

Introduction to IDIOM - for Business People

What does IDIOM do?

IDIOM handles the implementation and maintenance of business rules in application software, ensuring that your systems are consistent with and enforce your business policies.

What are business rules?

Your company relies on a number of software systems to operate efficiently. These systems automate your business policy and practice through the application of business rules.

Some examples of business rules from our customers:

- ❑ Insurance: 'Market Value' is not a valid sum insured for vehicles with a current value of less than \$10 000 or for vehicles older than 5 years
- ❑ Health: Add 500 points to a potential organ recipient's score if they are less than 15 years old.
- ❑ Finance: If the Bloomberg 'Price List' is valid and the instrument type is 'Equity', then mark the price as 'clean'.
- ❑ Dental Claiming: If the operation is 'Extract Tooth' and if there has been any other maintenance on the tooth within the last 3 months, then flag the operation for review.

How well do your systems handle business rules?

Today's computer systems are good at handling data and some processes. But increasingly, this is not enough to differentiate your business or to improve your efficiency over that of your competitors. Business systems are being challenged to step up to the next level – automation of decision making and the business rules that go with it.

Correct, consistent, and timely decision making within your business is critical to ensuring that you achieve the best outcome in every situation, and for most businesses, it marks an important point of competitive difference. Automation is an option for ensuring correct, consistent and timely decisions - but how do you make sure that the rules you have set and by which you want to run your business are being correctly and consistently applied inside your business systems?

When the market or your own organization demands a new type of response; or when market conditions change; or when you learn something new - how can you make sure that the required new decision making behavior is quickly and correctly reflected in your systems?

Failure to implement rule changes quickly and correctly can cost you money and increase risk for your company. The interval between management deciding that different behavior is required and executing

that behavior on the shop floor is a period of increased risk and reduced return.

For instance: What if you learn that the insurance out-turn is likely to be much worse for drivers under 25 years old, who have a car worth more than \$30,000 or engine capacity greater than 2 litres; and it takes you months to change your systems to enforce this change? You will continue to issue policies you have decided are not economic for this interval period.

The performance of your business is directly impacted by the ability of your systems to manage business rules.

How does IDIOM deal with these issues?

With IDIOM rules can be easily implemented and easily changed to reflect changes in policy or business conditions, and IDIOM will ensure that the decisions generated by your business systems reflect those changes.

With IDIOM you are in control. You can verify that what you have defined is what was coded into your systems – business rules have become 'content' under your control. You don't need to rely on technical staff to interpret your requirements. As a manager or specialist responsible for setting or implementing policy, you can use IDIOM's unique graphical user interface to define the rules yourself – and as one of our business users has said in a recent email, using IDIOM is 'more fun than playing golf'.

Or you can work alongside a business analyst and specify rules together if you prefer, using IDIOM's structured English version of the rules to check that the rules do what you want them to. IDIOM provides the structured English version of the rules to help you define and implement rules correctly, and to provide lasting, accessible, and complete documentation of the rules that you have created.

For instance (continuing our motor insurance example): *"if the customer age is < 25; and the car is worth more than \$30,000 or has a capacity of more than 2 litres, then do not offer comprehensive cover"*

IDIOM also generates and compiles the computer code needed to implement the rules at the same time. English for you, and the computer language of choice for your computer systems (Java, C#, C++), all with no 'fingerprints' in between so that you can be sure that what the English documentation says is what is implemented. And if other systems want to know about your rules, then we can produce them in XML as well.

Using IDIOM, rules and policies are easily codified, easily verified and easily changed or updated. This is good for the business and good for the IT staff too, because it greatly simplifies the maintenance of systems, leading to greater systems stability and reduced cost.

Turn your IDIOM rules into valuable assets

IDIOM allows you to retain the

integrity of the rules that drive your business so that you can manage and protect them as the valuable assets they are.

What would you use IDIOM for?

Automating decision-centric processes such as:

- ❑ Contract Automation - IDIOM can automate contracts, such as financial instruments, funding agreements, insurance policies.
- ❑ Process Orchestration - IDIOM can provide process orchestration within many process or workflow engines.
- ❑ Automated expert - IDIOM can replace human actors who make routine and well defined decisions in any automated process.
- ❑ Systems Configuration - IDIOM can dynamically monitor and adjust systems configurations to achieve specific goals within quality of service parameters.
- ❑ Validation and Transformation - IDIOM provides extended ability to make intelligent decisions within the transformation process.

IDIOM holds your rules in its repository so that you can track each and every rule – who is responsible for it, where it is used, what it does, how it does it and how (why!) it is used. They become recognizable assets of your organization – uniquely labeled, owned, and registered (even on the

balance sheet if you wish) so that they can be delegated - perhaps to knowledgeable third party specialists for maintenance; and they can be deployed independently from your core systems - perhaps to mobile or remote systems, or to business partners; and they can even be sold - IDIOM is already being used to develop a secondary market for 'best practice' sets of rules as a discrete product in their own right.

Contrast this with the traditional approach that pushes all rules through the same requirements 'grinder', often losing the identity, traceability, and eventually even the intent of the rules as they are merged into multiple processes, stored procedures, and various scripts across the system.

With IDIOM you simply generate the set of rules as a 'black-box' software equivalent of the ubiquitous 'PLC' (Programmable Logic Controller), retaining the integrity and traceability of the rules throughout. Applications – whether new or existing – simply send a request to the IDIOM generated 'black-box' when rules need to be applied or decisions made. The result is returned to the application – the result of your rules, returned quickly and accurately.

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