

TM FORUM FRAMEWORX CONFORMANCE CERTIFICATION



Tribold Earns Trust and Builds Confidence through Frameworkx Conformance Certification

Tribold was founded in 2003 to serve the global Communications Service Provider (CSP) Market and is a leader in Enterprise Product Management (EPM) and Configure Price Quote (CPQ) Software. The company is headquartered in London with offices and staff in EMEA, North America and Asia-Pacific. Tribold is the leading provider of software solutions powering product agility for Communications Service Providers (CSPs) worldwide. Their objective is to enable CSPs to accelerate speed to market for new offerings, improve offer conversion rates, and improve efficiency in the fulfillment of orders.

Tribold solutions include:

- Tribold EPM (Enterprise Product Management) - a Centralized Product & Service Catalog with end-to-end Product Lifecycle Management capabilities.
- Tribold CPQ (Configure, Price, Quote) - a Services Engine powering the CSP Quote, Order Capture and Order Management processes.

Their experienced management team includes Ernest Margitta, VP of Marketing. Margitta has been specializing in Communications Service Provider (CSP) product management, integration and product strategy for 20 years. He led the product management team for mobile content at Telstra and worked with many service providers including Vodafone, Orange, Telecom Argentina, and Cable & Wireless prior to joining Tribold in 2007. Margitta provided background on how Tribold got involved in TM Forum's Frameworkx Conformance Certification program.

Why Tribold Underwent Certification

Before TM Forum introduced the program, many suppliers claimed they were conformant but there was no measurable way to validate the degree to which a product or solution adopted the information models and business processes found in Frameworkx.

Tribold encouraged TM Forum to develop a certification program and initially provided input to help determine what could and should be measured and how the scoring models might work.

Since then, the conformance certification program has evolved and the industry, both the buying and selling communities, benefit from having a trusted non-profit third party who is independent and expert in the standards verify whether or not a product or solution is conformant.

Tribold first completed certification of its Enterprise Product Management suite in June of 2009. At that time, the EPM product was assessed against the Information Framework (SID.) The Information Framework groups information into "aggregate business entities" and associated attribute definitions.

A business entity is an item of interest to the business, such as customer, product, service, or network. Its attributes are facts that describe the entity. Within the information models used in the Tribold Product, 12 aggregate business entities were assessed in three domains (Product, Services and Resource.)

Tribold re-certified its EPM™ (Enterprise Product Management) Product Suite Version 5.1 against TM Forum's Information Framework in February of 2012 and the Business Process Framework in August of 2011. The EPM™ Product Suite Version 5.1 is now certified against 18 aggregate business entities in three domains and 8 process areas in the Strategy, Infrastructure and Product domains of the Business Process Framework.

The Benefits of Conformance

Meets Customer Requirements

All of Tribold's customers, more than 20 service providers from all around the world – mandate conformance to the Information Framework (SID) component of TM Forum's Frameworkx. Each and every one of them have adopted the Information Framework and adapted it as needed to meet the needs of their unique environment.

"Approximately 95% of the sales processes we engage in for our Enterprise Product Management software solution require conformance to the Information Framework (SID) found in Frameworkx." said Ernest Margitta, VP Marketing for Tribold "We helped pioneer the process of Frameworkx conformance certification and view it as an integral part of our product development process."

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Facilitates Integration

Tribold, as a best of breed supplier in product and services lifecycle management, needs and wants to be able to integrate with suite and bespoke solutions. It is critical to their business that the market leverage the same standards in order to keep the costs of integration and interoperability down. It's also key to the buyers to know that they can "pick up" Tribold's EPM™ Product Suite and it will integrate with their legacy platforms.

Reduces Costs

According to Margitta, certification does drive down the cost everyone incurs of doing business. It provides a clear and easy starting point for the suppliers to scope the implementation and discover where customization will be required and where there will be points of integration that need further work. Conformance to the standards allows the buyers to procure, use and integrate certified products and solutions more quickly, easily and cheaply.

Permits a Focus on Functionality

When both the supplier and the buyer conform to the standards it reduces the amount of time both parties spend defining and describing their information model and frees them up to focus on how the data is used, where it goes and what it does. The discussions can revolve around software functionality and usability and processes vs. what data has to be managed and how it is defined. In the long run, the services providers spend more time focused on how the certified products or solutions drive profitability or innovation in their business.

Provides Input to Product Development

When Tribold first underwent the Frameworkx Conformance Certification they genuinely believed they were conformant and in general they were but as they went through the process and examined the models and compared them to how they are executed within their products they found a couple areas where there was room for improvement. Product changes needed to be made in order for them to be fully conformant. The teams that worked on this increased their knowledge and understanding to a highly detailed level and were able to provide greater input to product strategy.

Earns Trust and Builds Confidence

During pre-sales, procurement and post-sale activities the Tribold team works with enterprise and information architects who spend their days delving deeply into the models for which they are responsible. After undergoing Frameworkx Conformance Certification the Tribold team was even more knowledgeable about the underlying models and could speak with great confidence and in detail with their current and prospective clients.

The fact that they can use the same language and lexicon and can answer very detailed questions about how their product leverages the Information and Business Process Frameworks enables them to earn the trust of the services providers they work with. There is a common bond. It also gives them the ability them to fully understand the impact when there are deviations from the model.

Meets New Demands Driven by Digital Services

In the new world of digital services, it's not just the CIO and his or her direct reports who are concerned with the product or solution that will enable product and services lifecycle management. Product lifecycles that were four months are now a month and lifecycles that were a month are now a day. When Tribold meets with a current or prospective customer in a pre-sales or strategy discussion it is most often with the product and marketing managers. There is an overriding demand for extremely agile product lifecycle management tools that can integrate and work with the complex systems in which the service provider has already invested greatly. There is great relief in knowing that a common industry standardized information model can be driven through those systems to meet their requirements.

Demonstrates Thought Leadership

By helping to initiate the Frameworkx Conformance Certification program and continually contributing to the model and providing feedback and input on the Information and Business Process Frameworks, Tribold is helping to evolve the industry. Tribold is one of the many players working to move the industry to a level of maturity where standardization and productization helps reduce the amount of time and development effort spent on customization. The goal is to reduce unnecessary spending so that service providers can re-direct investment dollars to areas that drive competitive advantage.

The Final Word

In the end, Tribold is pleased and proud of the certification of its EPM™ Product Suite. According to Margitta, achieving conformance to Frameworkx is viewed as a critical foundation of their product strategy and has become a baseline for all product releases going forward.

When asked if he had any insights he could share with others who want to get the most out of their Frameworkx Conformance Certification Assessment, Margitta shared the following advice.

Resource the Assessment Properly

Margitta states that undertaking the assessment is not a trivial task. It requires time from knowledgeable resources who understand your product and the Information Framework and/or Business Process Framework in sufficient enough detail to provide the right evidence of conformance. The resources assigned to the certification should also be expert enough to understand the impact of whether or not particular components of the product are conformant and make decisions about what to do next.

Get Executive Sponsorship

He further asserts that the certification program should be owned at the product level. The CTO or executive directly responsible for the product should be the business owner of the certification. Otherwise, the output from the certification process will not make its way back into product development. The other key point is that the product and the Frameworkx model should continue to evolve together.

Catherine Michel, Tribold Founder and CTO states "Naturally we are delighted that Tribold has again been awarded TM Forum Information Framework conformance certification less than 3 years on from first achieving the Conformance Mark. We're focused on delivering rapid returns and business benefits to our customers, and adhering to the Information Framework can only assist in this aim."

To learn more about TM Forum Frameworkx Conformance Certification Assessments please visit www.tmforum.org/conformance.

To learn more about Tribold and its EPM™ Product Suite please visit www.tribold.com.

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