processes are not operating as efficiently as they should be operating. You've called in the process owners, and even they agree that the processes could—should—be delivering more. When pressed, though, they can't really tell you where the problems lie. They know what the processes have been designed to do, but what actually occurs during execution is, in many an organization, unknown. Without visibility into all the events taking place along the full path of a transaction, the answers to questions about how and where and when you make changes to improve your processes remain elusive.

So what can an organization do in the face of these shortcomings? You could rip out your ERP and related business systems, even your entire manufacturing infrastructure. In its place you could build a new Business Process Management Solution (BPMS), hoping that if you start from a clean slate, you'll build a solution that operates with greater efficiency than the old one. But that's an extreme response. In many organizations, the majority of the problems that plague your business processes can be attributed to just one or two percent of the processes. They may even misbehave only slightly, but that slight misbehavior can ripple through the enterprise and compromise other processes that would otherwise operate properly. To rip and replace the entire process infrastructure instead of fixing that small number of processes would involve huge capital expenses and a significant amount of transitional pain—and the optimized outcome you seek is far from guaranteed.

You could bring in an army of consultants and let them squint at every physical and virtual inch of your infrastructure to find the offending processes. They can bring to the engagement all their years of accumulated insight and wisdom. But without end-to-end visibility into your processes, these consultants are in no better position to pinpoint process problems and suggest a path to improvement. They may spend large amounts of billable time scrutinizing your processes and infrastructure only to present findings that, in summary, tell you that something is not right.

Better visibility leads to better insight

What you need is not necessarily a brand new solution or the recommendations of a consultant that lacks insight. What you need is better visibility into the actual workings of your business systems and processes.

With better visibility, you gain insight upon which you can act. Visibility gives you the ability to measure and analyze performance based on real-world events, which could be very different than the events that were forecast on paper when the processes were sketched out. Visibility enables you to discover problematic processes—and then you can determine what changes you need to make. You can even project what effect each change might have on the overall workflow or transaction environment, which can help you determine the order of changes to be incorporated.

Visibility and insight are the essential deliverables of Software AG Process Performance Manager (PPM). The software solution can provide you with a clear understanding of what your business processes and workflows are doing—and how they are performing—at the actual transaction and process execution levels. Once you know that, you can determine precisely what steps you need to take to improve overall process performance.

With Software AG PPM, you can:

- Automatically discover end-to-end processes for greater transparency
- Analyze historical processes to find patterns, anomalies and opportunities for optimization
- Benchmark processes to identify best practices
- Optimize team and collaboration structures using organizational analyses
- Provide clear and comprehensive insight into the dynamics of all your mission-critical processes

Moreover, once you have begun to make changes and evolve your process infrastructure, you can use Software AG PPM to monitor the effects of those changes over time. On a regular basis, you re-run PPM to gain updated insights into the performance of your processes, and you can compare that updated status to the baseline you created when first running Software AG PPM. You can measure the effects of your efforts to tune the infrastructure to improve performance against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) you are monitoring.

Better insight leads to more intelligent operations

By running Software AG PPM on a regular basis, you can see your processes becoming more efficient. You accrue a historical record of real-world performance against which you can measure improvement. The changes in the leading performance indicators that originally raised concerns should be evident when viewed through the lens of this history.

Once you become accustomed to the insights that Software AG PPM provides, it is natural to want more. The historical record is important. It is the foundation upon which you build. But what if you could gain real-time insights into process performance? What if you could automate certain kinds of tasks—such as alerting an operator if an anomalous condition or performance threshold were encountered or, better yet, that could execute a response to such an event? Tools providing that kind of support would be even more valuable.

These qualities—of intelligence and awareness, of automated analysis and decision-making—are associated with what Gartner calls “intelligent business operations” or IBO. In an IBO environment, your analytical systems could be monitoring your transaction processes in real-time, day in and day out. If a weather condition is causing delays at an airport you frequently use for shipping goods, an IBO solution might alert you and automatically begin rerouting goods through another location. If demand for a product is suddenly spiking, an IBO solution could alert you to the spike and automatically initiate orders for the required production materials from suppliers.



Evolving an enterprise with intelligent business operations

As part of the Software AG Intelligent Business Operations offering, PPM enables you to take the first step on a path leading to the kind of IBO that Gartner describes. The discovery tools within PPM provide end-to-end visibility. The analytical tools provide the insights you need to initiate change and to monitor certain processes and transactions more closely. The monitoring tools provide a baseline against which you can view your progress as you refine your processes.

Your desire for real-time intelligence will only grow stronger, and as it does, you can build on the knowledge you have gained from Software AG PPM. The Software AG IBO offering combines the process and data-centric management of both historical and real-time data. It draws on past and present processes, transactions and events to deliver a new level of insight and responsiveness. IBO enables businesses to make decisions at speed, at scale and with confidence and includes:

- **Process analytics** provides automatic end-to-end process discovery and analysis as well as performance monitoring based on historical data. By highlighting key areas for improvement, the process analytics features of the Software AG IBO offering can define a starting point from which to drive effective operational improvement.
- **Real-time process monitoring** provides real-time analysis of live business processes and infrastructure as well as a continuous view of process performance. Process monitoring can immediately alert users to potential problems before operations—and customers—are impacted.
- **Streaming analytics** provides a real-time analysis of transaction and event data and the ability to act rapidly on high-volume business operations and customer interactions. Streaming analytics supports smarter decisions and automated intelligent action taken in fast moving, big data environments.
- **Real-time data visualization** and exploration tools combine data from different applications into 'mashups' to be displayed on any device.
- **Integration and messaging** offers essential connectivity in enterprises reliant upon previously siloed ERP, CRM, BPMS and other systems. Integration and messaging facilitates the end-to-end view of process and transaction flows that heterogeneous environments require.
- **In-memory data management** provides the in-memory data fabric on which the entire IBO platform runs. In-memory data management stores massive amounts of data in memory for ultra-fast access and accelerated application performance.

Summary

As the first step in the journey towards IBO, Software AG PPM can provide unprecedented visibility into areas of an enterprise that had been shrouded in uncertainty. It enables an organization to gain visibility into its operational processes—and not as they should be but as they really are. With this visibility comes insight that enables you to make the appropriate adjustments and changes to improve those processes and your operational KPIs.

As you begin to move down the path of greater operational efficiency, it becomes apparent that you can leverage the insights gained from Software AG PPM to do even more. Incorporating other elements of the Software AG IBO offering into your operating environment enables real-time visibility into the dynamics of your operations and puts you in a position to automate and streamline processes even more. Your business operations become ever more intelligent, ever more responsive and ever more capable of performing in a manner that enables you compete in the marketplace and serve your customers most effectively.

For more information about enabling actionable process intelligence through Software AG PPM and Software AG's IBO offering, contact Software AG today.



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