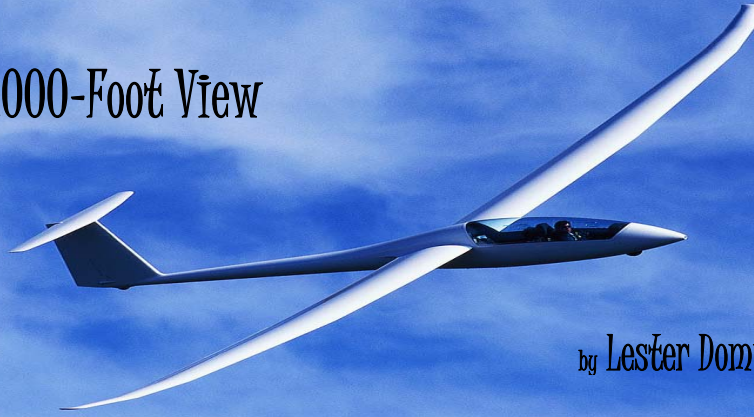


The 30,000-Foot View



by Lester Dominick

PLAYING BY THE RULES - *thinking through incremental business processes*

The term “Business Rule Engine” (BRE) has become a buzzword in the mortgage industry. As mortgage software suppliers provide clientele with products that offer more advanced automation processes, embedding business rule engines into system platforms is becoming the norm.

Those wondering what all the fuss is about will find the answer simple: It’s the “logical” thing to do.

A Business Rule Engine stores and controls all the logic of a system’s processes. Business rules transform a company’s concepts into definable business logic that is contained within a structured format and may be easily obtained by the end-user from the engine. BREs replace ambiguity by creating an organizational structure based on business intent, eliminating assumptions and guesswork.

By embedding a BRE into the core system, vendors give customers greater control over their own product offerings and business processes. Customers have the ability to customize system responses and internal processes, according to their specific needs and without third-party intervention. This provides immediate benefits in the areas of system security, product and pricing criteria and process compliance.

Business rules create a check-and-balance system and can interface directly with a workflow component, driving compliance intuitively.

For example, a rule can be written so that loan officers see only those products that match the borrower’s qualifying criteria, eliminating written product lists that are often outdated. It also drives new product promotion by automatically matching borrowers with products and allows an organization to adapt quickly to changing market conditions. Tasks such as ordering third party services are only allowed if the rules criterion is met and then can be an automated function. Business rules can present processors just those screens that they need to complete their assigned tasks, based on previously inputted borrower data. A rule engine also serves as a control mechanism by preventing users from altering defined data fields, protecting information confidentiality.

Adaptable and efficient

By capturing business intent, authoring and verifying complex rules and calculations, a business rule engine enables a product to be adaptable and efficient without the overhead expense of a major system overhaul.

While assessing our decision to incorporate a commercial BRE into LoanQuest.NET, MortgageFlex researched a number of competitors before selecting InRule® Technology’s product. We implemented a strong evaluation process for the competition, and in the end, we selected the vendor that best met our customer’s needs and challenges. InRule® Technology encourages users to start “Thinking in Rules” to better service their business and make products spontaneously adaptable.

InRule® contains all the necessary elements to provide decision makers with flexible applications that can be altered to reflect changing business requirements. Our customers have complete control over the rules and logic of their products, making counter-cyclical benefits available during lean origination periods to both small and large companies.

In summary, BREs challenge us to think through incremental business processes, creating a synergy between business philosophy and Information Technology. To produce agile and automated business functions and applications, business services need to be combined with the right tools. Playing by the rules is a good beginning.