



SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management Frequently asked questions

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POSITIONING & MESSAGING QUESTIONS

What is SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management?

SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management allows organizations to move decision logic that determines the process behavior in enterprise applications into a central location. Decision services are maintained centrally and then deployed distributed for de-central execution. Business owners and IT experts can easily and instantaneously change decision logic wrapped as decision services when used in either SAP standard and/or custom applications, called from ABAP code or implemented using SAP Business Workflow. This approach provides a cost-effective and simplified alternative to extensive application customization, custom coding, and application embedded business rules.

What is the rationale and history leading up to SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management?

SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management was actually not built from scratch, but is based on BRFplus, a rules engine component that is currently embedded in many SAP applications. BRFplus is in effect a very powerful tool that hundreds of customers are already using today.

A thorough analysis of the business rules space and the feedback collected from many customers, have driven to an expansion on the current BRFplus capabilities driving the need for a new architecture and more holistic business rules or decision service management solution. Many SAP customers want to use BRFplus outside the traditional SAP application space. At the same time, they are also looking for ways to centralize the management of the business rules that are being used across their SAP applications and reuse outside the core SAP apps space. This is the space that NetWeaver Decision Service Management comes to resolve really addressing a gap existing in SAP's offering.

BRFplus also does not provide the agility required by business experts as changes are distributed through transports via an IT driven process. On the other hand, IT experts do not want to allow business experts to make changes in the productive system directly. SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management closes this gap by providing an environment in which IT can define exactly what parts of the decision services/rules can be changed, and which tests have to be passed successfully, before deployment to productive systems occur (without any IT involvement).

Another technical but important reason was that rules distribution by transport makes rule changes more complex because of dependencies. Historic versions of objects cannot easily be deleted. Transports themselves are resource (IT and manpower) intense as well as it comes with downtimes for receiving systems. All this is just eliminated with SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management.

What are the key customer pain points addressed by SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management?

The ability to quickly react to new business requirements and adapt processes accordingly is critical to the success of any organization. However, when it comes to the ability to dynamically implement or change the business logic that determines the behavior of processes in business applications most organizations still rely on the following time-consuming, error-prone procedure.

1. Domain expert documents business knowledge (e.g. the criteria that determine pricing, marketing promotions, supplier selection, tax calculations, etc.) in a tool such as Microsoft Excel
2. Domain expert asks IT staff to implement this business logic
3. IT staff implements the business logic (e.g. through customizing, custom coding or changing embedded rules) into multiple enterprise applications and sets it into production as part of the next software update cycle

This procedure is very time-consuming, error-prone and it requires intensive communication efforts between different groups. SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management is set to change this inefficient procedure within the lifecycle of productive mission critical business applications. The solution allows organizations to change the behavior of processes via decision services that are being managed outside of enterprise applications. In fact, the solution allows organization to move all their applications decision logic into one central place that offers role-specific entry points for IT and business experts to collaborate together. While IT experts can define technical details such as maintaining the connection to the various connected business applications and systems, business experts can define and change decision services in the form of business rules without any IT staff involvement and without having any programming knowledge or skills. These decision services can then be made available in multiple connected SAP and non-SAP applications

instantaneously and without having to touch the connected applications. This approach not only speeds up changes in business applications, but it also significantly improves the efficiency of your IT and business staff.

It also helps to improve the quality of the implemented decision-making logic as no details are being lost in translation from the business requirements to the actual IT implementation.

What are typical use cases/scenarios that customers will use the solution for?

The basic idea of SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management is to separate decision logic from processes and applications. SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management can be used wherever automated decisions are needed. Use cases can be found in any industry and any business area. For example:

- Banking: Relationship based pricing, credit decisioning, scorecards, etc
- Logistics and Shipping: Parts management, duties calculations, pricing calculations
- Public Sector: Tax calculations, customs duties, land regulations
- Healthcare: Patient monitoring, fraud detection, claims
- Education: Fee calculations, course selections
- Insurance: New product introduction, claims settlement, calculation of agent commissions

How does SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management compare to BRFplus?

SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management uses BRFplus for the modeling of decision services. This translates into a leaner and easier solution to adopt by customers already leveraging and using BRFplus. At the same time, SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management extends BRFplus with more powerful deployment options. SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management also adds capabilities to BRFplus like test case administration, debugger, and HANA integration, etc.

SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management makes BRFplus capabilities available to systems that do not run BRFplus (since its remote rules injection in the target process or application container lowers the bar in terms of dependencies). In addition, SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management allows the distribution of decision services (even the same decision service) to multiple systems for execution. All of this, achievable without technical support (one of the value added capabilities of SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management is to empower the non technical audience to be more self-sufficient).

From a more technical perspective, SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management allows to use data from remote systems for building the decision service (metadata, master data, and transactional data to be used for value help for instance). There is no need for any data replication, but usage of productive data for decision service modeling. With SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management, new decision services can be tested well by business experts before they are set live, while BRFplus forces into technical transport connected with release cycles or live changes in the productive systems, which often are not supported by IT.

How does SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management compare to SAP NetWeaver BRM?

Acceptance and usage of SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management is in the majority of scenarios directly proportional to how well it is integrated into the technology stack, specifically with the programming models and lifecycle management of those applications. This also includes the ability to embed the rule maintenance UI (User Interfaces) into the application UI.

SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management in its current version is optimized for the SAP ABAP stack. ABAP-centric use cases should make use of SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management given its natural technology affinity.

With SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management, it is also possible to wrap decision services as web services and enable remote consumption if desired (for example by NetWeaver Business Process Management, NetWeaver Process Integration, and/or other non-SAP systems/applications).

On the other side, SAP NetWeaver Business Rules Management (BRM) is Java-based and it makes sense when the target application is hosted in the NetWeaver Java Application Server or simply on any Java-base application.

Both solutions offer similar capabilities, but depending on where the target application or process is executed (ABAP stack or Java stack), a specific solution would make more sense.

How does SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management compare to the business rules capabilities on SAP HANA?

SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management in its current version is optimized for SAP ABAP stack. But basic HANA integration is provided. Specific expression types can be processed directly in the HANA layer. Further HANA enablement is currently being developed. But it is too early to make any commitments.

Is SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management available today?

SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management is general available since 2013. Ramp-up started in 2012.

How can customers get started with SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management?

There are service offerings to help organizations get started with SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management from SAP Consulting, as well as from professional services firms partnering with SAP such as [Decision Management Solutions](#).

TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

What are the main components of SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management?

There is the Decision Service Manager, which is the design time component of SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management. And there are arbitrary many managed systems where the decision services are being deployed to and being processed. Decision Service Manager makes use of BRFplus which again consists of design time (BRFplus workbench to model business rules), repository, and rules engine.

Do I need to upgrade from BRFplus to SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management?

SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management is a separate product that is being installed through an add-on. Prerequisite is an SAP NetWeaver 703/731 SP4 (SP9 or later recommended) or SAP NetWeaver 7.40 (SP5 or later recommended) system for the design time environment. Almost all business rules you may have created with BRFplus can be used with SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management at design time as well as in runtime. Exemptions are dynamic expressions and some custom expression types that are not supported by SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management

On the managed systems side (target containers where decision services are deployed) neither BRFplus nor SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management is needed at all. So no upgrade with respect to BRFplus/SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management is required for systems like SAP ECC or SAP CRM where the services are being executed. In most cases also installation of an SP is not required.

What are the advantages to upgrade from BRFplus to SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management?

SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management extends BRFplus with more powerful deployment options. When BRFplus allows deploying business rules in the same container where the design time environment is deployed, SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management allows having a central design time rules modeling environment and remotely deployed into the target managed systems (where you do not have to have the design time environment). SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management also adds capabilities to BRFplus like test case administration, debugger, and HANA integration, etc. SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management makes BRFplus capabilities available to systems that do not run BRFplus (since SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management's runtime lowers the bar in terms of dependencies). More information can be found here: <http://scn.sap.com/community/brm/blog/2013/09/27/sap-netweaver-decision-service-management-let-s-talk-features>.

What are the technical prerequisites to be able to use SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management?

For SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management, SAP NetWeaver 703/731 SP4 (SP9 or later recommended) or SAP NetWeaver 7.40 (SP5 or later recommended) and the SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management add-on is needed for the design time environment.

Minimal system requirements are good enough as SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management is only a design time system.

For managed systems the installation of a note is sufficient. No upgrades and no SPs have to be applied to the managed systems to be used with SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management.

The following release levels are supported for managed systems:

NetWeaver 7.40: any SP level

NetWeaver 7.03/7.31: SP4 or later

NetWeaver 7.02: SP6 or later

NetWeaver 7.01: SP6 or later

NetWeaver 7.00: SP17 or later

NetWeaver 6.40: SP13 or later

NetWeaver 7.30: SP2 or later

Which additional features do customers get with SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management that are not included in BRFplus?

Beyond the deployment options, nearly all new features are connected to SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management license such as test case administration, debugger, and HANA integration.

How does SAP support customers in transitioning from BRFplus to SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management?

Almost all existing BRFplus applications can be used with SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management without any migration. To transfer them to the SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management system, they can be added to a transport request that is being imported to the SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management system. Also it is possible to export the application to an xml file and import it into the SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management system. A call with the Solution Management to discuss the customer scenario and help the customer can be scheduled. Contact data can be found in [SCN](http://scn.sap.com/docs/DOC-29158) (<http://scn.sap.com/docs/DOC-29158>).

Is there any value to non-SAP customers in using SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management?

Decision services can also be executed on the SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management system directly allowing customers to wrap decision services as web services for remote consumption. SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management can become the central decision and rules management system in the customer landscape. SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management has an open API allowing partners to provide add-on solutions such as clients for non-ABAP environments (Java, C++, C#, ...). For Java Mouritech is offering such a solution. For details see here:

<http://scn.sap.com/community/brm/blog/2013/10/13/dsa-decision-service-accelerator>.

What are the key highlights that are on the roadmap for SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management?

- Enhanced service traceability
- Support of predictive models
- Rules deployment into HANA database

PRICING QUESTIONS

What is the pricing for SAP NetWeaver Decision Service Management?

Pricing is based on so called "Decision Service Asset Packages" that are defined as a collection of 25 decision service assets that can be used to create rules and policies for external consumption (irrelevant of the amount of target managed systems that the decision services can be deployed to). A decision service asset can include rules and expressions (e.g. decision tables, decision trees, formulas – excluding constants as an expression). Objects are counted in design time that are being deployed to at least one productive system.

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