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With Asia Pacific growing faster than Europe and the Americas, enormous pressures are being placed on changing the way businesses operate in a much more competitive market. In a way this pressure is the catalyst for businesses to seek more efficient and effective ways of managing their business processes. While workflow and BPM is established in Japan and Oceania; BPM in Southeast Asia, India, and Greater China is now being recognised as a key differentiator for those starting to adopt it. It is more than a technology; it also involves innovation, best practices and cultural acceptance to be successful. Asia Pacific has shown its resilience by adopting best practice solutions while managing the internal changes faced when using new technologies and techniques. Globally the BPM market is estimated to be worth US$2.54 billion (in 2003) in both license and services, with the Asia Pacific region representing over 10 percent of the worldwide market.

The interest in BPM is across all industries and government bodies. HandySoft, a leading BPM vendor, has seen more than 50 new customers in the last 18 months in the region including well-recognised companies such as Hitachi, Samsung Electronics, BMW and QBE Insurance. This growth has underscored the dramatic changes Asia is undertaking in both IT infrastructure and business know-how. Even leading education institutions are taking part in increasing the awareness and skills of the business community in BPM.

The government sectors are also starting to look at BPM technologies to enhance the effectiveness of existing systems, such as records or document management. At the Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) in South Australia, BPM plays a pivotal part in managing the use of government owned land. BizFlow is also used by the Projects Management Department of the Ministry of Water Resources of China to oversee flood and drought relief related project management.

“We wanted innovative solutions to achieve a coordinated work environment to drive administrative and decision-making efficiencies and to provide a higher level of service,” said Mr. Liu Hanyu Section Chief of the Department.

Financial business can reap large benefits from the use of BPM technologies by:

- Reducing processing times
- Cutting costs per transaction
- Eliminating errors
- Increasing customer satisfaction

“As a leader in providing pioneering real-life business education, HKU SPACE is also working with industry leaders, such as HandySoft, to share best practices in BPM to its students.”

– F.T. Chan, Head Division of Information Technology
Other finance companies, such as Taiwan First Bank and QBE Insurance have also gone into production recently, automating budget verification and claims management respectively. “We chose BizFlow (from HandySoft) as the BPM engine to automate our budget verification and disposition process. Work is automatically dispatched and data entry correctly controlled, thus preventing errors caused by manual operations,” confirms Taiwan First Bank.

Innovative companies in other areas, such as telecommunications, manufacturing, construction and even marketing media are also seeing the benefits of BPM. Legion Interactive is Australia’s leading provider of interactive communication services. Legion specialises in promotional marketing services (competition and promotions), information services, unique communication solutions and content aggregation, origination and publishing. With a strong focus on media and consumer promotions, Legion manages the telephone, Internet, E-mail, SMS, WAP and mail promotions for many of Australia’s leading marketers and Media outlets. Some of Legion’s most recent activities include: Australian Idol- TEN/Fremantle, Big Brother – TEN/SSE, Fat Cow Motel – ABC, Alias – Seven, Arena TV Star Spotting – FOXTEL, Coca Cola SumMerdayS, McDonald’s SIP N FLIP 2 WIN, and MasterCard 2003 Beach House Promotion.

Legion Interactive is using BizFlow to manage their job management system. BizFlow will enable Legion to cope with the growing demand and continue to effectively capture immense volumes of information from SMS promotions, IVR, website interaction, and other public responses. “Due to the rapid change in the market and the increasing volumes of our workflow, it is vital that our systems keep up with our business activities. BizFlow will provide us with the BPM platform we need to respond effectively to market demands and keep the costs of development down,” said Peter Jones, Chief Operations Officer, Legion Interactive.

CONCLUSION

BPM technologies in Asia Pacific had a pivotal year in 2003. The region was faced with some of its most significant challenges and yet has recovered and is in fact leading global growth into 2004. As economic activity picks up and as IT infrastructure in the developing countries is enhanced, the potential for workflow and BPM technologies being adopted increases.

China and India provide the highest growth potential, as they are markets just beginning to adopt BPM technologies, while other regions are continuing to expand BPM adoption because of past successes. In turn, BPM solutions are being adapted to the local markets by adding language support and choosing implementation support strategies through local offices, partners or a combination of both. So far BPM technologies have proven adaptable enough to be readily accepted by the different cultures and technology environments across Asia Pacific. The potential for the region to increase its current 10 percent market share of the global BPM market is high. The probability of this increase, if there are no major negative forces (such as SARS) impacting Asia Pacific, is also very high. Asia Pacific provides a dynamic, high growth market for BPM to provide innovative solutions for enterprises and governments in the region.

Linus Chow is the Regional Director, Asia Pacific for HandySoft, a leading provider of BPM solutions. He is also the author of Asia Pacific: The Next Frontier for BPM found in the 2004 Workflow Handbook. For more information visit www.handysoft.com.
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