

ENTERPRISE ASSET MANAGEMENT (EAM)

Introduction

EAM is a recent addition to the Information Technology lexicon gaining acceptance in organizations where hardware and software maintenance activities must be closely coordinated with the management of enterprise wide systems. These systems include such applications as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Product Data Management (PDM), Customer Relationship Management (CRM), and other enterprise application integration (EAI) platforms.

The EAM framework focuses on the operational maintenance aspects of enterprise systems, rather than on individual desktop or point solutions found in a typical asset inventory system. This emphasis on maintenance has its roots in the ERP system paradigm. ERP creates “value” from the underlying assets by managing the “value producing” processes in a structured and predictable manner. EAM does the same for the physical software and hardware assets that enable ERP.

EAM Requirements

Industries that make use of strategic assets face similar management problems:

- Work management.
- Compliance with regulatory, safety, corporate policy; union rules; and normative industry guidelines.
- Resource allocation, utilization, constraint management, and budgeting processes.

The management of these processes can be facilitated in many ways. It has been shown that the biggest *time waster* is the prepara-

tion of the maintenance process. Simple things like gathering documentation, planning outage times, coordinating with the user community, and the arrangement of the software and hardware maintenance processes.

In many industries any disruption to an operational enterprise system means unnecessary cost burdens on the direct business unit. Planning and adherence to the plan is a critical success factor for any asset management organization.

To provide these management activities in a seamless way, an EAM system must be capable of:

- Work management – through tools that provide *process* control for the maintenance activities. This includes the interpretation and fulfillment of the maintenance requests.
- Inventory management – through tools that provide stock planning, version control, stakeholder communication, and the automatic electronic management of all assets.
- Knowledge management – by capturing the *best work practices* from previous activities, storing and disseminating this knowledge in a timely and accurate manner.
- Resource management – can only be effective if the right information is available at the right time to the right resources.

EAM systems must provide this framework for all applications across the enterprise. Such solutions must operate in ways similar to ERP. Data entered once and used many times, workflow process coordinated across distributed business units, business rules and constraints applied to these work processes.