# *Integrated Workflow Modeling Notation (I-WFMN)* ™

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## *For Developing Workflow Models Associated With Architecting Optimal Business Environments*

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## Table of Contents

# 1.0 The Foundation for a Workflow Modeling Notation

When completing organizational design work there is a need to develop a deep understanding of the organizational context to ensure that follow-on business solutions address the appropriate functional, non-function and transitional requirements of the business.

Therefore there exists a need to model primary organizational business processes, sub-processes and associated workflows – three primary artifacts that represent significant aspects of the architecture of all organizations.

It has also been recognized that the creation of business process maps (diagrams) is best accomplished through first constructing meaningful and detailed workflow models.

This position reflects the need to have a more granular perspective (discussed in the latter parts of this opening section) of an organization to ensure that follow-on solution design work is based on a deep foundation of knowledge and understanding of the business context.

This position also reflects the fundamental definition of a business process, as expressed by academics and organizational design practitioners.

For example, Davenport (1993) defines a (business) process as *"a structured, measured set of activities designed to produce a specific output for a particular customer or market. It implies a strong emphasis on how work is done within an organization, in contrast to a product focus's emphasis on what. A process is thus a specific ordering of work activities across time and space, with a beginning and an end, and clearly defined inputs and outputs: a structure for action. ... Taking a process approach implies adopting the customer's point of view. Processes are the structure by which an organization does what is necessary to produce value for its customers."*

Rummler & Brache (1995) suggests that *"a business process is a series of steps designed to produce a product or service. Most processes (...) are cross-functional, spanning the 'white space' between the boxes on the organization chart. Some processes result in a product or service that is received by an organization's external customer. We call these primary processes. Other processes produce products that are invisible to the external customer but essential to the effective management of the business. We call these support processes."*

Whatever the specific definition may be, it is clear that business processes are high-level generalized maps that approximate how an organization transforms inputs into valuable outputs.

It is recognized that the modeling of organizational business processes can be accomplished via the utilization of numerous techniques. Of these techniques the Business Process Modeling Notation (BPMN) approach has promise in being appropriate for developing high-level models of business interaction and fundamental organizational business processes.

However, business process models in and of themselves are simply insufficient in detail to be useful in the design of optimal business environments.

More specifically, there exists the opportunity (and need) to extend these fundamental icon-based approaches to provide the ability to model the business environment at a more granular level in order to capture a deeper understanding of organizational inter-relationships between the:

- Primary business processes
- Supporting sub-processes
- Roles that personnel "play" within these processes
- Controls that guide interactions
- Pre and post conditions that must be addressed to ensure appropriate reaction to specific business events
- Inputs and outputs that are associated with pre and post conditions
- Information systems (defined as a set of assembled computer-based components that provides digital-based input and output)
- Decision points
- Business rules

While BPMN does allow for extensions to its base iconic structure, extending BPMN may disrupt the original intent of this modeling notation and introduce a level of complexity that would impact the greatest value of BPMN – its ability to achieve a high-level of clarity and understanding of how a business process works within the organizational context.

Therefore, BPMN should remain as a "high level" business process modeling notation.

However, the need to achieve a more granular view of an organization requires a detailed depiction of the associated workflows that exist within the primary business processes' associated sub-processes.

Unfortunately there is little in the way of a formal standard for modeling workflows.

While some have attempted to use the Unified Modeling Language (UML) designed for software development, this modeling notation has proven to be difficult to morph into a workflow modeling approach that could provide a graphically based lexicon for depicting organizational inter-relationships.

More specifically, UML by its very nature is designed to be utilized within an iterative environment in which the gathering of requirements is gained through "rational reasoning and ongoing discussions with stakeholders".

From this perspective UML is both important and meaningful.

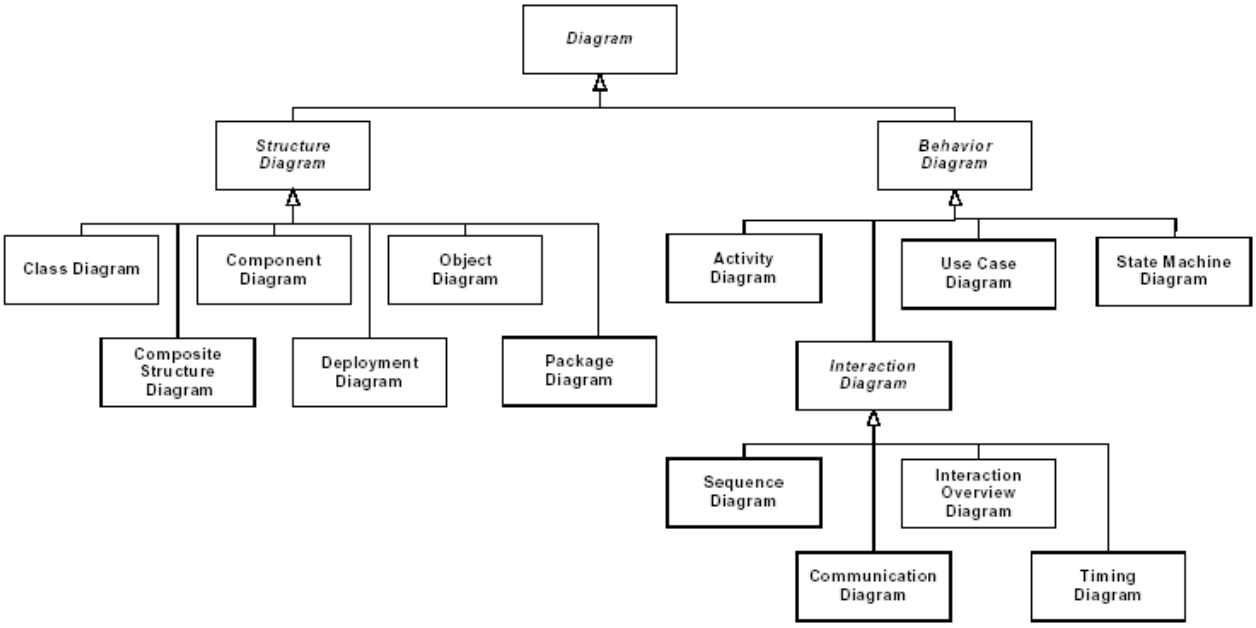
However, the very iterative nature of UML precludes a more detailed perspective of the numerous inter-relationships that exist within all organizations (regardless of size). Simply put, any iterative approach require "lightness in the models that get created". Too much detail makes the derived model "heavy", slowing down its interpretation and transition into executable software that delivers specific functionality.

Yet it is the detail of the inter-relationships between a wide array of organizational components (people, policies, business rules, locations, etc.), while making the end organizational model "heavy" is necessary for achieving a meaningful alignment between business process, people and computer-based technologies.

Further, UML has two primary purposes as clearly depicted in the following graphical model – both of which do not align with the purpose of workflow modeling and the development of a deeper understanding of the organizational context.

The first is the graphical depiction of software as a set of classes, components and objects – reflecting UML's "roots" in object-oriented programming.

The second is the graphical representation of behaviour. Most "process models" created through the utilization of UML are some form of activity diagrams, use cases or interaction diagrams – all having the primary purpose of depicting interaction behaviour between people and a computer-based system.




The importance of developing models that provide a deeper understanding of inter-relationships between the varying organizational constructs that define an organization's architecture cannot be over stated, particularly in professional efforts to analysis the business.

It is within these contextually established inter-relationships that an organization's value chain is created and its decision-making capacity and velocity is established. These are not behavioural aspects of a business, thus making the creation of behavioural-based models ineffective.

In response to the need for inter-relationship based modeling, the Integrated Workflow Modeling Notation (I-WFMN) ™ was introduced into the marketplace as a means for developing "heavy" models that provide the opportunity to create a more granular perspective of the varying inter-relationships that constitute the concept of work.

Further, it is important that any prescribed modeling approach draw from accepted and "time-tested" modeling approaches that inherently contain some form of best practices.

As such, I-WFMN is based on the IDEF (*Integrated Definition*) group of modeling methods; more specifically IDEF0 (http://www.idef.com/idef0.htm).

Why IDEF0?

Partly because IDEF0 is a method specifically designed to model the inter-relationships between decisions, actions, and activities of an organization or system – a primary design goal of an iconic based notation for workflow modeling.

However, workflow modeling effort requires an expansion to IDEF0's primary design model so that a professional practitioner can create:

- Inter-relationship models of an organization's current state that a cause-effect analysis can be applied as a means of discovering (and exposing) organizational problems that impact an organization's capacity to achieve its business goals and objectives in the most efficient and effective way
- Inter-relationship models that can be modified to depict an optimal future state inter-relationship model of organization for the purpose of achieving efficiency and effectiveness within its work efforts

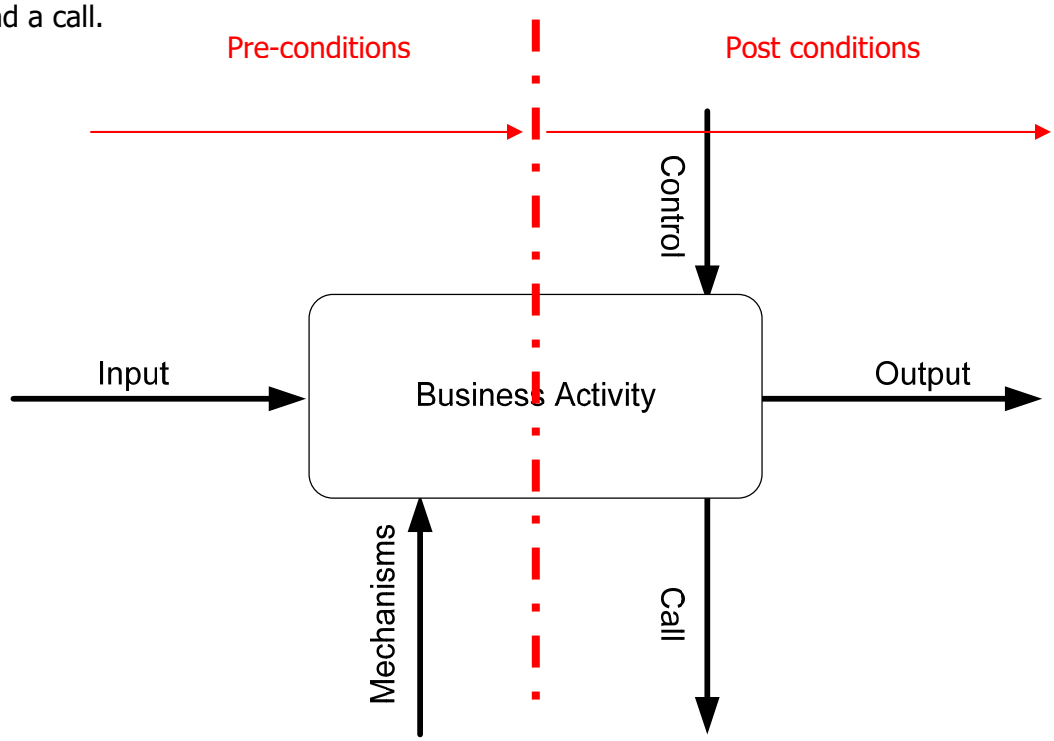
As outlined the IDEF approach has sixteen defined methods, from IDEF0 to IDEF14 (and including IDEF1X), each designed to capture a particular type of information.

I-WMFN is based on IDEF0.

| **IDEF METHODS** | |
|---|---|
| **IDEF0** | Function Modeling **(I-WFMN Base Standard)** |
| **IDEF1** | Information Modeling |
| **IDEF1X** | Data Modeling |
| **IDEF2** | Simulation Model Design |
| **IDEF3** | Process Description Capture |
| **IDEF4** | Object-Oriented Design |
| **IDEF5** | Ontology Description Capture |
| **IDEF6** | Design Rationale Capture |
| **IDEF7** | Information System Auditing |
| **IDEF8** | User Interface Modeling |
| **IDEF9** | Scenario-Driven IS Design |
| **IDEF10** | Implementation Architecture Modeling |
| **IDEF11** | Information Artifact Modeling |
| **IDEF12** | Organization Modeling |
| **IDEF13** | Three Schema Mapping Design |
| **IDEF14** | Network Design |

## 2.0 I-WFMN in Detail

I-WFMN begins with the IDEF0 general model of a business activity. As depicted below, the basic model begins with six (6) primary components – an input, mechanisms, a business activity, an output, a control and a call.




This basic IDEF0 process model, while capable of describing the way in which actions influence one another by means of interconnected inputs, outputs, controls, mechanisms and calls to other business activities, is insufficient in its primary state to articulate detailed workflows found in complex organizational environments.

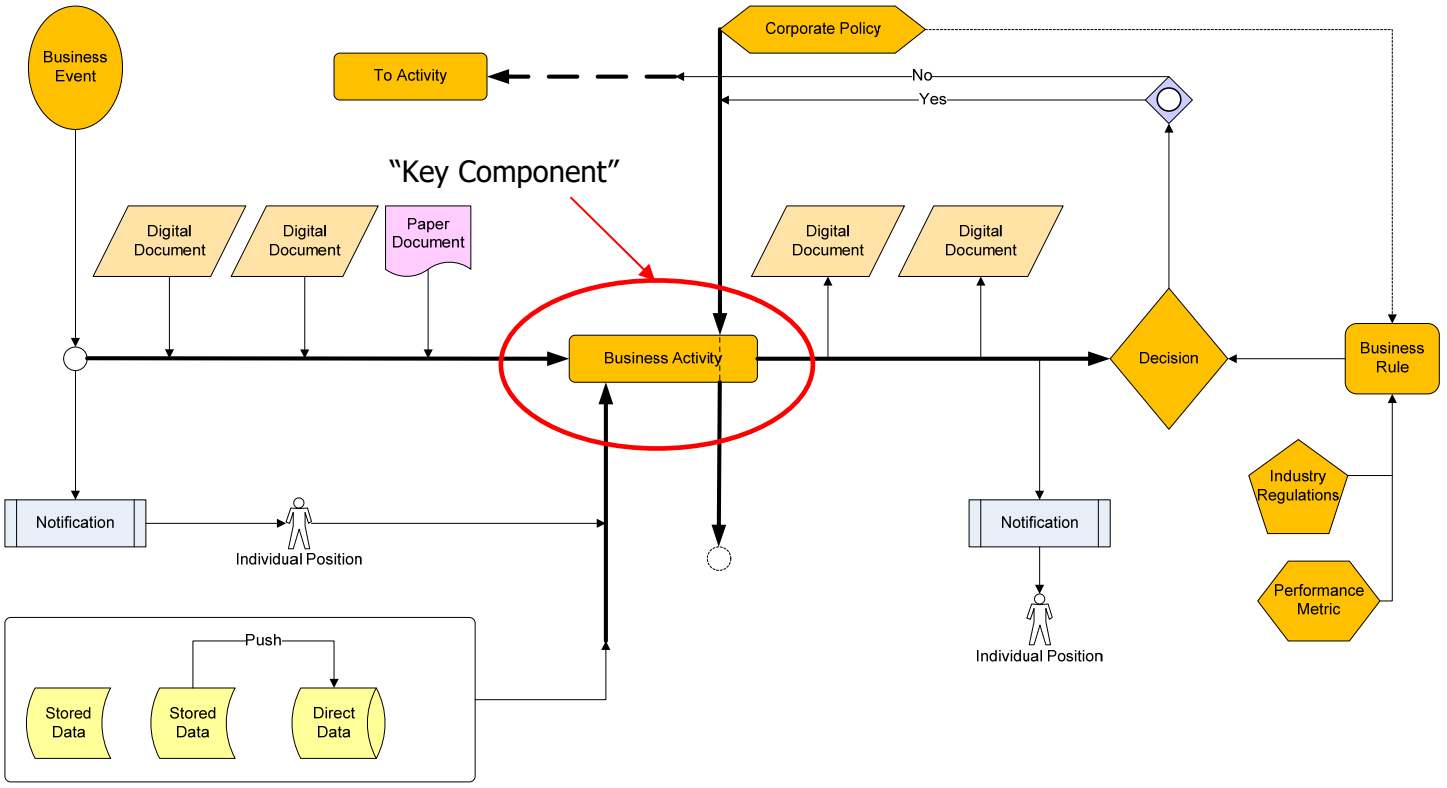
Therefore, the basic IDEF0 process model has been expanded along two specific activity scenarios found within human-centric workflow models - pre and post conditions.

## 3.0 Anatomy of an I-WFMN Model

The following model is the "basic" I-WFMN model. As depicted, it provides a clear "line of sight" into the various relationships that exist in any organizational work effort.

The "key" component is the *business activity*. Everything is aligned to it.

More specifically, these types of workflow models provide insight into the relationship between business events, notifications, roles, inputs, information systems, outputs, decision points, business rules and corporate policies – all organizational components that must work together in a meaningful manner to create business value and induce high levels of velocity in decision making.



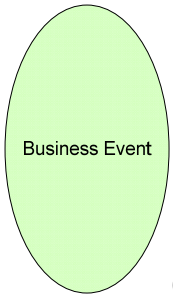
# 4.0 Events

An event represents something that "happens" within an organizational environment that is clearly definable and identifiable. Generally an event can be classified as a cause or result.

Within the organizational context an event is always associated with a primary business process.

There can be numerous events within a primary business process signifying the flow path of a business process.

## 4.1. Business Event




**Oval –** A coloured oval that identifies a primary business event that must commence before the associated business activity associated with the work effort can be initiated.

A **business event** is a primary action within an organization that induces a commencement (start point) of a series of inter-related identifiable and distinctive activities. The wording of a business event must contain a verb in the past tense, (e.g. "Budget Approved") because the completion of the event is the catalyst for the ensuing business activities. Once a primary business event induces organizational action, associated pre-conditions will be introduced.

Within the context of the Object Management Group's (OMG) Business Process Modeling Notation (BPMN) the **business event** is an *extension* to the foundational *event category*.

### 4.1.1. Start Event

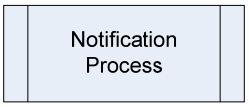
**Empty Circle (Light Line) –** A blank circle (light line) identifies a start point induced by a primary business event from which all pre-conditions commence.

Within the context of the Object Management Group's (OMG) Business Process Modeling Notation (BPMN) the **start event** is a *primary element* within the foundational *event category*.

### 4.1.2. Interim Start Event

**Empty Circle (Light Dashed Line) –** A blank circle (dashed light line) identifies a start point that is a follow-on from a previous Business Activity.

### 4.1.3. Notification Event




**Notification Rectangle** – A light blue shaded rectangle with two "end bars" identifies a pre-defined notification process associated with the Business Activity. Notifications can be "in-person", by telephone, in a meeting, fax, surface mail or electronic mail. Therefore, the Notification Rectangle will have attached in its upper left hand corner an additional symbol depicting one of the potential methods for achieving notifications. Therefore, one of the following six (6) icons should be utilized in conjunction with the *notification rectangle* when any of these methods are utilized.

TELEPHONE

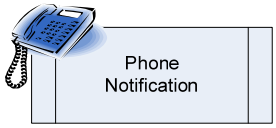
ORGANIZATIONAL EMAIL

FAX

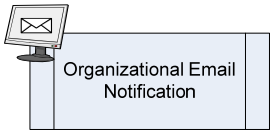
IN-PERSON

MEETING

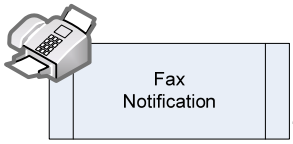
SURFACE MAIL



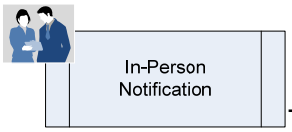

The depicted notification icon identifies that people within the defined workflow are notified by telephone.



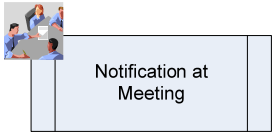

The depicted notification icon identifies that people within the defined workflow are notified via organizational electronic mail.




The depicted notification icon identifies that people within the defined workflow are notified by fax.




The depicted notification icon identifies that people within the defined workflow are notified in person.




The depicted notification icon identifies that people within the defined workflow are notified at a meeting.


The depicted notification icon identifies that people within the defined workflow are notified via surface mail.

Within the context of the Object Management Group's (OMG) Business Process Modeling Notation (BPMN) the **notification event** is an *extension* to the foundational *event category*.

#### 4.1.4. End Event

**Empty Circle (Heavy Line) –** A blank circle (heavy line) identifies an end point associated with a primary business event.

Within the context of the Object Management Group's (OMG) Business Process Modeling Notation (BPMN) the **end event** is a *primary element* within the foundational *event category*.

## 5.0 Pre-conditions

Pre-conditions are elements within an organizational environment that must be in place or have been initiated for the business activity within the work effort to be successfully started, as induced by the business event.

### 5.1. Inputs

Inputs are definable and identifiable artifacts that are associated with a specific business activity. Within the context of the Object Management Group's (OMG) Business Process Modeling Notation (BPMN) **input pre-conditions** are defined components that are *extensions* to the foundational *artifact category*.

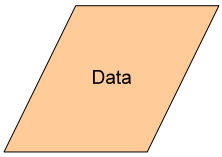
#### 5.1.1. Input Directional Arrows

**Pre-condition Activity Input Arrow** - A single arrow pointing right from the start event icon to the business activity icon identifies input into the business activity.



**Input Attachment Arrow** - A single arrow pointing downward from the input icon to the precondition activity input arrow identifies input into the business activity.

### 5.1.2. Input Components

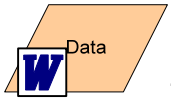



**Data Skewed Square** – A shaded skewed square that identifies a digital based data component or document associated with the Business Activity. Data is generally "attached" via an Attachment Arrow to Input and/or Output Directional Arrows. Digital data can be in several formats. Of these formats three (3) are prominent – Microsoft Word (.doc), Microsoft Excel (.xls) and Adobe Acrobat (.pdf). Therefore one of the following three (3) icons should be utilized in conjunction with the *data skewed square* when any of these formats are utilized.

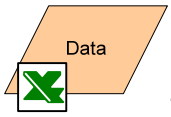

MS-WORD


MS-EXCEL

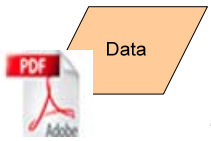
ADOBE



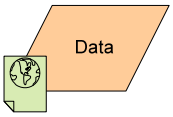

The depicted data icon identifies that the data within the defined workflow is formatted as a Microsoft Word document



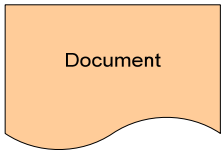

The depicted data icon identifies that the data within the defined workflow is formatted as a Microsoft Excel document



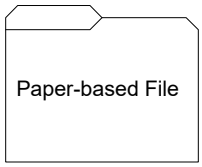

The depicted data icon identifies that the data within the defined workflow is formatted as an Adobe Acrobat document




The depicted data icon identifies that the data within the defined workflow is location-specific. The location-specific icon is represented by a shaded rectangle with a folded bottom left corner containing a globe image




**Document Rectangle**– A shaded rectangle with a "torn leading edge" that identifies a paper document associated with the Business Activity. Documents are generally "attached" via an Attachment Arrow to Input and/or Output Directional Arrows




**File Icon** – A stylized file folder icon that identifies a paper-based file folder associated with the Business Activity.

### 5.1.3. Mechanisms

Business activities are carried out by people, devices or systems. These are grouped together as mechanisms in IDEF0 modeling.

#### 5.1.3.1. Mechanism Directional Arrows

**Mechanism Directional Arrow** - A single arrow pointing upward into the business activity icon that identifies the mechanisms that support the execution of the business activity



**Mechanism Connection Arrow** – A single arrow pointing into the mechanism directional arrow identifying a link between the depicted mechanism component (see below) and the business activity

#### 5.1.3.2. Mechanism Components

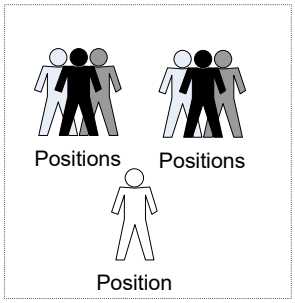
A mechanism component can represent, amongst other things:

- a human resource playing a particular role
- a computer-based information system
- a functional area within a computer-based information system

##### 5.1.3.2.1. People (Positions)

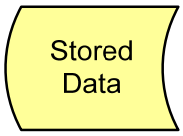

The depicted single person icon identifies primary organizational personnel that is directly involved the defined workflow. The icon must include a defined role that the organizational individual is assigned to.


The depicted multiple person icon identifies a primary organizational group that is directly involved in the defined workflow. The icon must include a defined role that the organizational group has been assigned to.

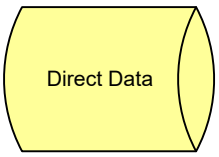



Roles depicted inside a light line dashed box reflect collaboration of more than one group role and/or individual role relating to a defined workflow.

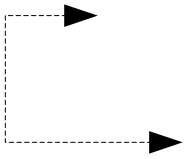
#### 5.1.3.2.2. Computer-based Information Systems



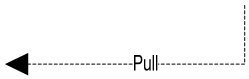

**Stored Data Half Drum** – A shaded half drum that identifies a secondary operational data store associate with a primary Application.




**Direct Data Full Drum** – A shaded drum that identifies a primary operational data store that provides data or stored documents into a Business Activity.



**Black Dual Direction Arrow Without Wording** – A black dual direction arrow with no wording identifies the direction of dataflow between an application and its supporting data stores




**Horizontal Black Direction Arrow With Wording** – A black direction arrow with the word "push" or "pull" identifies the direction of dataflow between two or more integrated computer-based information systems.

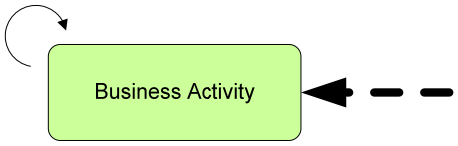
## 6.0 Business Activity

A business activity is the primary component within a workflow. The business activity represents a "group of tasks" and implies a functional requirement.

### 6.1. Standard Business Activity Component


**Shaded Cornered Rectangle** - A shaded rectangle identifies a specific Business Activity that transforms inputs into outputs and decisions by means of mechanisms under the influence of business rules and external controls. The wording of a business activity includes a verb in the present tense, (e.g. "Request Budget Approval").

### 6.2. Recursive Business Activity Component




**Shaded Cornered Rectangle with Loop on Centre Symbol off of a "No" Call** - A shaded rectangle with a loop on centre symbol off of a "no" call identifies a specific business activity that repeats until a "yes" call is achieved.

## 7.0 Post Conditions

Post conditions are states within an organizational environment that take place after the business activity has commenced.

Post conditions can manifest as a tangible artifact such as a document and are referred to as outputs. Sometimes, though, the end result of the business activity is less tangible. In the case of assessing and modeling an organizational workflow one of the primary post conditions is a decision.

Decisions are impacted by the business rules that may exist and other controls (constraints) that may exist externally.

### 7.1. Outputs

See Section 4.1 of this document. The same symbols apply.

### 7.1.1. Output Directional Arrows

**Post-condition Activity Output Arrow** - A single arrow pointing right from the business activity icon to the decision diamond icon identifies output from the business activity.

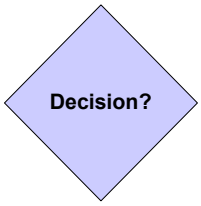


**Output Attachment Arrow** - A single arrow pointing upward from the post-condition activity output arrow to the output icon identifies output from the business activity.

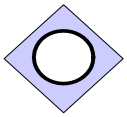
### 7.1.2. Notifications

See Section 4.2 of this document. The same symbols apply.

### 7.1.3. Decision Points

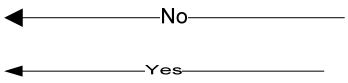



**Shaded Diamond** – A shaded diamond identifies the need to make a decision. The actual "decision" is articulated as a question within the centre of the diamond.



**Circle in A Shaded Diamond** – A circle within a shaded diamond identifies a branching of the "decision. Two directional arrows (see below) identify where a "yes" or "no" decision leads to. Decisions are guided by:

- Corporate policies, procedures and standards
- Business rules
- Performance metrics
- Industry regulations




**Directional Arrows with Yes & No** – Directional arrows with "yes" and "no" lead to follow-on activities associated with the "decision".

## 7.2. Control

A control within the IDEF0 modeling approach is a special **input** that influences or constrains the way in which the activity is executed. However the input itself is not consumed during business activity execution.

Each business activity has a minimum of one control as per IDEF0 modeling principles.

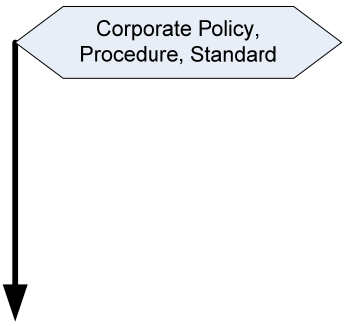
I-WFMN applies this same modeling principle with a focus on common organizational policies, standards, and procedures.

### 7.2.1. Control Components

Control components can be expressed as:

- Corporate policies, procedures and standards
- Business rules
- Performance metrics
- Industry regulations

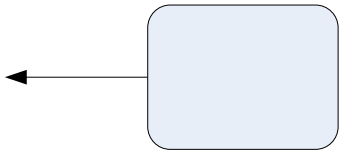
#### 7.2.1.1. Corporate Policy




**Vertical Black Direction Arrow with Hexagonal Control Flag** – A vertical black direction arrow with a hexagonal flag that contains the name or description of a corporate policy, procedure or standard, placed at the top of the Business Activity, indicates an external constraint or influence that impacts all aspects associated with the Business Activity

**Horizontal Dashed Black Direction Arrow** – A horizontal black direction arrow that extends the "no directional arrow" associated with a decision indicates the direction to an external action associated with the "no" decision

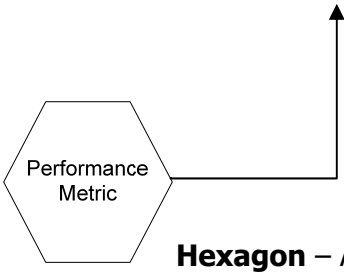
#### 7.2.1.2. Business Rule



**Square with Single Direction Arrow** – A rounded corner square with a single directional arrow identifies the business rule (s) that guide decision making. The directional arrow points to the decision that the business rule impacts.

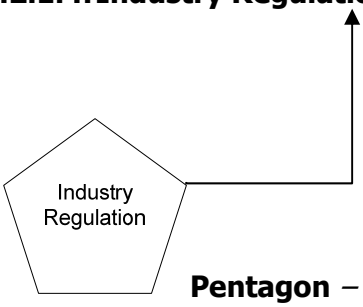
**Dashed Line with Right Angle** – A Dashed line with a right angle is used as a connection between the Business Rule and the Corporate Policy, Procedure or Standard.

#### 7.2.1.3. Performance Metric




**Hexagon** – A six (6) sided element with a right angle arrow identifies the performance metric (s) that influence the business rule.

#### 7.2.1.4. Industry Regulation




**Pentagon** – A five (5) sided element with a right angle arrow identifies the industry regulation (s) that influences the business rule.

# 8.0 Inter-relationship Principles

The following inter-relationship principles are key to the I-WFMN models. Workflow diagrams must include such inter-relationships so that workflow patterns and relationships may be extracted from the gathered information.

## 8.1. Workflows

- Each Workflow must have a Business Activity
- Each Workflow must have a Decision Point
- Each Workflow must have a Corporate Policy

## 8.2. Business Activities

- Each Business Activity must be related to a Business Event
- Each Business Activity must have a Pre-Condition Activity Input Arrow, Mechanism Arrow, Post-condition Activity Output Arrow, Control Arrow, a Yes Call and a No Call related to it

## 8.3. Applications

- Each application must have a Business Activity related to it
- Each application must have a Stored Data object related to it

## 8.4. Notifications

- Notification must have a Role, or Group of Roles object attached to it
- Organizational Email Notification must have a Role or Group of Roles object attached to it
- Phone Notification must have a Role, or Group of Roles object attached to it
- Fax Notification must have a Role, or Group of Roles object attached to it
- System Notification must have a Role, or Group of Roles object attached to it
- In Person Notification must have a Role, or Group of Roles object attached to it
- Notification at a meeting must have a Role, or Group of Roles object attached to it
- Mail Notification must have a Role, or Group of Roles object attached to it
- Notification must be attached to an Input Attachment Arrow, Output Attachment Arrow or Start Point icon
- Organizational Email Notification must be attached to an Input Attachment Arrow, Output Attachment Arrow or Start Point icon
- Phone Notification must be attached to an Input Attachment Arrow, Output Attachment Arrow or Start Point icon
- Fax Notification must be attached to an Input Attachment Arrow, Output Attachment Arrow or Start Point icon
- System Notification must be attached to an Input Attachment Arrow, Output Attachment Arrow or Start Point icon
- In Person Notification must be attached to an Input Attachment Arrow, Output Attachment Arrow or Start Point icon
- Mail Notification must be attached to an Input Attachment Arrow, Output Attachment Arrow or Start Point icon

## 8.5. Roles and/or Group Roles

- A Role, or Group of Roles must be related to a Mechanism Arrow, an Artifact, or a Notification

## 8.6. Pre-Condition Activity Input Arrow and Post-Condition Activity Output Arrows

### 8.6.1. Input Attachment Arrows and Output Attachment Arrows

- Artifact must be related to an Input Attachment Arrow or Output Attachment Arrow
- Word Doc must be related to an Input Attachment Arrow or Output Attachment Arrow
- PDF Doc must be related to an Input Attachment Arrow or Output Attachment Arrow
- Paper Doc must be related to an Input Attachment Arrow or Output Attachment Arrow
- Excel Spreadsheet must be related to an Input Attachment Arrow or Output Attachment Arrow

### 8.6.2. Mechanism Arrow

- Information System dotted box must be related to the Mechanism Arrow
- A Role, or Group of Roles that are a pre-condition must be related to the Mechanism Arrow

### 8.6.3. Control Arrow

- The Control Arrow must have a Yes Call Arrow and a No Call Arrow related to it

### 8.6.4. Yes Call Arrow and No Call Arrow

- The Control Arrow must have a Yes Call Arrow and a No Call Arrow related to it

### 8.6.5. Decision Object

- A Business Rule must be attached to a Decision object
- A Business Rule must be connected to a Corporate Policy
- Control Arrow has both a Yes and a No relationship to the Decision object

## 9.0 Supporting Narrative

Each developed workflow shall include a supporting narrative captured in the following table structure.

| | |
|---|---|
| **BUSINESS EVENT *(See Section 3.0)*:** | |
| **BUSINESS ACTIVITY:** ***(See Section 5.0)*** | |
| **WORKFLOW #:** | |
| *Written Description of the Process* | |
| **POSITIONS** | |
| **People / Groups Involved** ***(See Section 4.2.1)*** | |
| **PRE-CONDITIONS: INPUTS *(See Section 4.0)*** | |
| **Documents / Forms / Screens** | **Identify if document / form is paper or electronic, the format, key data elements, where it resides)** |
| | • |
| **Pre-condition Notification(s)** | **Take action, Verification / Validation, Approvals, Confirmations, Files, FYI** |
| | • |
| **Information Systems** | **Information** |
| | • |
| **POST CONDITIONS: OUTPUTS *(See Section 6.0)*** | |
| **Documents / Forms / Screens** ***(See Section 3.0 – Integrations)*** | **Identify if document / form is paper or electronic, the format, key data elements, where it resides)** |
| | • |
| **Post-condition Notification(s)** | **Take action, Verification / Validation, Approvals, Confirmations, Files, FYI** |
| | • |
| **Information Systems** | **Information** |
| | • |
| **DECISION POINT *(See Section 6.3)*** | |
| **Primary Decision** | |
| **If "No"** | |
| **If "Yes"** | |
| **CORPORATE POLICY, PROCEDURE, STANDARD *(See Section 6.5)*** | |
| • | |
| **BUSINESS RULE(S) – CONTROLS *(See Section 6.4)*** | |
| • | |
| **INFORMATION SYSTEMS (INTEGRATIONS) & METHOD Identify if data is "pushed" or "pulled"** | |
| • | |
| **TIME VARIABLES** | |
| • Notification<br>• Pre-conditions<br>• Activity<br>• Post conditions<br>• Decision | |