Traditional BPM Gives Way To Digital Process Automation

Customer Obsession Means Faster Evolution For A Legacy Workload

by Rob Koplowitz
February 24, 2017

Why Read This Report

Within the next two years, the primary goal for business process management (BPM) projects will be to drive digital transformation initiatives. This is a stark change from just two years ago, when application development and delivery (AD&D) professionals considered the primary goal to be cost reduction. To support and exploit this shift, vendors will pivot their offerings so dramatically that the term BPM will no longer properly describe the category. This brief outlines Forrester's rationale for replacing the term BPM with digital process automation (DPA).

Key Takeaways

Goals For BPM Are Shifting Dramatically

Traditional BPM projects — long, hard, expensive, and resource-intensive — paid off with cost reduction. Now companies cite digital transformation as the BPM investments. Products and projects will need to adjust to get there.

But Old Requirements Remain Critical

Digital transformation requires access to systems and processes that are complex, mission-critical, and well understood by BPM vendors and AD&D pros who work with them. The foundation BPM lays will be a critical part of the journey to digital transformation.

DPA Will Hinge On Scale And UX

Automating processes means more software — and more software that delivers great user experiences. These applications will increasingly touch both employees and customers. AD&D teams will have to innovate rapidly to add new interfaces like voice and chat to satisfy demanding customers.

Traditional BPM Gives Way To Digital Process Automation

Customer Obsession Means Faster Evolution For A Legacy Workload

by Rob Koplowitz

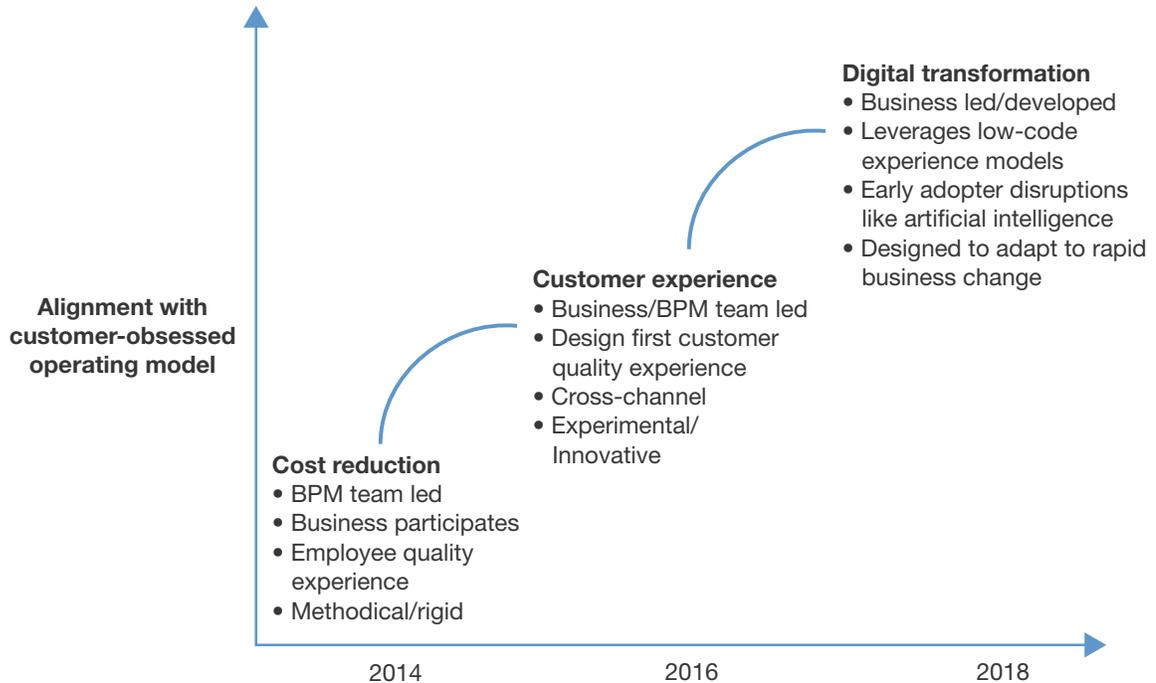with Christopher Mines, Allison Vizgaitis, and Andrew Reese

February 24, 2017

Customers Drive Toward Digital Transformation

Where once cost savings drove BPM, the new goal is digital transformation.[1] As organizations move increasingly toward a customer-obsessed operating model, digitizing all business functions becomes an imperative.[2] This means that AD&D pros must make underlying systems and processes that were once considered "back-office" accessible in order to turn data into insights and respond to customer needs in moments, rather than hours or days. The transition will take time as the primary driver for BPM moves from cost reduction, to an emphasis on customer experience, and then to digital transformation. The underlying elements of these initiatives also shift as the journey progresses (see Figure 1).

FOR APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY PROFESSIONALS

February 24, 2017

Traditional BPM Gives Way To Digital Process Automation
Customer Obsession Means Faster Evolution For A Legacy Workload

FIGURE 1 The Drivers For Traditional BPM Shift And Become More Aligned With Customer Obsession

Alignment with customer-obsessed operating model

Digital transformation
• Business led/developed
• Leverages low-code experience models
• Early adopter disruptions like artificial intelligence
• Designed to adapt to rapid business change

Customer experience
• Business/BPM team led
• Design first customer quality experience
• Cross-channel
• Experimental/ Innovative

Cost reduction
• BPM team led
• Business participates
• Employee quality experience
• Methodical/rigid

2014   2016   2018

As BPM Evolves To DPA, AD&D Pros Will Demand New Functionality

Traditional BPM functionality will play an important role in this transition. The complex task of driving consistent processes across disparate systems will not go away. In fact, it becomes a foundational requirement for digital transformation. AD&D pros will play a meaningful role in the move to digital transformation, and they will seek solutions that offer functionality, pricing, and delivery that are far faster, inexpensive, and more user-centric than old-line BPM suites. To make the shift from BPM to DPA, AD&D pros should look for vendor offerings with three characteristics:

› **Tools to build and onboard applications fast.** While BPM vendors claim their tools are fast and easy, the truth is BPM tools are expensive, time-consuming to procure, and spawn projects that are lengthy and delay-plagued.[3] New-era DPA tools need to be inexpensive, and easy to adopt and offer rapid deployment and iteration. They must also become more accessible to citizen developers in business roles.

› **A focus on user experience.** The path to digital transformation goes through user experience. The closer users get to the processes, the faster and more efficient they become, and the more user satisfaction goes up. To get there, these systems must meet the users on their terms with consumer-like experiences across all channels.

FOR APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY PROFESSIONALS

Traditional BPM Gives Way To Digital Process Automation
Customer Obsession Means Faster Evolution For A Legacy Workload

February 24, 2017

> › **Innovation at consumer pace.** When consumers directly access a company's applications, the usability and performance standard becomes like the best consumer applications. The companies that excel are constantly pushing the boundaries with new directions like artificial intelligence, new interfaces like voice and chat, and new input and new nonhuman connections via the internet of things. To achieve digital transformation, AD&D pros will need tools that embrace these emerging trends.

What It Means

DPA Will Become A Critical Part Of Digital Transformation

Software is the central differentiator of a customer-obsessed organization. Fast, simple, elegant, and delightful are all terms one might hear as part of an excellent software experience. But most companies' underlying processes and BPM projects to date have not met with these types of glowing descriptions. Long, expensive, and inflexible may be more apt. However, like the plumbing and electrical systems in a building, a framework has been set. Once manual processes have been digitized, they offer a starting point for your organization to extend and exploit. The path will require very different capabilities and strategies than those of traditional BPM vendors. The shift will be profound, and some vendors will not be able to adjust. AD&D pros will align with vendors that support a new set of shifting requirements that focus on customers while still serving the traditional foundational elements of managing complex processes across legacy back-office systems.