**Lab Guide**

IBM Decision Manger Open Edition

Nigel Crowther – ncrowther@uk.ibm.com

Hands-on Guide

DMN Beyond the Basics



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# Introduction

In this guide we go beyond basics of DMN to build real-world DMN.

The following topics are presented:

* **Why use DMN**
* **Advanced DRD**
* **Decision Table Hit Policies**
* **Using Data Types**
* **Advanced Feel**

By the end, you will be able to apply these real-world techniques to your DMN projects.

# Why use DMN

DMN is a decision model based on a notation standard defined by the Object Management Group (OMG)

DMN uses a graphical decision requirements diagram (DRD) that represents part or all of the overall decision requirements graph (DRG) to trace business decision flows

DMN has an underlying XML schema that allows the DMN models to be shared between DMN-compliant platforms

DMN supports Friendly Enough Expression Language (FEEL) to define decision logic in DMN decision tables and DMN boxed expressions

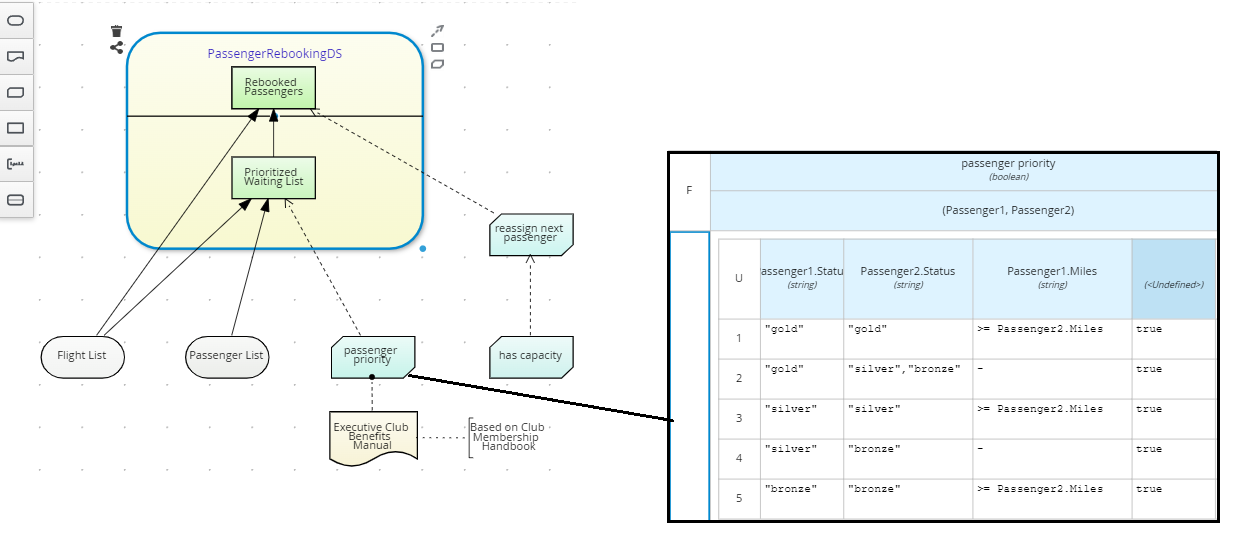
Use DMN if you need a standard way of creating comprehensive, illustrative, and stable decision flows

# Advanced DRD

If you are beginning your DMN journey, you probably stick with and DRD components. This is great for simple models. But if you want to unleash the full power of DRD notation, consider the components listed here:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Description | Notation | |
| Business knowledge model | Reusable function. Use this when decisions have the same logic but depend on common sub-decisions or functions. |  |
| Decision service | Top-level decision containing a set of reusable decisions published as a service for invocation. A decision service can be invoked from an external application or a BPMN business process. |  |
| Text annotation | Explanatory note associated with an input data node, decision node, business knowledge model, or knowledge source. |  |
| Knowledge source | External authorities, documents, committees, or policies that regulate a decision. This component is not executable. |  |

An example where all the DRD components are used is shown below:



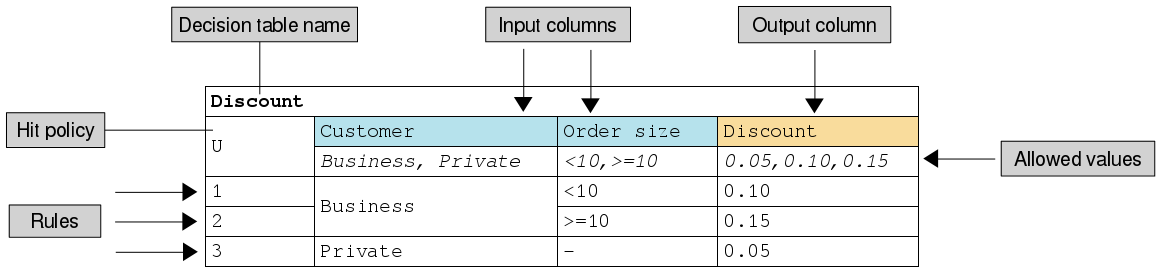
# Decision Table Hit Policies

Hit policies describe ways to evaluate rules contained in decision tables. Hit policies change the evaluation order of every row in a decision table. It requires different ways of reasoning over the entire table. Therefore, it is important to be able to select the right hit policy for your rule application.

## Why use Hit Policies?

Not all decisions are the same! Some decisions are top down, some count outcomes, some require traceability. You need a different hit policy for each of these.

In DMN the hit policy is specified in the top left of the decision table. See below:



The commonly used hit policies are:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Hit Policy | Description | When to use |
| ****Unique (U)**** | Permits only one rule to match. Any overlap raises an error. | For detailed reasoning. Ensures your rules cover all cases and are complete |
| First (F) | Rules are evaluated from top to bottom. Rules may overlap, but only the first match counts. | For concise decision tables |
| ****Any (A)**** | Permits multiple rules to match, but they must all have the same output. If they do not, an error is raised. | For tables with many rows leading to identical actions |
| ****Collect (C)**** | Aggregates values in an arbitrary list. | For multiple row satisfaction. Works for strings (which are cast into a list) and numbers which can be summed, cast to a list, or return the smallest or highest number. |

Other less commonly used hit policies are **Priority**, **Rule Order** and **Output Order** which have similar behaviour to **Collect.**

## Lab

See xxx for lab.

# Using Data Types

## Why use Data Types?

The quickest win to improve DMN readability and maintainability is to replace primitive inputs with one or more data structures. This helps declutter the DMN diagram.

## Data Type Example

For example, below are two versions of a functionally identical decision service. The top DMN uses primitive attributes, the bottom DMN replaces this with a data structure which makes the design clearer and allows additional attributes to be added without changing the diagram.

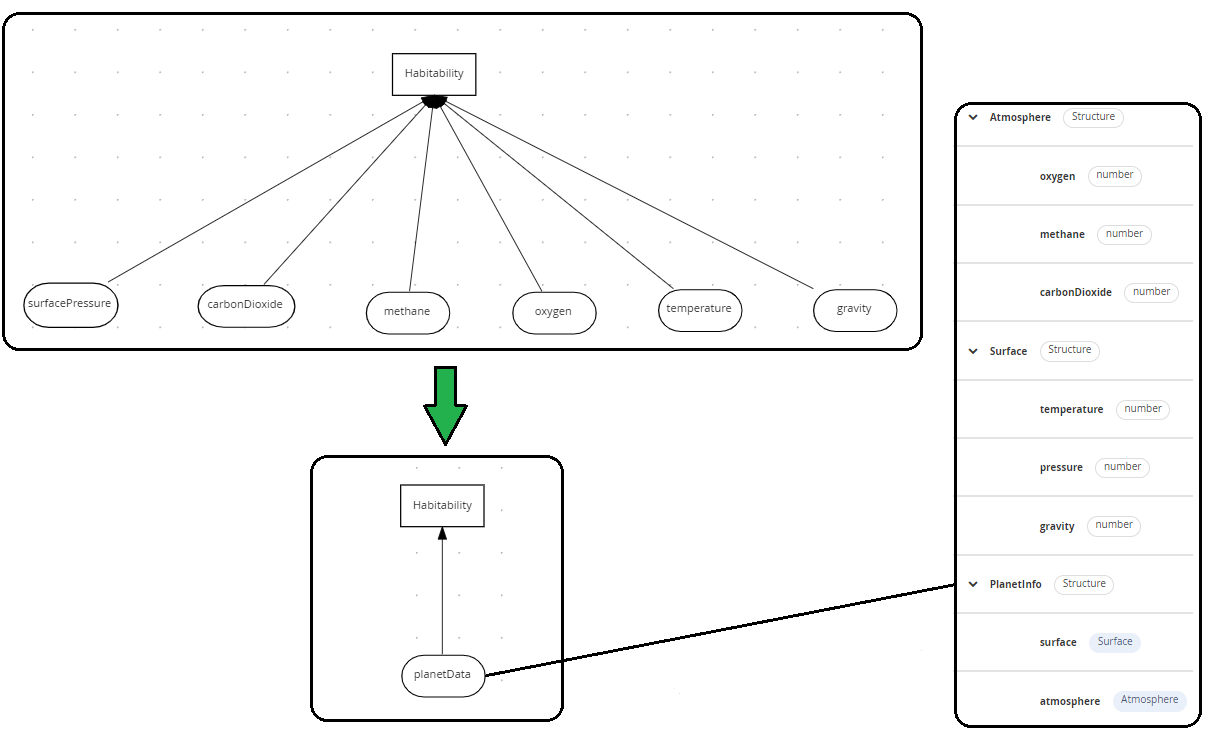


Figure 1: Structured Versus Unstructured Data

## Lab

See xxx for lab.

# Defining Logic in Feel

Friendly Enough Expression Language (FEEL) is an expression language defined by the Object Management Group (OMG). FEEL expressions define the logic of a decision in a DMN model. FEEL is designed to facilitate both decision modeling and execution by assigning semantics to the decision model constructs. FEEL expressions are written inside boxed expressions and business knowledge models.

## Why use Feel?

The following is a real-world DMN model example that demonstrates how to use FEEL to reach a complex decision. In this scenario, a flight from San Diego to New York is canceled, requiring the affected airline to find alternate arrangements for its inconvenienced passengers.

First, the airline collects the information necessary to determine how best to get the travelers to their destinations:

Input data

List of flights

List of passengers

Decisions

Prioritize the passengers who will get seats on a new flight

Determine which flights those passengers will be offered

Business knowledge models

The company process for determining passenger priority

Any flights that have space available

Company rules for determining how best to reassign inconvenienced passengers

The airline then uses the DMN standard to model its decision process in the following decision requirements diagram (DRD) for determining the best rebooking solution:

## Lab

See xxx for lab.

# Conclusion

In this lab we presented tips and techniques for building real world DMN projects. Consider applying these DMN patterns to help you scale!