

PRODUCTIVITY TOOLS SPECIAL

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The Navigator for Enterprise Solutions

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IN MY OPINION

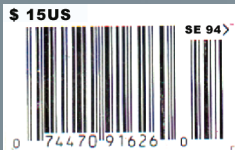
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ServiceSPAN: Making Work Centers Work Better

Daniel W. Corcoran,
President & Founder



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CIO REVIEW

COVER STORY



Daniel W. Corcoran,
President & Founder

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When your software
is not in the way,
you will reach the
highest hanging fruit of
productivity gain

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ServiceSPAN: Making Work Centers Work Better

By Shashikanth Peetla

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urther enhancement of productivity and business transformation can seem like an overwhelming challenge for well-run work centers that consider additional change a risk of upsetting the appcart. For nearly three decades, Plainview, NY based ServiceSPAN has been providing solutions to improve efficiencies in manual work centers, when good isn't good enough. With a specific vision, Daniel Corcoran, CEO and Founder, along with his team, take on the most perplexing situations that prevent the high-hanging fruit of productivity from being reached.

Corcoran says, "ServiceSPAN has both software and a methodology for work centers filled with good management, process and technology to find and execute on their next 30 percent productivity improvement. Our typical client has executed well on several approaches to improving or automating processes, and has begun to reach a point of diminishing returns due to technology limitations in their line of business and operational support software.

Attempting to make further change is perceived as reaching for high hanging fruit—a costly endeavor that would require the replacement of software."

Corcoran adds, "Line of business applications lack the sophisticated functionality needed to match people to pending work, manage a diverse workforce, or provide support for knowledge workers to consistently make excellent decisions. The original software architecture is not ideal for adding on such capability, so workarounds are created by the people using the applications to accomplish the goal of processing manual work as efficiently as possible".

ServiceSPAN's methodology focuses on six areas of difficult process improvement that are actionable after an organization has succeeded with root cause analysis, six sigma, lean process, automation of repetitive process and other techniques to reduce cycle time and the cost of manual processes.

Their software product, Work Center Manager (WCM) enables ServiceSPAN to configure workflow and technology on top of existing infrastructure without requiring IT to do any heavy-lifting, such as adding interfaces or changing legacy software, and can be deployed in 12 weeks or less with guaranteed success.

ServiceSPAN's domain knowledge was the driving force behind the company's excellence in helping enterprise clients transform manual processes without modifying their existing software. From that experience, they evolved their software product into a configurable add-on to existing line of business applications, which excel at solving six specific areas of workflow improvement at the core of their methodology.

Corcoran believes that it makes more sense to re-evaluate workarounds, especially those that are technology based, rather than attempt to incrementally improve them. Given the high cost and risk of replacing line of business applications, ServiceSPAN offers organizations an option to layer this capability across business applications in their enterprise. A catchy phrase he invokes is that "if you like your software (or even if you don't), you can keep your software", yet still achieve radical transformation of your manual business processes to meet the needs and goals of the organization.

Replacing Workarounds, Swivel Chair Example

One example Corcoran uses when he describes replacing workarounds, are those designed for decision support. A Dashboard or '360 degree view' is an example of a workaround that may appear to be adequate or even an excellent way to overcome applications limitations and improve productivity. But often they do little to reduce swivel-chairing issues and actually add on time when a user goes to 1 application to get their work, a 2nd to research the work, a 3rd to perform the work, a 4th to verify that underlying applications succeeded and maybe even a 5th to log the work they've completed.

Corcoran believes that dashboards and applications that provide a 360 view are antiquated unless they are deployed so that

- Users don't swivel-chair, cut & paste, or retype information.
- Software is task-aware and provides a smart presentation based exactly on the current task.

- There is support for a mix of in-bound, out-bound, and off-line work.
- Only live information is presented.
- Automation capabilities are right at the user's fingertips.
- Decisions are taken from the users directly, and proxied to back-end applications, rather than swivel-chairing.
- Spreadsheets, notepads, tracking databases and most emails are eliminated in all processes.

Optimizing Business Processes

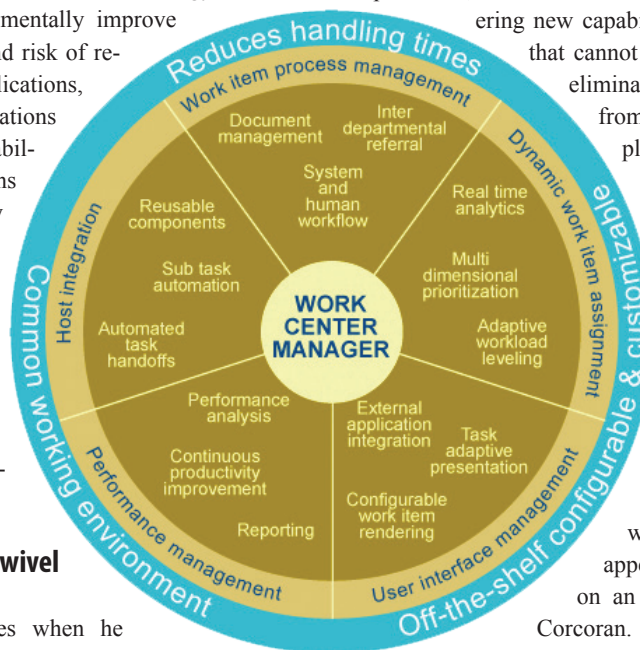
Additionally, WCM helps combine disparate IT infrastructures and provides a consolidated environment for users. The company enables enterprises to have the benefit of consolidating their applications, without the actual costs of doing so. "Also, by layering new capabilities over older legacy applications that cannot be cost-effectively modified, WCM eliminates barriers that prevent employees from implementing best practices," explains Corcoran.

WCM has various capabilities to intercede at the point of human decision-making, taking the user's decision into the GUI and automating the next steps of the transaction. Input from users updates multiple applications, and facilitates a SaaS data analytics engines enabling the business to measure costs, risk and compliance.

"WCM is browser-based, but without browser buttons, it gives the appearance of a desktop application on an enterprise workstation," points out Corcoran. Its VMware virtual server manages traffic of the users and the applications they need, and the overall integration is facilitated through web services, API's, database queries, or screen scraping.

Driving Productivity for Clients

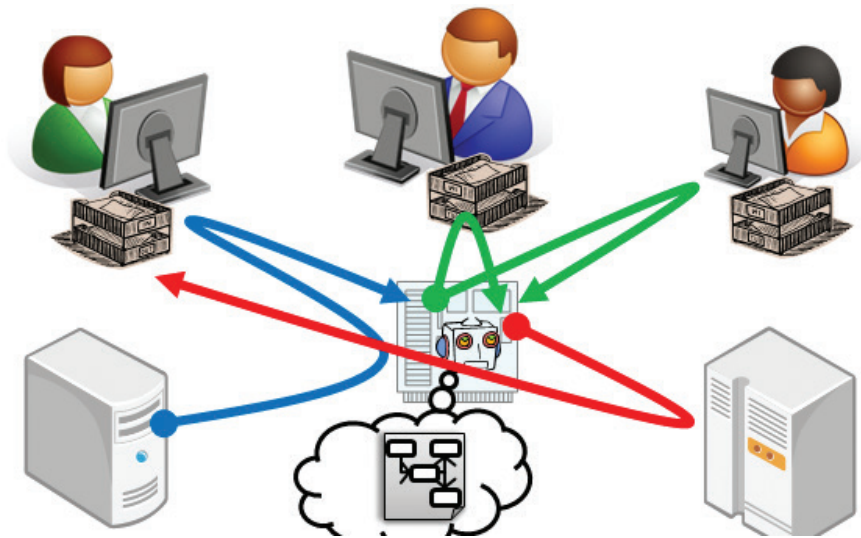
One of ServiceSPAN's clients, a Fortune 500 clinical laboratory and diagnostic testing services provider was suffering from several millions of dollars in backlogged denied claims. The company's capable IT team, found and executed on many process improvements despite limitations in the core claims management software. For example, their managers cleverly used Excel spreadsheets, data extraction, dashboards, web and screen scraping scripting tools, exacting daily analysis and the management of employees to get the most claims processed accurately each day, including filtering the work so only the most promising ones were worked. The agents still had some remaining manual steps, often



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Work Center Manager (WCM) enables ServiceSPAN to configure workflow and technology on top of existing infrastructure without requiring IT to do any heavy-lifting

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swivel-chairing, copying and pasting from one screen to another, and to the billing system for claims resubmission. As good as the refined processes were, many claims had to be written off because the labor was still more than the cost x 40 percent success rate of claims appeals, and peaks in claim submissions created a mounting backlog of denials. Also, it was identified that the many workarounds used to speed the existing process consumed 30 percent of the total labor cost.

Leveraging ServiceSPAN's domain knowledge and innovative technology, they configured WCM in 8 weeks, replacing the existing effective workarounds with a solution that eradicated the 30 percent workarounds cost and added entirely new features that increased the client's user productivity and provided a new workflow to overlay the existing claims applications. WCM eliminated the use of Excel worksheets, scripting tools, email workflow and more. Now, agents just have to click on hyperlinks to transfer keystrokes to the desktop billing application and insurance carrier websites rather than type or copy-paste key data from one ap-


plication to another. Additionally, WCM empowered the agents with a composite view of the billing information. "We reduced the cost of working a claims denial so much, the company actually added employees so they could pursue lower dollar claims they previously had to write off due to labor cost. Over one million dollars in backlogged work was cleared in 90 days, and a permanent increase in bottom line revenue was realized by taking this group's productivity far beyond a 100 percent increase," reveals Corcoran.

Automating Work Distribution

WCM adds a work distribution mechanism on top of a customer's legacy applications, consolidating many work silos and other sources such as emails, spreadsheets into a single repository. The software intelligently distributes work to employees in a manageable and measurable fashion, enabling employees to be on track to meet the organization's goals and prevent work that needs special attention from being lost. It automates the fetching of data from various sources and displays to employees only the necessary information needed to

complete an item of work. WCM not only provides a 360 view of all the processes on any given transaction, but also offers a smartly filtered view that shows the most current information employees require to make excellent decisions.

Conquering the Productivity Solutions Market Space

Over the years, as businesses have become more competent at process improvement and automation, ServiceSPAN has upped its ante with domain knowledge and feature functionality. ServiceSPAN further empowers productivity solutions by adding layers of security features on top of existing enterprise applications. This capability enables customers to off-load some manual processes to business partners already involved in service delivery, rather than using external workflow tools or work centers for the job. "We will stay relevant in the enterprise productivity market by maintaining a constant fixation on finding innovative ways to reduce cost while positively impacting revenue, increasing compliance and decreasing risk," concludes Corcoran. 

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20 Most Promising Productivity Tools Solution Providers

Productivity is the name of game for enterprises to work faster and smarter. Today, there are large numbers of modern productivity tools that are designed with a specific focus on usability. Tools like office suites, content management, web conferencing, project management, innovation management, and social software help users remain efficient, and effective. These tools have replaced the traditional method of doing work, which help enterprises to organize, manipulate, shape, and ultimately present ideas in innovative ways.

As the direction of technology is changing, productivity tools are also improving their integration between systems and departments, which is extremely valuable in fast-paced, multi-functional environments. Moreover, mobile-based productivity apps and tools enable easier access to data,

and storage, which will contribute to better collaboration. With all of these enhancements at fingertips, updating older applications with modern tools for productivity workflow is a great way to meet customers' increased demands.

In the last few months, we have analyzed hundreds of Productivity Tools solution provider and shortlisted the companies that are at the forefront of tackling challenges in the arena. A distinguished panel comprising of CEOs, CIOs and analysts including CIO Review's editorial board has selected the final list of Productivity Tools Solution Provider of 2015.

In our selection process, we looked at the vendor's capability to fulfill the need for cost-effective and flexible solutions that add value to the Productivity Tools landscape. We present you CIO Review's "20 Most Promising Productivity Tools Solution Providers."



Company:
ServiceSPAN

Description:
ServiceSPAN has been providing solutions that create efficiencies in manual work centers for more than 20 years

Key Person:
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President & CEO

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