

Course ISE 323: Information Systems Engineering 1

Recitation 8 Exercise

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Today's recitation will be divided into two halves. During the first hour we will work on RFPs as explained in the first section below. In the second hour we will start to work on DFDs (which we will continue next week) for an analysis example shown in the second section.

1 RFP Examples

Each student should lookup two RFPs online related to Information Systems. Read the RFP and write down the following information:

1. Who is the organization who sent out the RFP?
2. What is the purpose of the RFP?
3. Who would be potential suppliers who could answer the RFP?
4. Summarize the organization's requirements as listed in the RFP.
5. Write down the major parts of the RFP. What is there? What is missing?

We will spend one hour on this part of the recitation.

2 DFDs

In the second hour of the recitation, we will start working on a DFD example which will be continued next week.

In this recitation we will work on making DFDs for the following information system. I provide you with the general story that the system must support. Your job is to work in teams of two or three to develop DFDs for a system to support the story. Every so often we will break and compare results working on the board.

2.1 What to do

We discussed in class the general steps for making DFDs. Today you will do an exercise to do some of those steps yourselves.

1. Break up into groups of 1, 2, or 3 students to work together.
2. Read the case description below. It returns to a window company example. The description is not complete, but it is detailed enough to get you started on making DFDs.
3. Create lists of the following things:

- A list of all external entities
 - A list of all data sources and data bases which will be needed
 - A list of the important data processes - consider them hierarchically
 - A list of important data flows (reads, writes, data transfer between processes)
4. When you have your lists ready, start analyzing the story and preparing to draw a high level DFD. Ignore the low level details of the example at first and just work on the high level processes and behavior that is needed.
 5. **Begin working on a DFD for the Customer Request Management** portion of the story.

2.2 Window Factory Description

2.2.1 Company Description

The company makes custom vinyl windows as well as standard sizes. They also make specialty “bay windows” which are higher priced and have more involved assembly. The vinyl windows are produced in several stages along different manufacturing lines for practical considerations:

1. A vinyl extrusion line produces the vinyl sides and frame for the windows.
2. A glass cutting line which takes large sheets of glass and cuts them with a knife or laser to the required size
3. An assembly line to put together the vinyl pieces into frames and hanging sides.
4. A specialized sealing line which takes the frames, the glass, puts them together, puts a layer of insulating gas between the two, and seals them.

Since the company makes standard size as well as custom windows, there is a mix of parts, vinyl pieces, and glass which must be manufactured. Custom windows need to be made to size and have specially cut glass to fit them.

The company has limited storage space and very fragile materials, so it wants to keep partially finished pieces around as little as possible.

The company receives orders for not single windows, but collections of windows. Installation costs make it worthwhile to do installations all at once for an entire house or building, not just one window. That means that orders should be assembled and produced all at once to minimize storage needs and prevent mixups.

2.2.2 The Role of the Information System

Aside from the scheduling problem, which is very hard to get right on its own, the coordination of the different manufacturing lines is essential. The goal of the information system is to allow the day’s schedule of production to be coordinated such that the vinyl and glass parts are available at about the same time and so that the glass sealing line works on similar jobs as much as possible. The glass sealing machinery must be calibrated for different size jobs, so it makes sense to do similar ones in a row. Extruding vinyl parts is also something best done by type since the machines to do the extrusion need to be warmed up, calibrated, and tested before producing materials.

Each manufacturing line has its own main computer which controls the line as a whole as well smaller computers which run each machine.

The information system needs to supply the schedule for the day to each manufacturing line and keep track of how they are progressing. Machine failures, material breakage, and errors are an inherent part of the daily work. Workers enter information about breaks, errors, and problems into their central computer. If the computer sees that a job is being held up at a specific point in the manufacturing line, it will try to preempt the problem by adjusting the daily schedule to get some work out of the parts that can.

The window factory produces windows of several kinds based on orders or catalog requests. There are several important parts and processes that the window factory does:

2.2.3 Customer Request Management

Customers can express interest in purchasing windows from the company by calling the company's toll free number, sending an email, or sending a request by mail. When a request is received, the potential customer indicates whether he wants to receive a catalog by mail, have a phone consultation, or have a sales representative arrive at his house. Each expression of interest is stored in a CRM database along with the requested method of contact.

Catalog requests are handled every morning at 10am. Outstanding requests for catalogs are retrieved from the database, the catalogs are packaged and mailed based on the contact information, and the outstanding request database is updated. Requests for phone consultations include a preferred time for contact.

Two sales representatives take care of all phone consultations based on the outstanding requests. They start each day by looking at the outstanding requests, arranging a schedule for themselves based on them, and updating the outstanding requests database as appropriate.

Home consultations are handled by two window sales professionals who are able to measure buildings for windows quickly and explain the different options to customers. Home visits are all scheduled for Thursdays or Fridays, times when people are likely to be home. The scheduling is done one week ahead so the window sales professionals know their schedules ahead of time. Once an outstanding request has been scheduled, it is indicated a "in process" until the actual home visit is concluded at which point it is updated to "concluded."

To follow up on sales consultations and catalog requests, managers can generate reports about outstanding requests, concluded requests, and orders. Customers who have not placed orders after receiving their catalog, phone consultation, or home consultation are included on the report which is forwarded to the sales staff for follow up phone calls.

2.2.4 Order Management

Customers can send orders to the factory either based on information from a consultation or directly without initial consultation. This includes contractors who resell the factory's windows and send detailed requests for specific quantities of windows.

Customer orders arrive by fax, phone, mail, or email. When an order arrives, it is divided into two categories: (1) requests for one or more standard window sizes or (2) requests for custom sized or shaped windows. In case of orders which include both kinds, the order is divided into two, with the standard sized windows placed in a secondary order request. Order information is correlated with requests for customer information to see whether the customer (if not a contractor) had requested information previously.

Standard window requests are stored in a database separately from custom windows since they are handled differently by the factory.

The order databases are managed by the stock manager and manufacturing manager and updated as will be detailed below.

At the end of each day, the computer generate a report about which orders have been fulfilled that day. Orders which contain both standard and custom sizes are not considered finished until both parts are completed. When an order is finished being produced, a notice is sent to the customer's contact information as well as a request to set up a payment schedule. Once the schedule has been established by the customer, the order will be released for shipment to the customer's site. Orders which have been completed and have not received a response for payment within 10 days are generated in a separate daily report. The manager sends the report to the sales department to contact the customers by phone to remind them about payment.

2.2.5 Standard Windows Management

Standard sized windows orders are processed in two phases.

First, the factory stock room is examined at the beginning of each day to see whether there are sufficient standard sized windows in stock to satisfy the order. If yes, the quantity requested is deleted from the database of available windows and the order is marked as completed. If there are not sufficient windows, the manager must decide whether to set aside windows to partially complete the order or to place the full

quantity of the request in line for manufacture. The manager may choose to do the second option if the order is large and the manager wants to keep a quantity available for smaller orders which may arrive in the mean time. The residual amount of windows which are needed are then added to the outstanding requests database for the standard size stock room.

Since the factory floor produces standard sized windows whenever they have a lull in manufacturing, the stock room only sends a special request to the factory floor when the number of requested windows is greater than 10. When that happens, the manager creates a manufacturing request for the factory floor, sends it to them, and marks the order as “in process.”

At the end of each manufacturing day (around 4:30pm) the stock room workers note what new standard size window parts have been delivered to the stock room. They generate a report which is then sent to the manager. The manager examines the report against the outstanding standard window orders to see which ones can be marked as “completed” and be released for payment or delivery. Normally orders are fulfilled in a first-come-first-serve order. However, if an order consists of both standard and custom windows and the custom portion of the order has already been finished (meaning that the standard size windows are holding up the release of the order), he will give the order priority over others. After making the decisions about order completion, the stock room manager updates the orders database, the available stock database, and sends a notice to the payment and delivery department telling them which orders have been finished and may proceed for payment and delivery.