Rules management technology plays an important role in the management and automation of business decisioning processes. When you select the FICO™ Blaze Advisor® business rules management system to improve the management of your business applications and processes, you reap the benefits of developing complex applications faster, responding more quickly to changing business factors and reducing the total cost of day-to-day operations.

To guide and accelerate your implementation of Blaze Advisor system, FICO offers the Starter Service. This service provides the training, planning, design and implementation support vital to your success. The Starter Service provides you with access to FICO consultants with extensive experience in the use of Blaze Advisor and its implementation in a variety of system environments. We provide you with unparalleled insight into making your Blaze Advisor project a success.

The Starter Service consists of four steps: Blaze Advisor Basic Training, Rule Service Planning and Design Methodology, Rule Service Deployment Planning and Mentoring.

**Blaze Advisor Basic Training**

Blaze Advisor Basic Training is essential to accelerate your rules management learning. In this three-part course, we provide your rule writers and developers with a class devoted to rule authoring, business user interface design and deployment. Over four days, clients learn how to develop rules within the technical development environment, create easy-to-use HTML templates that allow non-technical business users to create and modify rules, and deploy their final application. Blaze Advisor Basic Training provides your rule writers and developers with a solid foundation for developing their first Blaze Advisor system-enabled application. We prepare you to move to the next stage of the Starter Service to learn the Blaze Advisor methodology for rule application planning and design.

**Rule Service Design**

In this step, your developers combine the basic elements they learned in the Basic Training to form complete rule services in support of working applications. More time is spent covering integration of object models based on database designs, XML schemas and Java classes. Advanced rule concepts are introduced, including patterns, event rules and collections of objects. Clients receive guidance on how best to separate and manage rules into sub-tasks for best performance, maintainability and clarity.

**Rule Maintenance Application Development**

Developers learn how to create rule maintenance applications that allow business users to change and maintain critical decision points in production systems in a secure and controlled manner. Developers use the Rule Maintenance Application Generator to automatically generate a complete web-based interface for their business users. Training also includes advanced techniques for customizing the Rule Maintenance Application to work with more complex rule templates, user controls, security settings and operational look and feel. This is hands-on training, with clients creating working applications.

**Rule Service Deployment**

Instruction in this part of the course teaches clients how to deploy scalable rule services on all leading application server and hardware platforms. Clients learn how to embed Blaze Advisor business rules management system rule services into either single-user or multi-tier distributed enterprise applications. Additional material covered includes an overview of the Blaze Advisor system’s API, configuration
Rule service planning and design methodology

- **Business Rules**
  - Acquisition of business rules
  - Rulesets and ruleflows

- **Business Object Model**
  - Techniques for business object model design
  - Object model import and creation

- **Rule Invocation Interface**
  - Business data sharing
  - Calling rule services

- **High-Level Project Plan**
  - High-level project plan created
  - Visibility into major project tasks

Rule Service Planning and Design Methodology speeds your application development and deployment.

Components of this step include:

**Business Rules**
We work with you to document a subset of your business rules and give you the tools, techniques and methodologies to complete the business rules acquisition process.
You are also provided with the tools to design and document the rulesets and ruleflows needed for rule execution.

**Business Object Model**
The business object model is a structured view of your data that is used by the rules.
An “object” typically contains the data from a physical business item such as an application form.
Our team works with your application to demonstrate the techniques used to create a business object model in Blaze Advisor.
You will be able to extend this work to finish your object model development.

**Rule Invocation Interface**
The Rule Invocation interface defines how business data is shared by rules and the rest of your application, how rule services can be called upon by your business process and when the rules are processed.
In conjunction with your architects, we describe how, when and where rules will be used by your application.

**High-Level Project Plan**
A high-level project plan is created to provide visibility into major project tasks.
The plan provides approximate durations for the major tasks based on information collected during the four-week period.
The high-level project plan serves as the foundation upon which your project manager builds your detailed plan.

**Rule Service Deployment Planning**
A critical step in the use of Blaze Advisor is creating a robust plan for how to best deploy into your specific architecture.
Establishing a well-defined plan for creating and deploying Blaze Advisor rule services in your applications is extremely important.
To establish your deployment plan, we spend three consecutive days working closely with your solution architect to enable you to leverage our deep experience with deployment of Blaze Advisor.

Your planning is established in the key areas of:

- **Rule Service Invocation** to aid in planning for how your deployment will be affected by your specific environment, with consideration given to the different invocation options:
  - RPC-based (e.g., J2EE/RMI-IIOP, RMI, CORBA, .NET).
  - Messaging or event-based (e.g., MQSeries, J2EE/MDB/JMS, COM+, etc.).
  - Web-based (e.g., JSP, Servlets, web services technologies, ASP, etc.).

- “Stateless” Versus “Stateful” Rule Services needs are evaluated and planning advice is provided to facilitate your implementation.

- **Performance Considerations** are examined to identify potential bottlenecks and ensure optimal system performance.

- **Exception Handling** requirements are evaluated and implementation guidance is provided.

- **Remote Debugging** options are discussed to create a plan for debugging problems on the production system, should the need arise.

The completion of Deployment Planning provides your staff with a strong understanding of the options and trade-offs available for Blaze Advisor deployment, how each will affect your deployment and how your deployment can be adapted to your system environment.
Mentoring
Proper guidance during the design phase of your FICO™ Blaze Advisor® implementation is key to keeping your Blaze Advisor business rules management system project on track. Mentoring follows Rule Service Planning and Design Methodology to maintain project momentum and guide key design decisions during the crucial early phase of design.

Our consultants provide you with demonstrable support within important design elements:

- **Interface Design**—advice for interfacing Blaze Advisor system with your existing systems for the exchange of data and results. This includes the structure of data (objects, messages) passed to the rule services and parsing of data.

- **Decision Logic Design**—guidance on design of the object model, ruleflows, rule templates and the rule repository architecture.

- **Rule Maintenance Design**—recommendations provided on use of Blaze Advisor to create a Rule Maintenance Application, including scope and options available for addressing rule maintenance.

- **Design Review**—review of your team’s design work with recommendations for how to improve the design of your rules implementation.

The four weeks of Mentoring supplies you with an experienced source for checking design ideas, learning by example and asking project-specific questions during the critical early stages of design and development. Further mentoring is also available to provide you with additional support where needed and to assist with larger Blaze Advisor projects.

Why FICO?
FICO helps companies realize Decision Management goals through advanced analytics, and business and technology integration. We help organizations intelligently leverage their information assets through analytics, optimize the decisions that develop, and expand and maximize profitable interactions consistently across the enterprise. Our deep consulting expertise is built on 50 years of experience and delivery of thousands of custom solutions.

Recent Honors for FICO and Blaze Advisor
- Best Business Rules Management System for 2008—InfoWorld
- Best Business Rules-Based Decision Management for 2008—Yphise
- 2008 Innovative Implementation Award—ACORD

FICO services ensure you realize the benefits of the Blaze Advisor system
- Empower business users to change and maintain their own rules
- Build sophisticated object models incorporating existing corporate data sources
- Graphically design multi-step rule services with conditional branching, reusable rule sets, functions and questions sets
- Build rule-based web portals
- Deploy scalable rule services with exceptional performance on all the leading platforms
- Accelerate rules management learning
- Ensure no false starts—project planning and design gets you started the right way, the first time
- Support the creation of a robust plan to deploy on your specific architecture
- Provide guidance during the design phase to keep your project on track

For more information

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