



***AUTOMATE PROCESSES
FOR A COMPETITIVE EDGE***

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In today's hyper competitive and vibrant business environment, companies are relentlessly pursuing new technologies or new ways to maximize existing IT investments to augment productivity and purge unnecessary costs. With more and more procedures being managed automatically, automated processing has shown considerable promise on this front. Specifically, Business Process Management [BPM] technology in the next 10 years provides the ideal road to a thriving and automated business. From cost saving to improving client relations, BPM Technology is the building block of a modern enterprise.

A NEW ERA

Managing different processes is as old as business itself. It comes as no surprise, then, that BPM as management philosophy dates back to the 50's. Yet, the need for routing and managing email messages or networking complex tasks was hardly an issue then. While the need for BPM has been around for decades, it is in this new era that the technology is varied and advanced enough to achieve the desired goals. As any field or line of work evolves, the technology and tools involved must naturally evolve as well. And that's where BPM technology comes in. Data/process tracking, business activity monitoring, and outsourcing are inherent aspects of the IT world these days. A competitive edge requires not only expert faculty and innovative ideas, but also the structural capabilities to compete with the rest. To keep up with the pack, automating businesses is a necessary first step.

THE BIG PICTURE

As soon as applications are automated and deployed, they can be monitored. Processes are no longer isolated instances; rather, they are just one step in a thorough and organized management system. Data is no longer a figure of a fact; it is compiled into charts and graphs that predict future moves based off past yield and profits. Above all, BPM technology ensures that there are no dots left unconnected, guaranteeing reliability to any company or business.

AGILITY

On a very basic level, automated processes short-circuit many of the manual tasks that slow down a business. Often referred to as “post-it note syndrome”, companies streamlined with many levels of paperwork and command risk misplacing valuable information or making rudimentary mistakes that can slow down the overall efficiency of the business. Of course, misplacement translates into time and energy wasted in recovering from an error, which also bogs down the process. Studies show, on a very conservative estimate, that 2.5 hours have been saved per employee per week. To maintain a competitive edge in the business world, agility is at the heart of success. Shipments deadlines have to be met; customers must be responded to- all within a 24-hour window (or before the boss's temper explodes). Automating processes through BPM technology eliminates many of the middle steps that are cumbersome to the overall process.

The ability of BPM to increase visibility and a greater sense of the big picture also speeds up the process. When all the necessary steps are laid out and organized in one simple process, overlap and inefficiencies in workload are mitigated. Moreover, greater visibility allows managers to diagnose problems and attack them at the source, preventing the time-consuming process of sorting through multiple levels of command and extensive layers of paperwork.

Lastly, statistics show that a majority of time in the company is spent defining business rules and processes. For most businesses, this figure is between 70% and 75% of working time. With BPM technology and automated processes, the time invested in planning and allocating tasks is significantly downsized.

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CONTROL

Another great benefit of increased visibility is that it puts the people who should be in charge, back in charge. Oftentimes, valuable information and materials get lost in the quagmire of streamlined departments. With an organized and automated processing system, every transaction, negotiation, and shipment is electronically recorded and stored in the database. Moreover, a process lacking automation allows staff members to cherry pick which cases to tackle first. Oftentimes, this translates into the most easy or straightforward tasks getting completed first rather than focusing on the most urgent ones. Imagine a world where every major decision is electronically red flagged and completion/ success is ensured. This is the world of automated BPM technology. BPM allows you to know what your company is doing, so you can do it better.

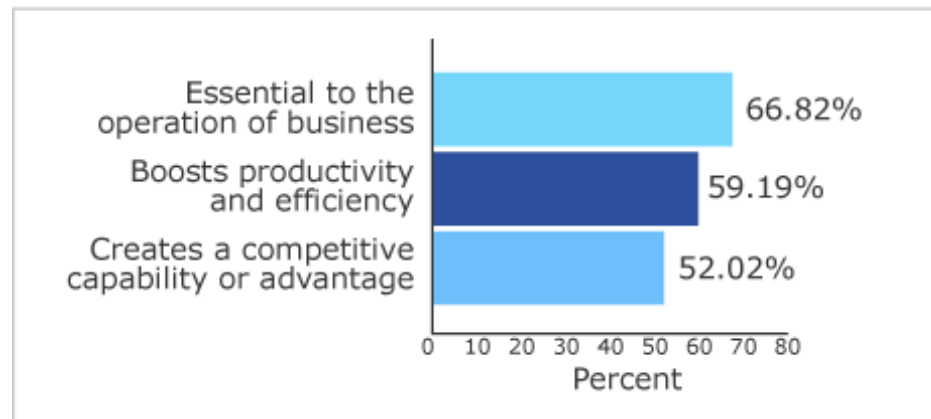
PREDICT

In the dynamic world of business, there is only one logical way to predict the future- historical data and trends. With BPM and automated technology, historical comparisons and overall trends can be analyzed to predict the direction the future holds. Even more importantly, predicting through trends helps to prevent the unexpected. Unexpected events are at the root of all process failure. Take the following example. Today's airline industry is so advanced, that transportation through air is second nature for humans. But without predictive technology such as analyzing weather patterns or conflicting air times, the reliability of the industry is greatly diminished. Similarly, without the mechanism to predict the unexpected, even the best of businesses will fall. Of course, nothing can predict the future- but automated technology is as close as companies can get.

IMPROVE

Before a process can be improved, the data must first be quantified and in a position to be analyzed. Visibility through BPM technology helps leaders take a step back and see which areas need improvement. Over the course of many years, certain trends can be analyzed to limit out unnecessary funding or misallocated resources. Moreover, the increased efficiency through BPM ensures shipments are received on time and clients are met on time. The end impact to this is an increase in vendor/supplier relations, the cornerstone for successful business. More than two out of every three businesses cite business application as essential to business operation. Several others go on to suggest that BPM technology is vital to a competitive advantage and boosts efficiency.

What are the top three factors you would use to determine the relevance and value of a business application?



Lastly, improvement relies on adapting to the needs of the customer. The time has passed when businesses can launch a customer interaction system and maintain it for years with small modifications. Lets envision a scenario in which the client is dissatisfied with a product and contacts the corporation. Regardless of whether the client chooses to complain via email or phone, BPM technology such as email storage or automated telephone directing ensures that feedback is received and responded to in an effective manner.

MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

A characteristic of BPM technology unique to the last few years is the affordability of such an investment. Empirical examples demonstrate that BPM technology accounts for less than half of the overall spending of process planning and development. Moreover, the alternatives to BPM are EAI and Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), which are far too expensive for all but the largest companies. For these reasons, there is no unique financial reason to maintain a process system aside from automated BPM.

In the long run, however, increased visibility as a result of automation and other BPM benefits can prove to be a worthwhile investment. By speeding up the amount of time required to define what needs to be done before implementation (the planning period), the time and cost of implementing these procedures is drastically lowered. As in most businesses, the room for error is slim to none. Any mistake or ill effect in policy change can alienate valuable clients, result in lawsuits, or add extraneous costs for repair. Automation virtually eliminates this risk and provides for a comprehensive and manageable policy initiative. Furthermore, the increased visibility discussed above opens up more time for employees to seek solutions towards cutting superfluous spending. The data and product tracking allows executives to see which areas of the budget are unnecessary and to work towards cost-effective solutions.

To clear any last minute doubts, here are some impressive figures –

- On average, 78% of all BPM projects delivered an internal rate of return greater than 15%, with some skyrocketing as high as 360%.
- After applying a BPM solution that monitored shipments for a high-technology manufacturer, on-time shipments were increased by 5.5%, accounting to nearly 3 million dollars saved that year.
- Approximately 71% of time and resources in businesses without automation is spent planning and defining business processes.
- Out of the 20% of companies who have adopted BPM technology, most of them have revenues of greater than \$ 1 billion.
- More than 25% of a company's revenue are directly related to the technology used

WHAT THE OPPOSITION IS SAYING

"Automation gets rid of the personal touch to the business"

The "personal touch" in a business is defined as the ability to have enhanced customer service, greater relationships with vendors, and an organizational system conducive to human intervention. Automating processes has a positive effect on all three of these areas. With basic tasks done automatically, more time and energy can be devoted towards customer satisfaction. With less mistakes made, relationships with clients can flourish. Finally, the ability to organize the business in a way where top level executives know what tasks are being completed in an organized manner, getting involved is much easier.

"Automation seems too technical"

Automating processes is the best way to avoid technical errors and jargon. With reliable technology and friendly customer service, the technical aspect is user-friendlier than ever. Furthermore, the data tracking and visibility advantages to automation provide for several advantages that status quo methods of processing cannot provide.

"Small businesses do not require automation"

The need for automation in a small business cannot be overstressed. With major scale corporations transitioning to BPM technologies, small businesses must keep pace with state of the art technology. Options such as mass email recruit the best employees for a small and tightly knit organization. Moreover, attaching a credible name via automation technology naturally attracts a wide pool of clients, ensuring success in every field.

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THE BOTTOM LINE

Many times before, the IT community has been offered the cure-all technology that claims to improve productivity but turns out to be a hoax. This time, however, it seems the IT community has delivered a reliable and credible tool in the form of automated processing and BPM technology. Especially in the business climate of the 21st century, the possibility of small mistakes must be eliminated because the impacts could be the loss of millions of dollars or even valuable clients. The bottom line is, the competitive environment in which businesses thrive serves to reward the cavaliers, and leave behind the obsolete. The era of note cards and the “human touch” in all aspects of the business is a thing of the past. To transform the business into a well-oiled machine, automated processes are the cornerstone of success and prosperity. For this reason, we at AdaptOne hope to gain your support to work towards a productive and successful future.

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