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Workflow Freedom

New Builder MT tool lets builders customize business processes.

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If every home builder issues contracts, releases work orders, and schedules new-home construction over 90 days in roughly the same way, why do builders need workflow software?

Brett Parkhurst, chief technology officer at Builder MT, maker of the purchasing-based software tool that integrates with Timberline's accounting software, says that while certain activities such as releasing work orders are similar, each building company executes its work somewhat differently. Builders even pride themselves on their own "home-grown" processes. The workflow system offers the flexibility to customize processes precisely how the builder wants them done.

"With our workflow tool, builders can choose to notify the customer, super, or business partner via e-mail at whatever point they see fit in the process," says Parkhurst, who adds that each workflow can be integrated with the builder's internal departments, vendors, buyers, field personnel, or sales offices—whatever the builder decides is important to the application.

Builder MT is set to release Workflow Designer next month. The software will let home builders customize and then automate specific processes, such as construction phase completion, bank draws, sales qualifications, walk-throughs, and customer service satisfaction surveys. Builder MT plans to roll out the workflow tools in select markets around the country with small, medium, and large builders.

Parkhurst says that the company will offer three distinct workflow products:

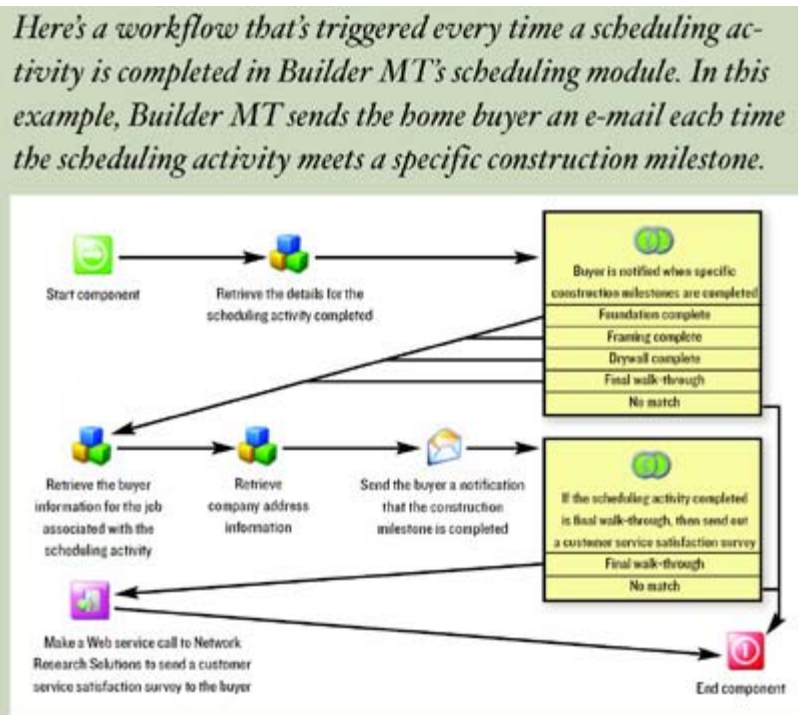
Event-driven workflows. Using Builder MT's Workflow Designer, home builders can choose from roughly 100 different standard events to build workflows. Examples of possible workflows include sending out e-mails when a scheduling activity is completed or when a purchase order is generated or approved. The event-driven workflows are geared for

builders who use the Builder MT purchasing, scheduling, and sales pricing system.

Customized workflows. This model is geared for builders who use Builder MT products but wish to develop their own customized workflows. For example, builders can use the tool to build their own job start workflow that would generate the budget in job cost, create the schedule, and perform internal and external notifications precisely the way the builder wants the job done.

Custom component generator. This is software that lets builders develop workflows for a construction management system other than Builder MT. A

component is a piece of software that performs a task in the workflow. Using the component generator, builders can design workflows against the most popular databases, including Oracle, Microsoft SQL Server, and Microsoft Access. Builders can also design workflows against leading open source software databases such as Firebird and MySQL.



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