

September 7, 2006

How To Drive Document Management Adoption

by Kyle McNabb

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Interviews With Enterprises Highlight A Need To Focus On Business Context

by **Kyle McNabb**

with Connie Moore and Eric Kim

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Enterprises have no trouble identifying needs for document management (DM) — a key component of enterprise content management (ECM). Virtually every department, line of business, and employee complains about how difficult it is to manage, find, and retain documents. With such pervasive needs, why do so many enterprises struggle with DM initiatives? Mainly, they focus too much on the expressed pains — managing, finding, and retaining documents — and too little on the business context. When Forrester interviewed 14 enterprises about document management adoption, we found it critical to ask: Who are the end users? What do they do on a daily basis? How do documents fit into their daily tasks? What tools do they currently use? Understanding context helps project teams approach DM as a technology to build solutions upon, rather than as a solution unto itself. And fitting DM technology into what matters most to end users — business value — drives up adoption.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2 **Document Management: Obvious Problem, Less Apparent Solution**

A Pervasive Problem: Finding, Managing, And Retaining Content Across The Enterprise

Many Enterprisewide Initiatives Suffer From Adoption Woes

4 **Focus On End-User And Business Context To Drive Widespread Adoption**

All DM Needs Are Not The Same: Answer Key Questions For Each User Constituency

RECOMMENDATIONS

7 **Err On Overinvesting In Understanding The Business Context For Documents**

NOTES & RESOURCES

Forrester synthesized lessons learned from discussions with user companies that had broad document management deployment and from interviews with ECM Suite vendor customer references.

Related Research Documents

[The Forrester Wave™: Content-Centric Applications, Q1 2006"](#)

March 29, 2006, Tech Choices

[Context Is King In The New World Of Work"](#)

March 8, 2006, Trends

[The Forrester Wave™: Enterprise Content Management Suites, Q3 2005"](#)

October 7, 2005, Tech Choices

TARGET AUDIENCE

Chief information officer, enterprise architecture professional, information management professional

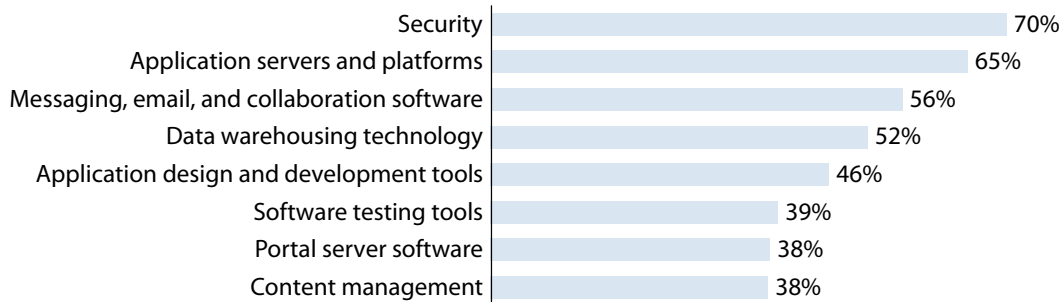
DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT: OBVIOUS PROBLEM, LESS APPARENT SOLUTION

ECM continues to be a top priority for business process owners, enterprise architect professionals, and CIOs — fueled by growing interest in DM (see Figure 1). Why?

Figure 1 ECM Is A Top Priority For Enterprises

1-1 North America software and services decision-makers were asked:

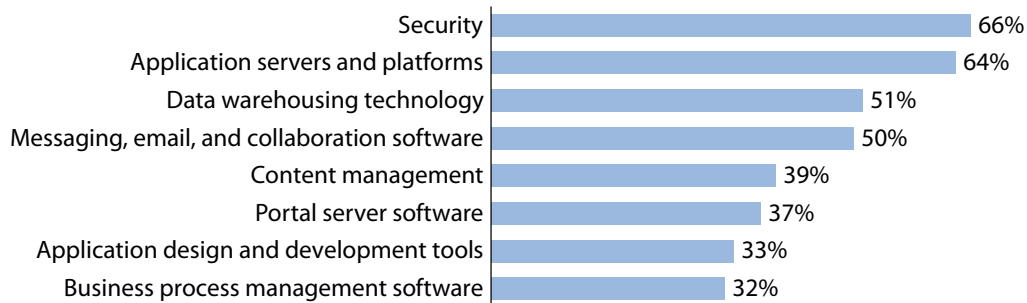
“In 2006, what will your company purchase?”



Base: 359 software and service decision-makers at North American enterprises

1-2 European software and services decision-makers were asked:

“In 2006, what will your company purchase?”



Base: 244 software and service decision-makers at European enterprises

A Pervasive Problem: Finding, Managing, And Retaining Content Across The Enterprise

Throughout the enterprise, business process owners and CIOs see and hear about the need for managing, finding, and retaining documents. Just about every line of business, division, and employee within the enterprise turns to the enterprise IT environment at some time asking for help with their documents. For example, purchasing needs help managing and finding contracts, finance wants DM to support financial plans and controls, and sales executives need DM so that sales teams can respond to customer requests. Human resources asks for DM to help manage, search, and retain employee resumes and training materials. Project teams within R&D, IT, and marketing often come to IT looking for help in managing, finding, and retaining project documentation and deliverables. These pervasive, common requests to help manage, find, or retain documents push many enterprises toward enterprisewide DM initiatives.

Many Enterprisewide Initiatives Suffer From Adoption Woes

During user interviews for The Forrester Wave™: Enterprise Content Management Suites, Q3 2005, Forrester talked to 14 enterprises about how they achieved broad adoption of DM.¹ Many CIOs and enterprise architects think, and often assume, that with such a pervasive problem, DM adoption should be easy. All too often, IT-driven product evaluations focus on how well a tool supports managing, finding, and retaining documents, leaving project teams in many enterprises surprised at how quickly users abandon what IT believes to be a superior DM product. IT and business project team members interviewed routinely cited these lessons learned:

- **What worked for one department didn't work for another.** According to one enterprise architect in a life sciences enterprise: “We had good success in R&D with DM. But we've found the same approach we used in R&D isn't getting us anywhere with the rest of the enterprise.” This scenario hits many enterprises with a long history in DM: What works for one department doesn't translate into success for another. For this enterprise's R&D group, DM held strategic importance because many documents were part of an FDA submission process — poor submissions hold up drug approvals. The FDA submission process demands a very structured, disciplined approach to DM, which doesn't necessarily translate well to the many other constituencies within the enterprise.
- **The corporate mandate negatively affected user constituencies.** Today's increasing focus on compliance and risk mitigation forces many enterprises to lock down and better manage documents located on the notorious shared drive. However, as one senior IT architect at a North American utility expressed: “We had the mandate from our corporate counsel and replaced one file share. Then we ran into trouble as soon as archive and retention policies started kicking in.” Unable to find the needed documents, this enterprise's employees quickly revolted, complaining about reduced productivity. The users couldn't find the information they needed to get their jobs done; they began working around the system by managing and sharing documents through email. This behavior thwarted the project's entire objective by introducing additional compliance and risk mitigation concerns.

- **End users find the DM system unusable.** Poor usability plagues many DM initiatives. For example, end users resist changes to their daily routines; DM doesn't integrate with the tools used on a regular basis; or the users are required to input too much metadata, which is painstaking and time-consuming. Any one of these drawbacks contributes to poor usability. For one HR director at a high-tech manufacturer, all three spelled disaster for a DM initiative: "It was so unusable. Eleven metadata fields! We just stopped using it altogether and started managing our documents on our workstations, another file share, anything to avoid having to use this system."

FOCUS ON END-USER AND BUSINESS CONTEXT TO DRIVE WIDESPREAD ADOPTION

The business context, the set of facts or circumstances surrounding an event or situation, for DM varies from one user constituency to another in any enterprise and is mainly driven by the business processes and user roles.² For example, purchasing may need help managing and finding contracts, which are typically thought of as documents. But what defines a contract? How does purchasing need to use this information? Do sales executives really want DM support? Do they want to improve how documents help them manage deals? Or, in another example, does human resources need help managing employee resumes and training material documents, or does it need to improve the employee on-boarding process? And, do project teams in other parts of the organization need DM? Or, do they need to better manage and use documents while collaborating on the project?

All DM Needs Are Not The Same: Answer Key Questions For Each User Constituency

Understanding the business requirements or business context for any user constituency takes time. Enterprise architects and information management professionals shouldn't rely solely on functional and technical requirements about the DM needs of end users; doing so often leads to simply focusing on basic management, search, and retention requirements. Instead, project teams must answer at least five key questions to better understand the business context for the DM system and improve the adoption of enterprisewide DM initiatives (see Figure 2).

- **Who are these end users?** Organizational structures fall far short of determining who the end users are, what their roles are, where they are located, how technically apt they are (are they tech savvy or tech phobic?), and what their work style is (mobile or tethered?). Yet, getting a solid understanding of an end-user constituency, such as sales reps, HR managers, corporate lawyers, or design engineers, requires answering these questions and is the necessary first step in understanding the business context.

Figure 2 Key Questions For Understanding Document Management Context

Who are the end users?	What are their roles? Where are they located? What's their technology aptitude? What's their work style?
What goals, objectives, projects, and tasks do they have?	What's their job? What work goals and objectives do they have? What projects and tasks do they have?
Who's their information steward?	Whom do they rely on for help? Whom do they call on for process assistance? Where can governance be established?
What tools do they use to complete their day-to-day tasks?	Do they use line-of-business systems? Do they spend their day in email? What devices do they use?
What documents do they need, why do they need them, and what type are they?	What information exists in these documents? Do they need this information to complete a task? For reference only? Do they need this information on a regular basis? Only once in a while?

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Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

- **What's their motivation, and what do they do?** Answering these questions will uncover a user constituency's true motivation for DM. What do the end users do on a daily basis? What are their jobs? What are their work goals and objectives? Are they constantly working on collaborative projects, such as sales deals, IT development projects, or marketing product planning? Or, are they working on specific tasks associated with a larger, better-defined or structured business process, such as employee on-boarding, responding to customer correspondence, or servicing technical or industrial products?

Answering these questions often helps an enterprise put the right label on a very generic term — document management. For example, a large national government agency, after working to understand the goals and objectives for several user constituencies, wound up abandoning the term “document management” altogether. Interacting with each user constituency led the agency to define separate projects for such areas as correspondence management, budgetary submissions, and project approval, essentially aligning DM with end-user objectives and rescuing a stalled enterprisewide DM initiative. This tactic was shared by other interviewed enterprises as they expanded from smaller, successful departmental DM initiatives to broader adoption within the enterprise.

- **Who's the trusted subject matter expert for these users?** Answering this question helps identify where governance should start. Too often, enterprises aim too high, VP level or higher, to establish, manage, and enforce governance of how documents should be managed and used.

Sponsorship of a DM or ECM initiative needs to come from the top, but the stakeholders vary greatly from one user constituency to the next, requiring enterprises to establish governance at lower levels within the organization. The project team needs to know: Who helps end users get through a process or task? Who do end users call for help?

For one high-tech enterprise looking to deploy DM within its sales organization, sales operations managers were the go-to team, the trusted subject matter experts, for help. These managers knew sales processes and how documents were essential to their business processes, and they were the ones who interacted with legal most often to understand document compliance and risk mitigation issues. Instead of establishing governance with senior management, this enterprise focused on the director of worldwide sales operations and his peers within legal and IT. This contributed to improved user productivity, with policies in place supporting document life cycles for sales contracts, request for information (RFI) responses, and customer correspondence.

- **What documents do users need, why do they need them, and what do they contain?**

Documents are not simply documents; they're sales proposals, contracts, financial plans, product collateral, requirements specifications, operating procedures, and training manuals, all of which have their own specific business context.

For example, do users need the information contained within documents to complete a task? Or is it for reference only? Do they need these documents on a regular basis or only once in a while? Answering these questions enabled one process manufacturing enterprise to quickly determine what documents on the network file share should be moved to a DM system. In this company, the documents containing sensitive information, such as customer information and design specifications, were moved to another location for greater control and security. Other documents, such as employee status reports and training manuals, were not relocated because employees already knew how to find and use these documents. By focusing on the information contained within their documents, this process manufacturer identified some documents that needed to be tightly aligned with specific steps in sales business process. Now, sales staff members access documents, such as previous customer proposals and warranty information, through a sales process portal, which is integrated with the DM system.³

- **What tools do these workers currently use to complete their day-to-day tasks?** To avoid usability complaints, enterprise architects need to identify tools, such as desktop productivity tools, collaboration tools, enterprise applications, portals, and email applications, that the workers use on a daily basis to complete their day-to-day tasks, objectives, and goals. DM project teams must assume that any demand to change user behavior will be met with resistance by end users.

Understanding more about the tools that workers use on a daily basis allowed an oil and gas company to recover from a poor DM implementation, one which originally compelled field engineers to use a standalone DM system to access maintenance manuals. After interviewing

the field engineering group, the project team discovered that workers relied on handheld devices when servicing equipment and that using a laptop was not practical for them. Now, instead of making field engineers access maintenance manuals via their laptops prior to servicing equipment, workers can access documentation from their devices while on-site. The company now plans to add GPS and GIS metadata to better deliver maintenance documents to engineers while they are on platforms or rigs throughout the world.

In another example, a global manufacturer's DM project team identified Microsoft Outlook as the primary tool for the legal department, which is a large, highly distributed group of individuals located throughout North America and Western Europe. The project team originally assumed that DM would be a part of the corporate portal. But for the legal team, a user constituency that "lives" in email, DM had to be integrated effectively with Microsoft Outlook. Focusing on this specific need allowed the project team to re-allocate resources from portal development to integrating DM within Microsoft Outlook. This, in turn, allowed the legal teams to access case files, matters, and contracts without jumping from system to system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ERR ON OVERINVESTING IN UNDERSTANDING THE BUSINESS CONTEXT FOR DOCUMENTS

Successful DM initiatives require project teams to look beyond the management, search, and retention requirements of end users and to better understand the business context driving the use of information contained within the document. Enterprise architects, information management professionals, and project teams must invest time and energy to understand the users' business context and should not focus solely on user and technical requirements. Doing so will help align DM with what business managers and end users really want — improved access to information in relationship to their business processes and work activities.

- **Couch the term "document management" carefully — emphasize the business context.** Document management on its own means little to end users, just as relational databases mean little to end users. Enterprise architects and information management professionals must learn to use terms that business users are familiar with. Examples include contracts for purchasing and legal, deals and proposals for sales, work orders for service teams, financial models and business plans for finance, and project documentation for IT and program management offices. Use the term "document management" sparingly to describe the technical capabilities that the business solution will include.
- **Align DM initiatives with the business — one process and one user constituency at a time.** Enterprisewide initiatives stand a better chance of success if they focus on the specific business context of individual user constituencies. Enterprise architects need to look at ECM initiatives, such as DM projects, holistically, but success requires that project teams tackle

enterprisewide initiatives one user constituency, one business process, or one department at a time. Doing so allows project teams to align DM with a user groups' specific pain points. This focus will minimize the need to bring in multiple point solutions to address each user groups' pains. Taking such an approach can help CIOs avoid the one-size-fits-all mentality that plagues many DM initiatives.

- **Think about content-centric applications instead of DM technology alone.** Content-centric apps usually comprise more than DM technology; they are horizontal or vertical business applications that rely heavily on collaboration, document management, workflow, and/or business process management software.⁴ Enterprise architects and information management professionals should strive to evaluate and deploy content-centric applications that put documents to use within the business context. These applications can be custom developed based on packaged business software being integrated with the DM technology (e.g., ERP and CRM) or increasingly sourced directly from ECM vendors.
- **Establish governance with process owners and key stakeholders.** Don't stop with executive sponsorship. Identify the key process owners and subject matter experts that end-user constituencies rely on for guidance and help, and establish governance with these individuals in mind. These individuals are best suited to help define governance policies and can enforce policies because of their strong relationship with end users.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Forrester interviewed 22 enterprises in support of a recent enterprise content management Forrester Wave™ evaluation. Forrester spoke with 14 of these enterprises specifically about how they addressed document management initiative adoption. See the October 7, 2005, Tech Choices “[The Forrester Wave™: Enterprise Content Management Suites, Q3 2005.](#)”
- ² In a September 2005 survey of North American professionals about the Information Workplace, 60% of respondents found that providing information within the context of business processes and roles was important. Understanding context and focusing on the interrelationship between roles, collaboration, business processes, and content will help enterprises drive their Information Workplace strategies forward. See the March 8, 2006, Trends “[Context Is King In The New World Of Work.](#)”
- ³ Process portals aggregate business logic components from multiple systems into role-based composite applications, connecting users to processes and not simply applications. This process manufacturing organization's process portal provides a composite application to sales staff members that directs them through the sales process, integrating with a document management system to provide immediate access to the documents that they need to complete a task. See the June 26, 2002, Commerce Platform Brief “[Gear Up For Process Portals.](#)”
- ⁴ Content-centric applications transcend ECM by helping enterprises put content to use by combining content, collaboration, interaction, and business process management technologies. Forrester recently evaluated 13 vendors against 45 criteria associated with how content can be used in different scenarios or business contexts. See the March 29, 2006, Tech Choices “[The Forrester Wave™: Content-Centric Applications, Q1 2006.](#)”

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