

EMERGING TRENDS

Business Process Management

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Introduction

Technology is evolving daily as new tools, applications and use cases are developed and adopted by enterprises and business users. As a result, a new breed of Business Process Management (BPM) platforms is emerging, leveraging these technologies and new paradigms. A small number of BPM companies are now offering the solution hosted or as Software as a Service (SaaS). Others are providing an integrated platform, combining all the tools necessary for deploying a BPM solution on one platform. In all these cases, the platforms are usually focused on Human Centric processes (workflows that connect people and data), simplicity and speed. In this whitepaper, we examine these trends and what benefits they bring to companies considering deploying a BPM solution.

Hosted or SaaS

Many traditional BPM companies already allow automated processes to be executed on a hosted basis or as a service, deployed in a web browser. Some also provide a subset of BPM tools like reporting, analysis and basic administration tools on a hosted basis. The newest solutions however go further, hosting the entire suite of BPM tools. Not only can one automate and execute a process as a service, but all the tools necessary to configure and deploy such a process are also available as a service. By delivering the entire suite as a hosted service, customers gain many advantages:

Simplicity and Savings

SaaS BPM implies no need to install or support hardware, networks, infrastructure, databases, backups, personnel etc. All are provided by the hosted BPM provider as part of the monthly recurring license fees, resulting in substantial savings and a reduction in total cost of ownership. In fact, according to a 2006 report by Triple Tree, LLC and the Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA) entitled “Software as a Service Update: Spurring Innovation, Enhancing Business Value and Enabling Business Processes,” the total cost of ownership (TCO) of a hosted

BPM suite is five to ten times less than that of traditional on-premise installed software application.

Speed of Deployment

According to the same report, SaaS application deployment is 50 to 90 percent faster than a traditional BPM deployment. In fact, a hosted BPM suite can be provisioned in a matter of minutes, as compared to a licensed installed suite, where it can take weeks to acquire and install the appropriate hardware and software.

Risk Reduction

Risk is reduced considerably when hosting a BPM suite since deployment times are shorter, project implementation is simpler by eliminating the hardware and software installation issues, and scarce IT resources are not necessary for the deployment. In addition, SaaS BPM shifts the software license expenditures from capital budgets to operating budgets.

Thanks to this emerging trend of SaaS BPM, the potential BPM market has expanded to include small and medium sized businesses that have been wanting to leverage this technology, but weren't able to before, given the high startup costs.

Integrated Platform

Traditional BPM suites typically involve combining a set of disparate tools in order to create a solution. For example, the company has to install and train personnel on the workflow modeling tool, the workflow execution engine, the form builder, the database, a development tool, the reporting engine, the analytics tool and an integration tool. Not only is the deployment process complex, users have to be trained on each tool individually and maintenance and upgrades of these different tools is a challenge on its own.

A central, integrated platform that combines all the tools into one portal, results in significant cost reduction as well as simplification of the installation and maintenance process:

Simplified Installation

With an integrated environment, only one installation is required, reducing the number of issues and amount of troubleshooting.

Less Training

All users are trained on the same platform.

Reduced License Costs

The overall cost of software is reduced with only one platform.

Easier Maintenance

Administrators need to only monitor, troubleshoot and backup one system.

Simpler Upgrades

A single platform upgrade results in all tools being upgraded at the same time.

Finally, a single integrated platform enables the BPM suite to be completely hosted as a service, which is why it is common for providers of an integrated BPM Platform to also offer it entirely hosted.

Simplified BPM

Another trend that is emerging is focused on simplifying the process of configuring, modeling, executing, and deploying a solution, by improving usability and eliminating the need to code or script. Although traditional BPM provides many features for business analysts and non-developers, it still is owned by IT and requires advanced technical skills to configure and deploy. Traditional BPM is sold to IT managers and CIOs and requires an army of personnel on both the technical and non-technical side to deploy.

Sold to Business Units

The newer simpler BPM platforms are targeted and sold directly to Line of Business Managers, the end users with the need, often times bypassing IT altogether, especially in a hosted case. Often times IT is grateful due to the scarcity of their resources and the amount of work load they are already facing.

Absolutely No Coding

The feature sets often introduce high level types of development concepts that are user interface based. The user simply drags-and-drops form elements to a page or sets property values to fields or drags-and-drops the workflow boxes on the canvas. The platform automatically and instantly determines the relationships, database tables and columns, stored procedures, meta-data and other necessary blue print information required to configure and deploy the solution. The platform automates what typically is performed by advanced programmers.

Faster Deployment

These features enable the solution to be deployed much faster than traditional BPM tools. In addition, changes to the process are faster to complete. Training is also faster and easier.

Lower Technical Skill Set Required

The features enable a resource with a much lower level of technical expertise to be able to own the deployment of an entire BPM process, something that typically belonged only in the realm of IT. In addition, whereas different users filled different roles in a traditional BPM roll out, i.e. IT, Business Analyst, DB Admin, Domain Expert etc., using the simplified BPM platforms all the roles can be performed by the same resource, which lends itself to much better collaboration.

Simplifying BPM has expanded the potential consumers of this technology. No longer is it limited to the realm of IT departments of large enterprises. Now, small to medium sized

businesses, as well business departments in large organizations with swamped IT, can automate their business processes and increase efficiencies.

Human Centric BPM

The final emerging trend covered in this whitepaper is the focus on human centric type processes, those that connect people to each other and to data for reports. These processes are typically manual and represent about 70 to 80% of the day to day workflows in an organization. Example human centric processes include Expense Management, Project/Product Lifecycle Management, and Change Request Management etc.

Traditional BPM, on the other hand, is heavily transaction based, connecting data between systems with very limited human interaction, and evolved from the Enterprise Application Integration (EAI) space. Examples of transaction or system processes include Credit Card processing, Quarterly Account Reconciliations, etc.

By focusing on human centric processes, these platforms are filling large gaps in operations that exist today, and are helping companies gain efficiencies and reduce cost by focusing on automation and simplification of manual processes. Companies often try to automate these manual processes by using desktop applications like Excel, Access, Word, Outlook, etc... Business users turned maverick IT (sometimes referred to as “Shadow IT” personnel) use these tools to create “duct-tape and band-aid” type solutions to solve the problem since IT is often overwhelmed with catering to mission critical systems.

Human Centric BPM platforms are ideal for these situations for many reasons:

Designed for Business Users

Shadow IT business users can be trained and own the entire configuration and deployment of the solution from beginning to end, especially in a hosted case. A lot of efficiencies are gained when the domain expert business user is also the creator of the solution, eliminating the need

for the hand off of information between business and IT. In addition, IT is freed up to focus on mission critical core capabilities that require the advanced skill sets and technical knowledge.

Easy to Use

Desktop applications attract business users due to their simplicity, speed to value, and availability. Human Centric BPM platforms aim to provide the same benefits by focusing on usability and speed. Coupled with a hosted deployment, a business user can be up and running configuring a solution as quickly as with MS Excel.

Scalable with Sophisticated Features

Despite the simplicity of these platforms, they still pack a sophisticated feature set, enabling users to configure solutions rich with key performance Indicators, business logic, reports, security, intelligence, advanced forms, workflows and compelling user interfaces. The BPM platforms are architected to be scalable, database driven, enterprise grade and maintainable. In addition, the data being centralized on the server provides instant visibility to progress status without the need to individually consolidate data from disparate Excel spreadsheets or systems. Thus, bottle necks, problems and issues can be discovered in real-time, translating into faster resolution and action.

Integration

Although many of the manual processes to be automated don't require integration with other sources initially, the human centric BPM platforms support the ability to connect data sources and tie them into the workflow after they are automated, using robust APIs, SOA and Web Services technologies. This is a great advantage over desktop applications which run locally in silos and cannot be effectively integrated with other systems.

If your company is considering adopting a BPM platform or examining the best option to automate a business workflow, it is important to consider how emerging technologies are changing the BPM landscape and disrupting the market prior to selecting a vendor or solution.

In this whitepaper, we discussed the reduction of total cost of ownership by deploying a Hosted or SaaS BPM, the benefits of an Integrated Platform solution, how Simplified BPM appeals to a larger market and finally how Human Centric BPM is ideal for manual processes and Shadow IT personnel.

About Interneer, Inc.

Headquartered in Los Angeles, CA, Interneer is a leader in human-centric Business Process Management (BPM) solutions. For over 9 years, Interneer has provided companies of various sizes, the simplest and quickest way to automate their human-centric business processes and workflows with the Interneer Intellect Platform. Interneer Intellect is a browser-based integrated suite of products comprising all components required for a comprehensive Business Process Management solution. The Interneer Intellect Platform is uniquely suited to transform business processes and workflow in far less time with less expense. No need for additional tools, software and integration. Interneer Intellect's integrated environment is a "One Environment Fits All" solution and does not require users to purchase, install, maintain, and learn multiple disparate systems. The intuitive user interface portal makes it easy for business, IT, analysts and end users to collaborate, execute and improve business processes, all without programming.

To learn more, contact sales at (310) 348-9609 or visit our website at www.interneer.com