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business management system

ideas, goals, & implementation

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Muse Systems :: Business Management System :: Ideas, Goals, & Implementation

Release 0.0.0

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# Introduction

***To build a compelling business management system you must start with a fundamental understanding of the business concepts that your application will be supporting.*** Nonetheless many newer business systems are designed and built by duplicating the well-worn features of predecessors without carefully considering how the operational functions reproduced create value for the users of the application. For those users looking for basic record keeping and accounting, this computer-as-filing-cabinet approach is sufficient. However, for those companies that see their technology spending as investment rather than an administrative overhead, the naively operational systems often time will fall short of expectations over the long run leading to expensive custom gap-fit efforts or forcing costly systems replacement projects.

The Muse Systems Business Management System (MuseBMS) is designed and built with a first principles approach. The reasoning behind common business practices and typical variations of those practices are understood first so that we’re tailoring the application to be efficient, flexible, and information rich. Our next priority is identifying the nature of the information that a business process generates leading to an information architecture reflecting both the explicit and implicit knowledge created. Finally, we work to ensure that the functional/operational components, those parts of the application that users will experience day-to-day, is efficient and as “friction free” as possible.

The MuseBMS is ultimately the expression of 30 years of business systems design, building, and in-the-field implementation experience. It is our hope that by bringing that experience to the creation of a new business system that we can deliver a deeper value from our customer’s technology investments than might have otherwise been available.

This book, The Book, is intended to be the theory of the MuseBMS. The explanation of what our goals are, what features we hope to implement, what business practices and principles guide the implementation of those features, discussion of technology choices and patterns, and what trade-offs we might make as we pursue building a useful product.

# Goals & General Considerations

***Knowing what you’re aiming for is the most important part of hitting the target.*** It’s also important for customers evaluating a system and developers building a system to understand the goals and motivations the system so that their judgements of raw facts have context and consistency. Conveying these guiding principles however is easier said than done for a cross functional business system, and there are various perspectives and competing interests which easily can contradict any broadly stated goals. Naturally, we could fall back on tired Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system marketing tropes such as “enabling customers to be more efficient and better informed”, or similar empty mission statements, perhaps involving more words, but that doesn’t move anyone’s understanding along.

## Long Range Goals & Release Planning

The MuseBMS is ultimately targeted at becoming a “low code”[[1]](#footnote-1) platform for allowing end users to create bespoke business systems for their specific business and needs. While many systems include customization capability, it’s most typically implemented as a bolt-on to an otherwise fully formed ERP system. In these kinds of systems, you can add custom fields, alter existing forms, or modify existing workflows, but they tend to not be well suited for creating wholly new processes and data. The MuseBMS will invert this relationship by defining versatile general purpose building blocks which can then be assembled by the platform users into complete business systems[[2]](#footnote-2).

Shorter term there will nonetheless be several steps leading to the long-term objective. Get

# Business Relationships

***All businesses form relationships.*** There isn’t much qualitative variety in the kinds of entities with which a business will form relationships; often we can simply generalize these entities as businesses and individual people. The distinction between business entities and individuals is that contractual agreements and recorded transactions are thought of as being entered into between business entities whereas an individual person is most often the agent of a business entity and is acting on its behalf. This isn’t to say that individual people cannot also participate as a party in contracts and transactions, but that when they do so they are acting in the capacity of a business entity[[3]](#footnote-3) just as any other legal business.

Even if the entities themselves can be grouped into simple categories of businesses and individuals, the relationships between these entities are much more complex and nuanced. Some relationships define a purchasing relationship while others may define selling relationship; some are employment relationships, and other relationships may be competitive in nature. Individuals, too, have relationships to the businesses for which they act on behalf of. Some individuals may make decisions, others may only act in supporting roles; some individuals will have authority to speak in all matters for a business entity while others may have functionally aligned responsibilities.

What is immediately apparent from the discussion above is that the relationship between entities and individuals is much more interesting that the entities or individuals themselves. Naturally there are direct attributes of the entities and individuals needed such as names or addresses. But the relationships themselves carry the attributes that we will act on when transacting business with the entity or that may set the context for data we may wish analyze to understand the relationship over time.

## Business Relationships in MuseBMS

1. “Low code” as used here is a bit of a tech industry buzzword for simplified development environments accessible to non-technical or non-developer resources. These environments often emphasize graphical construction of logic and “WYSIWYG”/drag-and-drop style form design. While these tools can lower the knowledge barrier required to construct a self-consistent and useful program, the user must still possess a good sense of information flow and basic logic  
    [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. To be clear, while the core MuseBMS will in essence be a toolbox with which to build business systems, the expectation is that pre-built business systems would be what customers would buy. These pre-built systems would be built using the toolkit, though, rather than having the processes and logic hard coded into the lower-level programming code. In this sense, we’d be providing starter systems which the users could modify as desired. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. There are circumstances where an individual person acting as business entity may have other individuals acting as agent on their behalf. Consider attorneys with power of attorney for an individual, brokers transacting business on behalf of individual account holders, or even a spouse or personal assistant making purchases on some other individual’s behalf. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)