



## Newsletter Vol. 30 - Introduction

Softengine News is dedicated to keeping you up to date with the latest information regarding SAP Business One systems, Softengine solutions and Best Business Practices.

### What's New?

#### Spotlight on SAP Business One – Management by Exception; Alerts & Approvals

##### Alerts and Approvals

You can set up immediate notifications and automatic responses to important business events through user-programmable, workflow-based alerts. Designate the events you want to track and define ranges for acceptable tolerances and limits connected to these events. Then, when indicators fall out of the predetermined range set for the event, you will receive an alert. Any breach of business policy generates an immediate notification to the manager and initiates a workflow process to manage the event. Using alerts in SAP Business One, you can proactively **manage by exception** and eliminate the need to monitor activities manually. You can know in real time every time a set threshold is crossed so you can take immediate action. You can also drill down to get information about the alert, which can help you make informed decisions regarding future actions associated with the event.

##### Approval Procedures

Approval procedures in SAP Business One are a collection of powerful mechanisms for controlling who can do what and who must be consulted to permit exceptions. Approval procedures involve setting limits on the size and nature of the business transactions that each user is authorized to execute. When someone tries to post a document that exceeds a limit set through the approval procedures, that document is automatically saved as a draft during the approval process.

SAP Business One supports thresholds for approvals, stages for approvals, and a general purpose mechanism that can subject almost any type of document to approval. When a document is flowing through the approval process, it is stored as a draft until approval is granted, and that is when the person who initiated the document can post it.

Approvals have two dimensions:

- Approval thresholds, which are criteria above or below which approvals are needed for various categories of documents. SAP Business One includes predefined terms that you can use to build criteria, or you can create customized criteria by writing a query.
- Approval stages, which are the steps the approval follows from the originator of the request to one or many people who must approve the work

The best way to get an idea of how approvals work is through an example. Let's imagine that Fred, a departmental administrator responsible for ordering office supplies, has a limit of \$1000 per purchase order. One day, to prepare for a large meeting, Fred has to order a much larger than normal amount of supplies, which results in a purchase order for \$2,000. When Fred tries to add that purchase order, he gets a message that indicates approval is necessary, and that it has been requested. The purchase order is not

added but saved as a draft, and a message is sent to Fred’s manager. If Fred’s manager grants approval, Fred can add the purchase order. Figure 1 shows the steps in the approval process.

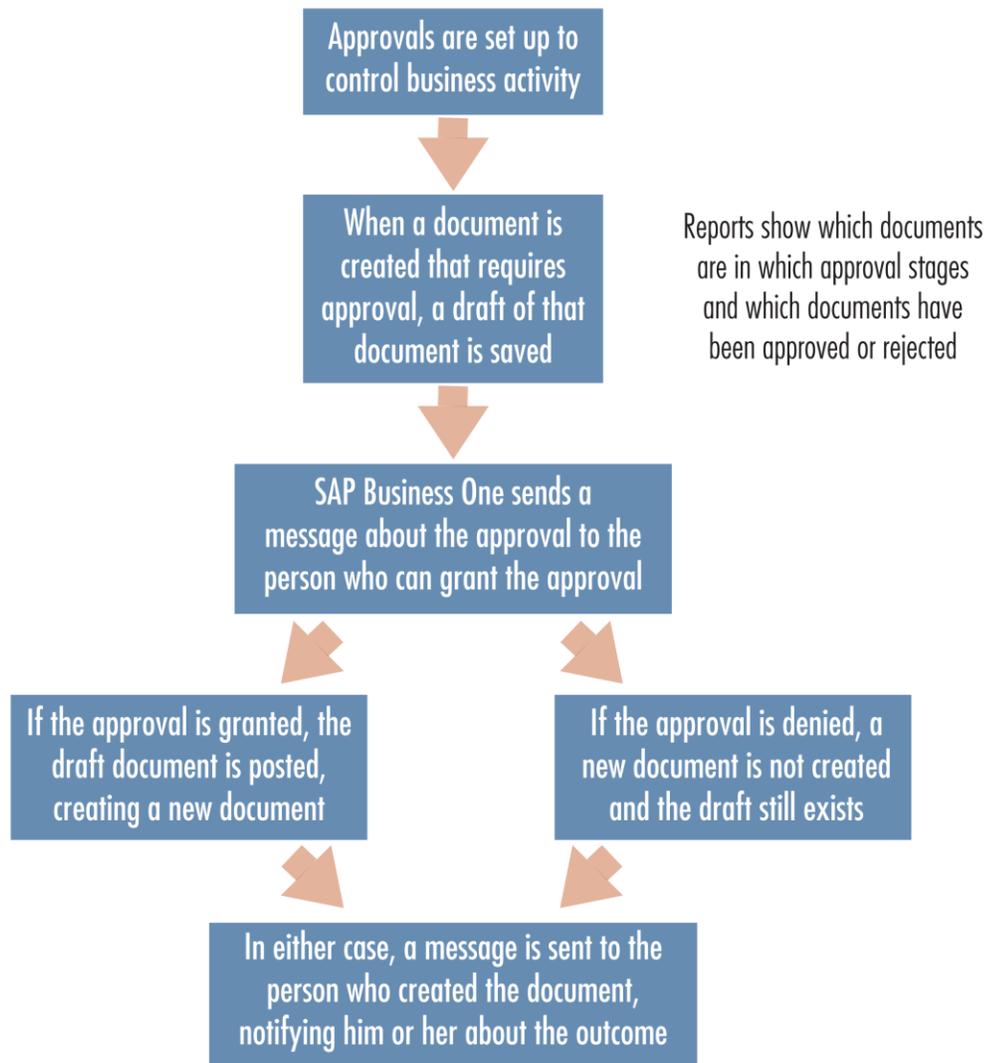


Figure 1: Steps in the approval process

If the approval is denied, the user can modify the document to meet the approval criteria. Once updated, if the document now meets the terms, the document is added to the system. If approval is still required, a new approval process starts.

With templates for approvals properly set up, approvals are managed in the following way. When an originator creates a document that needs approval, SAP Business One sends a message to the authorizer who is required to approve the document (there could be a chain of approvals required). An authorizer can approve or reject the document using the *Messages/Alert Overview* window (shown in Figure 2). If there are alerts pending for you, this window appears when you log in to SAP Business One. This window can also appear while you’re in the application, depending on settings made for you by your system administrator in *Administration* → *Alerts Management*.

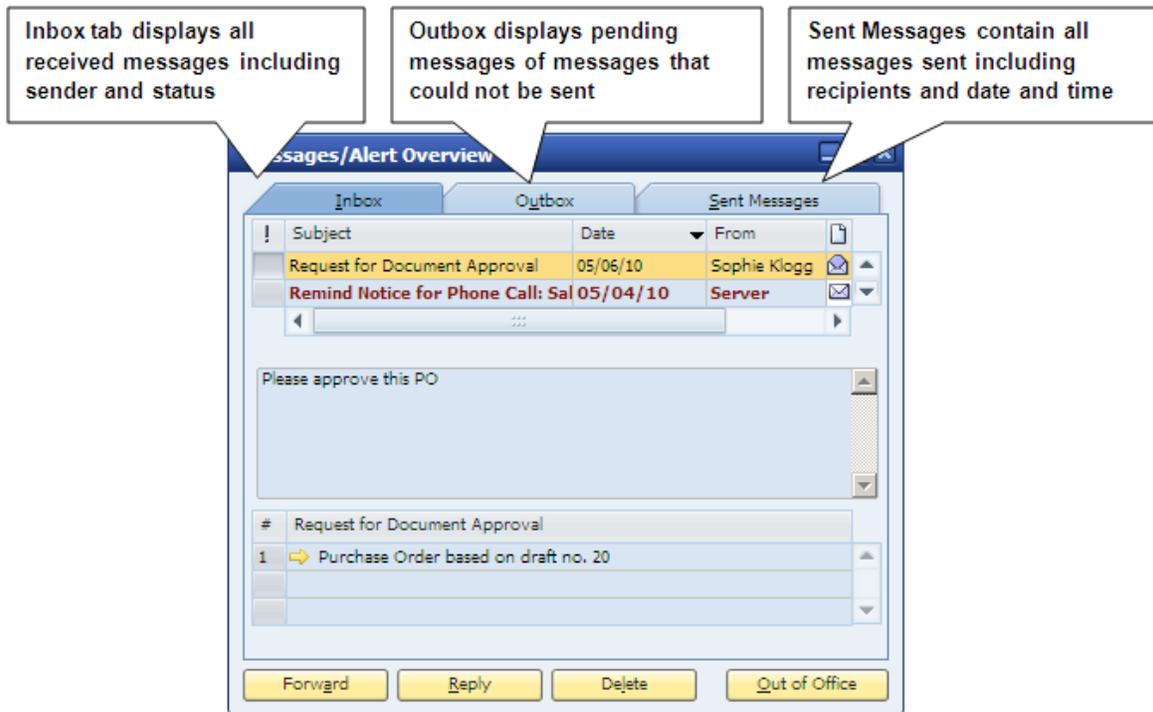


Figure 2: The *Messages/Alert Overview* window

The *Messages/Alert Overview* shows information about the document that is pending approval; clicking on the orange link arrows allows authorizers to quickly review documents requiring their approval. Authorizers can add remarks that clarify the rationale behind decisions. No matter what the outcome, as soon as the authorizer acts on the document, SAP Business One sends a message to the originator of the document, and the message is displayed in that user's *Messages/Alert Overview* window. If the document is approved, the originator can then convert the approved draft to a document directly from the *Messages/Alert Overview* window if desired. If the authorizer does not approve the document, the originator receives a message to that effect as well. As you would expect, in this case the draft cannot be converted to a regular document.

## Are You a Best-Run Business?

### Want to shorten a lengthy sales process?

*Performing the sales steps in sequence and identifying all decision influencers are two practices that can accelerate your sales.*

- *Without a personalized presentation, you can't clearly prove to the prospect that you understand their business. Too much reliance on email and technology in the sales process can be a problem. Selling is still an emotional process, and face-to-face contact is key.*
- *Identifying the proper decision makers is another critical step towards accelerating the sales cycle.*

Ken Thoreson. President, Acumen Management Group Ltd.

For more information about how SAP Business One application enables you to **manage your business by exception**, please contact Barry Lederman: 818.704.7000, [blederman@softengineusa.com](mailto:blederman@softengineusa.com).

This promotional e-mail provides information on Softengine's products and services that may interest you. If you prefer not to receive e-mail from us in the future, please reply with subject: Unsubscribe.