DIGITAL
TRANSFORMATION
with Business Process Management

Foreword by Nathaniel Palmer

BPM as the Platform for Digital Transformation

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DIGITAL IS BIGGER THAN MOBILE

2017 marks the 10th anniversary of the iPhone, and, with it, perhaps the single greatest step toward digital disruption. Over the last decade, we have seen an extraordinary shift in customer expectations – which has ultimately created the need for digital transformation. How digital are your processes today? Many will answer this in terms of their mobile strategy, yet most will have missed the point. It is not the iPhone which excited consumers and drove innovation – it was a *catalyst* for digital disruption, but not an end-game. Rather, that which drives customer demand for digitization is the promise of (and expectation for) instant gratification.

If you cannot provide what I want immediately (an answer, a ride, a drone-delivered beer), I will quickly find someone who can. The value you offer to me erodes the longer it takes you to satisfy my desire, and the business value I represent to you drops just as fast, as I am become increasingly likely to move on to your competitor.

Today in 2017, the greatest catalyst for digital disruption is not mobility, it is *conversations*. The most emblematic and palpable devices representing digital disruption are not the iPhone or iPad, it is the *Amazon Echo* or *Google Home*. To be certain, as devices go they are relatively pedestrian; merely a speaker and a microphone. Certainly, they are nothing as transformative or ground-breaking as the iPhone was at the time. But speak; you shall be heard.

What drives this innovation is the cognitive capability offered by Amazon's *Alexa* or *Google Assistant*. These translate verbal commands into discrete results; conversations instead of taps onto a tiny screen. Soon these conversations will be heard across an infinite spectrum of enabled devices, and the way our customers will expect to interact with be not through taps and clicks, but conversations.

WITHOUT BPM IT'S ALL TALK AND NO ACTION

Does this sound like Business Process Management (BPM)? Perhaps not the way BPM has been leveraged for the last decade. Yet in the era of digital transformation, BPM will indeed follow a conversational model. This is because the best-equipped platform for enabling any business and consumer to conduct business through conversations is in fact BPM. What BPM provides is not only the means to digitize customer-centric processes, but the correct operations and business rules needed to support any customer transaction. Today, Alexa can add an item to a shopping list, but the transaction essentially stops there. Customers will quickly grow impatient with this level of capability, and we will demand the ability to complete the transaction; confirm prices, schedule services, negotiate terms, reschedule a delivery. There are all things which today are simply best handled through conversations. Is this not what AI-enabled commerce promised to deliver? Yes, but artificial intelligence (AI) is merely the interface (when it has a voice in front of it). How it enables *digital* transformation is via BPM.

AI As A Process Interface

Clearly digital transformation involves more matters than managing customer interactions. How might routine work change under this model? Consider how you received work today, with an alert sent via email or text. Your next step is review the task and figure out what's next, but instead imagine an AI assistant who parses and summarizes the task, and asks for response (i.e., interacting just as you would with Alexa). The task might be an exception requiring approval, and within the summary is context from the decision logic (e.g., business rules) which outlines the circumstances. It may seem farfetched to imagine Alexa or Google Assistant being integrated with your internal core systems. Indeed, tight-coupling would be awkward at best, yet for a BPM environment it would be no more exotic than exposing interaction via an iPhone or other mobile device. What the growing spectrum of AI engines provide is the ability to respond in a natural language statement as you would any assistant, bridging the gap by interacting with the BPMS. You can ask questions for further drilldown or require to be told when something requires your undivided attention. This highlights a critical principle of the future of both software and digital transformation; to re-envision the structure of the task to be not a single, discrete unit of work, and to remove the distinction between what supports a task and the task itself.

Of course, all work can be done via voice prompt or for that matter text or email. Yet many tasks can be, and the ability to have work truly follow the worker, for both convenience and expediency, underscoring the value of separating how work is performed from the work itself. AI is merely an abstraction of the interface, and the business logic that comprises the rules and process definition remains within the BPM environment. Core systems remain intact, processes are followed and reported on, yet this abstraction of the interface into conversation components greatly simplifies the interaction between participants. Beyond simply supporting verbal commands, the processes may extend (by leveraging both BPM and AI system capabilities) to proactively chasing down other participants and asking qualifying questions until the work is successfully completed, based on criteria defined within configurable rules.

BPM And Intelligent Automation

Today process automation (sans BPM) still looks a lot the same investments in industrial automation for the last 40+ years; designed for optimal efficiency and consistency. Industrial engineers designed the ideal routes to move objects in the most efficient way possible. Yet the challenge we face is that fixed pathways are not consistent with the way we work as humans. We do care about what's in the package, we do care about context. This is fundamental to digital transformation.

In a conversational model, we cannot fully script out in advance the sequence of steps and end-to-end processes without knowing the exact context of any given task we will be performing. Leveraging BPM over other modes of process automation expands the range of what can be automated or otherwise managed. It is the combination of process, rules and data which frame today's BPM platforms which, in turn, enables "intelligent automation."

Today's BPM platforms deliver the ability to manage work while dynamically adapting the steps of a process according to an awareness and understanding of content, data, and business events that unfold. This is the basis of intelligent automation, enabling data-driven processes adapting dynamically to the context

of the work, delivering the efficiency of automation while leveraging rules and policies to steer the pathway towards the optimal outcome. For these reasons, BPM is the ideal platform for digital transformation. Not old wine in new bottles, but the critical leverage point for capitalizing on digital disruption.

Get the complete book here: https://bpm-books.com

BPM Strategy and Real-World Execution

BPM is essential to a company's survival in today's hyper-speed business environment. The goal of ***Digital Transformation*** is to help empower enterprises to compete at the highest level in any marketplace.

This book also provides compelling award-wining case studies contributed by those who have been through the full BPM experience and describe the processes involved to generate successful ROIs and competitive advantages.

CONTENTS

Digital Transformation
- **Transform Customer Experience and Operational Excellence by Going Digital Outside and Inside**
  Connie Moore
- **IoT with iBPM & DCM for Battlefield Digital Transformation**
  Setrag Khoshafian, Kerry Finn
- **BPM Farming: Reap Benefits by Nurturing Your Existing Platforms**
  Kay Winkler
- **Creating Digital Threads, Driving Lean Startup Models**
  Neil Ward-Dutton
- **Methodology for Human BPM Processes**
  Keith Swenson
- **Improve, Automate, Digitize**
  Frank Kowalkowski

BPM Use Cases Execution
- ARaymond Brazil
- Die Mobiliar
- Fujirebio Diagnostics, Inc.
- INTA, Argentina
- Ministerio del Interior de Colombia
- National Bank of Kenya
- Santos City Hall
- Seguros Universal