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Contextware Speaks “Contextual Workspaces”

By Marc Strohlein @ 10:17 am

Outsell recently spoke with Contextware, a company that provides tools that enable enterprises to bring together people, processes, and information to create what Outsell calls “contextual workspaces.” Contextware takes a different approach than traditional business process management (BPM) vendors - instead of focusing on the sequencing of tasks within a workflow, it enables process owners to assemble the tools and information that are needed at each step of a workflow to improve knowledge worker productivity. Contextware uses a central taxonomy to manage resources such as software applications, documents, and Web resources, and they are handled as meta-data. The meta-data approach makes it easy to share resources across multiple processes, as it serves as a kind of resource repository from which tools and information sources can be selected.

Outsell’s Take: Contextware’s approach is interesting in that it avoids the imposition of task sequencing on knowledge workers and instead focuses on trying to make them more productive by assembling the tools and information they need in the context of a task within a workflow. This approach acknowledges that knowledge workers don’t always navigate a given process in the same way and need some flexibility to improvise. At the same time, the tool provides a road map for workers who are new to a process and may need to follow the map in a stepwise progression. Contextware will be interesting to enterprises looking for a lighter approach to BPM, and it provides a means for enterprises to quickly gain experience in the brave new world of contextual workspaces.