ACORD Implementation Process Guidelines

The following are practical steps you can follow to increase your chances of success when implementing ACORD standard interfaces.

Getting Started

Internal Prioritization

- Review your business strategy and goals.
- Identify the business partners with whom you want to implement.
- Determine your business criteria for prioritization. Examples are:
  1. Value of business over a medium-term period/forecast (importance of the relationship).
  2. Volume of business over a given medium-term period (bringing greater efficiency more quickly).
  3. Current interface capabilities (knowing or having implemented standards make for quicker implementation).
  4. Ease of integration (location and existing business relationships make for easier first steps).
- Prepare material for future meetings with key decision-makers within these organizations.

Make Contact

There is a general misconception that the majority of the issues in interface projects are technical in nature. This is not the case and can lead to projects taking longer than expected or failing to deliver on expectations.

Before technical decisions can be made, business requirements and business benefits must be understood and agreed upon **jointly** by interfacing partners.

No assumptions should be made about processes, workflows or data requirements. The partners should discuss and agree on details **jointly** before conducting internal analyses. The parameters of internal analyses will rely on these agreements to produce an interface that meets everyone's expectations.

Three Step Approach

When agreeing to interface with a business partner, it is useful to set up a detailed checklist incorporating the following:

1. Organizational Steps

- Validate joint objectives and goals.
- Find an internal business owner/champion in each organization.
- Get the involvement of both business and IT staff at all steps of the process.
- Define a shared schedule with your business partners - internal and/or external.
- Establish regular working meetings and status meetings.
- Estimate workload and resources requirements - plan to monitor.

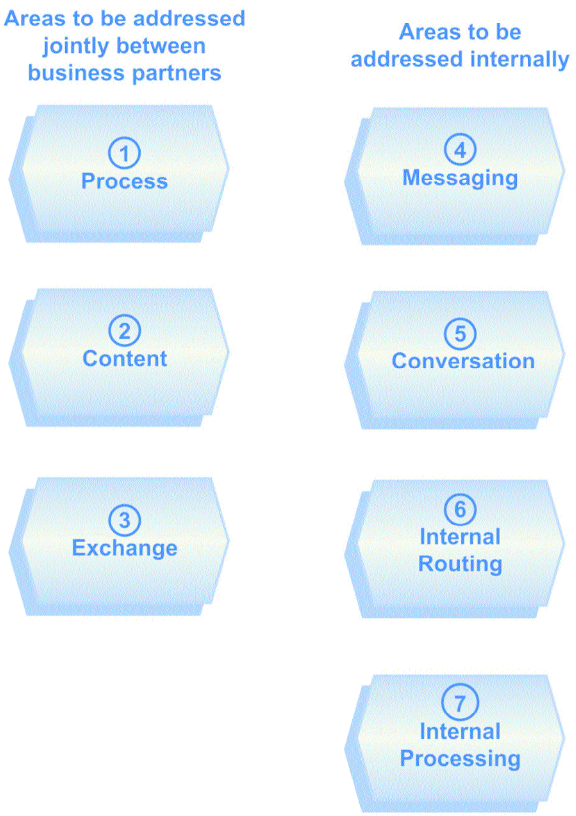
2. Functional Steps

- Define the business scope of the implementation (type of message, of transaction, LOB, branches, etc.).
- Develop and maintain a business case.
- Develop a functional specification that includes workflow, specific features, data requirements and high level expectations.
- Validate and synchronize data requirements.
- Identify all business entities involved.
- Monitor the relationship and ensure all changes are communicated to all parties involved.
- Decide if an initial data conversion should be considered.
- Define required level of information for data mapping.
- Map all required data.
- Specify the message automation process (fully automatic, user validation, control, etc.).
- Carefully review the recommendations of the ACORD implementation guides for such items as mandatory fields, exchange rates, and business rules.
- Along with your business partner, define rights, authorizations and access to unstructured. information. Identify the security "owner" for each organization.
- Agree on acceptance criteria.
- Agree on the correction process.
- Agree on reporting to ACORD (OARS) on project status.

3. Technical Steps

- Ensure both parties have a good understanding and comply with the selected ACORD standard.
- Agree on the exchange protocol versions (ACORD message, SOAP/Web Services Profile, etc.).
- Agree on the way to access non-structured data (document repository, FTP, etc.).
- Work to a 3 phase delivery:
  1. Test period on a specific test environment.
  2. Pilot period on a parallel-run of traditional/paper and XML messages.
  3. Production with XML messages only.

Developing A Business Partner Interface



These 3 areas should be addressed prior to any agreement to integrate to establish potential fit and business benefits.

For complete business case analysis, these areas should subsequently be analysed.

1 Process	Which business process is covered? Which process steps are covered? One or multiple? Is it a one-way process, or are there feedback loops?
2 Content	What document types are covered? Just the main documents/messages or supporting documents also? What data attributes should be found on the document types? What are the links between the documents?
3 Exchange	What is the technical means of transfer (email, disk, internet, VPN,)? Is it a direct or indirect (via third party) transfer? What are the security requirements/ profiles?
4 Messaging	What is the technical implementation of the agreed exchange mechanism? What is the level of required automation (manual to full automation)?
5 Conversation	What is the technical implementation of the conversion mechanism (content and structure)? Content mapping from the industry standard to the internal standard (if different).
6 Internal Routing	Technical and logical implementation of the routing mechanism to ensure that the right application/person gets the documents (using the respective channels using the right format)
7 Internal Processing	Roles and responsibilities, guidelines, organisation to ensure Processing Respective interfaces with necessary automatic validation Procedures within/for IT applications

NEW YORK: Two Blue Hill Plaza
3rd Floor, PO Box 1529
Pearl River, NY 10965-8529 USA
Tel +1 845 620 1700 ■ Fax +1 845 620 3600

LONDON: London Underwriting Centre
Suite 1/3, 3 Minster Court, Mincing Lane
London EC3R 7DD, United Kingdom
Tel. +44 (0)20 7617 6400 ■ Fax +44 (0)20 7617 6401