

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CORPORATION ADMINISTRATORS

2008 Merit Award Nomination

Electronic Master Business Licence and Service Guarantee

Submitted by: Director, Companies and Personal Property Security Branch  
Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services  
ServiceOntario

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## **Introduction**

Electronic Master Business Licence in 2 business days -- guaranteed!

ServiceOntario is transforming government service delivery to meet or exceed customer expectations...every time. Excellence in customer service is demonstrated by the new Electronic Master Business Licence (eMBL) and Service Guarantee, available through [www.ServiceOntario.ca](http://www.ServiceOntario.ca). This licence serves as proof of having registered a business name in the province – a requirement in most situations if an individual is not using his or her own name and is not incorporated. The eMBL document is used with financial institutions and other levels of government as proof of having complied with business name registration obligations. Over 75% of the business name registrations accepted by the Companies and Personal Property Security Branch are now processed 100% electronically using this direct-to-government electronic service. After successfully completing an online application for a new business name, customers are emailed an electronic version of their master business licence in two business days, or their money is refunded. This online business registration service can be accessed seamlessly through direct-to-government, as well as from BizPaL, the online multi-government business service for entrepreneurs. The Electronic Master Business Licence Service Guarantee is North America's first public service money back guarantee associated with a business service or product. It is also a flagship offering for ServiceOntario, as the Ontario government's retail service provider to over 12 million Ontario residents.

Since the launch of the Electronic Master Business Licence and Service Guarantee in January 2007, not a single transaction has exceeded the 2-day service guarantee -- a 100% service fulfillment rate! In fact, more than 90% of applicants receive their electronic licence on the same day that they apply. This service improvement, supported by the service guarantee, is encouraging entrepreneurs to move towards the convenience and speed of online government services. With this success rate, ServiceOntario is making its vision a reality – meeting or exceeding customer expectations...every time.

## **Description of the Project**

Prior to the implementation of the new Electronic Master Business Licence (eMBL) and Service Guarantee for clients using this direct-to-government on-line service, a successful application would return a PDF Master Business Licence as a screen display. For clients familiar with the technology, it was possible to save and print the product. However many users had difficulties printing and retrieving the document. And for those using the electronic service after hours, there was no electronic document available. The client had to wait up to 10 business days for a Master Business Licence to be mailed out.

The Companies and Personal Property Security Branch of ServiceOntario had two primary objectives in supporting this project. The project furthered the objectives of the Branch and ServiceOntario to improve customer service by offering enhanced service for an already popular product. Those using the on-line service during business hours now received an e-mail with an easy-to-store PDF product within two business days. For the many clients requesting a Master Business Licence outside of normal business hours, there was now the

option of requesting an eMBL via email within 2 business days – a 500% improvement over the hard-copy service that took 10 business days or more to arrive. Secondly, from the Branch's perspective, by emphasizing ServiceOntario's commitment to the convenience and reliability of on-line services, reinforced by guaranteeing the service, the project helped drive customers to the cost-effective e-channel, with consequent operational efficiencies for the organization and savings to the taxpayer. See Attachment 1 for the eMBL process schematic.

## **Implementation Approach**

The project team was led by ServiceOntario's eChannel Development Branch, and included business experts from the Companies and Personal Property Security Branch and technical experts from the e-Channel Operations Branch that now runs the service on behalf of CPPSB. The project began in June 2006, and was completed in January 2007, finishing on time and budget, and successfully passing a risk audit process. Planned operational savings of staff processing time and reduction in operating costs were realized. Applying the Project Management Institute (PMI) methodologies, with a particular emphasis on knowledge transfer and meticulous project documentation, the team handled multiple challenges during the design and implementation process, including internal reorganization and changes to design criteria. Through the commitment and collaboration of all project partners and stakeholders, the Electronic Master Business Licence Service Guarantee was a highly successful project.

## **Results of the Implementation**

To date, statistics show high customer acceptance of the Electronic Master Business Licence and Service Guarantee. Ninety percent of all the customers who applied for a new business name using this direct-government service have provided their email address, allowing them to receive the Master Business Licence via email. Higher levels of customer uptake for this improved service, especially outside of regular business hours, result in significantly reduced paper, postage, and delivery costs to the government. Printing and mailing costs have declined by over 2/3 in the first year of operation as a result of uptake on the PDF delivery alternative.

As a part of the initiative, an enhanced business and technology solution for printing was developed. It automated the process by building the printing queue that allows staff to generate, print and mail paper copies of licences in one easy step. The new process significantly reduces staff time required to fulfill the transaction where customers request a hard copy eMBL or do not provide an email address. It also provides cost efficiencies and speeds up the mail-out of hard copy Master Business Licences, further improving customer service.

## **Cost-Benefit Highlights**

The solution has addressed many of the shortcomings of the previous service identified by the Branch. With the old system business owners requiring this important document faced expected wait times for receipt of a paper Master Business Licence of 10 business days or more, and the paper product they received lacked the flexibility and utility that today's

entrepreneur is looking for. Many clients who lacked confidence in the electronic channel used the paper-based applications, often experiencing further delays due to errors in completing forms. The production of master business licences was labour intensive for staff, requiring manual printing of all individual licences.

The solution addressed these in several ways. The introduction of a guarantee built awareness of this option and increased client confidence in the electronic channel. By creating an incentive for individuals and businesses to use this online service, rather than relying on paper processes that require government staff to perform routine transactions, customers interacting with a well-designed application, can complete the transaction for themselves and staff can be redirected to priority projects, saving time and tax-payer dollars.

From a technical perspective, the solution built on the opportunity that most electronic delivery initiatives offer to save money through automation and the reduction in manual intervention and paper costs. The eMBL Service Guarantee is no exception. High levels of user uptake for the delivery of the eMBL, especially after regular business hours, has resulted in 2/3 reduction in paper and postage costs, as noted above. The inclusion of the new printing system, described above, further decreased the costs of printing the remaining mailed MBLs. The daily staff time spent printing MBLs has been reduced from half of a day to only a few minutes.

Please see Attachment 2 for testimonials concerning the positive impact of the eMBL from the perspective of staff administering the program.

## **Lessons Learned**

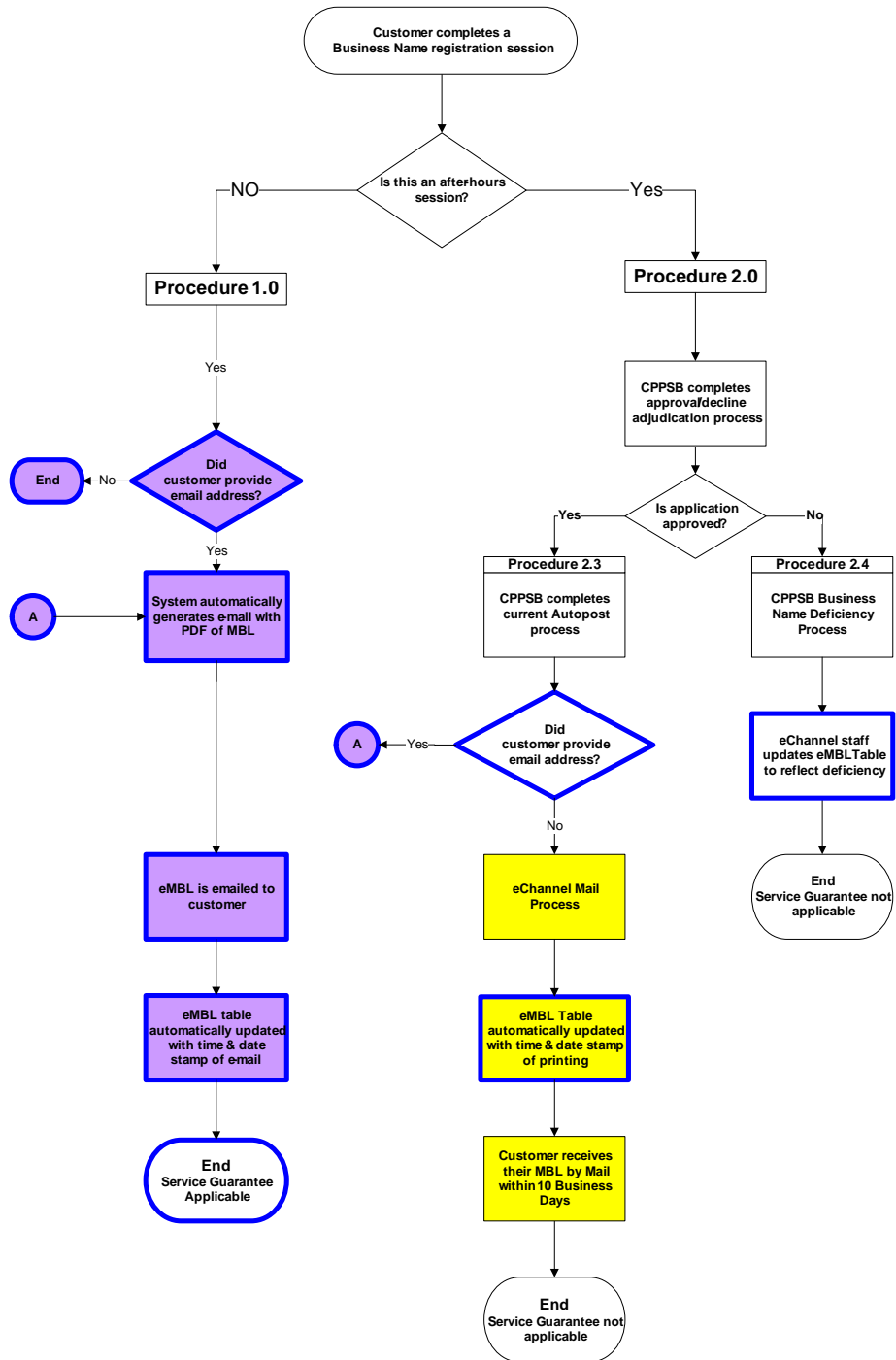
This project was dependant on accurate business process analysis and IT expertise, focused through the lens of customer needs. The original service guarantee was proposed to be 5 business days. Through careful analysis of the existing processes and IT infrastructure, the project team was able to develop a guarantee that would achieve an even faster fulfillment time of 2 business days, a significant change in scope.

An important lesson about implementing service guarantees was learned during this project. Service guarantees should be implemented using a multi-phased approach. The first phase, which begins when the technical and service infrastructure “goes live”, is a Service Standard period that should be used to ensure that the infrastructure is working as planned. During this phase performance measures can be gathered, and the impact of, and technical reasons for any service failure that would trigger a guarantee in Phase 2, can be assessed and addressed. The second and final phase is the transition to the service guarantee, with the organization positioned to achieve service standards consistently. Using this phased approach minimizes financial risk to the government, and ensures maximum performance of the application, building customer confidence in ServiceOntario’s e-service offerings.

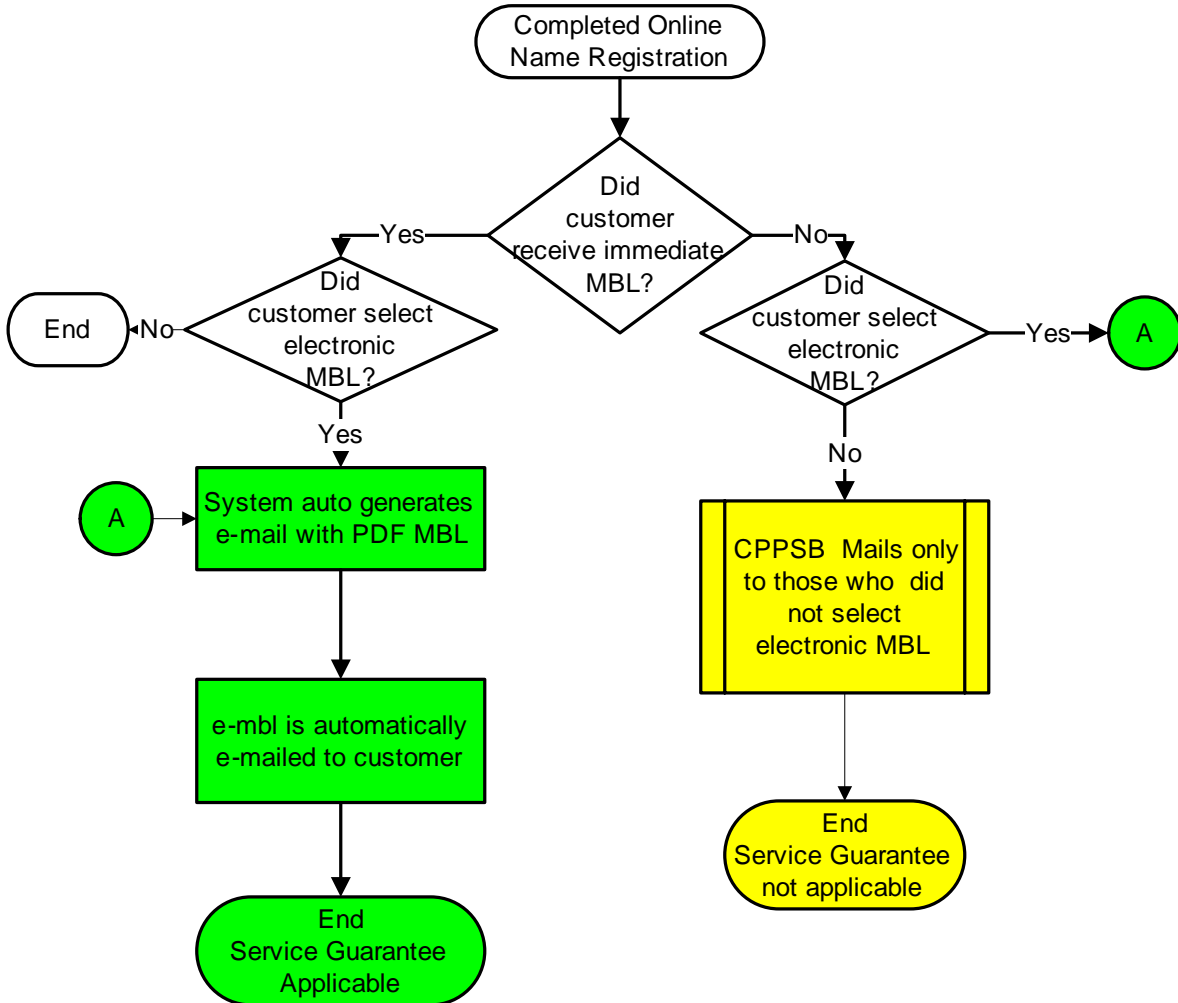
# Attachment 1

## Schematic of Electronic Master Business Licence (eMBL) and Service Guarantee Solution

eMBL Operational Flow



# Guarantee Processing Flow



## Attachment 2 eMBL Testimonials

“Because of the new process efficiencies we now have more time to provide personal service to our clients, and less time wrangling with technical issues. Those technical issues are now managed part-time by one staff member instead of three.

Calling eMBL clients is one of my favorite parts of the job, because people always tell me that the turnaround and customer service is exceptional, especially for a government service.”

Spencer Daniels, Service Guarantee Clerk, eChannel Operations

“The electronic Master Business Licence service guarantee is making it easier for people to obtain a Master Business Licence when they need it.

With the eMBL tools that are available to us, we are able to better serve our customers and provide faster turnaround to meet and exceed expectations of the clients that use the Integrated Business Service Application.

It is not easy to maintain a 100% success rate for electronic services, but we have managed to keep that level of exceptional service for the eMBL service guarantee to date, with the collaboration and sensational team effort from ServiceOntario’s Companies and Personal Property Security Branch, eChannel Operations, eChannel Development, and the Government Service Delivery Cluster.”

Young-Jin Lee, Senior Technical Support Analyst, eChannel Operations

# News Release Communiqué



Ministry of Government Services

Ministère des Services gouvernementaux

For Immediate Release  
February 02, 2007

## **BUSINESS LICENCES IN TWO DAYS, GUARANTEED**

### *New On-Line Service Guarantee Means More Time For Business, Less Time On Government Forms*

TORONTO – The Ontario government is implementing a two-day money-back guarantee for companies and individuals that apply for a Master Business Licence (MBL) through ServiceOntario, announced Government Services Minister Gerry Phillips today.

“This is the fourth money-back guarantee the McGuinty government has launched since November 2005,” said Phillips. “Businesses have told us that to compete in the global economy, they need our help to spend less time filling out forms and waiting for licences, and we listened.”

“This is a great initiative which will assist us to improve business environment and service delivery thus allowing small business to focus on what they do best - creating jobs and prosperity for the people of Ontario,” said Small Business and Entrepreneurship Minister Harinder Takhar.

An MBL allows a company to do business in Ontario. It is also needed to open a business bank account with financial institutions. The licence includes information such as the company’s name, address and identification number. When an application is accurately completed online at [www.serviceontario.ca](http://www.serviceontario.ca), applicants will be sent an electronic version of their licence within two business days or it’s free.

“The government is committed to a robust and dynamic economy to support our standard of living, which is second to none,” said Phillips. “Businesses in Ontario need to be more efficient to compete on the world stage, and this is our latest effort to help them do that.”

This is the latest example of how the McGuinty government is working to help Ontario businesses grow and prosper. Other initiatives include:

- Passing the Securities Transfer Act to create a modern legal framework for the transfer of securities and harmonize Ontario’s laws with the United States.

- Passing the Consumer Protection and Service Modernization Act to help create a more responsive business environment for Ontario corporations.
- Launching programs such as BizPal, an online pilot project that helps businesses save several weeks of time applying and waiting for documentation. It is currently offered in conjunction with the Government of Canada, Region of Halton and City of Ottawa, with plans to expand the program across Ontario.

This is the fourth money-back service guarantee launched by the McGuinty government. The government previously announced the implementation of 15-business-day service guarantees for birth, marriage, and death certificates.

For more information, visit [www.serviceontario.ca](http://www.serviceontario.ca).

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