# Foreword

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Once again, it is my pleasure and privilege to welcome you to the latest edition of the official WfMC Handbook. This year, 2003, is an auspicious date in the annuls of the Workflow Management Coalition—it marks the 10th anniversary of its founding, from what was then a small meeting in San Diego, California, when six or seven fledgling vendors got together under the auspices of the Black Forest Group to discuss the viability of developing a set of industry standards for the emerging workflow industry.

Since those days back in 1993, the WfMC has grown to become more than just a collection of competing vendors with their own objectives and agendas; it is now *the* globally recognized body for the advancement of workflow management technology and its use in industry. The WfMC is a proven force in the process management industry.

During this past year there have been significant moves and changes in the Business Process Management sector; this is especially true in the area of Standards. In some respects, the increase in both the interest and development of standards has resulted in some confusion within our industry sector—for instance, one question I am asked, seemingly daily, is "What exactly is the difference between Workflow and Business Process Management?"

I'm not going to make any effort to answer that question in this foreword except to say that part of the Coalition's charter is to assist users with understanding of the technology, therefore, as part of its obligations enormous strides have been made to reduce this confusion by working with other, complementary standards groups such as BPMI and the OMG as well as more vendor specific initiatives such as WSCI and BPEL4WS. The ongoing dialogue between the WfMC and the bodies mentioned above are going a long way toward removing any uncertainty and doubt—ensuring that the WfMC is well placed to provide clear answers to these questions. You can move ahead with confidence that the standards being developed will be cooperative, comprehensive and relevant across a wide range of industries.

Furthermore, the technology environment within which many of the contributors to this handbook operate continues to change at an ever-increasing pace. These technology changes, when taken in isolation, are

significant—but when combined, have the potential, and I don't think the language is too strong, to dramatically liberate all users of Information Technology from the copper-bound, expensive suit of chains that it has become.

These technologies, when they mature, will enable organizations to dynamically find, develop and tap into the services, systems and resources they need to support their business objectives and goals. At least that's the theory...

The combination of these technologies, which I have dubbed Enterprise Process Integration, won't be easy to build; nor will it happen overnight—but it *will* happen and it will change the way IT suppliers do business and how IT users exploit the technology. This anniversary edition of the Workflow Handbook goes a significant distance in putting together all of the parts of the jigsaw, and is, in my humble opinion, the best ever—encompassing a wide range of educational, readable and interesting topics.

The sections within this book deal with issues from an uncomplicated definition of the technology, architecture styles, the importance of Web Services, adaptive workflow in a distributed environment, Business Activity Management to discussions and examples on the importance and deployment of standards.

With such a variety of topics and ideas, it is easy to understand why the WfMC membership comprises a highly diverse group of workflow product vendors, analysts, universities, government organizations and corporations all touched by workflow technology. For the same reasons, it should not be surprising that different approaches are chosen for managing Business Processes. Combined with the "eBusiness" revolution, now part of our everyday lives, Business Process Management has become a rich and diverse technology.

The members of the Workflow Management Coalition hope you enjoy the Workflow Handbook 2003 and find it useful as you explore workflow and its many benefits.

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