



## Business Alerts – It’s What You Don’t Know That Can Hurt You

A little more than 100 years ago, the author Mark Twain was asked about his many business ventures – most of which had failed. Twain explained how his ventures had failed not because of bad technology (most of the technologies he invested in became realities, but under different ownership), but had failed because he had not kept an eye on their progress.

He summed up the lesson that he had learned as follows:

“Keep all your eggs in one basket – and watch that basket.”

If anything, that phrase is truer today than it was 100 years ago. Organizations have vast quantities of information that they need to keep watch over; pending sales opportunities, invoices needing to be paid, projects due for completion, and customer support issues awaiting resolution are only a few examples. And with corporate downsizing and fiscal belt-tightening, few – if any – organizations have the luxury to turn to an individual employee and say “Hey you – it’s your job to keep an eye on our pending sales; and if anything looks wrong, let me know.”

That’s where Business Activity Monitoring (BAM) software comes into play.

Call it what you will – ‘business alerts’, ‘active notifications’, or even ‘exception management’ – the concept is the same. *“If there’s information that relates to our business or our customers, we need to know about it.”* It just isn’t possible – or practical – for an organization to rely on their own employees to identify and respond to every business condition that impacts their productivity and their clients’ satisfaction.

Business Activity Monitoring technologies have two basic principles:

- 1) Automate the process whereby important business information is identified and acted upon.
- 2) Enable this monitoring & response capability on an enterprise-level.

It’s the second of these principles that’s fairly new to people. Historically, many business applications contain some degree of “monitoring & response” capability. But they suffer from two failings: a) their “identify/response” capabilities are limited, and, b) each application has its own “identify/response” technology; there is no consistency, no sharing of information, and no central command center.

Business Activity Monitoring software addresses these issues in the following ways:

- **Focus.** BAM software focuses on doing one thing: identifying and responding to business conditions. It can identify the most sophisticated business conditions (such as clients who have changed their buying habits) and respond to those conditions in the greatest variety of ways.
- **Delivery.** BAM gets the right information to the right people via the right method. Email, fax, pager, PDA, cell phone, pop-up message, web browser. Quick one-line alerts, or detailed documents such as invoices, quotes, statements, & dunning notices. And reports are delivered when they’re needed most – at the time the information warrants it.
- **Independence.** BAM plays no favorites; it works with any – and all – business applications. CRM, finance, manufacturing, HR . . . the list goes on. Commercial applications as well as home-grown solutions. And – very importantly – BAM monitors information outside of your applications. Incoming email, web form submissions, and even operating system data. All are valid targets for BAM.
- **Integration.** BAM solutions realize that sometimes the most critical condition isn’t represented by information in just one application – it’s in the combination of data between two or more applications. BAM technologies are uniquely able to combine, analyze, and respond to such data.

The software industry has long talked about “islands of information” within an organization and the need to better share and communicate that information. As long as databases exist, so too will the need to monitor and act on information within those systems in a timely and intelligent manner. With Business Activity Monitoring, you really can “mind your own business”.