

Beating the Business Function Blues

By Penny Allen

EI Editor's Note: *It's no surprise that with over 10,000 business functions in EnterpriseOne® 8.12, and yet only a handful documented, working with business functions can bewilder even seasoned developers. Penny Allen, our ERW guru, has encountered this issue numerous times, and has helped clients find their way around business functions (BSFN). Therefore, based on her Collaborate OS presentation, Penny has assembled this handy tutorial for us, complete with a behind-the-scenes look at BSFNs to help de-mystify the process. Use this the next time you encounter a BSFN of the undocumented variety, and you just may be able to figure out that elusive mapping.*

A full PowerPoint of this presentation is available for download in the JDEtips Document Library, under the Collaborate OS category.

Why is everyone so frustrated over the use of business functions? Well, a large part of it could be that, at last count for release E1 8.12, there are 10,784 business functions! Ordinarily, you would think more would be a good thing; however, less than 10% of these business functions are documented! Without this documentation, you're left wondering what various business functions are intended to do for you or, worse yet, how to map the data structure that is required to pass the information back and forth into your application.

The most common question I get from fellow developers and clients is "how do I map this particular Business Function?" As I've helped clients figure out this mapping, I've come to realize that they actually don't understand the design components of the Business Function itself and, therefore, can't actually look at the code. With that need in mind, it is the intent of this article to explain the different elements that collectively make up a Business Function, and also to share the mappings of some of the common functions that I use often. The topics I will cover include:

- Business Functions (BSFN)
- Data Structures and Named Mapping
- The Logic, C code or NER

- Named Event Rules (NER)
- Examples of Commonly Used BSNFs

Business Functions (BSFN) Defined

Business functions are designed to perform a logic routine that can be used in either batch or interactive applications. Approximately 65% are functions written in C code, and 35% are Named Event Rules (NER). NERs are scripted using the toolset, and then compiled into C code utilizing Microsoft Visual C++.

The object naming convention is very important. An object named Bxyyyy identifies those written in C, while objects named Nxyyyy are Named Event Rules.

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Data Structures

Once you have the business function object as a whole, whether Bxyyyy or Nxyyyy, we can now look at the individual components. A data structure is a group of parameters that are used to pass values into and out of the business function logic at runtime. It is this data structure that we see when we call a business function into the event rules of our application. In our example, we will look at B83000PA. This is a Business Function that is used to retrieve the total Period Activity from F0902, based on the period number and fiscal year that are passed in through a processing option template at runtime. Imagine yourself in OMW: You search for B83000PA using the search window on the right; you find the BSFN and drag it to the left into one of your project folders. If you then focus on the BSFN, you can enter "Design" using the icons down the center, just like you would go into report design. Once you start the Business Function Design aid, you will see a screen like the one shown in Figure 1. Business function example B83000PA has an associated Data Structure D83000PA.

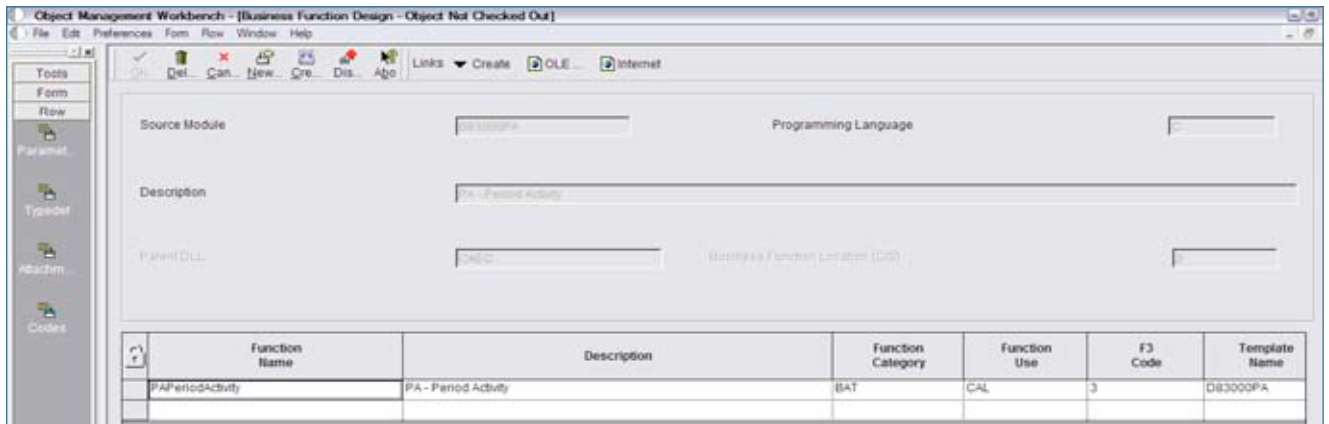


Figure 1: Business Function B83000PA with Associated Data Structure D83000PA

As you can see by looking in the grid area, there is a data structure associated with the function and it is named D83000PA. Notice it is the same as the BSFN name, only with the letter “D” instead of “B”. We now have two separate objects:

B83000PA – Business Function D83000PA – Data Structure

The data structure is used to pass parameters into the business function, and return the results to the calling application. From this form, use the Form pull down menu or Form Exit Bar and choose Edit. You will now see the actual data structure as illustrated in Figure 2.

We’ve all been here before, right? We have called a business function into our report, we see a data structure that has many parameters, and we don’t know how to map them. We cross our fingers, we cross our toes, we cross anything else that we might have to cross, and we click on the Business Function Notes, only to find that it is one of the 90% that are not documented! Perhaps you have become familiar with the screen shown in Figure 3.

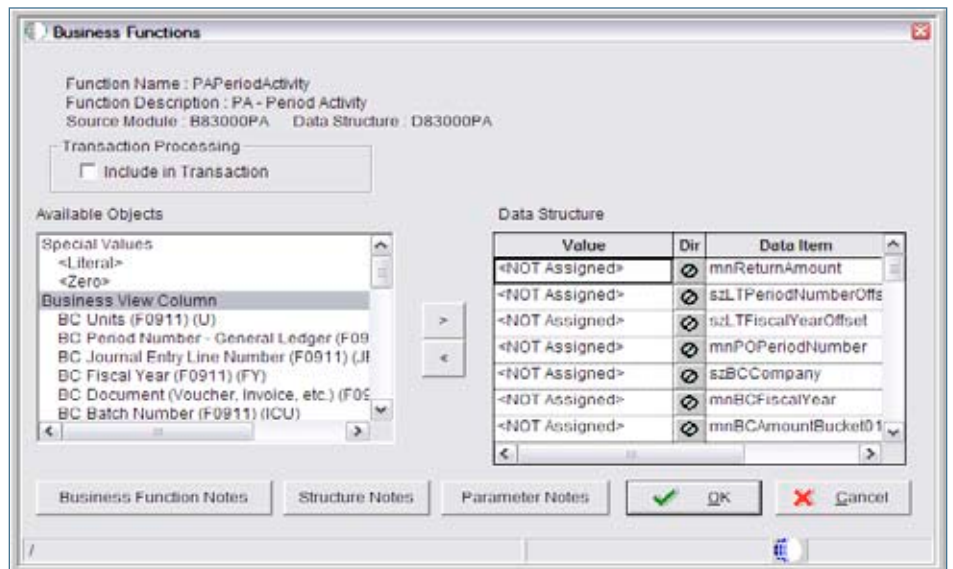


Figure 2: Data Structure Example D83000PA



Figure 3: Undocumented Business Function Notes

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