

TECH CHOICES



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FileNet's BPMS Is Unbeatable At The Intersection Of Content And Processes

Forrester Wave™ Vendor Summary, Q1 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FileNet, a strong performer in both enterprise content management (ECM) and human-centric business process management suites (BPMS), holds a unique position in the BPMS market. With respectable modeling, simulation, and monitoring, Business Process Manager is much more competitive than many give FileNet credit for. And FileNet is virtually unbeatable when enterprises need event-driven BPMS with active documents and e-forms, and collaboration tools, to support document-intensive and people-intensive processes. Although Business Process Manager has considerable room for improvement, FileNet is steadily adding richer functionality — taking the company deeper into BPMS. The main challenge? Getting FileNet to stop stuffing its BPM features back into the ECM box, and showcase the product for what it really is — a compelling BPM product.

FILENET BEST SUITED FOR DOCUMENT-INTENSIVE PROCESSES, BUT EXPANDING

Since Forrester's last pure-play BPM Wave in 2004, FileNet has added simulation with roundtripping, and new, robust business activity monitoring (BAM) features. While this hasn't leveled the playing field between FileNet and the leading BPMS vendors, it's given FileNet a much stronger position when competing outside its core competency of BPMS-enabled content management.¹ FileNet's also providing innovations, like the "point-in-process" capability that tracks all activity when users move from structured process activities into more collaborative workspaces to accomplish process tasks.

However, Business Process Manager still lacks a strong, collaborative development environment — preferably Eclipse based — and adapters for integrating with legacy, custom, and packaged applications. FileNet Business Process Manager supports Web services for most integration scenarios. FileNet's relationships with business rules vendors and enterprise application integration (EAI) vendors also leave much to be desired. These relationships are primarily co-marketing arrangements instead of more meaningful, deep working relationships such as product OEM relationships.

Forrester evaluated FileNet's current offering and strategy for human-centric BPMS against approximately 215 criteria (see Figure 1). Overall, the product offers outstanding support for event management that drives "active content" — including native e-forms, documents, corporate records, or any other content managed in FileNet's content repository.² The product also integrates with FileNet's records management offering, providing excellent functionality for compliance-related processes, and, through integration with FileNet's collaboration tools, supports an entire or "whole" process that

encompasses both structured and collaborative activities.³ We found FileNet's Business Process Manager is an especially good fit for buyers that:

- **Need to manage document-intensive processes.** FileNet has unparalleled strengths using event management to trigger processes when content arrives from external sources, gets updated or otherwise changes state. FileNet supports this feature — known as “active content” — through its tightly integrated object-based process engine and content repositories.
- **Seek strong solutions for compliance.** Many BPMS vendors believe managing business processes leads to compliance. ECM vendors believe organizations accomplish compliance objectives by managing and retaining content — managing email messages, retaining and managing corporate records and making sure documents are locked down, under control and changes tracked. The truth rests in the middle: most compliance regulations require both strong business-process controls and rigorous management of documents, including corporate records. Because FileNet provides a records management and message archiving product, Business Process Manager can create corporate records based on business events, as well as manage audit trails for compliance-related business processes.
- **Are shifting their external transactions from paper to e-forms.** FileNet's traditional customers — large insurance companies, banks, government agencies, and other service intensive organizations — are increasingly making a strategic shift from paper-based forms to e-forms. This could represent a major threat to FileNet's legacy core document imaging business, but FileNet's 2003 acquisition of e-forms vendor Shana helps customers — and FileNet — make the transition. FileNet's native e-forms capabilities surpass what can be done by integrating with Adobe PDF forms, IBM's PureEdge, and Microsoft InfoPath, thanks to tight integration between forms, process, and other content. Data can flow between workflows, forms, and users without additional coding.
- **Need more structure for collaboration and ad hoc workflow activities.** FileNet's collaboration tool integrates tightly with the BPMS, allowing information workers to collaborate in shared workspaces — while audit logging the entire process — both structured and ad hoc — for compliance. Users are more productive because they do not need to leave the FileNet environment to share ideas to contribute to a discussion.

To see how FileNet stacks up against 11 other competitors, see the Forrester Wave evaluation of the human-centric BPMS market.⁴

Figure 1 FileNet Business Process Manager Evaluation Overview

CURRENT OFFERING	
Design	FileNet BPM's modeler is a Web-based Java applet that is easy to use, but not especially feature rich. The product supports simulation roundtripping of production data, and the complex data model used for content is also applied to processes. A major weakness is a complete lack of standards or import/export support, though FileNet will be adding XPDL import in the next release. Overall, the product benefits from management, access control, and information modeling features supported by the FileNet P8 content repository.
Development environment	FileNet's development model is strong because it is based on the same robust structure as its content management products. BPM projects benefit from granular access control and complex data modeling. Simulation is integrated into the modeling/development environment, and all process deployment tasks can be accomplished using the Web.
Automation	FileNet has strong Web services support and provides for integration with most common technologies. Transactions within a process can be modeled graphically. However, change management features are weak; administrators have little control over whether process instances are routed to a new version of a process model. In addition, there are very few facilities for implementing business rules and logic as part of the process. However, FileNet has several formal partnerships with rules engine vendors.
Workflow	FileNet's Business Process Manager is notable for its advanced native e-forms support and its end user environment integration. Because of the content management foundation, the system can make changes to Word documents and other content as part of a process. The system supports content federation and integration with third-party content management environments as well. FileNet's work portal environment is also strong, with cross-browser support, excellent configurability, and features like bulk approval. And team collaboration is also well supported, again thanks to the system's integration with FileNet content management.
Monitoring and management	FileNet lacks instance design change and suspend features, but provides strong monitoring and management presentation. Graphical tools that show process status and milestones in a process can be graphically modeled.
Analysis and optimization	FileNet has a standard complement of built-in reports. But, because the product relies on Microsoft Analysis Services for the majority of its historical analysis features, FileNet users miss out on the richer capabilities of a process-aware analysis environment.
Product architecture	FileNet's Business Process Manager product fits in with the vendor's P8 Reference Architecture. It has a J2EE-compliant architecture and supports a wide array of languages.

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Figure 1 FileNet Business Process Manager Evaluation Overview (Cont.)


STRATEGY

Product strategy	FileNet's BPM is suitable for document-intensive and people-intensive processes, thanks to strong integration with FileNet content management. The vendor's product road map will bring features that help move the product more into the mainstream, like standards support.
Corporate strategy	FileNet is a large, public corporation with a large installed base that spans the globe. FileNet BPM is a strong product offering that is overshadowed at times by its vendor's commitment to -- or obsession with -- content. The company does not yet offer strong system-to-system integration features.
Product cost	This is an expensive product that is suited for enterprise, platform-style deployments; it will probably not appeal to companies not interested in managing their content alongside process management functionality.

MARKET PRESENCE


Installed base	FileNet has a large, global installed base that includes major financial services customers gained from the vendor's imaging legacy.
Revenue	FileNet reported revenue of \$413.3 million for Q404-Q305.
Revenue growth	Revenue growth was 6% for first nine months of 2005 versus first nine months of 2004.
Systems integrators	FileNet has approximately 15 systems integrators with three or more deployments.
Services	FileNet provides myriad training offerings and has 145 professional services engineers.
Employees	FileNet has 1,800 employees, 148 development engineers and 455 in worldwide sales. Twenty-five percent of the sales staff sells outside of North America.
Technology partners	FileNet boasts more than 200 resellers and has partnerships with a number of rules engine vendors.

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.



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Smart data for smart decisions

Go online to download additional in-depth data and scores for this vendor and other vendors included in this Forrester Wave evaluation.



SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Online Resource

The underlying spreadsheet for Figure 1 is available online. The spreadsheet includes more detailed data and scores for this vendor.

This detailed data and scores for this vendor are also available online through an Excel-based vendor comparison tool that provides detailed product evaluations and customizable rankings.

Forrester Wave Methodology

We conduct primary research to develop a list of vendors that meet our criteria to be evaluated in this market. From that initial pool of vendors, we narrow our final list to those presented here. We choose these vendors based on: 1) product fit; 2) customer success; and 3) Forrester client demand. We eliminate vendors that have limited customer references and products that don't fit the scope of our evaluation.

After examining past research, user need assessments, and vendor and expert interviews, we develop the initial evaluation criteria. To evaluate the vendors and their products against our set of criteria, we gather details of product qualifications through a combination of lab evaluations, questionnaires, demos, and/or discussions with client references. We send evaluations to the vendors for their review, and we adjust the evaluations to provide the most accurate view of vendor offerings and strategies.

We set default weightings to reflect our analysis of the needs of large user companies — and/or other scenarios as outlined in this document — and then score the vendors based on a clearly defined scale. These default weightings are intended only as a starting point, and readers are encouraged to adapt the weighting to fit their individual needs through the Excel-based tool. The final scores generate the graphical depiction of the market based on current offering, strategy, and market presence. Forrester intends to update vendor evaluations regularly as product capabilities and vendor strategies evolve.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ FileNet is a strong performer in the ECM suites market. For more information, see the October 7, 2005, Tech Choices "[Enterprise Content Management Suites Scorecard Summary: FileNet](#)," and see the October 7, 2005, Tech Choices "[The Forrester Wave™: Enterprise Content Management Suites, Q3 2005](#)."
- ² Document-intensive processes involve scanned images and extensive use of documents, often in support of back-office processes; people-intensive processes involve the automation of activities like servicing customers, call centers, and sales operations. See the January 26, 2006, Market Overview "[Demand For Business Process Management Suites Will Accelerates Through 2009](#)."
- ³ Most BPMS vendors focus on highly structured processes, with some supporting highly dynamic structured processes and ad hoc processes. But some pioneering BPMS vendors, like Action Technologies, Appian and FileNet, support both highly collaborative activities and more structured activities within the same

BPMS product. As the BPMS vendors focus more on bringing order and structure to highly collaborative activities, organizations will be able to manage the “whole process” that encompasses both a high degree of structure and collaborative, team-based activities. When this occurs, enterprises will be able to automate an entire process through the full spectrum of human work rather than using BPMS for structured activities, collaboration in a separate environment, and integration between the two worlds being done in the user’s mind. See the June 1, 2004, Forrester Big Idea “[The Information Workplace Will Redefine The World Of Work — At Last!](#)”

- ⁴ Many enterprises are now turning to BPMS as a way to realize their strategic focus on business processes. To see how human-centric BPMS vendors stack up, Forrester evaluated 12 vendors across 215 criteria. Lombardi Software, Pegasystems, and Savvion lead with comprehensive suites that foster rapid, iterative process design. Fuego and HandySoft are strong performers with excellent integration — making them great for enterprises that lack EAI or need to span human- and system-intensive processes. TIBCO, another strong performer, is the only vendor we evaluated that’s integrated its human- and integration-centric products, but Metastorm is also on this path. Metastorm and Global 360 are strong performers with Microsoft-based products; but Metastorm relies too much on third-party software and Global 360 needs better analytics. FileNet by far offers the best support for document-centric processes, and both Appian and FileNet excel at combining structured and collaborative work. Ultimus is a contender with a competitive Microsoft-based product, but lacks a full suite. And Fujitsu, another contender, leads in OEM deals and standards but requires coding to build out advanced functionality. See the February 24, 2006, Tech Choices “[The Forrester Wave™: Human-Centric Business Process Management Suites, Q1 2006.](#)”