

# Sidebar for the Software Industry: *Reconfiguration Agility*

*Realizing the Management Imperative of assemble-to-order  
production capability for the business itself*

by Roger T. Burlton, Ronald G. Ross & John A. Zachman<sup>1</sup>

*This Sidebar is dependent on The Business  
Agility Manifesto for context and meaning.*

~~~

1. The preeminent software concern to support business agility is *reconfiguration agility* – how business solutions are *configured* – and rapidly *reconfigured* – at any given point in time.
2. Building blocks for reconfiguration agility should be based on business knowledge and housed in a Business Knowledge-Base.
3. Assembling business solutions *procedurally* results in inflexibility, bloat and complexity – *configuration stagnation*. A *declarative* approach, one based on rules, is far superior.
4. Reconfiguration agility envisions rapid, traceable business change *after* initial deployment for business products, business processes, and other infrastructure investments.
5. These days many business processes need not be undertaken in pre-specified sequences. That doesn't mean they follow no rules. It means they need to be

---

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Gladys S.W. Lam for input to the content and organization of the Manifesto document suite and to Sasha Aganova for shepherding the work through to completion.

configured with the appropriate business rules and bots just-in-time.

6. Agile software development practices have resulted largely from limitations in current technology to easily reuse explicit business knowledge.
7. Faster development of code using programming languages is not the answer to business agility. The software industry should provide new interactive tools to support rapid reconfiguration of business products and processes.
8. The software industry has failed to appreciate something fundamental about business activity. Business is grounded in obligations, which can be violated. Such business rules require selective reaction to violations (for example alerts or corrective measures) and graded levels of enforcement (all the way from strictly enforced to simply guideline).
9. The debate in the software industry over rule-based vs. statistics-based AI techniques will never alter the fact that business is fundamentally obligation-based.
10. IT Project Professionals need automated knowledge companions – bots that can engage in dialogs to assess business knowledge for gaps, conflicts, ambiguity, and completeness.