BPM Solutions for Grocery Retailers

Overview

Mindfire partnered with the client to develop this software to enable retailers to efficiently manage the creation, review and approval of artwork used in their packaging. It offers a centralized and paperless workflow which considerably reduces the approval timeframes and the time to market. Having proven its worth, the solution is being currently used by 4 out of 5 biggest grocery retailers in the UK.

A web-based workflow and approval solution, this is used seamlessly by personnel involved in product development, branding, marketing and packaging to achieve the highest degree of efficiency. Centralized project management and client centric approach makes it possible for the solution to handle high volumes of artwork. The conspicuous benefits it offers the users include

- Reduced costs
- Superior Communication
- Fewer mistakes
- Improved compliance
- Better visibility

About the Client

Client: BPM Service Provider | **Location**: UK | **Industry**: Retail

Technologies

Java, Spring, HTML5, JavaScript, ExtJs, Draw2D, CSS, MySQL, Lasso, Illustrator, FileMaker, Flex, Flash

Project Description

The parent company specializes in offering services for private label retail programs and brand owners in the food and general merchandise categories. With solutions are highly intuitive and user-friendly, the company has been providing packaging graphic services and technology solutions to many of Europe's leading retailers.

This solution in discussion, which the client developed with us, was aimed at facilitating business process management in retail entities. It enables brands owners and retailers to manage the creation, review and approval of artwork efficiently. They use the solution suite to improve project visibility, business efficiency, and deliver their products to market in record time.

The workflow is as follows:

- designers submit artwork for review
- approvers view the artwork and leave comments by adding sticky notes
- after all assigned approvers see the artwork and approve/request amends, the graphics studio makes the relevant changes and uploads the new PDF to the BPM system
- the artwork is resent through the approval process until it is signed off for release to print
- additional functionalities could include asset management (artwork as assets), advanced reporting and custom views in each implementation

The solution being web-based facilitates a workflow specialist or the business analyst to design the workflow for a any business process with outmost convenience. The application consists of the following different modules/features:

Form builder: It has drag-and-drop functionality that enables quick building of forms. The form elements can be dragged and dropped to the canvas and their properties set. These forms are later made available as tasks get assigned to users.

Artwork Review: A critical element of the application, which helps to review documents online using Java Annotation module or HTML5 Annotation module with ability to annotate, draw, zoom in/out, compare versions, ruler, densitometer, print, download etc.

Workflow builder: It is capable of building the workflow which can be then configured to meet the varied requirements of business processes. It offers the facility to drag and drop elements and contains the set of mutually exclusive workflow objects for e.g., form object,

review object, email object, decision object etc.). These objects when connected in a sequence can implement a task driven business process management tool for any scenario. Each object can be dragged on to the workflow canvas, connected to other objects and have attributes assigned.

Business Process: This helps in accomplishing a specific process. Every business process has a workflow attached to it, and is considered to be complete when all the encompassing steps of the workflow are performed.

Task dashboard: This lists the pending tasks for a given user.

User/Role module: The administrator can create users and assign roles. This module also provides functionalities to assign user/role privileges. An application module has access subject to user/role privileges. A User can't access modules if the required privileges are not in place. Roles privileges can be overridden at user level.

Dictionary module: This is where all the application labels and messages are kept. Admin can change these labels any time with instant reflection on UI. Dictionary also keeps various language translations. It makes the application multiple languages compatible.

Value list module: This is where all the drop down/multi select items are managed.

Asset management module: This allows the users to manage their assets. Users can keep assets like (DOC/XLS/PDF/Image etc.) in various user-defined categories and have the provision to upload/delete/view them. The module also has special features for managing versions

Reporting module: One of the distinctive features of this application is the ability to build custom reports, with build-in code editors. This is done by taking inputs of data-source (stored procedure), business logic (java) and presentation layer (JavaScript/ExtJS). The reporting engine then compiles the inputs from the various sources and generates the reports.

Task Delegation: is the screen where a user can delegate his or others' tasks subject to the user/role privileges available.
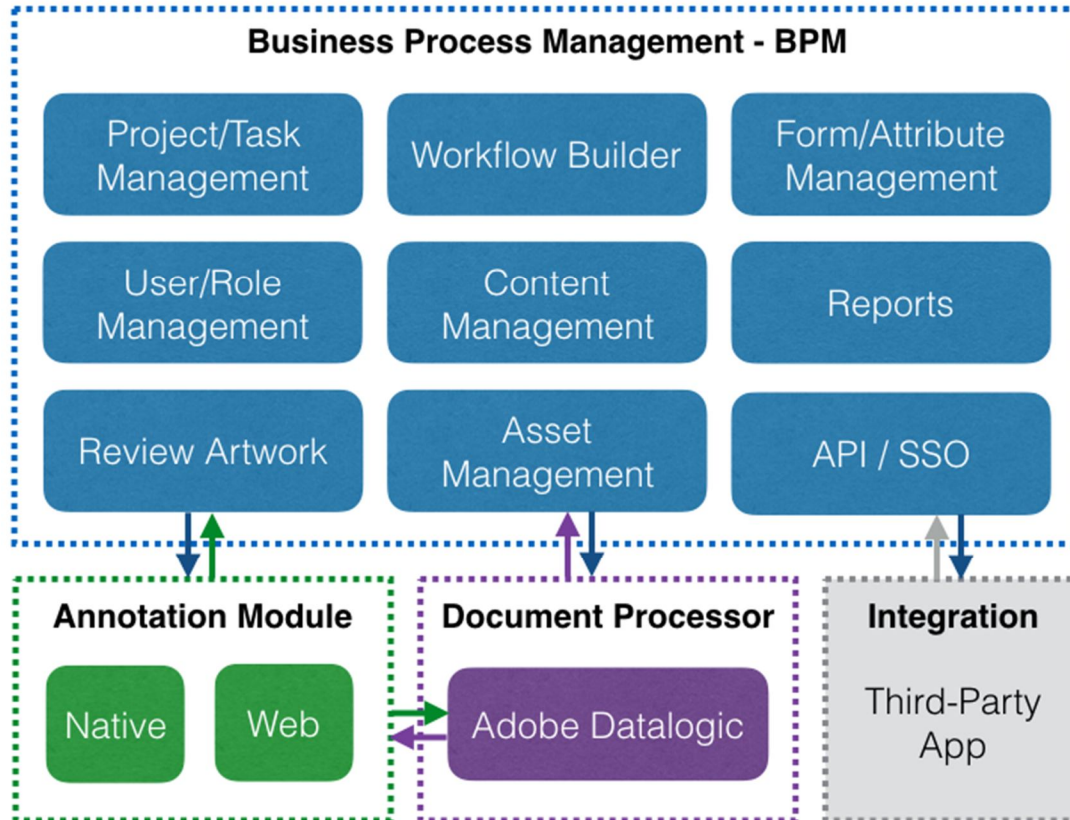
There are other modules as well like Preferences, Attributes, History etc.

By increasing the visibility and accessibility of project assets across relevant users, the solution addressed a critical business bottleneck. It brought in a higher degree of accuracy and accountability throughout the approval cycle. Phases in projects showing indications of triggering delays could be easily identified, issues addressed, and delivery timelines adhered to. Infact, significant time reduction in approval process could be achieved. Also,
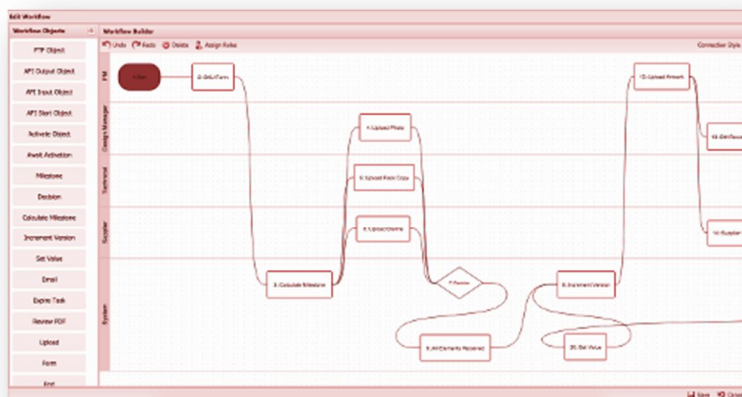
the centralized project management approach makes it possible to manage and approve artwork of very high volumes efficiently.
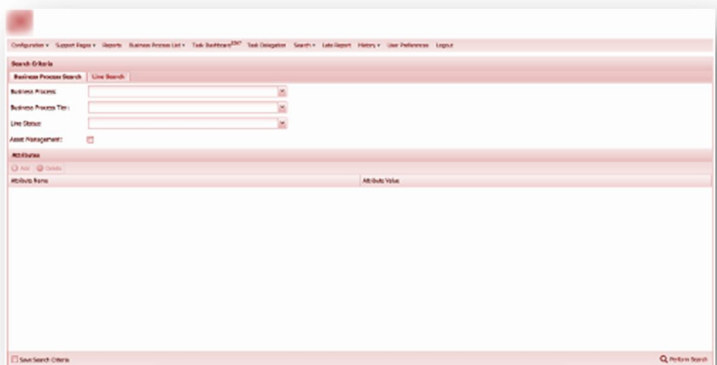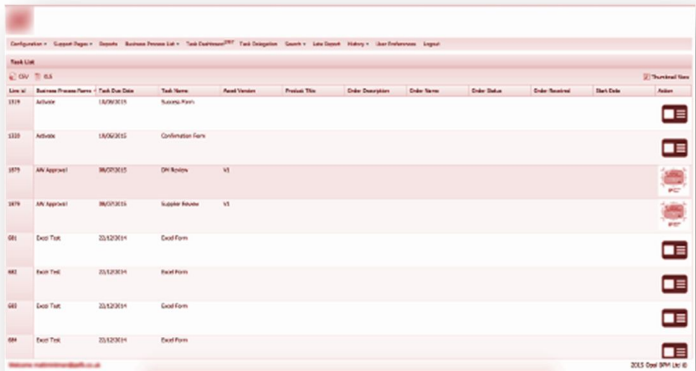
Architecture Diagram

Screenshots

1. Workflow Builder Screen

2. Artwork Review

3. Business Process

4. Task Dashboard

5. Report