



Automate, orchestrate, integrate

Take control over telecom
order management



In the telecom industry, most organizations are heading towards mergers and acquisitions to diversify their businesses and realize synergy between talent and technology. The disparity between the systems used by these organizations leads to a complex IT landscape. Control over end-to-end order management becomes a challenge as they use several fulfillment systems to perform various activities at different stages in the order management process. Any slip while performing order management activities has a cascading effect on the downstream processes and jeopardizes the committed delivery date.

With today's customers, who demand customer service on their terms, telecom players cannot afford the risk of dissatisfying them. It leads to loss of credibility and reputation, and a lower Net Promoter Score (NPS). Telecom companies need to perform all functions at each stage of the order management process in a timely and accurate manner.

Orchestrated and automated order management

In multi-stage and multi-activity scenarios with disparate IT systems running in the backend, tracking the status of an order becomes difficult. To deal with this, some organizations choose to implement middleware infrastructure, which provides systematic connection between the disparate tools, allowing data from one system to move to another. However, middleware infrastructure is an expensive investment and can take years to implement successfully. Organizations instead should opt to have control and visibility into their order management processes through a cost-effective approach. They need to orchestrate their entire order management process by leveraging a process orchestration engine and at the same time, automate fulfillment activities.

A process orchestration solution that leverages the capabilities of a Business Process Management (BPM) platform with automation and analytics helps organizations keep track of all the activities in an order management system. The solution frequently updated with data feeds from fulfillment systems; bring in transparency in the order management process. Organizations should set up their order management workflow based on the stages of order fulfillment and the activities required at each stage (Figure1).

BPM platform embedded with automation helps organizations deploy robots to perform activities on disparate IT systems. The platform also enables 'assisted automation' by allowing human and robotic agents to work and collaborate on a single platform. Robots programmed with decision-making capabilities work on operational activities and transactional tasks instead of human agents. Whenever a robot encounters an exception and is unable to solve it, the platform allows the robot to reach out to a human agent for help. In such cases, human agents apply their expertise and judgement and help the robots resolve exceptions. Using human agents only for exception handling increases productivity and efficiency in the order management process. Moreover, robots can perform transactional tasks much faster, and with better accuracy and efficiency. This allows organizations to utilize human agents to perform knowledge-based and higher value-add tasks.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) enables inter-system communication in the absence of middleware infrastructure by recording activity status, confirmations and error messages from each fulfillment system into the orchestration engine. Frequent updates sent from the fulfillment systems to the orchestration engine via a simple flat file exchange further augments inter-system communication. As a result, the orchestration engine furnishes near real-time data on all the orders that flow through the system. Organizations use this data to create expressive reports, which give them a bird's eye view of the entire order management process. Thus, it becomes easier for operational leaders to identify order throughput and the status of orders. In case of a delay in an order delivery, the process orchestrator automatically highlights the reason for the delay so that the issue is proactively resolved. Process orchestration helps organizations with active jeopardy management. This is a great differentiator for the order management process, which has time and accuracy critical requirements.

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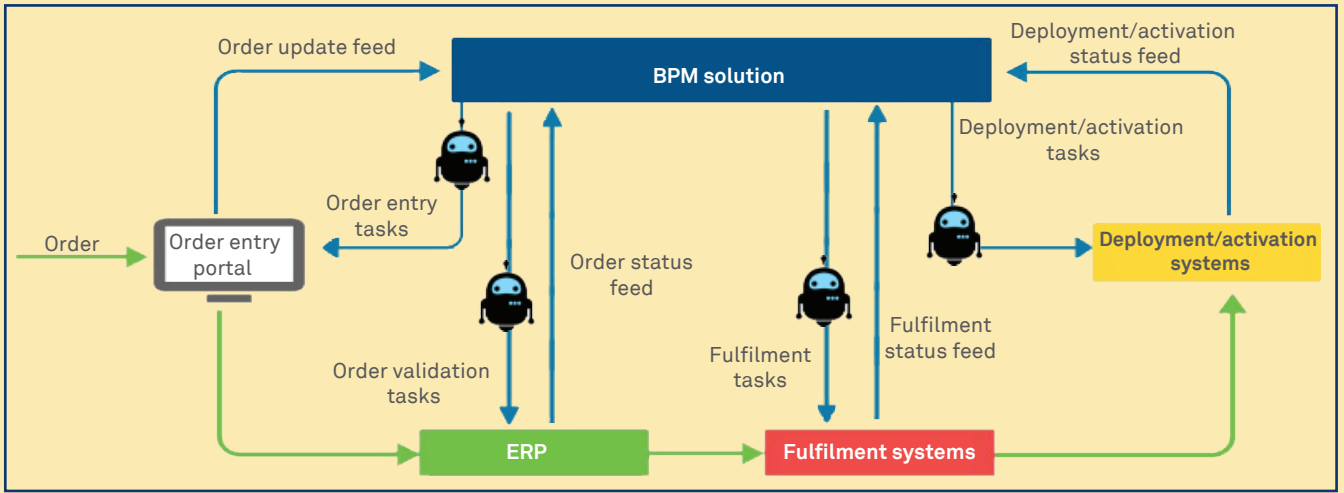


Figure 1: Process orchestration engine

Analytics for governance

Analytics-embedded BPM platform empowers organizations with better visibility on the entire operation. This helps them track order management KPIs such as volumetrics, stage-wise distribution, exceptions and rewinds, ageing, order jeopardy and SLA risks. When organizations have better visibility and control over their entire order management process, they provide customers with timely updates on the progress of their orders, ensure better on-time delivery, and anticipate risks to SLAs. This helps organizations improve business metrics such as right-first-time, on-time delivery percentage, and exception percentage, thereby increasing customer satisfaction and ultimately, the NPS.

Analytics also help organizations study the exceptions that occur in the system. By identifying frequently occurring exceptions and root causes, they can reengineer the upstream process to reduce exception rates.

About the author

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Rahul has over 14 years' experience in the IT-led business transformation space in a variety of industry verticals such as telecom, credit cards, Fixed Income rating services and investment banking. He helps global organizations define and refine their vision of technology transformation in a digitally disruptive business environment. He is passionate about climate change awareness and sustainable agriculture.

The future of order management

The future of order management will see self-learning and cognitive robots. Right now, the robots are rule-based. They follow a pre-programmed script and cannot make complex decisions. As more robots become self-learning, they will build their internal bank of knowledge and rules that will help them improve processes and ensure better efficiency. By utilizing their intelligence and the previous resolutions provided by human agents to solve exceptions, cognitive bots will solve exceptions on their own, further reducing the dependency on human agents. The future holds immense possibilities for organizations willing to explore the opportunities of process orchestration and embedded automation.



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