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ERP TODAY



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ERP
TODAY
AWARDS
2022

TRANSFORMATION
PROJECT OF THE YEAR

NETWORK RAIL

PLUS
SMART ERP
FINANCIAL TRANSFORMATION
PEOPLE-FIRST CONSULTING
CLOUD IN 2022



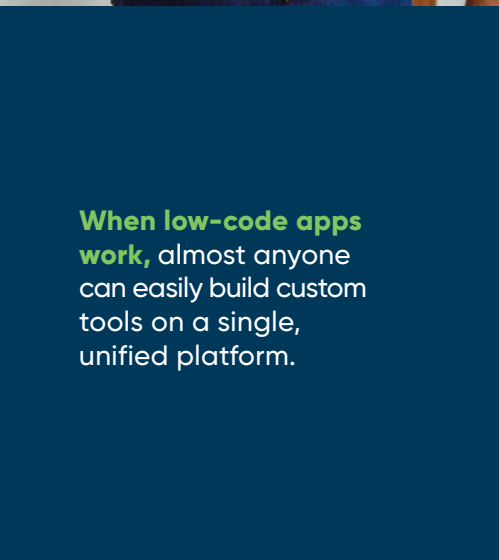
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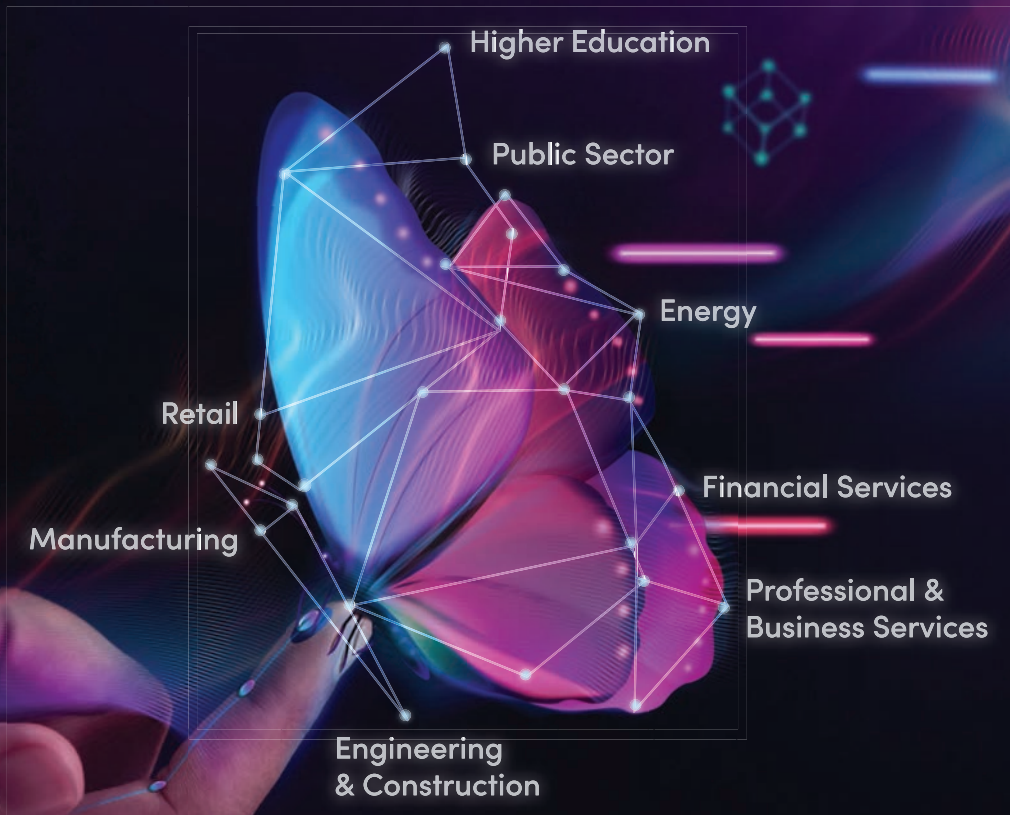
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Strength in adversity

As a sombre mood has been cast across the United Kingdom with its effects reaching all four corners of the globe. Queen Elizabeth II has passed and Charles III has been proclaimed king. As the world adjusted to the loss of the longest serving monarch on record, the ERP Today community shared a unique opportunity to pay tribute to Her Majesty at Royal Ascot, one of the late Queen's most cherished venues.

In true British fashion, the ERP Today Awards stayed calm and carried on whilst being mindful of recent events and respectful of our surroundings. A packed Ascot Racecourse witnessed the coming-together of the entire ERP community for our annual fundraising and awards event. A minute's silence was observed before proceedings began and a showreel of Her Majesty's greatest Ascot moments was shared on big screens around the venue.

It was an honour and a privilege for all who attended to reflect and give thanks to one of humanity's greatest leaders.

The death of a reigning monarch is something that very few, if any of us, will have experienced before. The magnitude of recent events cannot be overstated and although it's direct bearing on the world of big business and technology will be imperceptible, it serves as a timely reminder of the fragility of life, the passing of time and lessons that can be learned from hardship.

I am a firm believer that failure and adversity are vital ingredients for prosperity. The hardest lessons leave the greatest impression and help prepare us for the future. Mistakes challenge us to do better. Loss teaches us to value. Failure gives success meaning. The rich tapestry of life rarely offers a linear journey and I know that the sum of my past experiences plays a vital role in shaping my future.

As I reflect on the fourth anniversary of launching ERP Today, I think about our own challenging, consuming but ultimately rewarding journey. From our launch event which was nearly scuppered by ex-President Trump, to our first awards event which was cancelled due to the pandemic, the second attempt which was the first in-person event after lockdown, through to our most recent Ascot experience which took place in the wake of national mourning. At times it has felt like the gods have been against us - but that has only spurred us on, forced us to work harder and ultimately sweetened the successes.

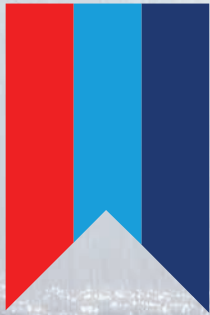
The ERP Today Transformation Project of the Year is a fitting example of triumph over adversity. The project was predicated on the awful loss of life amongst **Network Rail's** employees, and it had twice failed in the past. Undeterred and motivated by necessity, Network Rail and its partners found the resolve and determination to learn from the past and deliver a programme of change that will bear long lasting and meaningful benefits.

We should not be afraid or embarrassed by mistakes, adversity or failure. We often need these reminders to fulfil our true potential.

Paul

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ERP Today is trusted by the world's most influential CEOs and tech brands to deliver creative content that encourages our audience to think differently about the complex challenges of twenty-first century IT.

Our EMEA magazine and digital platform was first published in 2019 and is read by 25,000 business decision makers. In Q1 2023, we will be launching in North America with a product that will land on the desk of more than 20,000 CxOs at the largest enterprises in the USA and Canada.

Our premium quality print magazine sets us apart from all other media outlets and allows us to bring stories to life in a way that others cannot. We augment our traditional product with the industry's premier in-person event, the ERP Today Awards, and a dynamic digital offering which includes dedicated vendor channels, daily industry news, special reports, blogs and webinars.

The combined offering of print, digital and live formats has created a powerful media brand that continues to grow in reputation and reach.



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News Deals & Wins



IFS crowned ERP Vendor of the Year

BY PAUL ESHERWOOD

IFS has been named ERP vendor of the Year 2022 at the ERP Today Awards on the back of a stellar year which saw the launch of IFS Cloud, strong growth in revenues and a recap valuing the business at \$10bn.

The rise of IFS from anonymous Swedish software vendor to global leader in its primary market segment (EAM and FSM combined with ERP for asset-heavy businesses) is one of the true success stories in the ERP sector. When CEO Darren Roos took the helm in 2018 he started from a very low base in terms of strategy, brand, reach and product development. However, the combination of clear leadership, a laser focus on just a few key industries, coupled with a rejigged management team and a new, modular, cloud product portfolio has seen the business soar in terms of relevance and stature.

The accolade of ERP Vendor of the Year was determined by a panel of

expert judges comprising industry heavyweights, independent analysts and senior media commentators. IFS returned a near-perfect score with all but two judges voting it as the winner alongside two second place votes. One standout achievement noted in the award submission was that IFS had won more new customers in the last 12 months than in the previous 25 years combined - an unbelievable achievement and testament to the vision and positioning of IFS Cloud.

In a recent interview, Roos told me that IFS would comfortably top \$1bn in revenue this financial year and that his sights were set significantly higher than that. The CEO set out a clear path for IFS that would take the vendor to \$2bn, then \$5bn and beyond... there is certainly no shortage of ambition in the IFS camp.

Two years ago, IFS launched a marketing campaign under the strapline 'For the Challengers,' drawing on its own status as a would-be disrupter

in a market dominated by just a few long-established players. As it breaks new ground in revenue growth and customer wins, that self-deprecating narrative may need an update. Whilst its finance and HR suites probably wouldn't win a best of breed contest - it is IFS' ability to offer a unified solution that cuts across core ERP competencies, asset management and field service, all wrapped up in the same solution that is creating a compelling case for many large enterprises.

When I first met Roos in early 2019 there was a lot to prove. He was a first-time CEO and in the firing line at a business backed by ambitious private equity owners. In little under four years, the CEO has put 10x on the valuation and delivered a totally transformed business with a clear identity. A worthy winner of the 2022 title and, in our opinion, this year has marked a turning point for Team Purple.

Bertrand Baret



focus on its clients' digital transformation agenda.

Michel Brabants, EY consulting leader at EY Belgium, said: "This acquisition is another strategic transaction for EY that will enable us to significantly augment the services we provide to our clients in terms of customer-driven innovation and digital transformation."

Bertrand Baret, managing partner of EY Consulting France and deputy managing partner of EY Consulting Europe West, added: "As a market leader in digital transformation, Fabernovel is the ideal

EY acquires Fabernovel

EY has acquired **Fabernovel**, a Paris-based innovation and digital transformation consulting firm that supports customers across Europe. The deal adds around 350 employees to EY Consulting's team, making it one of its larger acquisitions in the past decade.

The strategic investment

of EY complements the previous transactions in Belgium of **VODW** (a frontrunner in customer-centric thinking and digital solutions), **CogniStreamer** (innovation management) and **Krios Solutions** (SAP advice and implementation).

Stéphane Distinguin, founder and chairman of

Fabernovel, said: "Joining EY means seizing the opportunity to better contribute to a new stage of the European economy while continuing to be inspired by the models of the tech giants that we have relentlessly shared."

EY has plans to grow its consulting services and has progressed this rapidly already with a particular

"Fabernovel is the ideal partner to achieve the ambition of our NextWave strategic plan in Europe."

partner to achieve the ambition of our NextWave strategic plan in Europe. Fabernovel's 350 talents, combined with EY's highly complementary skills, will become the foundation of this

transformation, with an ambitious goal of building a world-class, multidisciplinary team of 1,000 innovation-focussed employees within three years."

IBM MAKES CAUTIOUS FULL YEAR FORECAST DESPITE STRONG Q2

IBM has reported better than expected Q2 2022 results, revealing a 9 percent year-on-year increase in revenue to \$15.5bn, but shares fell in extended trading hours after the company cut its 2022 cash forecast. During the quarter, the company saw a 16 percent rise in hybrid cloud revenue

to \$21.7bn and a six percent increase in software revenue to \$6.2bn. IBM's consulting revenue totalled \$4.8bn, up 10 percent year-on-year, whilst infrastructure revenue was \$4.2bn, up 19 percent. For the full year 2022, IBM expects constant currency revenue growth at the high end of its mid-single digit

model. However, it now anticipates around \$10bn in consolidated free cash flow for all of 2022, down from the range of \$10bn to \$10.5bn provided in April. According to IBM, the wind down of the company's Russian operations resulted in "incremental charges in the quarter."



Capgemini and Unity team up on metaverse solutions



Capgemini and Unity are joining forces to help organisations seize the benefits of immersive and metaverse experiences. Together they'll conduct R&D projects as part of the Capgemini Metaverse Lab and will design and scale tailored metaverse solutions for clients to accelerate the convergence of the physical and digital worlds. Unity's expertise in real-time 3D and immersive experiences will enhance Capgemini's customer and employee experience strategy, while Capgemini's ability to deliver on large-scale digital transforma-

tions will help to speed the growth of Unity's technology platform. Pascal Brier, chief innovation officer at Capgemini, said: "Immersive experiences open a universe of possibilities from enabling more emotional connections with consumers to optimising engineering, manufacturing and operations." Marc Whitten, senior vice president and general manager at Unity, added: "Unity's real-time 3D solutions will bring many companies into the metaverse, helping them achieve greater engagement with their customers."

"UNITY'S REAL-TIME 3D SOLUTIONS WILL BRING MANY COMPANIES INTO THE METAVERSE"

Accenture reports mixed results in light of FX headwinds

Accenture reported mixed financial results for the third quarter of 2022, with the company beating Q3 revenue expectations but forecasting Q4 revenue will be below estimates due to the negative impact of foreign exchange rates. Accenture also cut the higher end of its fiscal 2022 profit forecast range.

These challenges are not unique to Accenture, and global businesses trading across multiple jurisdictions are all set to be squeezed by challenging currency

and inflation headwinds.

Accenture's Q3 revenue was \$16.2bn, up 22 percent in US dollars over the same period last year, while operating income was \$2.6bn, a 23 percent increase.

With rising inflation and the strengthening of the US dollar impacting overseas earnings, Accenture now expects revenues for Q4 2022 to be in the range of \$15bn to \$15.5bn,

reflecting the company's assumption of a negative eight percent foreign exchange impact compared with Q4 2021.



CURRYS POWERS UP WITH SALESFORCE

Currys has chosen **Salesforce** to support its digital, omnichannel transformation.

The retailer spoke about its digital transformation at the Salesforce World Tour event, revealing how its omnichannel strategy is enabling customers to enjoy a more personalised experience across every channel.

Salesforce's CRM enabled all of Currys' functions to have a single, 360-degree shared view of every customer, while Service Cloud has enabled Currys' colleagues to meaningfully interact with customers.

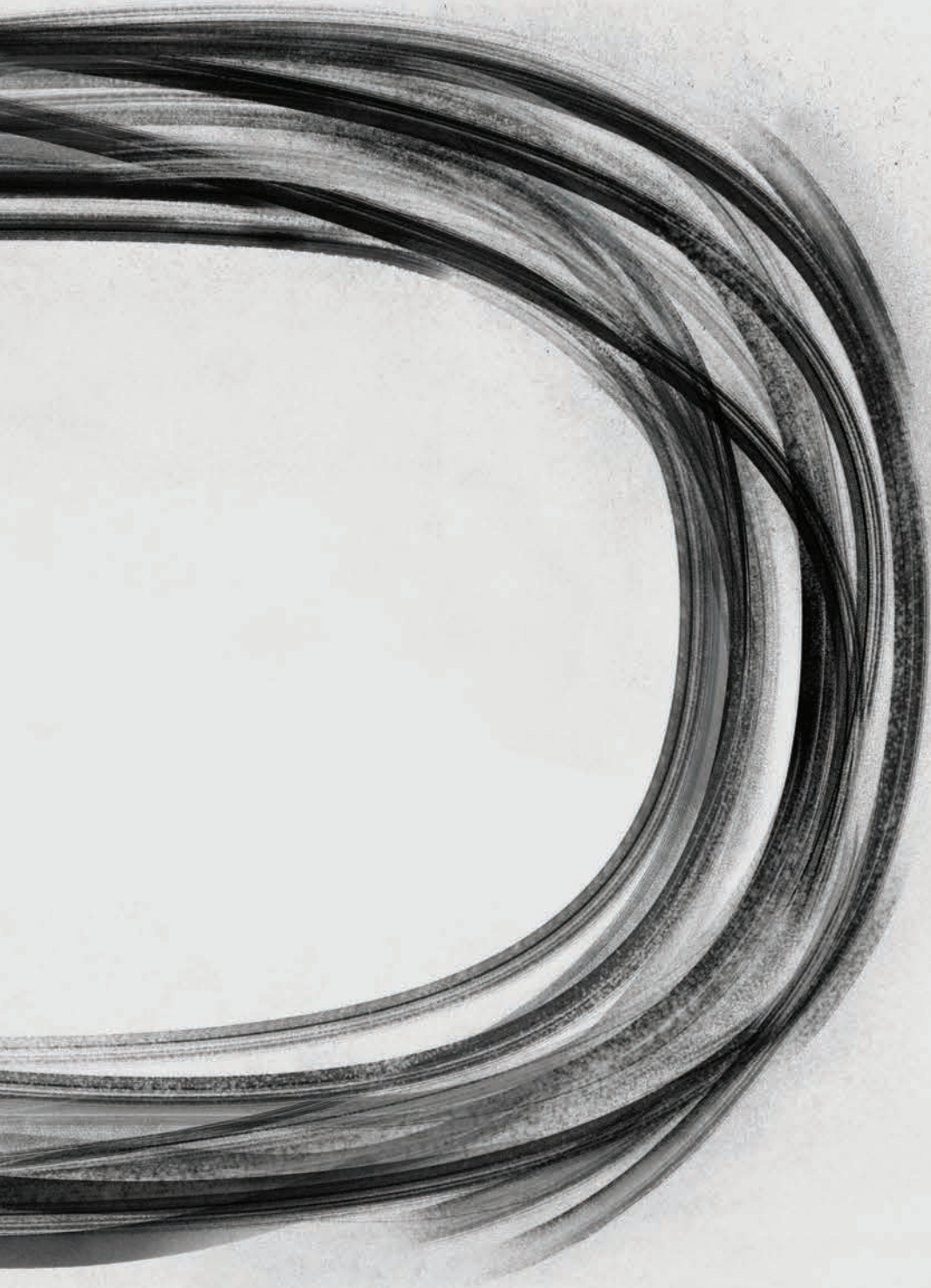
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Cloud boom drives strong Q4 for Oracle

Oracle has beaten expectations in its fiscal 2022 Q4 results, driven by a rise in demand in its infrastructure cloud business.

Q4 cloud revenue was \$2.9bn, up 19 percent in USD, while total quarterly revenues were up five percent year-on-year to \$11.8bn. Cloud services and licence support revenues increased 3 percent to \$7.6bn, with cloud licence and on-premise licence revenues up 18 percent to \$2.5bn.



Q4 GAAP operating income was \$4.5bn, down one percent, while non-GAAP operating income increased by three percent at \$5.6bn. GAAP operating margin was 38 percent, and non-GAAP operating mar-

gin was 47 percent. Safra Catz, Oracle CEO, said: "The consistent increases in our quarterly revenue growth rate typically have been driven by our market-leading Fusion and NetSuite cloud applications.

But this Q4, we also experienced a major increase in demand in our infrastructure cloud business. We believe that this revenue growth spike indicates that our infrastructure business has now entered a hyper-

MICROSOFT PREDICTS UPBEAT 2023

Microsoft reported revenue of \$51.9bn for Q4 2022, up 12 percent compared to the corresponding period of last year but falling short of Wall Street expectations.

However, in better-than-expected guidance for the fiscal year ahead, the software giant predicted that revenue and operating income will increase at a double-digit pace, driven largely by demand for cloud computing services.

Although predicting

fiscal first-quarter 2023 revenue of between \$49.25bn and \$50.25bn, which is below Wall Street's consensus of \$51.44bn, Microsoft has forecast between \$20.3bn and \$20.6bn in revenue for its cloud business,



in line with analyst's expectations.

Diluted earnings per share was \$2.23 in Q4, an increase of three percent from the same period last year but also below estimates. Commercial bookings grew 25 percent, while Microsoft Cloud revenue was up 28 percent year-over-year at \$2bn.

The company said in its earnings statement that several "evolving macroeconomic conditions and other unforeseen items" had affected its results, including the ongoing

war in Ukraine and an unfavourable foreign exchange rate movement within the quarter.

Satya Nadella, chairman and chief executive officer of Microsoft, said: "We see real opportunity to help every customer in every industry use digital technology to overcome today's challenges and emerge stronger. No company is better positioned than Microsoft to help organisations deliver on their digital imperative – so they can do more with less."



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Bill McDermott

ServiceNow exceeds Q2 earnings target whilst revenues fall short

ServiceNow has reported financial results for Q2 ended 30 June 2022, showing subscription revenues of \$1.65bn, representing 25 percent year-on-year growth. However, the company's total revenues for Q2 were up 24 percent to \$1.75bn, just falling short of the \$1.76bn estimated.

On the other hand, Q2 adjusted

earnings per share exceeded targets, coming in at \$1.62 versus the \$1.54 estimated.

As of Q2 2022, current remaining performance obligations were \$5.75bn, representing growth of 21 percent.

ServiceNow has 1,463 total customers with more than \$1m in annual contract value, representing 22 percent year-over-year growth in custom-

"SERVICENOW REMAINS A CORE COMPONENT OF OUR CUSTOMERS' DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY."

Gina Mastantuono

ers, and has surpassed 100 customers paying over \$10m in annual contract value in the quarter - a year-on-year increase of more than 50 percent.

During the quarter, ServiceNow announced Procurement Service Management, a new solution to help transform procurement across the enterprise, and furthered its investment in employee experience with the acquisition of **Hitch Works**.

Gina Mastantuono, CFO of ServiceNow, said: "Our Q2 results demonstrate the durability of our business, as strong net expansion and a best-in-class renewal rate of 99 percent drove a solid balance of growth and profitability. In the current macro environment, ServiceNow remains a core component of our customers' digital transformation strategy and we continue to see a very strong pipeline."

For the full year 2022, ServiceNow anticipates subscription revenues of between \$6.91bn to \$6.92bn, representing year-on-year growth of 24 percent.

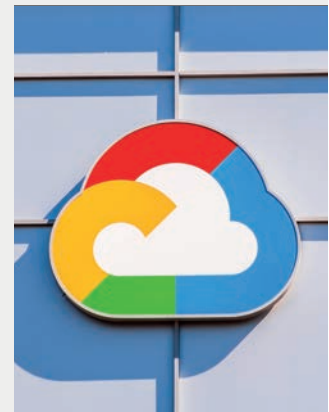
GOOGLE CLOUD LOSSES CONTINUE IN LATEST Q2 EARNINGS REPORT

Google parent company, **Alphabet**, has reported lowered profits for consecutive quarters, despite overall revenue increasing for the business.

The company's Q2 2022 report reveals over a \$2.5bn loss in profits compared to the same period last year, dropping from \$18.5bn down to around \$16bn.

Sales of Google Cloud continue to miss profit estimates, as the report shows growing losses of \$858m in Q2, despite revenue increasing to \$6.2bn for the division. These margins dig a larger hole in profits for Google Cloud, following on from previous annual losses of \$5.6bn in 2020 and \$3.1bn in 2021.

Rising levels of expenses could spell the workings behind Google's ongoing falling profits, although revenues were reported as \$7.8bn higher in Q2 than the same period last year, the total costs have ballooned by \$16.7bn. Research and development costs reportedly also rose by \$3.8bn when compared with 2021 figures.



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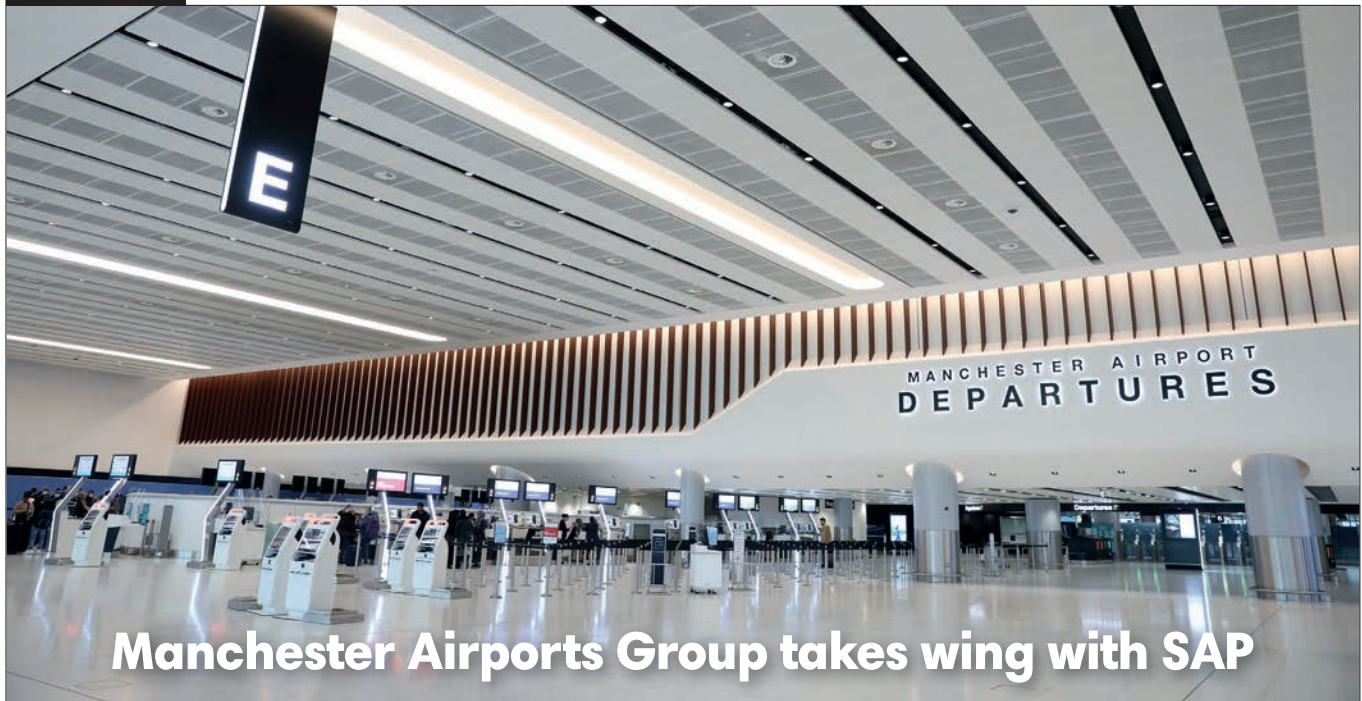
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Manchester Airports Group takes wing with SAP

Expanding on its existing partnership with SAP, Manchester Airports Group (MAG) has chosen RISE with SAP as the first step on its digital transformation journey.

During the steady recovery of the aviation industry post-pandemic, MAG partnered with SAP as part of an initiative called 'Project Build Back Smarter' – a programme focussed on

"AS MAG BECOMES MORE AUTOMATED AND INSIGHTS DRIVEN, IT IS PUTTING ITSELF IN THE BEST POSSIBLE POSITION TO TAKE OFF."

total departmental transformation.

Through the initiative, SAP worked closely with MAG to identify a roadmap to support its recovery. Despite challenges, MAG went live on RISE in March – marking the first step on the road to transformation with SAP over the next five years.

Michiel Verhoeven, UK and Ireland managing director at SAP, said: "The tourism industry has been profoundly affected over the last couple of years, but as MAG becomes more automated and insights-driven, it is putting itself in the best possible position to take off as global restrictions ease."

Workday drives transformation for Stagecoach

Stagecoach has deployed Workday Human Capital Management with payroll as part of a two-year digital transformation programme.

Stagecoach now has a single source of real-time data for its employees with HR and payroll in one cloud-based solution. It will also be adding Workday Recruitment to its portfolio to standardise and streamline recruitment and onboarding



processes across all departments.

The new Workday system gives Stagecoach's workforce an easy way to

digitally access pay information and request time off as well as simplify and reduce manual processes. Michael Douroux,

Workday group vice president for Northern Europe and South Africa, said: "Stagecoach can now unlock the power of data across the business to support its digital transformation efforts. By reducing paper-based processes and simplifying payroll, Stagecoach can make faster decisions based on real-time insights about its people and is better equipped to adapt to a changing world."



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**Head of ERP
RSBG UK**

This is a hallmark of the Embridge partnership – the team has almost become part of our organisation, proactively helping RSBG UK to think differently, de-risk the strategy, and always focus on the end result. This is the 'art of the possible' in motion.

Vishal Pandya – Head of ERP, RSBG UK

**Finance Director
Climate Bonds Initiative**



Embridge challenged us on our processes. The entire team shared our sense of mission and the need to achieve quick wins. Their technical competence, encouragement, and focus on our goals were second to none.

Tim Morris – Financial Director, Climate Bonds Initiative

Begin a new partnership today with Embridge

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Embridge delivers Unit4 ERP for Norwich City Council

Embridge Consulting has been selected by **Norwich City Council** to implement **Unit4's** ERP software.

This project will be the first major SaaS deployment across the Council's back-office systems. Working with Unit4, Embridge Consulting will deliver

the new ERP system and implement standard business processes to help the Council overcome previous challenges, particularly around month and year-end reporting, as well as improve HR processes.

Mark Harris, business development director at Embridge Consulting, said: "This world class

cloud-based ERP solution will provide many opportunities for efficiency across the finance and HR functions."

Chris Richards, regional president UK&I at Unit4, added: "Norwich City Council has a clear digital vision to use cloud-based

solutions wherever it can to provide the best possible service and experience to its citizens. This project will enable Norwich City Council's finance and HR functions to embrace the cloud in a single platform whilst improving operational efficiency."



INFOR AND EVERSTREAM ANALYTICS JOIN FORCES

Infor has entered into a technology partnership with **Everstream Analytics** to help organisations better anticipate and navigate supply chain risks and disruptions.

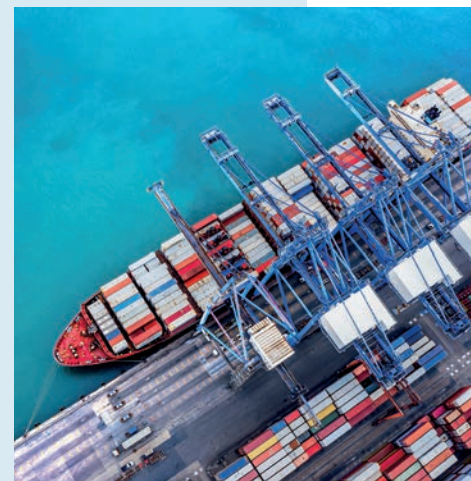
Through the partnership, Infor will integrate Everstream's end-to-end supply chain risk assessment and monitoring data with its Infor Nexus multi-enterprise

business network platform.

The Infor Nexus Control Center provides organisations with visibility of orders, shipments and inventory throughout the supply chain - delivering intelligent insights through its connectivity to carriers, logistics service providers, suppliers and manufacturers. Everstream's solution will provide data on external events that could impact

a company's supply chain flows and its ability to deliver.

The partnership will enable Infor to provide customers with a single supply chain control tower that provides predictive alerts to supply chain events and their impacts, helping customers to sense and respond to external events and deliver shipments on time and in full.





Oracle and Microsoft partner for database service

Oracle has partnered with **Microsoft** to give Azure customers direct, streamlined access to Oracle databases on Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI).

The offering allows Microsoft Azure customers to easily access and monitor enterprise-grade Oracle Database Services in OCI with a familiar experience. Users can migrate or build new applications on Azure and then connect to high-performance and high-availability managed Oracle Database Services.

Many joint customers, including **AT&T**, **Marriott International** and **Veritas**, want to choose the best services across cloud providers to optimise performance and scalability. The Oracle Database Service for Microsoft Azure builds upon the core capabilities of the Oracle Interconnect for Azure and enables customers to integrate workloads on Microsoft Azure with

Oracle Database Services on OCI.

Clay Magouyrk, executive vice president, Oracle Cloud Infrastructure, said: "There's a well-known myth that you can't run real applications across two clouds. We can now dispel that myth as we give Oracle and Microsoft customers the ability to easily test and demonstrate the

value of combining Oracle databases with Azure applications."

Corey Sanders, corporate vice president at Microsoft Cloud for industry and global expansion, said: "This partnership is an example of how we offer our customers choice and flexibility as they

digitally transform with cloud technology. Oracle's decision to select Microsoft as its preferred partner deepens the relationship between our two companies and provides customers with the assurance of working with two industry leaders."

"THIS PARTNERSHIP PROVIDES CUSTOMERS WITH THE ASSURANCE OF WORKING WITH TWO INDUSTRY LEADERS."

KPMG AUTOMATES SERVICES WITH ALTERYX

KPMG UK has formed an alliance with **Alteryx** to automate solutions, boost its data analytics services and help clients to accelerate data-driven business transformations.

The companies will use their combined expertise to help clients inject automated analytics into everyday business processes and make smarter decisions, all powered by Alteryx's end-to-end analytics automation platform.

The companies' shared clients can accelerate their digital transformations while leveraging data-driven insights to expedite automation.



EY INVESTS \$1BN IN AUDIT TECH

EY has invested \$1bn into a next generation assurance technology platform.

The existing EY Assurance technologies will be integrated into one platform through the support of the investment. It will combine the strengths of the organisation's audit platforms and leverage advanced technologies from EY alliance partners to power a new generation of data-driven assurance services.

The programme facilitates transformation in data access capabilities and advanced analytics, AI and UX.

NATWEST TEAMS UP WITH ACCENTURE AND MICROSOFT

NatWest is working with **Accenture** and **Microsoft** to build a new customer engagement platform that will integrate all of NatWest's legacy front office systems onto a single, digital platform.

In the first part of its transformation, the bank is launching a new real-time booking platform that is accessible directly by colleagues and customers and will reduce appointment booking times by up to 75 percent.



“Improving digital capabilities will significantly free up NatWest staff to focus on providing support in these times of financial difficulty.”

Nina Raphael, managing director in Accenture's UK financial services practice, said: “Improving digital capabilities will significantly free up NatWest staff to focus on providing support in these times of financial difficulty.”

Wendy Redshaw, chief

digital information officer of retail banking at NatWest, added: “Our investment in integrating all of our colleague support tools onto one digital platform will enable our staff to really focus on delivering personalised support for our customers.”

Strong H1 results see Capgemini raise full year outlook

Capgemini reported revenues of €10.7bn in the first half of 2022, up 22.7 percent year on year.

H1 organic growth was 18.5 percent at constant exchange rates, with Q2 growth of 19.3 percent, confirming the strong momentum previously observed in Q1. Operating profit was up 32 percent in H1 to \$1.07bn.

The company stated

that growth has been driven by its intelligent industry and customer first business areas.

Aiman Ezzat, CEO of Capgemini, said: “This is the fifth consecutive quarter of double-digit growth and strong bookings. These re-



sults illustrate the relevance of our strategy in a market driven by structural demand for digital transformation, which will remain a priority for our clients in the coming years.”

Capgemini has raised its growth objective for 2022 and is now aiming for revenue growth of between 14 and 15 percent at constant currency, instead of the 8 to 10 percent expected previously.

PETROBRAS ACCELERATES DIGITAL JOURNEY WITH WIPRO AND SERVICENOW

Wipro and **ServiceNow** have joined forces to support **Petrobras'** digital transformation towards automation and internal customer experience.

The project aims to raise the level of service for internal users and reduce costs by modernising and aligning IT infrastructure processes with the business through a modern cloud solution focussed on automation and integration.

The solution will also provide greater availability of technology infrastructure, visibility, and cost control of IT assets.



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SAP up in the clouds for Q2, but profits fall

SAP has reported financial results for its Q2 2022 and half year ended 30 June 2022, revealing a 34 percent year-on-year increase in cloud revenue to €3.06bn, driven by growth across its SaaS and PaaS portfolio.

SAP's current cloud backlog exceeded €10bn for the first time and was up 34 percent. The company's SAP S/4HANA current cloud backlog extends its growth trend, up 100 percent to €2.25bn.

Whilst SAP saw a 39 percent increase in its cloud gross profit to €2.13bn, its IFRS operating profit was down 32 percent to €673m, primarily, it says, due to the impact of the Ukraine war. This detail places further context around the company's decision to slash costs and freeze hires.

SAP has reaffirmed its full year 2022 revenue outlook and anticipates €11.55 to €11.85bn in cloud revenue, up 23 to 26 percent at constant currencies. The company expects free cash flow above €4.5bn.



Christian Klein

KURT REBRY

Christian Klein, SAP CEO, said: "As our Q2 results demonstrate, SAP's portfolio is more relevant than ever. Our transition to the cloud is ahead of schedule and we have exceeded top line expectations, with cloud revenue becoming SAP's largest revenue stream. Our pipeline is strong, and we are winning market share underpinned by the very strong 100% growth of S/4HANA current cloud backlog."



SAGE ACQUIRES LOCKSTEP

The Sage Group has entered into an agreement to acquire **Lockstep**. The acquisition broadens its value proposition for SMBs by expanding Sage's digital network.

Lockstep is a provider of cloud native technology that automates accounting workflows between companies. Its solutions include applications to automate accounts receivable and accounts payable workflows, which will deepen Sage's capabilities in the office of the CFO.

As part of the deal, Lockstep's management team will join Sage to help drive the development of Sage's digital network.

Aaron Harris, chief technology officer at Sage, said: "The acquisition represents an important milestone in our growth strategy. Lockstep's complementary portfolio of products, resources, and know-how accelerates our ambition to be the trusted network for SMBs."

Peter Horadan, CEO of Lockstep, added: "We look forward to accelerating the development of connected accounting, which is imperative for accountants, finance teams and the companies they serve."

Eureka Solutions provides drive for change

Eureka Solutions has rolled out a tailored **Oracle NetSuite** solution at **St Andrews Links Trust** to keep the home of golf at the forefront of the global game.

The Trust, which manages the Old Course and other Links golf courses at St Andrews, has said that the introduction of vital business software has proved transformative in its journey towards modernising digital operations and improving services for customers, suppliers and staff.



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Google further exits smart city stage with cloud closure

Google Cloud's IoT Core system will be retired on 16 August 2023, pointing towards a further pivot away from smart city technology for Google and parent company **Alphabet**.

The news comes not even one year after **Sidewalk Labs**, Alphabet's controversial urban planning subsidiary, was folded back into Google.

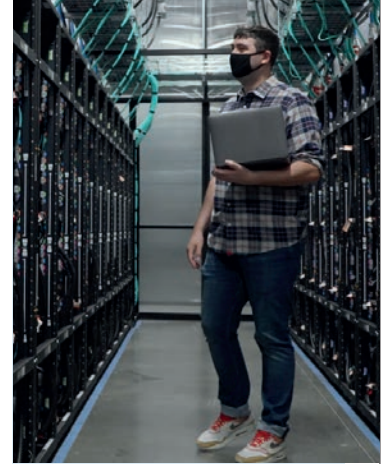
IoT Core was launched in 2017 with an aim at smart city and enterprise deployments such as utilities, transportation and energy. It allowed users to manage Internet of Things (IoT) devices and sift and

analyse data, working in union with Google Cloud's other services.

In an on-the-record statement provided to ERP Today, a Google Cloud spokesperson commented: "Since launching IoT Core, it has become clear that our customers'

"OUR CUSTOMERS' NEEDS COULD BE BETTER SERVED BY OUR NETWORK OF PARTNERS THAT SPECIALISE IN IOT APPLICATIONS AND SERVICES."

needs could be better served by our network of partners that specialise in IoT applications and services. We have worked extensively to provide customers with migration options and solution alternatives, and are providing a year-long runway before IoT Core is discontinued."



ORACLE TO LAUNCH NEW SOVEREIGN CLOUD REGIONS ACROSS EU

Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) is launching several new sovereign cloud regions across the EU in 2023 to better serve its European customers. Both private companies and public sector organisations will be able to use these new OCI sovereign cloud regions to host data and applications that are sensitive, regulated, or of strategic regional importance.

The first two regions will be in Germany and Spain, with operations and support restricted to EU residents and specific EU legal entities.

Scott Twaddle, VP of OCI product and industries, said: "OCI's new sovereign cloud regions will operate under a comprehensive set of policies that enhance our existing capabilities for data residency, security, privacy and compliance. These policies will establish a framework for data and operational sovereignty, including how customer data is stored and how government requests for data are handled."

Unit4 continues strong growth trajectory

Unit4 has reported results for Q2 and the first half of 2022, revealing 91 go-lives and 18 new customers signed, as well as unveiling a new support service for cloud customers, Success4U.

Some of its ERPx customer wins in the quarter include **Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation**, **Dogs Trust** and **Agora Strategy Group**.

During Q2, the company also made the strategic acquisition of **Scanmarket**, a global vendor of cloud source-to-contract software.

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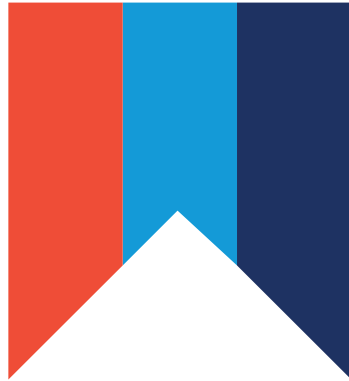
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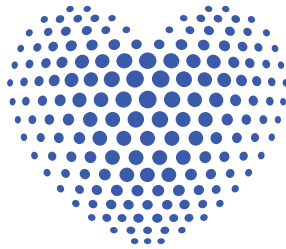
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TRANSFORMATION PROJECT OF THE YEAR

NETWORK RAIL

NOMINATED BY EY

Network Rail is an enormous rail organisation in the UK, employing 45,000 people and supporting 200,000 contractors across the supply chain. But, since 2008, there have been 33 employee and contractor fatalities on NR's infrastructure. As recently as 2019, two track workers were killed after being tragically struck by a train on a live track.

Network Rail's response was to create a programme through its Safety Task Force to deliver better workplaces for everyone on the railway. Several causes were identified, ranging from how the safe work system was planned and authorised to a lack of effective challenges among colleagues when the system deteriorated on work sites.

Initially, employees were sceptical of the new vision to 'get everyone home safe, every day' because previous attempts had failed to enable any lasting change. However, it was essential for the project to succeed this time around.

Network Rail, **EY** and partners successfully launched a solution that radically transformed the way safety was managed on the network. The programme was called RailHub.

RailHub set out to analyse the core components of the systems underpinning the safety record in order to implement its mission, which was to get everyone home safe every day. The consultation involved getting the buy-in of local and national union representatives, a relationship that was historically fraught with difficulty and usually failed. Another significant challenge was convincing end users to change their operating procedures. This time, however, RailHub succeeded.

Two significant changes the project made were removing legacy systems that were difficult for operators

to use and integrating user data sets.

An example of an integrated data set was using cloud-based interfaces that allowed real-time checks on an employee's competency to complete work safely, directly addressing recommendations made to Network Rail in 2019 by the **Rail Accident Investigation Branch**.

RailHub managed to meet all of the goals of the project. There have been reductions in critical areas paramount to workplace safety: near misses and lost time, staff fatigue and operational risks.

The transformation project has been revolutionary for Network Rail, with results going beyond the objectives to create a safe environment for everyone working on the railway. There has been a significant change in the organisation's behaviour and culture by ensuring work is carried out systematically by following the correct safety procedures.

Planners no longer have to switch between systems and have access to clean, real-time source data pre-populated in RailHub, resulting in a 40 percent reduction in schedule slippages on planned work. With the elimination of printed safe packs, savings of £15m per annum have also been made for Network Rail.

Network Rail has also made RailHub's line blockage element accessible to the wider rail industry, significantly boosting Network Rail's reputation across the sector and enabling similar gains for the industry.

By putting forward a genuine, human-first approach to the programme's objectives, Network Rail and EY have successfully implemented a system of change, with complete buy-in from all partners for the very first time, paving the way for a safe working environment for all workers now and in the future.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

COMMENDED

BRIGGS OF BURTON

NOMINATED BY SAPPHIRE



Briggs of Burton is a world-leading British engineering firm with a proud heritage in brewing innovation. They now have an ambitious goal to expand globally. Based for over 300 years in Burton upon Trent, their global innovation in hygiene technology for many of the world's biggest drinks, food, and pharmaceutical brands is accelerating the firm's growth.

Briggs of Burton employs around 190 people in the UK, but it has plans to extend its operations internationally, specifically into the Asia and South America markets, where demand is growing.

In 2021 they became the first UK company to adopt RISE with **SAP** business transformation as a service for S/4HC Public Cloud.

From a revenue of £16m in 2016, Briggs of Burton plans to increase this to £100m by 2024. To bring this growth home, they needed to upgrade their 1980s system to a cloud-based approach. The company decided to partner with **Sapphire** and set its sights on the SAP S/4HC Public Cloud backed by RISE.

Briggs of Burton and Sapphire fit perfectly when it comes to attitudes to people. They both believe in empowering teams to achieve their best and work smarter. So, using cutting-edge technology and automation means staff have extra time to do the things that matter, whether that is speeding ahead with growth or taking time to support each other.

After implementing the new system at the lightning speed of six months, it has already seen the benefits. The new platform allows them to obtain the best margins on bidding for work. With speed and data, they are also creating new expansive offerings to their customers and futureproofing their business with carbon capture modules for their distilleries. The customer is enjoying the Sapphire-led, mid-market growth benefits as a result.

The project is already experiencing improved accuracy, visibility, insight, and decision-making, as well as access to comprehensive reporting that is helping them see and run their business in real-time.

The company is also working on a new multi-million-pound Scottish distillery leading the way in sustainable production in the whiskey industry. The ambitious project for the Ardgowan Distillery, near Inverkip, west of Glasgow, has pledged to be carbon negative by 2024, which it can achieve by creating a modular distillery able to adapt as sustainable technology evolves.

Briggs of Burton is now not just live but through their first cloud enhancements and powering ahead in exploring and exploiting how S/4HC with RISE and Sapphire, the company can drive further transformation in their business.

NHS DIGITAL

NOMINATED BY COGNIZANT AND SERVICENOW



NHS Digital is the national supplier of information, data and IT systems for commissioners, analysts and clinicians in health and social care. It provides services to 1.5m employees across the **NHS**, including NHSmail, Microsoft Teams, Spine (consists of the e-Prescription Service, Summary Care Records, e-Referrals and the Child Protection Information Sharing system), IT Operations, IT Security, and other related services.

NHS Digital needed a user-friendly management platform to help patients and employees access their required services by providing a frictionless experience. Previously, NHS Digital selected an IT Service Management platform, but the implementation did not go ahead due to difficulty in scaling.

After a tumultuous process of re-tendering and assigning implementation partners, NHS Digital finally selected **Cognizant** as their partner for a **ServiceNow** platform.

Cognizant created an 'out of the box' core solution to fit the NHS Digital needs. The results so far include a streamlined process for all critical areas of business, strategic management of information, data-driven approaches and frictionless user experiences.

The product vision for the platform was to build and deliver a first-class digital service for the NHS and beyond and to reduce time spent on non-patient work for clinicians.

The technology-driven automation built into the platform has increased self-service usage by 20 percent, resulting in a reduction in cost/time per transaction of 14 percent and a seven percent reduction in the spend.

NHS Digital now provides a 21st century experience for clinicians, nurses, and all the support staff. For example, in the past, when a carer needed to access a patient's records, they would have raised a request manually, spending a lot of time waiting for the request to work its way through a process with little traceability or visibility. With the new platform and experience, they can use their ServiceNow portal or mobile phone to log, track and be updated as soon as the case receives information while they continue to care for other patients.

By providing a frictionless and automated platform for all staff, NHS Digital is giving time back to health professionals and patients because every 20 minutes saved by NHS Digital allows one more patient to be seen by a health professional.

FINALISTS

ALTER DOMUS
NOMINATED BY DELOITTE



Alter Domus is a fully integrated fund and corporate services provider with almost \$2tn in global assets and over 4,000 employees. In 2020, after significant growth, Alter Domus embarked on a large-scale ERP transformation project to move its entire global business operations across 21 countries to one **SAP** Cloud.

Alter Domus chose SAP software and **Deloitte** as their implementation partner to deliver the vision, and together they created a team of over one hundred individuals. The two brands worked together to find the right solutions across process, data and technology challenges.

A range of SAP technology was selected to cover over 100 level-two processes across R2R, P2P, O2C, HR, client delivery and analytics globally across 85 business entities in 21 countries, delivered in regional waves between 2021 and 2022.

All countries are now live. User uptake and experience have been outstanding, with over 4,000 users now live. Furthermore, the project has had a significant positive impact on the whole business. It has provided a unifying platform and a shared success story for the entire organisation. Acquired businesses have been assimilated and a 15 percent IT cost reduction has followed the single cloud platform.

The project has genuinely transformed the Alter Domus business and delivered on the vision of providing the platform for the future.

Delivering this amount of change and benefit without causing significant business disruption over a two-year timescale is a rapid and remarkable achievement.

HOWDEN
NOMINATED BY LTI



Howden is a leading global provider of mission-critical air and gas handling products, established in 1854 in Glasgow servicing the local marine industry. Following the acquisition of six new companies, Howden acquired six different ERP systems bringing its total number of ERP systems to 15, half of which were out of mainstream support. This acquisition left them in the midst of an ocean of different complexities and approaches. As a result, Howden knew it was time to think about a single platform to tackle the major inefficiencies it was experiencing.

The company appointed **LTI** to implement **Microsoft** Dynamics 365 ERP across their business, creating a single, holistic view of the organisation's key business processes and data.

The results were immediate and impressive; improvements in the customer experience came via the improved ordering process and access to the correct customer data. Internally, Howden made considerable gains in efficiency, productivity, employee satisfaction and cost control information. User-friendly employee dashboards and role-specific workspaces were created on the platform and optimised for employee use. The usability of the platform was shared across the company and not just for senior leadership. Reporting capabilities extended to the entire employee base.

As LTI provided key inputs into their ERP strategy definition and in Howden's execution, the project was a great success. As a result, Howden is now gearing up for accelerated deployment of the right ERP solutions globally.

INNOVATE UK
NOMINATED BY WORKDAY



Innovate UK is a government body that provides essential development support to a cross-section of businesses and is a driving force behind the government's ambitious vision to make the UK a global hub of innovation by 2035.

Innovate UK's mission was to increase its support reach by working with and funding more businesses.

Although Innovate UK was already live with **Workday** Human Capital, the collaboration between HR and finance was limited. The teams were still using spreadsheets and manual processes to supplement Workday alongside old systems. Then the pandemic struck, and internal complexities coincided with a sharp rise in customer demand for funding.

Using Workday UK Payroll presented Innovate UK with an opportunity to realise the full potential of its existing investment. Payroll was the ideal bridge between the HR and finance functions, and the team was tasked with championing an agile approach to implementation.

A project team was created, and a dedicated payroll manager helped coordinate Workday alignment. Workday UK Payroll rapidly demonstrated value in improved agility and a radically accelerated ability to make changes and generate data for strategic decision-making.

The transformation project between Innovate UK and Workday has revolutionised the decision-making capabilities required to meet post-COVID demands, facilitated agility for streamlined innovation and allowed the team to meet the growing demand for live data.

TRANSFORMATION PROJECT OF THE YEAR

FINALISTS

JACKSONS BAKERY

NOMINATED BY COLUMBUS



Family business **Jacksons Bakery** has been baking bread with superior quality, taste and texture for over 100 years. In 2021, it was presented with a business opportunity that could only be met by undertaking a transformation project to overhaul its technology and supply chain. The move provided the springboard for Jacksons to transition from regional to nationwide supplier, introducing 14 own-brand product lines.

The new deal meant an uplift of 30 percent in Jacksons' production and distribution. However, it was clear that the company's disparate legacy IT systems would be unable to cope with the new level of growth.

Working in partnership with **Columbus UK**, Jacksons selected a new integrated Dynamics 365 Finance and Operations (D365 F&O) ERP solution. D365 F&O would be essential to modernise core processes from order to invoice, including procurement, EDI automation, advanced forecasting, production planning, material consumption and despatch.

The ERP platform implementation needed to be deployed and go-live in parallel with the new Distribution and Fulfilment Centre, an extensive programme of factory refurbishments, whole-scale capacity ramp-up and significant new product development and product launches.

The project went live at the start of March 2021 and was completed on time and on budget. The success and immediate stability of the ERP implementation provided the backbone on which Jacksons could launch its new business and continuous development with system enhancements in partnership with Columbus UK.

MERSEYSIDE POLICE

NOMINATED BY EVOSYS



Merseyside Police serves a population of around 1.5 million people across Merseyside and Northwest England. After recent spending limits and austerity measures, the force decided to look for ways to improve services and value by redirecting cost savings to front-line services.

In this pursuit, and working closely with the internal team, **Evosys** was instrumental in the force's successful business transformation. Taking them from disparate on-site systems to an **Oracle** Cloud ERP solution as its primary system for human capital management, finance and procurement fully integrated with the force's new duty management system.

Merseyside Police chose a multi-faceted Oracle Cloud system as part of its digital transformation strategy. This solution helped the force to connect all its critical data across functional business areas, making it accurate and accessible. A subsequent reduction in administrative time and error has been a significant outcome.

The force transformed its procurement model by moving away from an email-based system to a digital supplier portal. As a result, suppliers are consolidated in one place, and a streamlined approval process allows the efficient delivery of critical operational equipment.

Despite pandemic restrictions, Evosys' team of cloud experts managed a remote delivery of the cloud solution. Implementing a new ERP solution on a budget is challenging at any time, but with Evosys' proven implementation methodology and innovative tools, they managed a successful transformation.

MICROSOFT CIRCULAR CENTERS

NOMINATED BY MICROSOFT



Microsoft **Circular Centers** are leading the way in zero-waste sustainability efforts in the tech industry. To successfully prove the concept viability, Circular Centers needed a robust and flexible supply chain management platform to support an optimised warehouse routing and management system to process decommissioned servers from Microsoft data centres.

Kesava Viswanathan, Circular Centers programme director, collaborated closely with **Microsoft** Cloud Supply Chain Engineering to design and implement new capabilities needed to stand up the Circular Center programme. Decision makers were looking for a quick ramp-up and implementation to align with their tight timeline for the pilot launch and a cost-effective ERP system for warehouse and supply chain management. Equally important was a system that would meet Microsoft's internal security parameters and integration capabilities with other supply chains.

Microsoft Dynamics 365 Supply Chain Management emerged as the winner. This platform was not only on budget with a responsive MCS team, but the lack of required security validation meant they could achieve rapid implementation and deployment.

This model has achieved 83 percent reuse and 17 percent recycle of critical parts while delivering a reduction in carbon emissions of 145,000 metric tons CO2 equivalent.

Microsoft is looking forward to extending this model to all cloud-computing assets and achieving 90 percent reuse by 2025, with projected savings of approximately \$100m each year.

FINALISTS

**NORFOLK COUNTY
COUNCIL**

NOMINATED BY SOCITM ADVISORY



Norfolk County Council is the top-tier local authority for the rural, non-metropolitan county of Norfolk in East Anglia, England, serving a population of around 900,000 citizens and employing over 9,000 people. Like all UK local authorities, it is faced with the dual challenges of increased demand for front-line services and citizen expectations against a declining government grant.

With a strategic objective to become more financially self-sufficient and accelerate digital transformation, the council identified its ageing **Oracle E-Business Suite (EBS) 12.1 ERP** system as a significant constraint. The 2004 system had a limited flow of data and analytics, and many processes were still paper based.

Following a partnership with **Socitm Advisory**, the council selected Oracle Fusion as the best cloud-based ERP solution to help their transformation.

The new system was launched to 9,191 users in April 2022. Oracle Enterprise Performance Management was implemented to streamline planning, forecasting and reporting processes and support a cultural shift. Eight hundred managers were empowered to take ownership of budgeting through self-service.

A focus on end-user experience was paramount to the process and collaboration between the council, Oracle and Socitm Advisory led the change programme and empowered employees and managers along the way.

The transformation of Norfolk County Council has been a trailblazing success, driving a culture of change that will benefit all users across the system.



TRANSFORMATION PROJECT OF THE YEAR

FINALISTS

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS NOMINATED BY COGNIZANT



Oxford University Press (OUP) is the largest university press in the world. OUP's mission is to create world-class academic and educational resources and make them available as widely as possible.

Like many other organisations during the pandemic, OUP saw a significant increase in traffic. To service this new demand, it was imperative to optimise the customer-facing applications, get a unified view of the observability and availability of digital products, and optimise multi-cloud spending as part of digital transformation.

The initial objective of the transformation programme was to self-fund the project with an expectation of being cost-neutral. But **Cognizant** has so far delivered savings of £1.7m and supported a cultural change within the organisation where individuals and business units are empowered to take control of their own cloud spend.

As Darrel Douglass, head of product operations in Oxford University Press, sums up:

"(The pandemic) has accelerated digital transformation programmes already in place across the organisation to ensure we can deliver what our global customers need, and when and how they need it.

"A key pillar of our strategic partnership with Cognizant has been the work the PACE team have delivered in baselining existing product performance and optimising technical configurations and holistic cloud spend across product portfolios. The significant savings enable the Press to invest in our mission to create (our) resources and make them available as widely as possible."

ROLLS-ROYCE NOMINATED BY CAPGEMINI



The 'Pioneers of Power', **Rolls-Royce** is a famous British institution established in 1884. It creates cutting-edge technologies that deliver clean solutions, and boast a workforce of 11,800 civil engineers and 16,000 defence engineers globally.

The Direct Procurement Excellence Programme (DPEX) delivered a much needed update to the procurement systems at Rolls-Royce. Moving on from siloed operations, spreadsheets and emails, Rolls-Royce selected a highly customised Ivalua software package to transform the entire direct procurement process. The new Ivalua system impacts over 700 global users, 3000 suppliers and billions of supplier parts contracts.

With **Capgemini** as their implementation partner, Rolls-Royce has built a strong programme of transformation that has benefitted many parts of the business and set the stage for growth. The DPEX team delivered a globally sustainable procurement process driven by the embedded process within the Ivalua workflows, connecting suppliers directly to Rolls-Royce. Buyers are no longer chasing RFQ emails with suppliers but instead using the Ivalua workflows resulting in savings of 170 percent above budgeted targets.

The Ivalua platform has enabled progress in environmental goals, from the paperless system, a decrease in air-conditioned storage and a fully optimised working from home set-up for buyers, all contributing to a significant reduction in carbon emissions. The delivery of the DPEX project has also driven value results for both employees and suppliers.

TECHNIP NOMINATED BY INOAPPS



Technip Energies was founded as a brand-new company, spun out from the parent organisation in 2021 with the specific objective to pioneer global renewable energy projects.

Fundamental to the success of this strategy would be a 'One ERP' programme rationalising four global ERP systems to a single platform of **Oracle** Cloud ERP by 2025, in addition to deploying Oracle Cloud HCM globally in 2022.

In partnership with **Inoapps**, it has already realised value in three core areas: common employee experience, analytics accuracy and process simplification.

For the common employee experience, Technip Energies brought together stakeholders from all over the world to go-live with Cloud HCM, which will deliver a common employee experience and increase personal development opportunities for a more flexible workforce.

Increasing analytics accuracy to help optimise decision-making required a migration of more than 19,000 users from local and legacy HR systems to Oracle Cloud HCM with upstream and downstream integrations, data migration and other local source systems. There was a positive response from all regions with change workshops and local market insight sessions to ensure an inclusive process. The project spanned more than 30 countries, and Inoapps, Oracle and Technip worked together to achieve a single, globally coordinated go-live in February 2022.

Inoapps ensured successful implementation and deployment globally, as well as setting the client up for future successful adoption of Oracle Cloud.



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ERP VENDOR OF THE YEAR

IFS



IFS delivers the next generation of cloud-based enterprise software to companies across the world. The Swedish giant's vision for the intelligent, autonomous enterprise focusses on evolving and transforming its customer's business, allowing them to challenge expectations and grow exciting new offerings, radically efficient processes and new ways of thinking.

Significant advances have been made by IFS towards driving innovative solutions to help provide the best customer experience today; including Demand Forecasting: Demand Planning, a forecasting tool that uses AI and ML to collect historical product data, using weather, consumer confidence index, interest rates, showroom traffic, load balancing and more to automate forecast demand.

The vendor has also pushed machine learning for predictive maintenance. In 2021-2022, they improved asset performance prediction and intelligent monitoring with IoT and streaming data, which means less downtime and better maintenance plans to realise value from a combination of sensor and IFS data.

The IFS expense reporting process allows employees to be reimbursed for business-related purchases. The user photographs the receipt and uploads it to the expense report, where ML capability adds the amount, descriptions, and date directly to the expense report. It also classifies the receipt with the customer's own expense, putting an end to laborious expense practices.

Meanwhile, inside the IFS Labs, new ideas and innovations are being explored, resulting in new technologies being turned into solutions. For example, their IoT and IFS Remote Assistance solutions started in the IFS Labs. Subsequently, they have shipped over 900 new features,

helping drive improvements across a suite of products, all engineered for maximum customer value.

In April 2021, IFS launched its three-year sustainability strategy and published its goals, including ambitious sustainability KPIs and achieving carbon neutrality by 2025. They have made significant strides across many areas of ESG, including increasing female managers to 28.1 percent in 2021, building an IFS Education Program and making multiple data privacy commitments.

IFS launched the Change for Good Awards in 2021 to recognise how technology makes a difference by enabling customers to be more sustainable across their businesses. The awards showcase IFS customers' incredible work in customer sustainability. In addition, the awards drive visibility into the community, and engagement with customers helps IFS better understand their needs and goals, influencing how sustainability capabilities are built into products in the IFS Cloud.

In October 2021, the IFS Cloud Sustainability Hub was launched, allowing customers to calculate their scope emissions and gather 'E' (environmental) data for ESG reporting. The carbon footprint tool allows customers to track their emission reductions against their targets, giving greater insight into progress against commitments such as carbon net zero.

The roadmap for the Sustainability Hub expands on the carbon footprint tool, bringing in ESG metrics for automated reporting against ESG frameworks and standards.

The core values at IFS: trust, collaboration, and agility, continue to frame how they work with partners, customers, and colleagues to show how technology is essential in enabling a fairer, greener society.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

MICROSOFT



Microsoft empowers every person and organisation to achieve more by offering a comprehensive portfolio and supporting customers with their business needs. The connected data and applied intelligence at the core, Dynamics 365 and Power Platform create a complete set of integrated, intelligent business applications. An investment into Dynamics 365 is central to the security and compliance of Microsoft Azure and connects to tools millions of people use daily through 365 and Teams.

Business applications are becoming multiplayer, and collaborative applications leverage the Context IQ technology, a natively integrated set of cross-app experiences that bring people the information they need when and where it's needed.

The capabilities of Context IQ make information, people and conversations more accessible in the moment, reducing switching between apps. At the data layer, Microsoft can ingest, manage and unify data from all data sources, including on-prem applications, SaaS applications and third-party systems. Using Azure Machine Learning, Cognitive Services, and AI Builder, they synthesise larger quantities of data and turn these results into deliverable actions.

Microsoft UK takes pride in the impact they have made on the UK economy, environment, and society. Over the past year, £149.6m was given in grants and 718 UK charities, and 4,000 students reached. Thirty thousand young people have engaged in the Generation Cost programme, and 183 partners have signed the Microsoft Partner Pledge to meet standards across upskilling, diversity, responsible and ethical AI, and sustainability.

On the sustainability front, core UK Microsoft facilities are now powered by 100 percent wind energy, and their Circular Centers are making huge strides forward with supply chain management solutions. As a result, the centres have achieved 83 percent reuse, and 17 percent recycle of critical parts while reducing carbon emissions by 145,000 metric tons of CO2 equivalent.

Microsoft will extend this model to all its cloud-computing assets and is on track to achieve 90 percent reuse by 2025, with projected savings of approximately \$100m each year globally.

Microsoft's mission to help the world achieve more extends to empowering social purpose, which includes large upskilling and apprenticeship schemes and being a leading force for inclusivity.

COMMENDED

SAP



SAP is a world-leading software producer for managing businesses, processes and solutions.

Their purpose is to help companies of all sizes and industries run their businesses profitably and adapt continuously. As a market leader, their commitment has led to over 22,000 partnerships and employees in more than 140 countries. SAP customers generate 87 percent of global commerce and they have ranked as the #1 software company in the **Dow Jones** Sustainability Index for 15 years.

Customers have seen tremendous innovative benefits from the SAP S/4HANA Cloud solution and best practice use cases. For example, the Automated Data Capture delivers time and cost-saving scenarios using optical character recognition to collect and digitise large amounts of business documents.

AI and ML learn from customer-specific history and exceptions to predict, support or automate business user decisions. Robotic process automation detects problems and triggers workflows, and SAP CoPilot provides conversational UI with a digital enterprise assistant for various business roles.

SAP S/4HANA Cloud has enabled innovation for top, bottom and green-line growth and, together with their customers, they have spearheaded a future with zero emissions, zero waste and zero inequality. Enterprise solutions deliver company-wide functionality and industry-specific sustainability features to drive sustainability at scale by embedding operations, experience and financial insights into core processes.

Companies can use the SAP S/4HANA Cloud to move beyond economic measures to have complete visibility into the consequences of their actions – adding real-time environmental, social, and governance impacts into reporting. It is modular but pre-integrated so customers can start where they need and adapt proven business processes with intelligent robotic process automation, ML and embedded analytics.

SAP S/4HANA Cloud is an ERP solution for the digital era. The new RISE enhances this approach with SAP solutions, simplifying contracting and providing concierge services for transformation. Consequently, RISE has seen 15 to 40 percent improvement in customer satisfaction, a five to 15 percent improvement in customer spending, and a 15 to 20 percent reduction in their carbon footprint.

The numbers bear out SAP's purpose to help the world run better and improve peoples' lives with sustainability at the core.

FINALISTS

GLOBAL SHOP SOLUTIONS



Global Shop Solutions create products that simplify manufacturing by automating critical functions, including shop management, scheduling, inventory, and more.

Their Fast Track ERP Implementation process is their newest offering, reducing manufacturers' time to go-live with their software, so they can achieve a faster ROI. Global Shop Solutions has been assisting new customers to achieve go-live in 90 to 120 days by focussing on their core functionality and using a detailed schedule.

Their product innovation and technology roadmap includes two critical elements for today's manufacturers: expanding ERP capabilities with software integrations and the ability to customise and display real-time production data on the shop floor.

Access to real-time shop floor data is essential for keeping up with today's short lead times and just-in-time delivery dates. The Dashboard Designer is one of the newest features and enables customers to design and build custom dashboards that convey essential information to the workforce across the shop floor.

Global Shop Solutions also drives several sustainability initiatives; training on reducing travel, carbon reduction software and championing a paperless workplace. Furthermore, Global Shop Solutions installed solar panels at its global headquarters last year, generating enough clean electricity to power the entire facility for 30 years.

Global Shop Solutions also has a long history of supporting charities, including healthcare, youth sports, assisting the homeless and special needs children.

INFOR



Infor offers the latest cloud software products to drive enhanced performance and efficiency for the modern business, building solutions for every customer journey stage. They leverage user experience, latest technology, data science and market research in their work.

Designing expert solutions in the cloud, Infor has helped thousands of customers worldwide to stay on top of market disruptions and help companies implement sustainability programmes and encourage traceability. Go Green, for example, educates customers on how software can help them achieve their sustainability goals and improve asset utilisation, maintain compliance with government regulations and reduce costs.

Infor's comprehensive portfolio of ERP solutions supports companies from manufacturing to the public sector, retail and healthcare. Infor creates complete solutions that integrate with their customers' systems, delivering an unmatched user experience with ERP at its core.

Their customers report improved results and superior auditing and compliance achievements. With CloudSuite, companies gain an advantage in detailed industry compliance and improved business continuity in the face of the most challenging disaster scenarios. Furthermore, solutions can be distributed globally across AWS data centres.

Infor drives rapid redeployment of applications and data in response to nearly any imaginable service disruption around the globe, making for a formidable ERP vendor in today's market.

UNIT4



Unit4 is trailblazing the latest in enterprise transformation capabilities across the world's mid-market and people-centric players. ERPx is their cloud-based solution connecting human capital management, financial planning and analytics, and the latest in ERP onto one dynamic platform.

With real-time information and a powerful people-centric core, the platform creates viable benefits for organisations and employees, driving better insights, productivity, purpose and engagement.

Creating an individualised platform for customers, ERPx also allows for continual adaptability and improvement, ensuring the best tools are used in the most effective ways to bring the organisation and its people together. The solution provides customers with a platform and tools designed around the specific needs of their people. New technology and capabilities help customers become more efficient while making their teams more resilient and adaptable.

The Industry Mesh platform builds upon that value by using pre-built data flows between applications, data sources, and the industry ecosystem, reducing the cost, burden and time-to-value of integration and bringing organisations richer and more consistent data across the enterprise.

Unit4's social responsibility mission follows pillars linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals on education and employability, health and wellbeing and environmental sustainability, which have earned them the Bronze Level on **EcoVadis**.

SPONSORED BY

techUK





WINNER

TRANSFORMATION TEAM OF THE YEAR DELOITTE

Deloitte Consulting MCS helps organisations imagine, deliver and run their dreams using the latest technologies, from strategy development to implementation. The **SAP+** team, part of the wider Deloitte transformation unit, comprises 680 employees and is firmly established as number one in the UK marketplace for SAP Enabled Transformation.

It has grown by over 240 percent in the last two years and uses a proven, multi-disciplinary model focussing on multiple industries, including FSI, public and private sectors.

The Deloitte transformation team are problem solvers; from researchers to designers, ecosystem engineers and emerging stars, they are all masters of change. They look at balancing the right blend of industry, process and SAP technical skills to provide their clients with a comprehensive integration and transformation experience. The team holds a reputation as the best UK organisation for implementing finance, supply chain and human capital transformation programmes for some of the best-known global brands operating in the UK.

The '+' in SAP+ symbolises the team's added value for their customers when delivering SAP-based transformation projects. They fill in the gaps around technology, extending opportunities, solving problems and creating value on the road to S/4 transformation. They have a strong focus on data, analytics and the next generation of technologies, including machine learning and artificial intelligence.

SAP+ has an in-house team of experts across multiple industries who can participate and advise on programmes alongside the core transformation unit. This approach continues to be a massive differentiator in the marketplace.

SAP has recognised their work, with SAP+ playing a vital role in the Deloitte Global SAP practice. They have received four Pinnacle Awards this year for transformation, technology and sales excellence. Furthermore, one of their teams won the SAP Business Technology Prodigy Award at a hackathon earlier this year for building a metaverse-based drone command centre and interface to optimise the supply chain for transporting people, goods, and waste. The project used a sophisticated network of drones with adaptive route planning, spare capacity utilisation and automation with an interface to deliver the best solution to consumers.

Over the past 18 months, they have enjoyed the ongoing success of integrating independent SAP consultancy **Keytree**, adding a deeper layer of skills, knowledge and expertise to the team.

The shift to the cloud remains a huge industry-wide progression, and the team continues to support SAP in its RISE initiative. They will soon be named a full stack SAP RISE partner, where their managed service capability will be a crucial component of their offering.

While some customers still use classic application management services, more and more are DevOps-focussed; the priorities of the SAP+ team remain the same; to provide continuous delivery. Helping customers evolve and respond to new and unexpected challenges remains part of their core offering.

Prioritising in-depth conversations and establishing long-lasting relationships with customers continues to feed their ethos as a transformation team. SAP+ understands that the closer they are to their customers, the more value they will deliver. This approach lets Deloitte shine as a transformational leader in the digital and technology space.

TRANSFORMATION TEAM OF THE YEAR

HIGHLY COMMENDED

COMMENDED

CAPGEMINI



Capgemini is a global leader in partnering with companies to transform and manage their business by harnessing the power of technology. The consultancy is guided daily by its purpose of unleashing human energy through technology for an inclusive and sustainable future. It is a reputable and diverse organisation of 290,000 team members from nearly 50 countries.

Over the last few years, Capgemini has seen more clients focus on enterprise management transformation programmes, driven by the need to adapt their business models after significant global supply chain disruptions, access to new technology options and a constantly evolving marketplace.

Often the ambition is high in transformation projects, but customers are left with something little better than what they already had: more tech replacement than any meaningful change. It's essential now to bring expertise and rigour to business processes, excite users with demonstrator applications, and develop for them a clear articulation of the business change.

The ERP Advisory Service at Capgemini aims to help clients shape their ERP programmes to maximise business benefits, realise their corporate ambitions, and provide the best transition for programme delivery.

At the core of the team's success is the Capgemini Reference Model, which is the approach they take to executing complex ERP-enabled enterprise management transformation programmes.

The model has three key components: digitised business change, end-to-end user experience and 'seeing is believing' working applications, and it is tailored to specific industry drivers, processes, and application architectures. The model enables the best architecture and covers an integrated and holistic approach to people, processes, data and technology. The critical top two layers, business strategy and business outcomes, are completely aligned within the model. In other words, the team focusses on delivering meaningful transformation and change, not just random bits of tech.

Valuable relationships are nurtured and maintained among the core team of consultants, employees, partners and clients. In the work that Capgemini does, collaboration and testing business-buy is key to success and producing quality output, whilst essential, is nothing without delivering lasting and critical outcomes.

EY



EY, a leading global expert in professional services, offers insights and quality services to help build trust and confidence in the capital markets and economies worldwide. In addition, EY develops outstanding leaders whose teams deliver on their promises to all stakeholders and the higher corporate mission to build a better world.

The EY EPM team uses the latest generation of **SAP** technology to shape and deliver digital business transformations. They support clients initiating or undergoing major business transformations - their capabilities span end-to-end solution implementation services, from strategy and architecture to production deployment and continuous improvement.

The EY EPM team and EY Digital Finance team helped formulate an Integrated Business Planning (IBP) solution for a major oil and gas organisation. The team focussed on following the fundamental principles of transformation: standardisation, simplification and efficiency and ensured the focus was always on the value provided to the customer.

Combining industry expertise, technical know-how and finance process, experts helped develop a fully functioning and integrated business planning solution using the SAP Analytics Cloud for Planning platform. This was done within an extremely tight timeframe.

The IBP solution is a significant shift from traditional bottom-up financial planning to driver-based planning, allowing for increased visibility into the causes of variances, disruptions and cause-effect analysis.

The target outcomes of the IBP project included improved effectiveness and action-orientated insights, the adoption of a live plan concept, standardisation of all processes, increased data quality, visibility and integration between all users, and a simplified system landscape for easy and accessible use.

The EY team drove a consistent approach throughout the project, from the planning schedule via a people perspective, supported by a solid change management process. An agile framework was adopted to enable the client to have an early vision of the solution and enter a feedback loop during the design process.

The success of this engagement has led to the solution being adopted as a global planning template that will be used to formulate the scheduling process for the entire organisation and their projects in the future.

TRANSFORMATION TEAM OF THE YEAR

FINALISTS

COGNIZANT



Cognizant is a leading business transformation consultant and the preferred partner of **Amref Health Africa**. Together they are building a digital health service for Amref, the largest international non-governmental organisation in Africa.

The Cognizant and Amref Health Africa partnership created a new, user-friendly digital system to integrate three separate reporting tools and their functionalities into one platform. The new platform will enable better planning, resource allocation, identification of training needs, and, ultimately, patient outcomes by aggregating data from the existing tools and helping users generate valuable insights.

There is an estimated six million shortfall in the number of health workers needed in Africa by 2030, which, alongside the rise in population, is exponentially increasing the challenges facing health services on the continent.

The new platform will enhance health worker training programmes, produce meaningful and correlated reporting functions, improve patient outcomes, particularly for women, and drive a system of self-support where people can better address their own healthcare needs.

The Cognizant-Amref transformation project is working closely together to use technology to realise the Amref vision of increasing sustainable healthcare in sub-Saharan Africa.

EMBRIDGE CONSULTING



Embridge Consulting is an independent boutique digital transformation agency renowned for its ERP, business change and digital expertise. They enable successful and impactful digital results and promote a strong culture of purpose throughout their projects.

For example, Embridge recently implemented the **Unit4** Talent Management Platform for a nuclear-decommissioning organisation requiring smart integrations between the ERP and their ATS application.

The team utilised the Embridge Change Management expertise to increase engagement and performance management, removing inefficiencies and driving development and wellbeing.

Embridge helped the project team formulate, communicate and share their ideas, enabling a fruitful consultation with the broader HR team, unions, programme board and managers.

The vendor used a transparent and collaborative approach to achieve its strategic goals, reaching go-live integrations a month before the schedule. Furthermore, the project proved its ability to deal with larger applicant volumes, reduced manual working and administration time, and implemented GDPR compliance enhancements.

The project delivered positive cultural change in ways of working, upskilling employees and introducing improved working habits.

SAPPHIRE



Sapphire Systems is the leading digital operations platforms provider to the mid-market industry. Its partners include **SAP**, **Infor** SunSystems, **HxGN EAM** (formerly Infor EAM), **ServiceNow** and **Automation Anywhere**.

The **Briggs of Burton** S/4 RISE project is an example of a transformation team driving a cloud mindset to future-proof business growth through ERP. Together the brands achieved their go-live date in a phenomenal six months, helping Briggs of Burton experience improved accuracy, visibility, insight, decision-making and reporting.

The team were also responsible for the second RISE with SAP deal with global healthcare company **LetsGetChecked**, who needed to continue servicing demand against an overwhelmingly high take-up for COVID-19 tests.

The Sapphire Team went in to deliver a new system once again with flying colours. Gary Fitzgerald, group financial controller for LetsGetChecked, says: "Sapphire Systems understands all our complexities and specific needs. Their team worked closely with us to scope the right project methodology and expedite performance."

In addition, the Sapphire team has introduced SAP Business ByDesign to some fantastic fast-growth companies, pioneering sustainable products and services and paving the way for SAP's newest initiative, Grow by SAP.

The Sapphire transformation team continues to go above and beyond for their customers daily in pursuit of driving business growth through technology.

SPONSORED BY





WINNER

OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AWARD (NOT CEO)



STEWART MONK

general manager international,
FinancialForce

Stewart Monk is general international manager at **FinancialForce** and provider of customer-centric ERP, professional services automation and customer success solutions built on the **Salesforce** platform.

Stewart is a leader in the field of diversity and inclusion, where he leverages his experience as a gay man in business for over 30 years to focus on work cultures. He knows that integrity, the authenticity of voice and respect for individuality fosters an environment of collaboration and respect.

He has always called out bad practices in his teams and has a low tolerance for language perpetuating sexist or racist assumptions. As a result, he is extremely proud to have been selected to join the Salesforce Ecosystem Equality Partner Advisory Board.

Stewart managed the EMEA team for over two years with care and compassion and ensured that there were no reactive team changes or redundancies in response to prevailing market uncertainties. Instead, he helped transform and grow the business by 60 percent, opened new offices in The Netherlands and secured further headcount expansion. His attention and direct outreach to each FinancialForce customer kept confidence high while he invested effort and determination to reshape the business.

In just two years, Stewart has transformed FinancialForce EMEA in every respect, with positive change and new energy now visible in every cornerstone of the business. He drove change at a time when other companies were being cautious. For example, establishing a new EMEA office based in Utrecht showed customers and colleagues that FinancialForce was on a growth curve despite the market challenges.

By reaching out to reinforce relationships across the

FinancialForce ecosystem, he helped encourage new channel partner propositions to develop. He generated word-of-mouth attraction that brought in new partners in France and the Nordics – such as **Fluido**, who were excited to create new financial capabilities with their Salesforce solution.

Through building new bridges with senior Salesforce executives, he highlighted the shared benefits of supporting FinancialForce. Now go-to-market programmes have been jointly developed for several industries, and as a result, the line of Salesforce-referenced business is multiplying.

Drawing only from existing employees, he overhauled roles and promoted from within to reshape the sales team, customer success teams and presale job function. He flattened the organisational hierarchy in the process and injected new autonomy into many roles. Stewart reoriented every business development manager to sit at the centre of sales activity, never on the sidelines. As a result, continuous improvement and creative thinking have become part of the EMEA culture.

The energy in the EMEA team is palpable, and international sales campaigns are developed at a rapid pace; new go-to-market campaigns have reached companies in 17 countries across the region over the past two years, supported by a new multi-lingual EMEA website.

The proof of the value of this wholesale change is evident in the transformed sales results, and growth trajectory of the organisation and the outstanding leadership of Stewart Monk was undoubtedly the major driver.

Somehow, he even manages to have a real life outside work, with time for family, cooking, long dog walks and even (or so it is rumoured) a little disco dancing.

OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AWARD (NOT CEO)

HIGHLY COMMENDED



ANWEN ROBINSON

senior vice president and general manager of Infor UK&I

Anwen Robinson, a cloud ERP veteran, joined Infor in March 2021 and is a significant stakeholder in all regional business units.

When Anwen took the role of GM, she had to ensure that the UK&I was aligned to the new global strategy. When joining the business, it was against the backdrop of several UK&I predecessors over a relatively short period.

Plus, a major cross-regional shift in Infor's global focus was being rolled out, and Infor was purchased by **Koch Industries**. The UK&I needed to quickly realign to the new global direction and ensure that the team structure could achieve the core objectives.

The first step she took was to assess the UK&I structure, focus, and communications approach and determine where the UK&I would make a real difference. To understand the key operational processes, she connected with all key customers and employees. She also listened to her workforce to understand the areas that UK&I could rapidly improve.

Aligning everybody within the UK&I organisation to the new strategy was essential. She took that alignment down to core levels to ensure that everyone understood the internal and external challenges and what was likely to be coming in the future.

Looking beyond the immediate team, Anwen was also conscious of building on Infor's brand awareness and ensuring that relationships were built with trusted advisors. Her plan needed to ensure that the company's reputation remained strong and trustworthy. Anwen also saw the need to rapidly build a strong positive culture inside and out of the business, ensuring that the company gave something back to the community.

The results of Anwen's leadership initiatives are felt every day in the culture, meetings, collaboration, and engagement of the UK&I team. In the one year that she has been at the helm, UK&I feels united and operates like one team. Furthermore, the team knows exactly what the business strategy is. But, most importantly, the team understands exactly what part each of them plays in achieving that strategy.

Beyond that, the UK&I team has been making a solid impact in the marketplace and becoming more recognised as a leader in the field. This is all down to Anwen.

COMMENDED



CHRIS RICHARDS

regional vice president, Unit4

Chris Richards joined **Unit4** in Nov 2019 after spending 25 years in the enterprise software industry, working at **Software AG, Workday, Morgan Stanley and Citrix**.

At Unit4, she delivers the regional strategy and drives sales across the UK&I. She also focusses the concept of 'people experience', creating success through the experiences of Unit4's people and everyone who touches its customers' ecosystem.

Over the past two and a half years, Chris Richards has made a tremendous impact as a leader. When she joined Unit4, the UK&I region required a new strategy to turn around the business. The challenges were centred in three areas: people, customers and growth.

Chris found when she arrived that people were generally demotivated, the sales and leadership team weren't at the level required to drive global growth, and the collaboration between teams was lacking. Moreover, these internal problems were impacting other focus areas.

She implemented a leadership plan to refocus the business units to drive an ethos of 'doing the basics brilliantly'.

At Unit4, she has created a loyal, talented and motivated team and a place where people enjoy coming to work. In addition, an open feedback culture and safe space have built a positive working environment where employees are empowered to make decisions.

Chris also identified and responded to customer complaints, building a team of customer experience specialists to help improve and expand their customer base.

Focussing on business growth, Chris saw double-digit bookings increase up to the financial year 2021. In addition, she pioneered a new sales solution architect role in the company, hired top talent and kicked off regular reviews with the business development, marketing and sales directors.

When many go-to-market teams faced significant challenges during the pandemic, Chris' focus was to lean in, build, and use it as an opportunity to create tighter bonds with her employees, customers and partners.

By identifying the core drivers of the business' growth, Chris created a roadmap to drive a transformed business towards its objectives.

OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AWARD (NOT CEO)

FINALISTS



DAVID LAWSON

centre of excellence (COE) leader,
Capgemini

David Lawson has been Europe's COE leader at **Capgemini** since 2018. His role is to grow the S/4 business and provide a unified cross-continent approach.

In 2017, the **SAP S4** business at Capgemini was considered a niche player by **Gartner** and ranked number five by SAP in Europe. However, separate SAP businesses in Europe were not well coordinated outside The Netherlands, France, Italy and Scandinavia. There was a small Centre of Excellence team, but they did not use all available capabilities.

Upon taking the role, David expanded the scope of the COE to cover 17 countries while encouraging a greater team spirit and culture.

In the past four years, the headcount has grown by 1800 certified S4 consultants in Europe, nearly 10,000 in India, and he has opened new practices in Romania and Denmark. He certifies as many as possible in the latest technologies, and Capgemini has more certified SAP S4 consultants than any other European partner. Today David operates with a small core European team and COE in each country.

The success of the S/4 business has allowed many to accelerate their careers. David selects from a diverse mix of people and has recruited over 20 students from his local comprehensive school.

In addition, he has placed women into senior roles throughout Europe and strives for a better team balance in his male-dominated industry.



ALLY RULE

chief financial officer,
Inoapps

Ally Rule is driven by a desire to become part of an entrepreneurially driven, high-growth organisation, Ally joined **Inoapps** in 2017. From his base in Aberdeen, Scotland, Ally is responsible for shaping strategy and managing the challenges of the impressive global growth of Inoapps.

In April 2022, Inoapps signed an agreement with Boston-based **Abry Partners**, a leading private equity firm, which took a substantial stake in Inoapps. Ally recognised that it was vital for Inoapps to use industry-leading technology and create this opportunity to empower the analysts at the chosen partner to understand the business. This mission drove Ally to implement Oracle Planning and Budgeting Cloud Service (PBCS).

With this software, Ally and the joint investment partner working team could run every scenario requested, drilling into incredible financial detail.

Ally ran a series of what-if scenarios and demonstrated the impact of decisions in terms of salary spent, recruitment demands and onshore/offshore delivery mix.

Under Ally's guidance, the tool accelerated the recapitalisation project to under ten months, with data scrutinised by over 100 external figures across the UK, US and global territories.

In the future, all further acquisitions will be plugged into PBCS, and Ally will retain complete control over scenario planning so that he can continue to drive and direct this phenomenal growth.



VICKI O'NEILL-KING

chief operating officer,
Sapphire

Vicki O'Neill-King has been leading **Sapphire** to become one of the only organisations in the UK to be partners of **SAP**, **ServiceNow** and **Automation Anywhere**.

With relentless energy, she leads over 350 service and support professionals over four continents and is responsible for IT, risk and governance functions.

When COVID-19 hit the world, Vicki flipped the business from on-site to remote delivery, with teams servicing as many projects as they did the year before, ensuring customers could hold their operational line.

After the first year of global chaos, amid major market disruptions and while still in lockdown, Vicki onboarded four acquisitions in six months, meaning she had the enormous task of integrating their people, processes, systems and customers into Sapphire. Because of this, Sapphire became one of the sector's fastest-growing digital operating platform providers.

Without her energy and leadership, Sapphire could not have navigated the challenges that have driven the tremendous growth; as a result, they are a ServiceNow Partner of The Year award winner.

Vicki also sponsored and launched the global female mentoring programme Ceiling Smash, creating a 360-degree culture of empowerment for existing and future female talent at Sapphire.

She is an outstanding leader, an exceptional role model, and an extraordinary personality who wakes up every day and does great things for Sapphire and the transformation industry.

SPONSORED BY





WINNER

SUSTAINABILITY EXCELLENCE AWARD

HPE

Sustainability has long been an imperative business strategy within **HPE**, which was the first to set science-based emission targets across the value chain. Its annual report Living Progress outlines the commitment of the organisation across the ESG spectrum and is an increasingly powerful component of relationships with customers and investors.

Sustainability principles are embedded throughout the organisation, from ethical sourcing of assets to design for longevity, energy efficiency and optimisation of use, to sustainable end-of-use asset strategies.

Platforms such as HPE GreenLake's intuitive software platform help reduce energy consumption by 30 percent compared to traditional models. In addition, GreenLake provides intelligent workload and power management systems and drives sustainability wins for customers who can manage their entire IT estate and drive efficiency through the platform.

HPE is also solving environmental problems with electronic waste, representing the fastest-growing global waste stream. HPE financial services own and operate the largest IT equipment manufacturer refurbishing facility enabling tech to be reused. Now, close to 90 percent of technology returned gets repurposed.

HPE has created a new protocol for handling decommissioned tech equipment that supports their shared sustainability goals. The Technology Renewal Centre was the perfect solution from a security and sustainability perspective.

In its annual report, HPE announced an acceleration of their net zero greenhouse gas emissions to 2040 from 2050, and significant reductions are outlined in Scopes 1, 2, and 3. This represents an ambitious goal as HPE continues to drive the principle of sustainability through their business.

In addition to helping customers such as **Barclays** and **Nationwide** meet ESG goals, HPE helps them leverage technologies to tackle complex societal challenges, for example, fighting pandemics or accelerating clean energy solutions.

HPE focusses heavily on R&D to reduce the carbon impacts of their solutions. However, they recognise that many patents, such as those related to thermal management or enablement of zero-carbon energy sources, could benefit researchers working in entirely different fields.

To help reduce unintended roadblocks and encourage the acceleration of breakthroughs for low-carbon technologies, HPE co-launched with **Meta** and **Microsoft** the Low-Carbon Patent Pledge in 2021. As a result, more than 400 patents that could support low-carbon solutions for generating, storing and distributing low-carbon energy are available royalty-free.

HPE supports their manufacturers and suppliers with the data, digital tools and engagement they need to set goals and track progress around climate, water, waste, human rights, ethical sourcing and other ESG issues. For example, HPE has hosted engagements and provided supplier training during 2021 and intends to continue this into the future. Also, during World Ocean Day this year, HPE established a group of sustainability leaders from across companies in the UK to co-operate and lead together to enhance sustainability initiatives.

HPE is also working on sustainable innovation projects with customers, including creating clean energy from the ocean, global food security, low-carbon economy and a reduced environmental footprint of supercomputing.

A strong purpose inspires HPE to advance how people live and work, and its culture is increasingly focussed on sustainability.



SUSTAINABILITY EXCELLENCE AWARD

HIGHLY COMMENDED

SAP



SAP believes in a world where sustainable business practices can drive performance and profit. Their solutions help businesses bring people, profit and the planet together and accelerate progress towards a world of zero emissions, zero waste and zero inequality.

As an enabler and exemplar of the sustainable, intelligent enterprise, their objective is to create a positive economic, environmental and social impact worldwide. They provide products and services that meet their customers' sustainability challenges and opportunities.

The launch of SAP's comprehensive portfolio of software applications addresses four dimensions of sustainable transformation: climate action, circular economy, holistic steering and reporting and socially responsible value networks.

Underneath these dimensions, SAP has brought three products to market to help companies drive lasting change: SAP Footprint Management, SAP Responsible Design and Production and the SAP Sustainability Control Tower.

SAP and **Unilever** announced a pilot of the blockchain solution to further increase traceability and transparency in Unilever's global palm oil supply chain. In a successful proof of concept in Indonesia, Unilever applied GreenToken to source more than 188,000 tons of oil palm fruit. The solution enabled **Golden Agri-Resources** and other suppliers from whom Unilever sources to create tokens that mirror the material flow of the palm oil throughout the supply chain and capture the unique attributes linked to the oil's origin.

Another exciting partnership SAP has made is with **Anglian Water**, one of the UK's largest water recycling companies, under a shared vision to drive positive business transformation through environmental, social and economic prosperity. Together, SAP and Anglian Water are trailblazing a 'life-centred design' approach to business strategy and development, considering ecological and socio-economic impacts across production, distribution, and disposal.

The partnership model will build on Anglian Water's long-standing commitment to maximising community value while minimising environmental impact. Joint working will minimise harm to the planet and all parties involved across the entire business cycle. They will primarily focus on challenges within social procurement, climate change and decarbonisation, diversity, inclusion and skills development.

COMMENDED

CAPGEMINI



Aiman Ezzat, chief executive officer at **Capgemini**, has prioritised sustainability, with an ambitious target to help its clients save 10 million tons of CO2 equivalent by 2030.

In the UK, the vendor aims to integrate sustainability into all business operations, transforming Capgemini into a thriving net zero business well ahead of the national target of 2050.

Capgemini has established a 10-point sustainability transformation roadmap. The actions in the plan focus on empowering their people, transforming mobility into a low-carbon activity, and investing in low-carbon operations.

Globally, Capgemini has committed to being carbon neutral for its own operations by no later than 2025 and across the supply chain by 2030.

The Sustainability Solutions team, the first of its kind, is a growing, dedicated community of 18 expert practitioners and specialists. The eventual goal is to coordinate and leverage Capgemini's vast resources to accelerate the 'sustainable by default' mindset.

To live their sustainable vision, they have committed to educating colleagues from across all sectors, giving them knowledge on critical topics, membership to the Sustainability Champions Network and ongoing support. They will be set up to work side by side with sustainability specialists so that they can learn by doing. Alongside their Sustainability Solutions team, Capgemini's wider Invent UK sustainability community is now 70 strong.

In 2021, Capgemini partnered with the **University of Exeter** and its internationally renowned climate scientists and sustainability experts to create a bespoke programme for their consulting organisation, the Capgemini Invent Sustainability Solutions Leadership Development Programme.

The programme aims to provide education that instils confidence and creates a foundation to build on that will bring value to their customers and solutions. The first cohort of 50 participants saw colleagues from all grades and business practices, including Capgemini Invent UK CEO, Christian Kroll, benefit from an intense eight-week programme. The course consists of in-person lectures and applied workshops led by the teaching faculty from the University of Exeter.

They are also preparing to scale the programme to educate an additional 500 colleagues in their Northern European countries.

FINALISTS

DELOITTE



Jagruti Shah, finance transformation manager at **Deloitte Consulting**, has created a sustainable change programme that empowers individuals to own their role in reducing climate change. She recently convinced 20 leading members of the ET&P **Oracle** Leadership team to participate in her sustainability initiatives.

The first one was **GIKI**, a platform that provides organisations with the knowledge and tools needed to engage and educate their staff to help them cut carbon. Jagruti championed a team named The Oracle Eco Warriors on GIKI. In addition, she led fortnightly discussion groups with action planning gamification elements where league tables were used to keep score of pledges.

She also implemented a four-pillar Sustainability Development Framework to allow the teams to think more sustainably when delivering projects.

To promote sustainability values among their clients, she always elects a project sustainability champion on client projects to ensure that the sustainable development framework is adhered to.

Jagruti has embraced this way of life personally and led her team to support the UK in its race to net zero. She chooses not to go on this journey alone and brings her colleagues and organisation along with her.

She understands that everyone must play a part in saving the planet, and Jagruti is very much one of the shepherds leading the way.

IFS



IFS has placed sustainability at the core of its values since its inception in 1983; it believes it has a central role to play in the sustainability movement and aims to lead from the front.

They create and develop business initiatives committed to CSR and ESG innovation and focus on how they can support their customers' ambitious ESG ambitions.

In April 2021, IFS launched its three-year sustainability strategy and published its goals, including ambitious sustainability KPIs, documented in its annual Sustainability Report.

The IFS Change For Good awards were launched in 2021 to recognise how technology is helping to make a difference. The awards showcase IFS customers' incredible work to make their businesses more sustainable, empowering other customers to do the same.

The IFS Cloud Sustainability Hub, which allows customers to calculate their Scope 1-3 carbon emissions, is an initial step in gathering 'E' (Environmental) data for ESG reporting. Customers can track their carbon emission reductions against their targets, giving greater insight into progress against environmental goals.

As a business committed to ESG, the greatest impact they can have is supporting their customers to achieve their own sustainability goals. Furthermore, they are committed to showing how technology will be essential to enable a fairer, greener society.

SOCITM ADVISORY



Although only a six-year-old business, **Socitm Advisory** has huge sustainability ambitions far exceeding its size. Socitm Advisory's business model is unique, and so far, they've re-invested £1.3m into their membership organisation, providing local government initiatives, training, development, new products and services.

They remain sustainability focussed in a competitive environment by reducing the travel needs of their employees to almost zero and rewriting the rules on their contracts with customers about carbon capture.

Socitm Advisory champions sustainability within their organisation and encourages the local public sector to support the establishment of economically sustainable, socially just and ecologically safe places for people and communities to thrive. Contractually they are now a 'remote first' consultancy. They believe this switch is vital because their employees spend less time travelling, achieving a better work-life balance.

Socitm Advisory supports a range of charities. For example, with the **Heart of England Forest**, they have planted 589 trees since Spring 2021 for the Socitm Woodland, a designated plot of land for their organisation that will allow them to plant trees yearly. By 2025 they will be planting over 500 trees per year.

Socitm Advisory also helps to develop a sustainable supply of digital skills into public services through their 'Empowering Women' programme and apprenticeship scheme.

SPONSORED BY





WINNER

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR



ADAM STEWART

product lead, Dynamics 365
finance and supply chain
management, Microsoft

Adam is widely recognised as a thought leader in the ERP space despite only working with **Microsoft** for three years. In that time he has already led on Microsoft UK's first unicorn win for Dynamics 365. Adam was also part of the Microsoft UK Champion Award winning team, supporting **Dobbies Garden Centres** through a complete retail transformation amidst COVID-19.

Presenting the award, CEO Clare Barclay said, "Your work with Dobbies Garden Centres is a great example of customer obsession. Your alignment and engagement, understanding of the business needs and requirements, and in-depth ecommerce expertise meant you could successfully tailor a holistic and compelling proposal for Dobbies in the face of fierce competition."

Under Adam's leadership, Microsoft UK's Dynamics Finance and Operations business is growing above 50 percent year-on-year and Business Central is growing above 100 percent year-on-year.

The young professional has also been committed to helping create a platform for early career professionals to navigate a career path inside a large organisation like Microsoft. In addition, he runs an internal podcast series called Career Talks that provides short interviews explaining roles across the company. Adam is co-leading internal initiatives to help recruit external talent to Microsoft and improve internal awareness of roles in Microsoft's Business Groups. He supports school and university career Discovery Days and is an active member of Microsoft's graduate onboarding programmes.

Currently, Adam is co-leading on internal initiatives to help recruit external talent into Microsoft and improve internal awareness of roles in Microsoft's Business Groups.

With his clear leadership qualities, Adam has also mentored a number of Microsoft interns, with many relationships extending into support finding graduate roles and building career plans at the early stages of a career.

Adam has also stepped into the role as the face of Microsoft UK for ERP products to analysts, media and the broader market. At Envision UK 2022, Adam was featured in numerous sessions, including leading the Delivering a Sustainable Supply Chain discussion. Furthermore, he has featured in trade publications such as **The Manufacturer**.

One of Adam's advantages is his understanding of the importance of the Microsoft partner channel. Microsoft's success comes from the incredible work its ecosystem provides to its customers. Adam is extremely involved with the key ERP partner's leadership teams to support planning, reviews, programme execution and key deal sponsorship.

One such partner is **Bam Boom Cloud**, a four-time winner of Microsoft's Partner of the Year for Dynamics 365 Business Central. Upon receiving the award, Robert Pope, chief commercial officer, said to Adam, "Thank you so much for your support over the year, you are a key factor in our success."

Outside of work, Adam remains active on the European Badminton Circuit, being currently ranked in the top 250 worldwide. He has represented his national team, Wales, at numerous events, including European Team and Individual Championships.

Every step of his career to date, Adam has paused, reflected and acted to make changes for those that follow so they can have a better experience. He epitomises the Microsoft leadership principles of creating clarity, generating energy and delivering success.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

HIGHLY COMMENDED



POLINA ZOTOVA

consultant,
Deloitte

Polina is a consultant within the Business Finance Technology department at **Deloitte**. She is responsible for implementing **Oracle** Cloud planning and budgeting solutions. Polina graduated with a first-class BA (Hons) History from the **University of York**, and achieved a distinction in MSc Business Management from UCL to develop her business acumen.

She organised events like Accelerating Data to Intelligence for **IBM** and Rethinking Scale for **NTT**. She wrote an article in **Chief Disruptor Magazine** titled 'If You Can't Beat Them, Join Them: Greenfield Challenger Banks', about the symbiotic relationship between incumbent and challenger banks.

As an **Amazon** account manager, Polina understood the back-end challenges clients face within the application. She learned SQL and Python to help easier data access to support clients in an informed manner. Following her time at Amazon, Polina decided to become a consultant to help resolve clients' pain points and deliver high-quality solutions. Polina joined Deloitte to make a difference, not only to the clients but to the wider community. During her time on a finance transformation project, Polina developed strong relationships with the client and helped create a design to resolve blockers within their planning processes. She is willing to learn new strategies, dive deep into the client's models and design solutions.

At Deloitte, she focusses on diversity and inclusion. As a member of the Women in Consulting team, Polina is surrounded by inspirational women, and aims to bring that network to the rest of the community for knowledge sharing and development. She has spearheaded curating events on Breaking the Bias, hybrid working and #QueerAllYear at Deloitte, giving influential voices a platform to be heard.

Outside of work, Polina recently started a non-profit organisation with the aim to bring African-American dances to London. The organisation focusses on community and ESG, specifically ensuring that the black culture of the dance is reflected through the governance of the company.

By running events locally, Polina aims to emphasise a sustainable approach to running the business, and positively impacting the local communities. She focusses on the development of others. Polina is an active colleague, supporting new joiners and taking on mentoring roles that have resulted in double the rate of output of the client-ready materials.

COMMENDED



GEORGIE ADKIN

solution consultant,
SAP SuccessFactors

Georgie joined **SAP** in September 2019, making the career move from the customer environment to the technology vendor space as a solution consultant in the human experience management suite (HXM). In this new role, Georgie works closely with SAP customers and partners to identify how SAP HXM can be implemented to help drive improved employee experiences and allow customers to streamline end-to-end people management processes.

After graduating from the **University of Leeds** with a bachelor's degree in Law, Georgie joined **2 Sisters Food Group** focussing on HR administration before supporting the business in its HR transformation to SAP HXM. This role allowed Georgie to work closely with internal stakeholders on process improvement and system development.

Georgie honed her skills of stakeholder and project management, and delivering technical solutions, whilst also discovering a passion for presenting HXM demonstrations and training sessions.

The rising star then moved to SAP as a solution consultant, where she now provides tailored solution overviews for companies undertaking their own HR transformation projects. Her unique blend of customer and vendor experience has allowed Georgie to take on additional projects within SAP, supporting global events, working closely with SAP product management, coaching new employees and reverse-mentoring within SAP.

This exceptional talent is part of the SAP UK&I Transformation programme, specifically supporting SAP's growth and leads several workshops focussing on thought leadership and process excellence. Georgie was recently selected from over 300 peers globally to lead the SAP HXM presence at SAP's global annual sales event, travelling to several worldwide locations to help customers explore how SAP can support their HR journey. This included presenting the industry keynote demonstration on sustainability.

Georgie is a coach, mentor and buddy to new employees, helping to support others as they join SAP. Georgie brings her creativity to work, remodelling several long-standing ways of approaching customer interactions which have since been shared and adopted by the wider HXM team. She always goes above and beyond to bring a customer's HXM experience to life by tailoring all interactions based on their individual needs, challenges and goals.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

FINALISTS



ANEESHA SETHI

senior cyber security consultant,
ServiceNow

Within weeks of joining **ServiceNow**, **Aneesha** became a key member of the EMEA team with her commitment, work ethic and cyber security prowess. Aneesha is an enthusiastic team member who always takes the initiative to organise events/activities/workshops that benefit colleagues within the organisation.

Aneesha holds a Computer Science PhD from the **University of Southampton**, specialising in Cyber Security Visualisation. She is also a Professional Member of BCS and holds SN SecOps certifications and ITIL certifications.

Upon starting with the company, Aneesha immediately joined the ServiceNow diversity and inclusion programme and volunteered to run a new initiative of 'IamRemarkable' workshops for EMEA.

Aneesha's list of extra-curricular activities is impressive: founding president of ECS PG Women, founding president of Cyber Security Reading Group, and bringing IEEE Women-in-Engineering International Leadership Summit to the UK for the first time in 2018.

Aneesha is inspirational in her work on ethics, work-life balance and personal growth. She is passionate about real-world change with technology and in making SecOps better for customers through advising them and supporting the development and enhancement of products to deliver working solutions to customers. She goes above and beyond to support colleagues and believes in the 'win as a team' attitude, working towards making the workplace better for women and everyone. She loves problem-solving, and where there is a problem or a better solution, Aneesha will find it.



CHLOE EVANS

consultant,
Deloitte

Chloe joined **Deloitte** in September 2019 through the Analyst Graduate programme and has created a strong reputation for being motivated, proactive and positive in all of her tasks.

This young professional is ambitious and always engaged to learn and develop her skills. She has shown this numerous times with the project roles and practice development she delivers. Chloe understands where she can add value and is passionate; this has driven her to complete her PRINCE2 certification.

Chloe has worked on a commercially sensitive client since January 2021. The programme is the highest profile project in the sector at more than £40m. The programme has had challenges due to the clearance required and size of engagement, but Chloe has constantly received positive feedback from the client about her positivity, delivery and how she manages the project. More recently she has taken on a project management role, sweeping up the new responsibilities in her stride.

Alongside her project work, Chloe is actively involved in many areas of **Oracle's** practice, often the go-to person if you need to know something about the practice. Having prior experience with the analyst programme, Chloe took on a role within the Oracle Junior Talent, and has led the analyst training and onboarding since September 2021. She manages all 15 Oracle analysts and is the go-to person for all their challenges and queries.

Everyone in the practice knows who Chloe is and the impact she has already made and will continue making at Deloitte.



DIANA LIASUK

solutions consultant,
Sapphire

Diana came to **Sapphire** as a **UCL** graduate with a first-class master's degree in Applied Medical Science. As a graduate with no technology background, and still under the age of 30, Diana has rapidly risen to become a leading woman in technology at Sapphire. Her natural intelligence and enthusiasm make her the ideal presales guide to Sapphire's pioneering analytics software templates for mid-market businesses.

In 2018, she won the Inspiration Award from **Goldman Sachs** for achieving a significant milestone while overcoming substantial personal and professional challenges. Diana is an innovative thinker and creative problem solver, winning the UCL Medical Science Invention Competition in 2016.

She also enjoys a rich hinterland of interests, from dance to charity work. Diana shared her passion for Zumba with colleagues when she led a workplace workshop, raising £100 for charity. As she says of herself, "I am a consultant by day and dancer by dusk."

She started out as a functional consultant, empowering organisations with better and faster decision-making capabilities with **SAP** software and cloud analytics. She now works as a solutions consultant as part of the Specialist Analytics Division supporting the entire sales organisation at Sapphire with the provision of evidence-based customer requirements.

She is extremely well liked by colleagues and clients alike and has impressed everyone with the way she has flourished and developed.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

FINALISTS



HELEN COLLINSON
programme manager,
Resulting

Helen joined **Resulting** as a PMO analyst in 2017. She established many operational processes during Resulting's growth period.

In parallel with her internal role, Helen was seconded on a part-time basis to one of the company's large retail clients who were part way through a challenging SAP implementation. Helen worked with the procurement team to establish supplier governance and manage contract scope and licence negotiations.

Following her remarkable performance, Helen was promoted to head of operations and offered a place on the board, a position which she took to with great maturity, not afraid to speak her mind and challenge senior owners and managers.

She managed the implementation of the internal finance and operations systems and processes. She was pivotal in Resulting securing one of only 50 vendor spaces on the Digital Specialists and Programmes UK Government Framework.

In 2021, Helen was part of a team who secured another large UK retail client and, following an independent delivery review, took on a delivery management role to establish programme structure and governance. In early 2022, Helen was asked by this client to programme manage an SAP release and has since been promoted to Programme Management grade.

Despite this step up, she has performed an immaculate handover of her internal operations remit, including career development and the management of a number of sensitive issues.



JACK LOCKETT
account manager,
Infor

Jack joined **Infor** in April 2021. He started in the Digital Sales Team as an associate enterprise sales representative. Before that, he came from **NetSuite** where he began as a business development representative and was then promoted to account executive after one year. Prior to that he worked at **BP** and **Tech Data UK**, having achieved a first-class honours degree at **Nottingham Trent University**.

His career path has reflected that direction, as has his enthusiasm. The Infor team was new, and the organisation had undergone a lot of change when Jack joined. In turn, an environment that would have been challenging for many instead saw Jack thrive; he quickly gathered a strong understanding of his industry and product set. Jack took it upon himself to seek the guidance of more experienced sales reps within the team, and along with his own initiative, he proactively built, scaled and adapted a list of target accounts.

Jack developed a transparent and rigorous process for tracking and understanding which organisations were present within his sector.

Ten months into his role as an enterprise sales rep, his progress and success were such that he was promoted into the accounts team as accounts manager. Jack became one of the first representatives to close a new business ERP deal in his first quarter. This was a great achievement and testament to Jack's work to learn the product and sales process and build relationships with the prospect and his sales team.



LARA WIGGINS
SAP technology project consultant
at Capgemini

Lara has only been with **Capgemini** since September 2021 and has been a part of the **Rolls-Royce** account for most of that time.

Her first role was as part of the delivery Programme Management Office (PMO) for the DPEX project, at the time the largest engagement within the portfolio projects space in the account. Very quickly, Lara was delivering value to the project, earning the respect and trust of senior resources on the project, completing administrative, financial management and resourcing tasks as well as interpreting what she was doing, why she was doing it and what the stakeholders needed to know.

After four to five months on the DPEX project, the EM recommended and offered Lara the PMO team. The lead of the PMO had struggled with resourcing, and had experienced difficulty with poor quality resources of a much higher grade. In contrast, Lara was a breath of fresh air. She immediately stepped up to the role.

Lara's adaptability was so rare to find in graduate resources, yet she could absorb information, learn new skills and, most importantly, apply them in practice. Lara has since been given a number of considered leaps of faith and she has consistently delivered beyond expectations.

In her current position, Lara has a strong financial management element to her work, contributing to resourcing and other project delivery elements. Despite not having a background in finance, she picked things up very quickly, providing accurate work and valuable analysis and explanations.



MILES MACINNES
technology consultant,
HPE

Miles joined HPE in September 2018 when the company had an intake of 20 apprentices into the Pointnext Services delivery team. Miles was successfully placed into a live technology delivery project for a large scale modern workplace transition, working from and staying near to the client site.

The project team quickly started to rely on the work Miles was doing. He was adding value within a matter of weeks, rather than simply shadowing and learning on the job. In addition, Miles was set an apprentice roadmap of vendor certifications for the four year duration of his degree, all related to subjects that HPE technology consultants would typically have to know. Miles was the first apprentice to achieve certification from the roadmap, whilst supporting HPE's client projects.

In mid 2020, Miles diversified from performing an apprentice technology consulting role into an apprentice project manager - and he has been an integral part of the project management team since. He supported a programme for a large telecommunications provider client of HPE for the past two years, performing change management, stakeholder management and contributing to contract renewals.

Miles has been so busy contributing to the delivery of professional services for HPE's valued clients that his chargeable client utilisation percentage has been higher than many seasoned technology consultants year-to-year. This is an amazing achievement and contribution, given he's had to manage a four year degree programme for 20 percent 'off-the-job' working!



YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

FINALISTS



POOJA GOLANI
senior consultant,
Namos Solutions

Pooja joined **Namos** as a graduate consultant in August 2019 and has since taken advantage of every chance to learn and improve.

In less than a year, Pooja was promoted to a functional HCM consultant. She has led various projects for Namos and is particularly proud of the **University of Greenwich** project, which marked Pooja's first delivery of talent management.

She single-handedly drove the project from conception to completion, finishing it in just four months from discovery to go-live. Since then, Pooja has continued to go above and beyond the HR and talent space by owning and delivering the technical/functional specification for a multi-pillar implementation of HR and finance for all integrations between **Oracle** and third-party systems.

Pooja was also the single implementer of the company's own Talent Management system, confidently presenting and explaining the system to line managers, peers and co-workers. Pooja has consistently been nominated for multiple employee awards, recognising her relentless hard work and commitment to the company's values.

In addition, Pooja is passionate about participating in meaningful activities outside of work, including volunteering at a medical health camp in India. She was essential in setting up the camp and turning around 200 to 300 patients daily.

She is heavily involved in marketing projects and has a strong desire to demonstrate thought leadership by engaging in webinars and spreading the word about Namos and what it does for customers.



STUART NIXON
communications lead,
HPE

Stuart started his career with **HPE** as an intern in 2017 and returned after studying in 2019 as a UK&I Internal Communications Graduate. In 2022 he celebrated his third year at HPE, where he has worked his way up to communications lead for the UK, Ireland, Middle East, and South Africa (UKIMESA) geography. His remit covers UKIMESA but 60 percent is UK/Ireland focussed.

During his time as an intern, he received a Top Intern Talent award at HPE for his critical role in projects and outstanding performance throughout the intern years. Whilst in the HPE early careers programme, Stuart bagged several internal awards. For example, his Outstanding Leadership Award recognised his work ethic, insights, ideas and leadership qualities.

While completing his first year in the HPE graduate programme, he was awarded a UK&I Early Career award for the critical role he played in helping the UKIMESA organisation transition to working from home during COVID-19. His work focussed on providing moral support, creating useful content and supporting employee day-to-day wellbeing and success.

In his day-to-day role at HPE, he works with the executive teams in his geography on their internal and external communications, leads internal communications for UKIMESA, and coordinates communications plans while collaborating as part of a wider team.

He has recently been instrumental in driving comms, hackathons for Data Academy and being a 'Force for Good' with various community days across UK and Ireland.



ZOE LEACH-LEESON
communications, change and
enablement advisor, IFS

Zoe has worked for **IFS** the past three years. She has excelled in transformation-focussed roles at **SAP** and now she continues to do the same at IFS. She is incredibly knowledgeable about the industry and balances customer needs with those of organisational change and personal development.

She has the uncanny ability to engage people across the generational spectrum, dealing with early talent as efficiently and effectively as she does with multi-decade veterans. Whilst at IFS, Zoe partnered with its global leadership team, including the CEO, CDIO and CCO on various initiatives. She is now managing a critical part of business in Global Customer Services, focussing on the transformation and working across the entire customer base. Zoe is naturally industrious and builds solid relationships across stakeholder groups, mobilising and motivating others to drive change effectively.

Between August 2019 and December 2019, Zoe coordinated the creation of the GCS Transformation Charter, its launch event in January 2021 and the operationalisation of the plan during the course of last year. Now moving into 2022, she is leading the optimisation through organisational mandates and individual OKRs.

Zoe is a creative, empathetic leader who is already delivering beyond expectations. She is known as a multiplier; that is, if Zoe is involved, either owning or contributing to an initiative or programme, you know the project will get multiplied value back from all of the individuals involved.

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WINNER

EMPLOYEE HERO AWARD

FINANCIALFORCE

FinancialForce is the leading provider of customer-centric business applications across finance, services and customer success teams. Run on the leading cloud platform, **Salesforce**, FinancialForce enables organisations to unlock customer insights, deliver innovative experiences, run a digital business and achieve real operational agility.

Irrespective of their location, age, gender, or background, the business provides employees with an environment where they can grow. Through the FinancialForce4Good (FF4Good) initiative, employees have four hours a quarter to allocate toward a service opportunity of their choosing. In addition, FinancialForce has pledged at least one percent of employee time to the community, with the commitment formalised via Pledge1Percent.org.

Each year, employees can also donate 24 hours of their time to a cause that is important or meaningful to them. Globally, the FinancialForce team has completed 1,554 volunteer hours from February 2021 to January 2022 as part of the initiative.

Focussing on raising awareness, educating, building an inclusive culture, and understanding the impacts of D&I in the workplace, the FinancialForce4Inclusion programme has grown from a grassroots effort into a broad, rich, company-wide diversity and inclusion programme with executive-level commitment.

The business values employees' diverse perspectives and voices in helping shape the company and better build a more equitable future with the internal community, customers and partners. There is an active LGBTQ+ community with regular workshops and external speakers to stimulate conversation, education and involvement. ##EbonyFF and ##FF4her have been recent additions to the programme.

FinancialForce actively encourages managers to check unconscious biases during hiring, employee reviews and promotions, ensuring a diverse slate of candidates for board-level positions. They use surveys to understand the needs of their employees, allowing them to tailor their development programmes and other initiatives to fit each individual's requirements. According to **Glassdoor**, past and present employees rave about the company's culture, working environment and their colleagues.

Employees note that they're provided with the trust and freedom to work on passion projects and are invited to participate in lots of learning and training opportunities. They also mention how, thanks to the strong executive leadership team, FinancialForce has fostered an environment focussed on innovation and growth across the company.

One FinancialForce mission is to implement training to drive building and maintaining high-performing teams. In the first year of training, staff members are taught how to act and own by taking accountability, while in the second year, employees learn how to champion one another.

Each year, every office receives a paid day off to focus on education, community action, and a historically or culturally significant day for minorities, such as Juneteenth. FinancialForce encourages employees to use these days as an opportunity to act in their local communities. They have built strategic, paid days off into their schedule; this includes a day off to celebrate and prioritise family and friends, and a day for recharge to focus on health and wellbeing.

A company which prioritises employees' wellbeing, Financial Force knows that investment in a positive work-life balance translates into more creativity, higher productivity and job satisfaction.

EMPLOYEE HERO AWARD

HIGHLY COMMENDED

IFS



Team **IFS** has over 4,500 employees in over 50 countries and are trusted by over 500 partners worldwide. Together, they are growing at three times the market average. IFS' core values of trust, collaboration and agility frame how they work with partners, customers, and colleagues. This remains one of the key reasons people work with the brand and it is crucial to IFS' recruitment, onboarding and retention process.

To ensure the right message for applicants, all vacancy language is reviewed for neutrality and diversity. Particularly, the Make Your Moment campaign launch has highlighted employees' control over how they support customers and stakeholders too.

To hire people with the right qualities and attitudes, IFS believes they must be enticed towards the company. The business boldly seeks applicants that want to challenge the status quo, achieve real change and make a world-wide impact.

IFS wants every colleague to thrive. Their global benefit programmes are under constant review to ensure they are inclusive and accessible to all. During Pride Month, they launched their policy on transitioning, available globally to support any colleagues changing their gender presentation. This was accompanied by short, direct training sessions to help colleagues understand pronouns, the difference between gender identity and sexual orientation, and other LGBTQ+ topics.

The 2022 Global Get Fit Challenge saw colleagues around the globe setting themselves a physical challenge, preparing for it, and then achieving their goal. Participants raised funds for The IFS Foundation, a group of independent charities working to alleviate poverty in rural Sri Lanka, where approximately one-third of IFS colleagues are based.

Employees that are proud to work in an innovative, inclusive team are instantly set apart from the crowd. As such, IFS currently has a 4.3 star rating on **Glassdoor** and the CEO has a 92 percent approval rating.

Additionally, IFS has launched health and wellbeing curricula through the IFS Academy, including topics like nutrition, exercise and mindfulness, with manager content focussing on ways to support teams and identify struggling members.

COMMENDED

FRONTERA CONSULTING



Frontera Consulting puts people at the forefront of every decision it makes. By ensuring that each team member is thriving, Frontera is strengthening the organisation as a whole.

Frontera trusts employees to make the best decision, whether presenting a solution to a client or choosing how to structure their workday. Staff are offered the flexibility they need for their families, to progress in their careers, or to choose a different path altogether.

Trust, value, delivery, family, expertise and collaboration are the principles that guide Frontera and help to achieve and maintain a high-quality level in delivering their work. The enterprise is proud to say that its team shares the same corporate values and integrates them into everyday work. To achieve the goal of nurturing a healthy, safe and fair environment for all employees, the enterprise has also started implementing initiatives that help measure and optimise employee wellbeing.

As part of everyday company culture, Frontera includes a system of recognition and praise, as they want to acknowledge everyone's efforts and achievements. There is a constant focus on training and upskilling employees, based on their specific needs and interests, as well as recommendations from their line managers.

With monthly 1-on-1s and company-wide meetings, Frontera offers clarity and transparency to all employees who have access to extensive private healthcare, including mental health support, to help them maintain a healthy, balanced lifestyle. Unlimited time off has been implemented for all Frontera employees to help them achieve the perfect work/life balance.

There is great importance on maintaining and growing the Frontera culture through a variety of activities. The company has heavily invested in their employees' work-from-home setups to help them work more comfortably and productively whilst remote. Furthermore, they have also set up a corporate social responsibility programme to support employees who give their time to their communities via volunteering activities.

Through their supportive and collaborative culture, and by implementing each of the above programmes, Frontera is proud to report very high retention rates here in the UK.

EMPLOYEE HERO AWARD

FINALISTS

CAPGEMINI



Building supportive communities is at the heart of **Capgemini's** ethos.

Naming some Capgemini initiatives, the Armed Forces Network helps army veterans starting their careers at Capgemini, while CAPability raises awareness on disability-aware and caring-inclusive methods.

Capgemini's LGBT+ employees and allies network runs courses on LGBT+ terminology topics and issues affecting the community. The **Race Equality Network** guides Capgemini UK's actions to strengthen anti-racism, hosting workshops on bystander intervention. Moreover, to help career development, race and LGBT+ reverse mentoring connected senior leaders with 160 more junior employees last year.

Boosting female representation in UK tech, the **Accelerate Gender Equality Network** supports women at all stages. Annual awards nominate 130 inspiring women across Capgemini UK. 2021 also saw the Peppy app launched for guidance on menopause, fertility, and baby loss, with one-to-one medical professional support. In March 2022, this expanded to male health and wellbeing with Peppy Men.

Capgemini supported 160 female team members with leadership training from **Women on Boards**. The partner assists career progression, equipping women to take on non-executive board and trustee roles, and in the first three months, four women gained external non-executive director roles.

With the Relaunch Capgemini programme, **WM People's** Top Employer Awards even shortlisted Capgemini in 2022 as one of the Best for Returners.

HPE



HPE is a global, edge-to-cloud company built to transform their customer's business by helping them connect, protect, analyse and act on all their data and applications wherever they live.

Locally in UK&I, across the Middle East, and collaborating with leaders in worldwide communities, HPE has put in place critical players from across the business. Investing time in sharing experiences and expertise provides confidence across the business and helps teams' fluency in positioning **SAP**.

David Roden, lead solution consultant at HPE, is an exceptional team player who brings a creative approach to all key services roles and provides the best possible customer outcomes. As key customers have recognised, this goes hand-in-hand with great leadership, developing and demonstrating a unique approach, doing the right thing for the customer, and always aligning to their business objectives.

David has really stepped up, humbly taking the lead and focussing on getting things done. With real technical strength, he brings ideas and innovation to the table, exposing his customer to the real capability of products and services.

A measured communicator, David builds great customer relationships and insight, and gives thoughtful feedback to their teams, helping them with ongoing learning and development. A true silent hero, where nothing is too much trouble, David is fearless, tackles challenges with spirit and respect, and is always patient in driving the best possible outcome for the customer.

WORKDAY



At **Workday**, the business holistically supports employees, or 'work-mates' - and their loved ones - from wellbeing and physical health support to financial aid, training and recruiting policies that ensure a diverse and fair workforce.

On top of expansive health and wellbeing initiatives, Workday has implemented global parental leave (guaranteeing at least 12 weeks full pay) and medical benefits such as fertility support, behavioural health, addiction support and stress plus pathways for personal health (male, female and transgender).

A fertility benefit offers the equivalent of \$25,000 for IVF, egg-freezing, counselling, support, advice and adoption assistance. Meanwhile, a menopause policy supports female and trans employees.

The London employee wellbeing team organises activities such as Zumba classes, group cycle sessions, webinars on healthy eating and a mood room.

Last year, Workday's EMEA VIBE (Value, Inclusion, Belonging and Equity) council identified key follow-up activities from employee feedback, with courses like Inclusive Language for all employees, and training for leaders and hiring managers. An employee-led VIBE conference was launched, along with reverse mentoring schemes that enable female staff to mentor a senior leader and promote empathy, awareness, and trust to increase belonging. Lastly, a pilot six-month programme, Thrive, also proved successful to identify potential future female leaders and support them with growth opportunities.

SPONSORED BY





WINNER

CUSTOMER HERO AWARD INFOR

On Friday, 1 October 2021, **DBK** (an **Infor** customer and a 'just in time' automobile supplier) came under a cyberattack which took out all their systems worldwide: all company networks, data backups, systems, phone and email. It was a catastrophic situation. If it wasn't resolved within five weeks, it would result in a 75-year-old business collapsing into dust. This was the situation Infor received at 8am Saturday, 2 October 2021, from the personal phone of the CEO.

Trust is often cited as a necessary factor between an ERP vendor and customer, but in this case, trust was pushed to levels neither Infor nor DBK had ever experienced before.

On that call, a cloud strategy was presented to DBK, agreed upon, and an instance of a multi-tenant cloud environment was provisioned by Monday evening, a mere two days later.

For the next three weeks, the Infor team, using the Implementation Accelerator for LN Automotive to complete set-up 'out of the box', worked days, nights, and weekends to bring DBK back online. In addition, twice-daily meetings were set up on-site with the customer in the newly created 'war room'. Here relevant team members from UK&I, the Nordic and DACH regions gathered to make relevant recommendations to the CEO.

He, in turn, would make decisions on those recommendations hourly, both day and night. Given the cyberattack, communications could only happen through personal DBK channels, emails and phone calls. Hardware was strictly isolated from the internet and networks, and the cloud environment had to adhere to strict security offline protocols to ensure data integrity while restoring uncorrupted data. Between four to five

weeks was the critical deadline for DBK to be back online, providing automotive parts to OEMs.

With expertise, support, and collaboration with Infor, DBK achieved it on 25 October, three weeks after the attack occurred. DBK's initial disruption was catastrophic, but working with Infor, it turned into disruption that could be managed.

Infor demonstrated true heroic qualities throughout this process putting their customer's needs first and engaging in an open, transparent and collaborative course of action to meet and exceed the customer's needs.

Whilst Infor had the expertise to rapidly provide DBK with a secure, fit-for-purpose solution, it would not have worked without the close collaboration and transparency that DBK brought to the table.

Even more surprising was the level of camaraderie and teamwork that developed between Infor and DBK. "This makes collaboration fun" was one of the quotes captured between the teams during the work entailed.

"Infor's structured approach has significantly contributed to the fact that we were spared serious economic losses," says Dr Andreas Stratmann, CEO of DBK. "To completely rebuild the IT and go-live in just a few weeks is an extraordinary achievement, which is mainly due to our excellent cooperation."

From Infor's perspective, it was their responsibility not only to provide our customers with advice and support in an emergency but also to counteract appropriate attacks by providing cloud technology with the highest security standards.

As far as outcomes are concerned, "We succeed only when our customers succeed" has never been a truer

HIGHLY COMMENDED

EMBRIDGE CONSULTING



The **RSBG UK** and **Embridge Consulting** collaboration is an excellent example of where joint exploration of potential is never wasted time, especially when that journey yields brilliant results.

RSBG UK is an organisation that invests in entrepreneurial companies, including SMEs, providing them with a unique platform for growth. Dealing in 100 percent equity investments, RSBG UK has 200 years of brand heritage, supporting 1,200 careers to date. The company's 'reason for being' is to enable its brands to keep doing what they do best in the most efficient way.

Even if it means looking beyond technical boundaries, RSBG UK wants to make the most out of its existing systems. Prompted by inefficiencies in their **Unit4** ERP identified by their project managers, RSBG UK has been exploring ways to improve these and get the most out of the existing implementation without the need for heavy customisation and coding.

RSBG UK saw an opportunity with an intuitive way to guide project managers through risk assessments and project set-up. They examined 'the art of the possible' through collaborative discussions, but were reluctant to customise the Unit4 ERP, aware of the impacts on cost, time and future strategic migration options.

Together, RSBG UK and Embridge got inventive. They explored business processes through the innovative use of technology, focussing on delivering value and a superlative experience for users. They developed a power app that enabled exactly what was needed using **Microsoft's** Power Platform and Unit4's APIs. This emboldened the team to explore opportunities to apply these principles elsewhere, which resulted in an additional app supporting employee leave, purchase/sale requests and a blueprint for further use cases in the future. Embridge's Unit4 expertise was of significant value to RSBG UK, even though they weren't Microsoft Forms or Power Platform experts.

Working in partnership, they successfully used current technology to optimise processes and user experiences, and future-proofed their digital evolution for strategic migration to Unit4 Cloud/ERPx.

By creating an innovative and inventive proof of concept solution for RSBG UK's enhanced user experience, Embridge demonstrated a clear and practical progression of digital evolution at its best.

COMMENDED

SAP



ElectraMeccanica, a designer of electric vehicles, has been on an aggressive growth trajectory since being established in 2015, with a vision for digital-first operations. To achieve this, they turned to **SAP** to help define and implement a transformation.

The auto brand needed to create a digital foundation for its operations, including finance, supply chain, sales, distribution and services. As the company transitioned from selling its vision to delivering its highly innovative products, it needed to find ways to jumpstart its corporate maturity from an organisational and technology perspective.

The solution was to build a digital-first foundation by leveraging RISE with SAP. ElectraMeccanica opted for an innovative approach using a suite of SAP products, including SAP S/4HANA Cloud as its core ERP system and Commerce Cloud as its platform for customer and order intake.

Leveraging SAP's RISE business transformation-as-a-service, ElectraMeccanica completed its initial digitisation journey within eight short months. Now, its new digital core for finance, supply chain, sales, distribution and service operations is successfully deployed and is four times faster.

The intercompany accounting treatment of vehicles transported overseas is complex, and RISE with SAP, including SAP S/4HANA Cloud, provided a solution to easily transmit information across the company, and across the globe.

The company's go-to-market strategy then delivered environmentally efficient electric vehicles globally. ElectraMeccanica now has a user-friendly and real-time solution for an efficient supply chain, effective finance processes and integrated vehicle tracking. Manual tasks have been translated onto robust management and automation platforms with a full suite of S/4HANA Cloud products.

2021 was transformative for ElectraMeccanica, transitioning from a development stage start-up to a well-capitalised, fully operational, and digitally enabled, high-quality automotive OEM. Starting serial production, the company successfully commenced the first-ever commercial deliveries of its flagship, single-seat electric vehicle, the SOLO, to retail and fleet customers.

The partnership with ElectraMeccanica is more than just solving a big organisational problem; it also enabled a start-up to grow, accelerate, realise its vision and be a leader in its industry.

CUSTOMER HERO AWARD

FINALISTS

ACUMATICA



Acumatica places customer satisfaction at its cultural core, delivering value to SMEs globally. From ERP implementation to going live and beyond, personalised support is guaranteed from local partners throughout the process.

The 40-person customer Acumatica service team aims to reduce anxiety around ERP system operations, acting as onboarding mentors. Its Customer Bill of Rights highlights customers' rights to a suite of conditions that ensure customer satisfaction, with a simple end-user licensing agreement and a transparent, sustainably priced platform.

For Acumatica, deployment flexibility relieves implementation stressors. Operations change with customer demands, compliance regulations, business processes and even productivity improvement pursuits. Every business needs flexible ERP deployment and Acumatica guarantees its customers get it.

xByte Technologies, a refurbished **Dell** server and network switch provider, had accessible and inexpensive hardware at its disposal but, needing the mobile capabilities of the cloud, opted for a hybrid ERP deployment.

"The key thing for us with Acumatica is that not only was it web-based, but it wasn't purely cloud," said xByte CEO Ryan Brown. "We liked that we could control it ourselves, so we bought the on-premises model."

With improved visibility, efficiency, and customer service from hybrid Acumatica cloud ERP, xByte is considering a full SaaS deployment. Should that decision be made, they know Acumatica can action it cost-free.

DYNAMO



Dynamo aims to jump higher, faster and better for its clients. The company's mission is to exceed customers' expectations in everything they do and be rapidly responsive and fully flexible at delivering transformative ERP solutions.

A client, **END.**, needed help urgently. A global supplier was failing them on a key strategic project, placing a go-live requirement of 1 October in jeopardy.

It was already mid-May, and on the spot, Dynamo committed to help END. within budget and deadline. Dynamics365 ERP was offered with European third-party logistics integration.

Within six days, Dynamo flew five of their best consultants to the UK to work with END. Within six weeks 18 design documents were delivered, identifying an additional five integrations and 15 development requirements. To report to END.'s new US private equity owners that objectives could still be met was crucial for management and a big success story for Dynamo.

Another customer, **Ricoh**, needed to implement one cloud solution to replace 12 obsolete on-premise platforms across 14 countries, in a very aggressive timeline, or else face enormous renewal licence costs.

Dynamo rapidly hired, trained and equipped over 30 new employees in a lockdown to ensure an effective remote team. The solution was implemented on spec, on time, and within budget. Ricoh saved substantial costs and could manage its business with a unified cross-regional cloud solution during the remainder of the pandemic.

NAMOS SOLUTIONS



Ninety One is an independent, active, global asset manager delivering compelling outcomes for its clients. Back in 2020, the firm demerged from **Investec Group** to become Ninety One, joining forces with **Namos Solutions** for the transformation.

The demerger needed to complete within nine months and deliver a new technology platform to allow Ninety One to thrive as a separate entity. Namos' one-team collaboration approach has been critical to the project's success, as has their dedication to knowledge transfer and excellent governance during implementation.

With such fast-paced innovation, the company's users were initially apprehensive about adopting the new technology. Allowing the users to feel heard and putting themselves in their shoes, Namos earned their trust and delivered the answers promised. This was both in terms of incremental changes such as the automation of manual processes and transformative changes requiring a fundamental shift in the way people had been working.

Namos delivered a SaaS **Oracle** Financials solution enhanced using Oracle Enterprise Planning and Budgeting Cloud Service. It allowed Ninety One to access real-time business and financial information to manage its performance and enable operational efficiencies across the board.

Last year, without incident, Ninety One was able to grow, demerge and rebrand on time with employees working remotely in a pandemic. It demonstrates the strength of a robust, experienced and well-managed operations platform.

SPONSORED BY





WINNER

ERP TECH INNOVATION AWARD

FUSION PRACTICES/ GRANTSNOW

Fusion Practices has developed a product named GrantsNow that seamlessly integrates with Oracle Cloud ERP. GrantsNow was built to help universities win grants, allowing them to research and innovate on projects such as cancer research, COVID-19, Alzheimer's, sustainable energy and climate change.

GrantsNow redefines and streamlines the pre-awards process institutions follow to secure grant funding for research projects. The projects run by UK universities are for the greater good of humanity, focussing on finding cures for diseases and making life sustainable for coming generations.

The solution's automation allows universities to identify research opportunities and cost them to government guidelines. The calculation of research grant costs is regulated; therefore, the platform has a built-in workflow. In addition, the platform bundles in chatbots and other collaborative options, enhancing the user experience and making grant applications easier.

Moreover, the product covers reporting via visualisations and ready-to-use templates with self-service business intelligence capabilities. Offered as a SaaS product, the solution integrates into any major ERP software with pre-built integrations for Oracle Cloud HCM & Financials ERP after the research funding is approved and secured.

The platform integrates awards with Oracle Cloud Grants, allowing universities to record and report on costs against the funding received. The customers' ability to complete processes quickly and efficiently is one of GrantsNow's key features and it ensures all information is available to create and complete complex calculations. Customers need faith that their submitted applications are correctly costed, resulting in no revenue loss. In addition, integrations

are completed for them, which saves money and time during implementation.

GrantsNow stands out as an innovative product for four main reasons. Firstly, it was built on Oracle Cloud Platform but offered as a SaaS. Secondly, all users can automatically identify research opportunities, helping universities access grants.

Thirdly, as a pre-integrated product with Oracle Grants and Oracle ERP, it saves universities a lot of time and money in building these integrations in-house. For customers not using Oracle Cloud ERP, Fusion Practices can build integrations with other ERPs such as **SAP**, **Workday** and **Unit4** etc.

Finally, self-service configuration with an admin dashboard enables specific configuration to suit the institution's own terminology and needs. Third parties are not needed to set it up. It is then easy for institutions to adapt to their needs, but also makes the product truly global with changeable setups to suit different markets and regions. Fusion is unaware of any other pre-awards system with this level of flexibility to configure the cost engine and ensure regulation alignment, thereby increasing the accuracy of grant fund requests.

Other huge benefits of using GrantsNow include self-configurable costing models to suit the customer. Templates are provided, but the customer can easily create their own. This gives them the flexibility to add costs as required by the funders they are seeking money from.

The platform's self-service BI and chatbot functions also contribute to a stronger user experience and ease of use.

Finally, innovation and features are always being added to meet the demands of modern universities seeking to raise income.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

NAMOS SOLUTIONS/ AUDDIS



Namos Solutions implemented the AUDDIS (Automated Direct Debit Instruction Service) solution to help **Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council** in Merseyside prevent failed banking transactions. The digital banking solution has saved Knowsley Council a lot of effort and allowed the council to maximise paperless transactional processing and increase efficiencies.

Knowsley Council is working with local partners, residents, businesses and stakeholders. The organisation needed a fast, simple and cost-effective method of collecting direct debit payments, which was not available in **Oracle** Fusion Cloud apps. The Oracle fusion functionality provided no sort code validation for bank transactions, and with no guarantee that bank codes were correct, transactions could fail.

Namos developed AUDDIS and Direct Debit, a quick, easy, and cost-effective way to collect direct debit payments. The custom offering added value to Oracle Cloud customers in the market already. The solution is designed, developed and deployed within Fusion Applications to set up direct debit instructions (DDIs) with no delay, paperwork, or manual efforts. Embedded within the Fusion Applications screen, the solution gives instant access to validate/create the bank accounts before they are set up for customers using AUDDIS and Direct Debit functionality.

The Direct Debit offering allows organisations to collect regular payments from customers automatically. The ERP system sends customers an advance notice letter with all the collection details and is advised of future changes. This functionality automates the transfer of DDIs and collection files between the customer organisation and the bank. All entities (service users, consumers and the bank) using direct debit can benefit from this service.

Justtransform, a Namos partner, is an integration platform to facilitate direct debit and collection files with the customer bank. The solution uses Oracle DBaaS/Oracle Application Express to host the custom modulus checking screens. Once validated, the account is created in Oracle Receivables to configure direct debits on customer profiles and transactions.

Using Oracle BI Reports, outgoing reports like advance notice letters, DDI files, and collection files are generated. Finally, Justtransform was used to orchestrate the integration, kicking off report generation jobs and transferring them to the bank.

COMMENDED

INOAPPS/OUTTURN PLANNING



Skanska UK is part of Skanska Group, one of the world's largest development and construction companies, with 2021 revenue totalling around £12.5bn. Established in the UK in 2000, Skanska has over 3,300 local experts and is one of the UK's leading contractors, helping to construct, upgrade and maintain the country's buildings and infrastructure, delivering projects across sectors including real estate, defence, education, highways, rail and water. This work includes connecting communities with major highways improvement schemes, improving the rail network with a low-carbon, high-capacity railway, taking care of major organisation's critical facilities and providing sustainable homes.

Inoapps has been working for the last two years with Skanska UK on the delivery of a transformational cloud ERP programme. One of Skanska's key objectives for their transformation programme was to enable a 'single version of the truth' across its entire portfolio of project delivery to provide accurate and timely representations of the performance of its construction projects. Inoapps and Skanska evaluated many solutions, but there was no core **Oracle** Cloud ERP capability to meet the specific requirements. They decided to utilise Oracle Platform as a Service (PaaS) to develop an industry extension to Oracle Cloud ERP to deliver a solution for this complex industry requirement.

They named their solution Outturn Planning. An agile methodology was used to deliver the solution, and Inoapps and Skanska then embarked on a six-month workstream to deliver the product. Starting with existing Excel-based workbooks used to deliver business processes, the Inoapps team built a powerful transactional dashboard using APEX.

Outturn Planning delivered two key outcomes for Skanska: a consolidated dashboard of data encompassing all key business processes, and a transactional platform to track and record key industry-specific business processes. The benefits delivered to Skanska were wide-reaching, with greater consistency, reduced training requirements and fully integrated risk and opportunity metrics. Incremental revenue increased and margins were improved because of enhanced decision-making capabilities.

The partnership between Inoapps and Skanska has met the project objective of creating one truth that can align all business units and drive better performance both now and in the future.

FINALISTS

**EPICOR/
AUTOMATION STUDIO**



Epicor, a global ERP software leader, designed Epicor Automation Studio to support the end-users of Epicor customers with technology integration.

As businesses transform their IT ecosystems, they are challenged with connecting siloed systems, applications and data sources. The innovative Automation Studio is an advanced IPaaS solution, including instant deployment of low-code/no-code platforms and cloud integration, with no need for on-premise servers to eliminate extra technical deployment costs.

Machine learning makes intuitive recommendations, giving end-users the control to build bespoke self-serve recipes. It is also compatible with over 1,000 external applications including **Salesforce, ADP** and **ServiceNow** enabling full value out of technology stacks.

Automation Studio capabilities are embedded directly within the Epicor platform for hassle-free rapid deployment. This reduces the need to maintain multiple complex applications and systems and shifts costs to areas that can strategically grow businesses.

Epicor is the first ERP vendor to have the **Workato** application embedded, making Automation Studio a pioneering ERP solution. It drives better workplace collaboration, unites disparate systems, and allows the customer to focus on their business. The Automation Studio represents a democratisation of technology and data for better digital technology governance and compliance. This is a true game changer in software technology innovation.

**FINANCIALFORCE/
SERVICES CPQ**



FinancialForce is a provider of customer-centric ERP, professional services automation and customer success solutions built on the **Salesforce** platform.

Though the adoption of PSA technology (which automates PS revenue and resource forecasting, resource management, project management and project accounting) is high, automation is lacking for creating PS proposals. On average, it takes over six weeks to deliver a proposal. Invariably, it is a disconnected system with no pricing standards in place.

Services CPQ is a true game changer for service businesses. For the first time, service organisations can now predictably generate deliverable quotes, be profitable, and manage and monitor critical financial factors.

The solution enables companies to standardise and streamline all service-estimating activities and seamlessly connect them to delivery. It provides an engaging and consistent user experience throughout the entire process.

Building on previous learnings and best practices, the solution continuously improves how business is won and delivered. In six months since launch, Services CPQ has already been adopted by 14 customers and generated a healthy pipeline worth millions.

Salesforce has decided to use FinancialForce Services CPQ to manage its own services pipeline, complementing its existing use of Salesforce CPQ. The adoption of software by a company more than 70 times the size of its developer is a stunning achievement.

**TRINTECH/
ADRA**



With over 3,500 clients worldwide, including most of the Fortune 100, **Trintech's** portfolio of financial and cloud-based software solutions manage all aspects of the financial close process.

Trintech's Adra Suite is a part of this portfolio, built to support small and mid-sized companies to improve their ERP environments. The solution helps companies looking to quickly increase the efficiency, control and visibility for all critical areas of the financial close management process, including balance sheet reconciliations, transaction matching, financial task management and controls, and reporting. Its design ensures easy use, with cloud hosting achieving easy implementation at a lower cost.

Drastically reducing manual workloads, the Adra Integration Hub automatically uploads transaction and account balance files, drawing from network/local drive folders to various systems within the Adra Suite. Each import job is automatically launched in Adra Balancer and halted to await inspection by the Adra Balancer Business Administrator.

Reducing the associated cost, time and risks with data integration, the Adra Integration Hub eliminates manual processing and reliance on internal IT teams, supporting ERPs and GL systems for visibility across all business units and geographies. In addition, the Adra Integration Hub improves organisational data security; reducing manual file imports, generating fewer access handouts, and limiting chances of file manipulation or selecting incorrect files.

SPONSORED BY





WINNER

HR TECH INNOVATION AWARD

DELOITTE/ORACLE DIGITAL ASSISTANT

Deloitte's Oracle Digital Assistant (ODA) platform allows users to create and deploy a chatbot that simulates a human-like conversation to streamline user experiences. ODA offers out-of-the-box functionality to support employment-related questions and navigate to transactional pages in the HCM cloud.

Employees can update their emergency contact details, ask what their real-time leave balance is or request feedback from other employees. Additionally, ODA supports manager self-service transactions, such as promoting a reportee or requesting information on end-of-year performance document completions.

ODA's insight and analytics tool enables conversation analysis that supports reviewing unresolved requests and tracking the success of conversations between ODA and the employee. It offers a simple mechanism of DA training to resolve similar future requests in cases of unresolved questions, meaning the DA improves over time.

Organisations can personalise ODA by reflecting organisation-specific language, values and culture in the text, but also the appearance of the DA can be altered based on organisational branding. ODA allows the customisation of skills to meet client-specific requirements.

Alongside driving a move to cloud, the platform transforms modern user experience, utilising self-service, workflow automation and a more intuitive user interface to empower individuals.

The overall solution, comprising both technology and business change, has delivered: quicker, more effective services for users; an enhanced user experience of technology in the workplace; an evergreen solution that is easier and quicker to change; and a platform

for ongoing enhancement and expansion.

Adapted by developing custom 'skill' and new technical solutions, ODA enables users to directly access relevant policy and guidance not held within the Oracle solution by 'asking questions' within Oracle HCM. Previously, users would have needed to manually access and search other systems for content, which would entirely rely on search term knowledge. The ability for users to easily access relevant policy and guidance at the point of need has a direct and significant impact on user experience, user workplace satisfaction and compliance.

By adopting the ODA, existing client assets were leveraged to meet a specific, high-impact business need. Designing and delivering the solution required a range of skills and disciplines to come together to investigate, conceive and develop a unique solution to the challenge at hand through innovative thinking and design.

The undertaking was not without its challenges, requiring Deloitte, Oracle and client expertise to address matters within the Oracle solution and link across SaaS and on-premise solutions whilst adhering to the organisation's onerous security requirements and protocols. In addition, design and development was an iterative process, innovating and developing proofs of concept, before prototyping and ultimately delivering the solution. The base system was taken through an innovative application and enhancement process to deliver against user and business requirements.

Finally, the ODA project was able to deliver in a way that did not undermine the evergreen nature of the wider solution or create additional workload during quarterly updates.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

**SPLASHBI/
SPLASHHR**



SplashBI is a business analytics platform specialising in digital solutions to help customers thrive with a data-driven approach.

The world's largest international health and beauty retailer, **A.S. Watson** has 12 global brands in 29 global markets and over 16,000 stores and 130,000 employees. They also run the business strategy O+O (Offline plus Online).

A.S. Watson sets O+O as the new standard for retail, and its platform is an ecosystem powered by technology, big data and artificial intelligence. The brand is about creating an integrated offline and online experience to serve customers' needs through digital transformation, enabling them to shop across any channel, anytime, anywhere.

The SplashHR solution has enabled them to create a data warehouse for HR that can provide group standard dashboards, automating the distribution and allowing for managerial self-service across all their brands and locations.

In addition, A.S. Watson can leverage these data insights in their existing IT infrastructure and use **Tableau** as their primary visualisation tool, with all the stringent security requirements around data access being solved by the SplashHR data model.

Combining data from multiple platforms (**Oracle EBS**, **Cornerstone**, and ad hoc data imports), SplashHR has delivered a single, consistent source for A.S. Watson, reducing time around data validation. This single source ensures that insights are available in real-time, putting the data at the fingertips of the people and teams that need it, and reducing time spent on data requests.

A.S. Watson was already a data-driven company, but data insights into their HR data were not as mature. Therefore, they needed a partner to help them ensure they could embark on their data-driven journey. The partnership enjoyed three big wins from this initiative.

Firstly, A.S. Watson had a new platform providing out-of-the-box value around data models, visualisations, automation and extensibility, with fully configurable components.

Secondly, they had confidence that their data was good and clean. Finally, through automation, the team at A.S. Watson was free to focus on true innovation now that they were not dealing with data requests or validation.

COMMENDED

**EY/
PEOPLE APP**



EY worked on a transformation project with their customer, **Royal Mail**, to help bring connectivity to the frontline workers. As the UK's largest postal service, Royal Mail handled and delivered around 9.5 billion letters and 1.7 billion parcels in 2021 alone. As the sole universal provider, they deliver a 'one-price-goes-anywhere' service to over 31 million addresses across the country.

Today Royal Mail employs around 140,000 employees, with annual revenue exceeding £12bn. Most of Royal Mail's workforce - over 100,000 staff - are frontline employees based in the mail centres, delivery offices and driving the fleet. These employees were 'unconnected', with access to technology only to do their day-to-day job and depended on their line managers or HR for all administration services at work.

To improve sustainability, Royal Mail needed to move toward a connected and engaged workforce to deliver services more efficiently. The solution was to introduce the People App, targeted at, but not limited to, giving frontline colleagues direct access to their personal and business services and information on their own devices.

The challenge was to offer sufficient value and simplicity so that more than 100,000 employees would voluntarily use their own devices and data to access HR services. **SAP Business Technology Platform** was used, leveraging data from SAP HCM and several other sources. Within 12 weeks, the pilot app was available to download from **Apple** and **Android** stores.

Initially aimed at a small pilot group of 200 employees, the app went viral within Royal Mail on formal release. Adoption was spectacular; within the first six hours, 5000 users downloaded the app; in excess of 10,000 during the first 48 hours and more than 30,000 after the first four weeks.

Today the People App boasts 110,600 active users with up to 400,000 views each week. Several post-go-live releases have added new features and enhanced existing capabilities. The People App has not only provided a significant workforce with connected, on-demand services but, for the first time, Royal Mail has a simple and viable way to digitally engage with its workforce. It has enabled effective and concise communication and delivered significant cost savings company-wide.

There has been significant subsequent demand to utilise the People App as a digital channel to engage employees, with around 40 services now available.

FINALISTS

**ENTERPRISEALUMNI/
ENTERPRISEALUMNI PLATFORM**



EnterpriseAlumni is a corporate alumni platform that allows organisations to expand their talent pool, drive sales, and promote their brand by engaging with former employees. Leading the way in alumni networks, the vendor is the top software management platform for large companies, helping them to stay in touch with former employees.

The world is awash with talk of talent crises, with questions around finding enough talent and the right kind of talent plaguing organisations. EnterpriseAlumni's software helps companies stay in touch with their previous employees and hire up to 20 percent of their workforce from alumni.

The company is led by Emma Sinclair MBE, who has built an impactful enterprise SaaS business with customers worldwide. EnterpriseAlumni power the networks of everyone from **Citi** to **J.P. Morgan**, **Nike** to **Coca-Cola**. Even **LinkedIn**, the world's largest professional network, uses EnterpriseAlumni to stay in touch.

In a world where sales matters and marketing is so broad, alumni are more likely to recommend their former employers if they stay in touch. EnterpriseAlumni effectively commercialised this global challenge of staying in touch with previous colleagues and employees with a fresh solution to solving the talent crisis and helping drive authentic referrals and advocacy in the recruitment process.

**iCIMS/MARKETING
AUTOMATION**



Dialog Semiconductor is a global leader in semiconductor-based system solutions manufacturing. To help with their complex recruiting needs they partnered with **Cielo** and leveraged **iCIMS** Marketing Automation from the iCIMS talent cloud.

Dialog Semiconductor needed high volumes of technical talent to complement its 1,500-strong worldwide workforce, but competition for engineers was high. The business was facing a flagging and expensive ATS dataset, slowing down their hiring and preventing them from delivering on the world's engineering needs. They were struggling to get viable candidates to engage with their content and to hire engineers.

iCIMS Marketing Automation was needed to reduce the time to hire experienced engineers and nurture candidates for future roles.

Using iCIMS Marketing Automation's powerful talent pipeline software transformed Dialog Semiconductor's talent pool of nearly 3,000 into an active talent goldmine for immediate and future hires for competitive software engineering roles.

In just one campaign, the business achieved a 63 percent average open rate for their email communications, over three times the industry average. Meanwhile, 78 percent of a stale talent pool became active and engaged with Dialog Semiconductor content. The number of candidates to contact directly reduced by 86 percent and the relevant ones were identified for a hiring conversation in just four weeks. Time-to-hire was reduced by 50 percent and cost per hire was reduced by 93 percent.

**SAP/
SUCCESSFACTORS**



MOD Pizza faced expansion challenges and partnered with **SAP** for a new recruitment system. More than a pioneer of artisan pizzas, MOD Pizza has 9,000 team members otherwise facing barriers to steady employment; those exiting the justice system, individuals with intellectual development disabilities, and unemployed 18-to-24-year-olds who are not in school.

Technically, MOD Pizza struggled with point-to-point integration, repetitive integration testing, inconsistent data and a difficult reconciliation process. On the human side, effective people-centric recruiting and onboarding strategies were needed to support the high numbers of new hires.

For people-centric HR at hundreds of stores, SAP SuccessFactors solutions and SAP S/4HANA Cloud were selected. In addition, SAP Business Technology Platform offered an aligned data model and a central master data integration service.

The SAP Intelligent Enterprise Framework method was used to implement the SAP solutions and achieve hire-to-retain business process integration. By eliminating friction in the hiring and onboarding process, hires became productive faster.

Bringing the HR and finance teams closer, hires were automatically enrolled in the SAP S/4HANA Cloud, removing manual expense payments. Focussing on the interview process, employees can access relevant, connected data to partner with other business teams. By managing these recruiting tasks and reducing data maintenance costs, MOD Pizza has a foundation for future business growth.



WE'RE ALREADY PLANNING FOR 2023

The second edition of **ERP Today Awards & NHS Fundraiser** was held at Ascot Racecourse on 22nd September. More than 2,000 tech execs and 1,000 NHS staff shared the day to recognise excellence across our industry and raise money to support the NHS.

We had to write this copy 'before' the event so assuming there hasn't been any disasters, we hope everyone who attended enjoyed a fun-packed and entertaining day. The event has already raised £150,000 for the NHS and hopefully by the time the final total is tallied up we will have raised even more.

Our Awards event in 2023 will follow the same format as this year with a few tweaks and improvements:

Following on from our work with NHS Charities Together for this year's event, ERP Today is delighted to announce the start of a multiyear partnership to retain NHSCT as the patron charity for the ERP Today Awards & Fundraiser.

We are already planning how to make the event bigger and better in 2023. Here are a few things that you can expect.

- ✓ We are aiming for 4,000 attendees in 2023 with a big focus on young professionals
- ✓ Healthcare tech exhibition zone for sponsors to showcase their latest healthcare innovations
- ✓ More NHS Trusts in attendance with 20 being invited to attend the day
- ✓ NHS procurement tepee where buyers from across the NHS will welcome your advances
- ✓ New award categories that will recognise a broader church of entrants
- ✓ More hospitality options with increased number of tepees

To help us improve next year's event we want to hear from as many attendees as possible to share your views on what you liked and what you think we can improve.

You can leave anonymous feedback on the event website at www.erptodayawards.com/feedback or if you'd prefer to speak to us directly please send an email to awards@erp.today



ASCOT RACECOURSE, THURSDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER.

Tickets, hospitality, exhibition space and sponsorship details will be released in early 2023.

Award nominations will open in April 2023.



**TRANSFORMATION
PROJECT OF THE YEAR**

EVERYONE HOME SAFE EVERY DAY

**NETWORK RAIL AND EY TEAM UP
TO DELIVER A COMPREHENSIVE
PACKAGE OF MEASURES
TO IMPROVE SAFETY, DRIVE
EFFICIENCIES AND BOOST
EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE
FOR RAIL WORKERS.**

BY PAUL ESHERWOOD



NETWORK RAIL

Network Rail's 'Planning4Delivery' programme has been voted Transformation Project of the Year 2022 by a panel of experts including industry heavyweights, independent analysts and senior media commentators. The project was delivered by EY along with a supporting cast which included Capgemini, Arup, Egis, Morson and technology partner, OnTrac.

The overarching objective was to improve safety for 22,000 Network Rail workers by digitising the scheduling, approving and monitoring of remedial and planned maintenance work across Network Rail's infrastructure. The project was centred on the implementation of RailHub, a comprehensive industry solution developed by OnTrac that provides a cloud-based digital platform with baked-in compliance as standard. OnTrac delivers digital Safe Work Packs for planners and responsible managers, an extensive risk database, workflow management tools that are aligned to industry standards, and real-time data and analytics that reduce errors and significantly increase operational efficiency and safety.

Background

There are many reasons an organisation embarks on a digital transformation journey but few projects, if any, will have a benefits case as compelling as Network Rail's. Since 2008, 33 employees and contractors have lost their lives working on rail infrastructure. The 2019 fatalities at Margam, where three workers were killed, represented a tragic and seminal moment that became the catalyst for a concerted effort between all stakeholders to digitise safety protocols for all rail workers.

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch identified a number of causes behind near-misses, accidents and fatalities - from the way the safe work system was planned and authorised to a lack of effective challenges among colleagues when the safe system deteriorated on work sites.

Twice, Network Rail had launched a programme designed to address these problems. Both times, the programme failed leaving employees sceptical that the organisation could deliver a coherent safety strategy. At the third time of asking, Network Rail, EY and its partners successfully developed and launched RailHub, a solution that has radically transformed the way Network Rail manages safety on its rail network.

The partnership

Network Rail partnered with EY to devise an implementation strategy that was focussed on edu-



cation, change management and user adoption with the clear objective to win over the hearts and minds of both rail workers and the unions. At face value the proposition was simple: adopt new processes and everyone goes home safe. However, the transformation being proposed would radically change working practices that had been ingrained over decades and the challenge facing the implementation team was considerable.

The project was particularly demanding due to the complexion of Network Rail's workforce which was predominantly from a demographic resistant to change and stuck in an established pattern of work and behaviour. The programme required significant change management expertise to bring a traditional workforce out of a paper-based environment and into a digital domain. As Dylan Edwards, senior project manager at Network Rail, told me, "Many of our people have worked on the lines for decades and it was a huge challenge to convince them to use digital



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“Many of our people have worked on the lines for decades and it was a huge challenge to convince them to use digital technologies, especially when previous efforts had failed.”

DYLAN EDWARDS



technologies, especially when previous efforts had failed.”

The EY team adopted its ‘Transformation Realised’ approach with some nuanced elements that were geared specifically for Network Rail. The client facing team was carefully selected to make end-users feel comfortable. Sharp suits were replaced by casual clothes at workshops and training sessions. And the team included a diverse mix of people and opinions that ultimately led to a collaboration between all stakeholders centred around one common objective.

Jamie Crystal was the EY partner leading the project and he told me: “I am exceedingly proud of the work we have delivered alongside Network Rail on the Planning4Delivery programme, resulting in the delivery of a suite of people, process, data and technology enhancements that are making a hugely positive impact on safe working practices on, or near, the UK’s rail network. As the prime contracting entity, EY was accountable for the end-to-end delivery, bring-

ing together a broad team across EY and five ecosystem suppliers to deliver the full range of activities associated with this highly complex transformation programme. This included persona development and technology integration through to all aspects of business change.”

Chris Johnson, managing director at OnTrac, added: “We were fortunate to work as part of a fantastic delivery ecosystem. From the start, there was a shared willingness to create the right conditions for the project to succeed. The team collectively understood the project vision and objectives, which inspired everyone from day one. Given the mix of colleagues and organisations involved, this was especially important. Our diverse knowledge, skills, views, and perspectives created a positive environment that ultimately produced a high-performing team.”

NETWORK RAIL

The solution

RailHub is a modular cloud-based suite of applications that is used by the rail, transport, logistics and supply chain industries to improve safety and efficiency across the full value-chain. It is extensively used in the rail industry by more than 350 companies to de-risk and optimise virtually every aspect of rail infrastructure management and has been adopted by Network Rail to address its archaic scheduling and safety procedures.

Historically, Safe Work Packs were printed bundles of instructions and protocols that all workers were required to collect and read before starting work. Often this involved travelling to a central office to collect the packs before heading to the work site and, as you would expect with a paper system, there was no way for managers to know whether they had been read or not.

The new digital packs not only delivered an immediate £15m per year cost saving by reducing the print burden, they also reduced employee travel time, saved travel costs and delivered a significant environmental benefit.

In addition, managers were able to monitor how the packs were being used and step in with additional sup-

port for workers that needed it. Workers are now able to arrive on site and receive up to date and accurate method statements, safety protocols and instructions directly to a digital device – which can be read on or off-line – meaning every job is accurately planned and executed.

Edwards from Network Rail told me: “Whether you look at this from a sustainability point of view because we are cutting down less trees and saving on storage space; reducing worker fatigue because they can go straight to site and have all the information they need in one place; or the reduction in fuel bills and travel time – the trickle down benefits on top of the safety benefits are huge.”

At a stroke, Network Rail was able to dramatically improve compliance, ensure standards were being maintained and use data for continuous improvement of the employee experience and education process whilst realising a host of supplemental benefits which were aligned to Network Rail’s broader ambitions.

In addition, the solution and project highlights include:

- Developing and integrating a modern cloud-based technology platform into a legacy environment with poor data quality constraints
- Delivering a safety-critical system and obtaining the necessary approvals



“The project delivered a suite of people, process, data and technology enhancements that are making a hugely positive impact on safe working practices on, or near, the UK’s rail network.” **JAMIE CRYSTAL**





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■ ■ ■
The better the question.
The better the answer.
The better the world works.


EY
Building a better
working world

NETWORK RAIL

- Cutting over to RailHub without interrupting the safe operation of the railway
 - Preparing a sceptical end-user community for significant change
 - Completing a successful consultation with local and national trade unions
- Reduction in near misses, accidents and incidents
- Optimised possession and line blockage planning, based on shared visibility of track access
 - Increased compliance to the 019 Safety Standard

RailHub also gives Network Rail a platform on which to introduce complementary technologies to continue to improve safety, unlock new insights and increase productivity. The RailHub solution is both highly resilient and easily configurable. It is not only fit for purpose today, but also allows Network Rail to enhance and expand the platform long into the future.

Johnson from OnTrac told me: “The industry will soon see the transition from Network Rail to Great British Railways. It is important that RailHub continues to meet the industry’s needs today, whilst also ensuring that high safety standards are maintained and built upon throughout this period of change. One of RailHub’s great successes is that it ingests data from a significant number of Network Rail source data systems. This has the benefit of unlocking tremendous value from data that was previously siloed and underutilised. By presenting this data to users in a way that is useable, Network Rail is seeing tremendous value creation and new insights whilst also identifying where data can be cleansed and improved moving forward.”

Enhancements and future benefits

The core elements of RailHub have been successfully rolled out and Network Rail workers are already seeing significant benefits. A user feedback loop is helping Network Rail and EY refine the solution as more user data becomes available and further enhancements to the solution are already being scoped which will accelerate



“We were fortunate to work as part of a fantastic delivery ecosystem. From the start, there was a shared willingness to create the right conditions for the project to succeed.”

CHRIS JOHNSON



compliance and safety standards.

Johnson continued by telling me: “We are seeing excellent user feedback whilst they familiarise themselves with the new system. As part of this process, we are collecting suggestions for new features. It is important that user satisfaction is high, whilst ensuring work is planned more safely and efficiently. These suggestions are reviewed for suitability and scheduled into regular enhancement drops.



“One major enhancement currently ongoing is adapting the system to meet changes to Network Rail’s Standard 019, which aims to maximise the safety of work planned on or near the line. RailHub will play a key role in ensuring those benefits are achieved, whilst providing key management insights and reports. Reducing the risk of injuries and near misses is essential to supporting Network Rail’s safety vision ‘Everyone home safe every day.’”

What makes this project special?

Network Rail was voted Transformation Project of the Year 2022 for a collection of compelling reasons. Not only did the project succeed in exceptionally challenging circumstances. It also demonstrated the holy grail for all technology investments – a straight line to meaningful benefits.

On one hand, this is not a direct comparison with a global SAP rollout or a complex finance transformation across multiple jurisdictions.

But that doesn’t diminish its merit in the least. All transformation projects, no matter what the technology or environment, must illustrate certain characteristics in order to be considered successful - simply implementing software and turning the lights on does not constitute success.

In addition, for a project to stand out it must exhibit creativity, innovation and a uniqueness that sets it apart from others. The judges at this year’s ERP Today Awards considered 67 projects from a diverse pool of contenders and it was universally agreed that the approach and strategy applied to this project set a new bar in terms of vision and execution.

EY, one of the world’s biggest consulting firms, may not strike you as an obvious bedfellow for a project that required such a differentiated approach. The firm had to meet its customer at the point of

need in an environment where shirts and ties were replaced by hard hats and bright orange jumpsuits. The technical solution was complex but much of that was abstracted away in favour of a people-first approach that put education, training and support at the top of page one. There was a sense of shared responsibility that cut across the entire project team and EY delivered a programme that will have lasting benefits with a genuine human story at the heart of their endeavours.

As Edwards from Network Rail concluded: “Without them we wouldn’t have succeeded. As a supplier and partner, EY was fully immersed in the challenge and they got to grips with the issues very quickly. We knew it was going to be a tough challenge but EY delivered and now the rail network is safer and our people get to come home every day.”

Congratulations to Network Rail, EY and the other partners. ■

WHY WE NEED TO MOVE BEYOND

FAILING

THE GLORIFIED FILING CABINET

GREATER

CLLOUD'S

CLOUD

As transformation initiatives continue to accelerate, cloud continues to be a key enabler for organisations transitioning out of lockdown crisis mode to new hybrid working practices and recession-proofing strategies. As a result, cloud remains a major focus for investment: Gartner predicts that by 2026, public cloud spending will exceed 45 percent of all enterprise IT spending, up from less than 17 percent in 2021.

BY ALAN JACOBSON

Mass cloud adoption combined with mass digitalisation has also had a direct knock-on effect to the volume of data generated. Today, every business is essentially a digital business, generating terabytes of data during daily activities. From the websites and apps customers engage with when purchasing goods and services, to the IoT devices or sensors that track anything from agriculture, manufacturing and supply chain processes, and the predictive maintenance of escalators, big data undoubtedly now lives in the cloud. From cloud-based data warehouses to data lakes, enterprises are turning to the cloud to manage and store massive amounts of data. But while many businesses have a large volume of data, many more are unable to make use of it. With most

business process datasets now dispersed over different data lakes, data warehouses, and data silos that can't talk to each other, profiling, preparing, and creating an insight generating data pipeline has become a common challenge for many organisations.

Despite over a decade of hype and attention, the cloud has yet to reach its full business transformation potential. Cloud can mean several different things to various organisations. For some, cloud implementations allow companies to have additional data centres that are geographically friendly to where their users and/or their data sits. This can save time by reducing the amount of data movement, while also providing necessary legal compliance depending on the use case. For others, the cloud means

making full use of the ever decreasing cost of data storage compared to the same storage on-premise. Unfortunately, many companies are still predominantly focussing on the second approach, and cloud adoption strategies remain centred - and siloed - around data storage.

Today's storage cost is incredibly low and ever decreasing, making the value proposition of creating and storing data an easy equation. But one of the cloud's ultimate benefits can rapidly develop into a problem.

With data growing at an exponential rate, businesses are already facing an overwhelming amount of fragmented raw data. Unable to unlock it for new opportunities to drive growth and create value, many are just hoarding it without a purpose or end goal in mind.

Transitioning from data storage to insight generation

As one of the critical drivers of business success, the importance of data cannot be overstated. However, clean, structured and normalised data is needed to fuel trustworthy and accurate insights. As the volatile business environment of the last couple of years has highlighted, quick and accurate



RATHER THAN JUST STORING DATA, CLOUD STRATEGIES NEED TO FOCUS ON MAKING BEST USE OF THE GREATER HARDWARE ELASTICITY AVAILABLE TO SCALE UP AND DOWN COMPUTE RESOURCES.

data-driven decision-making agility is the difference between a successful business and a failed one.

Organisations and business executives need to have the right information necessary to formulate action plans quickly. According to an Alteryx-commissioned survey by IDC released in February 2022, 62 percent of practitioners, and 75 percent of mid-to-upper management, are now expected to make agile and scalable data-driven decisions as part of their day-to-day work. The aim of any cloud strategy should always be about facilitating the end business result. Rather than just storing data, cloud strategies need to focus on making the best use of the greater hardware elasticity available to scale up and down compute resources when required.

The cloud combines nearly infinite storage with the elastic computing capacity needed to process, analyse and automate processes at speed and at scale - delivering a comprehensive modern data and analytics ecosystem. Effectively leveraging this scalable compute power is the key to using the big data already in cloud repositories. Building advanced analytics into your cloud strategy transitions the business away from 'drowning in data but starving for insights', to analysing data from different platforms that would have otherwise remained siloed and deriving insights from these hugely valuable resources.

Fast, scalable data analytics capabilities are within touching distance of every business

With so much data already in the cloud, it is a far more efficient process - both regarding time and money - to move the analytic processes to the cloud instead of moving terabytes of data to a single computer to be processed. However, only a fraction of today's business data is accessed and analysed due to being dispersed across different clouds

A STRATEGY IS NEEDED TO MOVE BEYOND CLOUD'S STAGNANT USE AS A GLORIFIED AND FIERCELY GUARDED FILING CABINET, FOCUSING ON HUMAN INTELLIGENCE AND ANALYTICS FOR ALL.

and silos. In-cloud analytics - assessing the data where it lives - is key to analysing and unlocking the value from within the vast volumes of data organisations are holding.

Cloud-based analytics' biggest potential impact comes from combining data democratisation with enormous compute resources and analytical and data-handling power, delivering data-driven decision-making at scale. However, cloud-based analytics also provides massive leverage in the form of democratising the responsibility for data analytics, helping every worker get the insights they need from huge amounts of data so more people across the business can consume and analyse in order to identify critical patterns and trends more easily.

Today's evolving business landscape requires fast insights, formed on trustworthy information and accurate decisions for organisations to thrive. This high demand for data insight induces increased pressure on data analysts and business analysts to produce precise analysis in a rapid turnaround.

From data accessibility to data-insights: the need to democratise data analytics for all

As business leaders think about analytics, they need to see it as a collaborative process within the whole organisation. It's key to ensure that everyone from IT, to domain experts and business analysts, to data engineers and data scientists, can collaborate, develop models, solve problems and drive insights with data. If data

is the fuel needed to drive business insights, then a data-literate analytic-enabled workforce is the engine that powers this process, delivering new insights and innovations previously out of reach.

However, there simply aren't enough people with data science skills to meet the requirement for the data analytics needed by businesses today, and many employees are still mired in unproductive work using inefficient legacy spreadsheets.

With only a fraction of today's business data accessed and analysed, unlocking the value from within the huge volumes of data organisations are holding necessitates a significantly expanded strategy to move beyond cloud's stagnant use as a glorified and fiercely guarded filing cabinet - one that focusses on human intelligence and analytics for all. Cloud makes both data and analytics more accessible. By providing speed of execution and ease of use via access to browser-based self-service analytics across the enterprise at scale, business leaders can also help the next generation of knowledge workers put data-driven insights at the heart of decision-making.

While the pace of change continues accelerating, only those organisations empowering people with data literacy while providing faster and more accessible cloud-based analytics will be capable of delivering business insights at scale. ■

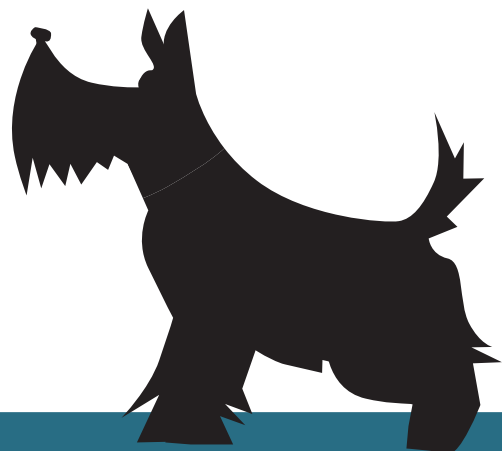
Alan Jacobson is chief data and analytics officer at Alteryx

Blurred lines





Is the consumerisation of
enterprise technologies
creating unnecessary
division? BY MARC AMBASNA-JONES



CONSUMER TECH

Enterprises beware – there may be some sacrifice

For Adam Doti, a **Salesforce** veteran of over 11 years who has designed the UX for platforms such as Salesforce Lightning, the whole debate over the consumerisation of enterprise technologies is simple. Users are demanding ‘frictionless design’ and if that means using engaging consumer techniques in enterprise products, then so be it.

“Enterprise technology companies need to stay hyper-focused on human-centred experiences and consider the humans who work for a company, more than the company itself,” explains the Salesforce VP and principal design architect.

“What are their needs as users of your product? At Salesforce, we show deep empathy for our users and remember that many of them spend eight hours a day on the platform as a function of their role, making human-centred design so critical.”

The point Doti makes is that if technology is easy to use and more intuitive, it is less likely to create a barrier to productivity. A simple case of using whatever technology works and gets the job done. But is that right? There is a distinction here - it’s one thing to design enterprise products to look and feel like consumer products. But it’s completely another thing to actually blur the lines and use consumer products in the enterprise.

During the pandemic and the rush to set up working from home, there was an inevitable shift in digital technology use. Employees working from home expected technology to be as simple to use as consumer technologies. Simplicity was key. With IT support staff stretched to breaking point, organisations needed employees to self-service as much as possible and that meant using devices and tools that were more familiar. It led to an increase in choice and, consequentially, a surge in sales at firms such as **Apple**.

“The pandemic was a catalytic moment for the consumerisation of the enterprise,” says Cameron MacQuarrie, head of strategic customer transformation group UK&I at **ServiceNow**. “The post-COVID economy is now defined by remote work-

ing, which places a greater emphasis on simplicity. When working in disparate locations, employees demand quick and easy solutions that make their lives easier. For instance, mobile capabilities, which consumers have grown accustomed to in their personal lives, are now seen as fundamental aspects of an on-the-go workforce, placing experience at the forefront in the battle for talent.”

This comes back to the idea of choice and in particular how new generations such as Gen Z who are entering the workplace for the first time, are more technologically astute. It means these users already have their own ideas about which software tools and devices work best for them. Potentially it’s a sticking point, one that will have to be worked through by businesses. If they don’t have them already, enterprises will need policies on how to manage this, both from a data security angle but also from an IT management and complexity point of view.

“With the increase in hybrid and remote working, this has accelerated,” says Emile Naus, partner at independent management and technology consulting firm **BearingPoint**, on the blurring of the lines between consumer and enterprise products. “We are seeing consumer tools being used instead of enterprise products. **LinkedIn** might well be better and simpler than your CRM product, and **WhatsApp** is becoming the default communication tool for many. Enterprise tools need to rethink dramatically how they work - by starting from the user and working back.”

Music to Doti’s ears at Salesforce, although he argues that this is not particularly new, at least for the CRM giant.

“We saw this blurring begin when enterprise software began moving to the cloud,” he says. “Older companies with legacy systems and solutions have been the slowest to make the digital transformation. Contemporary direct-to-consumer brands create product sites that perpetually improve the user experience. They make it incredibly easy for people to buy their products.”

While Doti accepts that the pandemic created an urgency for companies to shift how they relate to consumers, he believes that it is part of an evolution in how software companies in particular have to react



Once customers customise their Salesforce solution, they essentially become the ‘product owner’

ADAM DOTI SALESFORCE

in software simplicity for the hybrid user

to and pre-empt those changing habits.

Of course, we've seen it for a while now in social media too, which has managed to bridge the consumer and enterprise divide so successfully. As tools for reaching consumers, sites such as **Facebook**, **Instagram** and increasingly **TikTok** (which in 2020 launched a business focussed version, and is likely to finalise its US data deal with **Oracle** this year) have been instrumental. But perhaps the current poster child of enterprise consumerisation is **Zoom**.

The video communications business saw revenues rocket over 300 percent during the pandemic to \$2.65bn in 2021. The company grew another 55 percent to \$4.1bn by January 2022. Video communication has not looked back. Even **Microsoft's** Teams got in on the act, seeing a rapid increase of users from 20 million in 2019 to 75 million by April 2020. But it is Zoom that has crossed the consumer-enterprise divide more than any other video comms tool.

This smudging of the boundaries is important. How consumers perceive technologies is changing, and with Gens Y and Z, this will be more pronounced. As the world of work evolves towards a hybrid future, working with AI-driven automation and increasingly robotic functions, so technology will therefore be seen not in its market context of consumer or enterprise, but more in its usefulness in making things possible. This means that vendors, as both Doti and Naus suggest, have to be watchful.

It's an interesting one for companies like ServiceNow, which incidentally has run a major ad campaign this year about connecting people, regardless of home or work environments. ServiceNow's whole thrust is about unity, making folk work better across one platform regardless of location.

"The entire journey across the enterprise is initiated by the empowered consumer," says MacQuarrie, when asked what the consumerisation of enterprise means to ServiceNow customers and product strategies. "In previous decades, cutting edge technology was primarily only used by businesses, but the proliferation of high-end consumer technology has transformed both customer and employee experiences. This has raised the bar and set high expectations for services and products at work."

So, what does this look like? How is this manifesting itself at ServiceNow?

"Our platform enables IT systems to work together and understand the experience of the consumer," adds MacQuarrie. "We can act as a bridge between traditional technology stacks and where consumers are active. Workflows are used to streamline processes and make best use of legacy IT assets and orchestrate the applications that previously involved multiple systems and physical intervention by employees. This makes enterprise consumerisation cost-effective to deliver and improves the capacity of enterprise to expand into new profit pools."

Cost-effective or not, it's not plain sailing. As Doti at Salesforce suggests, it's increasingly a balancing act between product design, enterprise functionality and the consumer-like wishes of the users. That said, Doti, like MacQuarrie, also sees advantages, as long as they can meet the challenges head-on.

"The main challenge is the paradox of designing for a platform that can be used in so many unique and unexpected ways," says Doti. "Our product designers create features and capabilities that have enough flex to adapt to any given set of needs, from physical form factor and content to business requirements. Once customers customise their Salesforce solution, they essentially become the 'product owner'. If Salesforce constantly updated the UI/UX to respond to ever-changing consumer expectations, we would invalidate what the customer built. At the same time, they know that technology is evolving. It's a delicate balance."

What is clear is that this is only the beginning. Only now are we really starting to see the impact of consumerisation in the enterprise and what it means in terms of product design on the one side but also budget constraints, support and security fears on the other.

The decentralisation of IT budgets during the pandemic has undoubtedly led to conflict as IT departments question the validity of having so many external software tools on the roster. While there may be cost benefits (as we all know a lot



There are significant downsides. External tools will collate your data

EMILE NAUS BEARINGPOINT

CONSUMER TECH



We can act as a bridge between traditional technology stacks and where consumers are active

CAMERON MACQUARRIE
SERVICENOW

of tools are free to use, at least at entry level), it could lead to complexity and unnecessary costs and risks down the line.

As Naus at BearingPoint warns, “There are significant downsides. External tools will collate your data. There is significant value in business data, not always understood or explored. But putting data into external tools will transfer that value to the platform owner. And they typically monetise this data very effectively.”

Naus adds that there is also the risk that end users are left with a series of competing tools, making it less productive and potentially leaving data outside the business without any knowledge, as tools drift out of popularity.

“Security is equally a risk to the business,” he says. “Home networks are typically more vulnerable than corporate networks (for instance, users typically do not maintain/upgrade routers), and the platforms that run the consumer tools may not be based in the US or Europe, meaning legislation is different and sometimes difficult to enforce.”

MacQuarrie throws another challenge into the mix: environmental, social and governance (ESG) reporting.

“ESG metrics are one of the biggest challenges for companies embracing the consumerisation of the enterprise,” he says. “Now more than ever, it’s crucial that companies migrate towards being more transparent about the data across their end-to-end business, including supply chains, and how they’re impacting society and the planet.”

If more and more enterprises embrace consumer tools and platforms managed globally in the cloud, this could be huge. Creating a control tower to gather the right data, validate, audit and report has become a key risk to all stakeholders, adds MacQuarrie. And this is the point. The consumerisation of the enterprise is on the surface a UX and accessibility thing - tools that help get the job done quickly and easily.

On the other hand, it is fraught with potential complications and risks if left to run riot. Ecosystems will, as a result, become increasingly key to making it possible, through shared governance and compatibility. Less is sometimes more, as the saying goes. Sometimes, you can give people too much choice. ■

According to recent studies, anything between 50% - 80% of data collected by enterprises remains unused in reports and analytics!



Why is that? It's quite simple, whilst the data is, mostly, collected large amounts of it cannot be seen or accessed by users. With all this data missing how are people and organisations making data-based decisions?

SaaS applications' architecture and technology although complex, are highly effective in their intended use cases. However, these underlying complex data models, with thousands of tables, hold organisations back from using their data. Business teams need to extract data from these applications for insights and reporting and making critical decisions on the go. This is challenging because most SaaS applications restrict access to data.

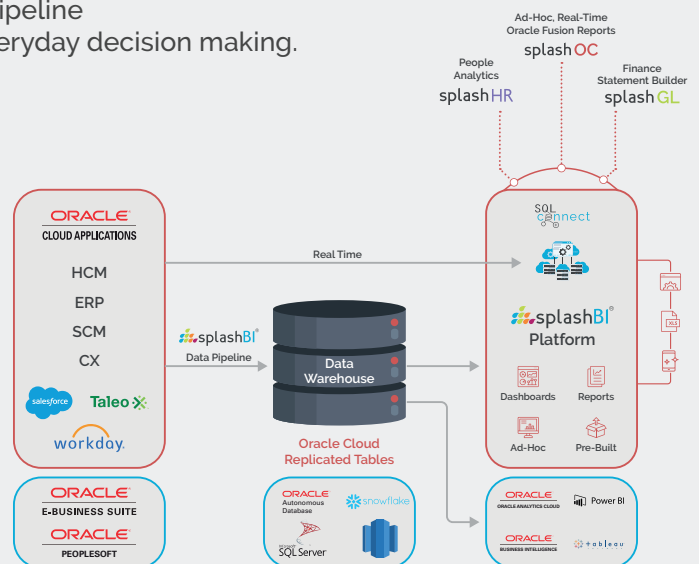
What does a Data Pipeline need to comprise to make data extraction efficient and scalable:

- ✓ A no-code platform for reduced dependency on IT and data engineering teams
- ✓ Homogenous data format for manipulation at scale and pace
- ✓ Easy and self-service connectivity with analytics tools for reporting
- ✓ Complete flexibility in data storage
- ✓ Scheduling capability for incremental data extracts
- ✓ Complete control over the replicated database
- ✓ No data management bandwidth is required with automatic syncing
- ✓ Enhanced data security and integrity with permission controls
- ✓ Enhanced standardisation

With Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications our splashOC Data Pipeline enables enterprises to become more data-driven in their everyday decision making.

Some of the benefits of our splashOC Data Pipeline:

- Incremental & full download options
- Schedule to run nightly or on-demand
- Integration with data warehouse or custom applications.
- HCM, Finance, CRM & SCM
- Ability to add new tables
- Multi-threaded technology for enhanced performance
- Data mashups/cross applications
- Synchronise DFF/KFF columns
- Developers have full access to all data
- Auto detects new columns
- Ability to exclude data sensitive columns in tables



DATA & DEVELOPERS

Citizen technologists, it takes more than a lion taming hat

BY ADRIAN BRIDGWATER

One of Monty Python's most celebrated sketches is the vocational guidance counsellor. Tired of his lonely dreary life in chartered accountancy, Herbert Anchovy (Michael Palin) goes in to discuss career options with the careers specialist (John Cleese).

Keen to explore a life beyond the balance sheet, Mr Anchovy says he wants to be a lion tamer, so the conversation plays out as follows:

Counsellor: Fine, fine. But do you, do you have any qualifications?

Anchovy: Yes, I've got a hat.

Counsellor: A hat?

Anchovy: Yes, a hat. A lion taming hat. A hat with 'lion tamer' on it. I got it at Harrods. And it lights up saying 'lion tamer' in great big neon letters so that you can tame them after dark when they're less stropky.

Comedy mirth notwithstanding, there is perhaps a lesson here for us all: just because you've got that hat, doesn't mean you're necessarily qualified to do the job.

The current rise of automation technologies is producing a variety of 'hat skills' in the form of abstracted functions that make complex tasks easier and more intuitive to complete.

The new IT democracy

The IT vendors behind many of these new functionalities are fond of calling their toolsets 'democratisation enablers.' From software programming itself with low-code and no-code platforms, to

highly complex data science tasks and onward to big data analytics and upper levels of user interface design, we're now at the point where we can enjoy the democratisation of technology at almost every level imaginable.

What we are witnessing here is big. This is a step-change in the way technology is interacted with and deployed. Arguably, gaining the most traction and interest in this space is the use of low-code and no-code platforms, so what are they and how happy or worried should we be about them?

"In the most basic terms, low-code is still relatively high-level software coding, if that doesn't



*A reminder
why just
because
you've got the
title, doesn't
mean you're
necessarily
qualified to
do the job.*



DATA & DEVELOPERS

sound too tautological. It is the platform-level ability to use workflow accelerators, defined architectural constructs and codified short-cuts in the process of building a software application, service or wider system. Low-code tools are tools for software developers,” explains Prakash Vyas, head of portfolio marketing at high-performance software application platform company **OutSystems**.

OutSystems is a company known for its low-code prowess alongside other industry stalwarts in this space including **Appian**, **Mendix**, **Pega** and others. Vyas clarifies low-code’s position over and above no-code platforms, which typically offer drag-and-drop functionalities usable by layperson businesspersons with little or no technical training.

“There’s no ‘worry’ factor in low-code, or no-code for that matter. Nobody is being put out of a job and nobody is going to have to work with rogue elements inside their corporate software estate created by citizen de-

Further and very importantly, these capabilities should only be used within the realms of company policy and process to ensure compliance, efficacy and efficiency - and any good platform will have those caveats and controls baked-in from the start,” continues Vyas.

Data science democracy

But low-code and no-code is not the only breeding ground for these new efficiencies. Now that we have become more used to big data and all collectively understood the importance of data analytics leading to what the industry loves to call ‘actionable insight’ as a part of contemporary business operations, we can talk about the democratisation of data science, too.

“The tech sector needs more data workers - globally - at almost every level. There’s massively increased demand for data analytics to generate strategies that can mitigate today’s market disruption. In the same way that low-code and no-code has answered the need for more developers,

Sweenor is clearly keen to agree with the thread of this discussion - after all, his company specialises in data analytics automation - so what insight can he provide over and above the basic bread and butter that we already know?

“In practical terms, we need to understand what’s happening at an operational level to grasp the need behind more approachable analytics and data science tools. Data scientists are often expensive, highly educated and very occasionally grumpy (I joke) - the cost factor needs to balance with the value they bring to the business. Hiring a team exclusively made up of data scientists just isn’t cost effective. It often takes just as much time to brief an analytics process or model request and come up with an analysis game plan as it would for the business people to answer that same question themselves with a little training.

“Just because you’ve got the right hat, doesn’t mean you’ve got the right experience to ‘tame the lions’. In many

Counsellor: Fine, fine. But do you, do you have any

developers that fail to integrate with the core IT function and the company mission.

“These tools work to alleviate some of the pressure off our already over-stretched developers, so that programmers can focus on higher-value tasks.

data science and analytics is experiencing a similar reimagining and reinvention. Data is becoming the lingua franca of business,” says David Sweenor, senior director for product marketing at analytics automation platform company **Alteryx**.

cases, having too many lion tamers means other critical roles (lion *feeder* being synonymous with data engineer) are missed. Ultimately, it’s a case of letting people do what they’re best at. Let your data scientists code their way to Nirvana, and leave the day-to-day data work to the upskilled in-department experts. They know their work best, so they’re generally also the best people to solve the problem.”

DAVID SWEENOR
/ ALTERYX

Let your data scientists code their way to Nirvana, and leave the day-to-day data work to the upskilled in-department experts

**No risk of lions, so far**

So far so good then. It sounds like the abstracted world of low-code and no-code combined with considerably lowered data science is a lion tamer free zone with little or no risk of a big cat mauling, right? The answer is yes, but with a note of caution.

There will naturally be some concerns in this sector of the IT market related to over-engineering. You used to be able to fix your car in the backyard

if you had a little know-how and were good with spanners. In the modern age of automotive engineering when cars need to be rebooted to install software updates, that's no longer always possible. Some of the same concerns exist in the citizen technologist space.

Webcon's VP of North America and chief evangelist Mike Fitzmaurice warns us to stop and think about all the other elements involved in building software. From initial steps to gather user requirements, onward to version and change management, then through to monitoring, maintenance and updates, Fitzmaurice (who is a staunch advocate of low-code) warns us not to just focus on construction, but to also think about wider system health.

Webcon itself is known for its low-code business process automation platform, so the company has a vested interest in making this space successful. What Fitzmaurice and team are keen to avoid is the use of any citizen technology that builds a service designed to just help 'scratch a personal

DANIEL RIEDEL / COPADO

The number of active citizen developers at large enterprises will be at least four times the number of professional developers



in response - Gartner predicts that by 2023, the number of active citizen developers at large enterprises will be at least four times the number of professional developers," says Riedel.

OWASP sting in the tail

Stepping outside of the citizen technologist sphere (as we now have done), not everyone is quite as sold on

"Partly this is because a substantial misunderstanding has arisen that has yet to be checked. Citizen technology platform vendors reassure business users that the technology is secure because it is. But this has somehow mutated to create a false expectation in these business users that because the technology itself is secure, everything to do with it, will also be safe,"

qualifications? Anchovy: Yes, I've got a hat.

itch' for the person developing it.

His personal vision also has room for a hybrid model that he calls citizen-assisted development. This is a scenario where citizens retain ownership and management of a software service's design DNA, but professional software engineers and data scientists manage the development in what is effectively a fusion team of peers.

Senior vice president of strategic services at cloud DevOps company **Copado** is Daniel Riedel. Pointing out analyst musings from **Gartner** that predict by 2025, 70 percent of new applications developed by enterprises will use low-code or no-code technologies. Riedel calls this phenomenal growth that cannot be ignored.

"Again, this is not necessarily surprising - it is a simple numbers game. **Morgan Stanley** has predicted a global shortage of 12 million professional software developers by 2024 and - almost

the security aspect of these platforms. The Open Web Application Security Project (OWASP) foundation recently unveiled a list of the most potent threats posed by low-code/no-code, with identity misuse topping the list.

As part of that report, OWASP notes: "As low-code and no-code platforms proliferate and become widely used by organisations, there is a clear and immediate need to create awareness around security and privacy risks related to applications developed on such platforms."

In response to security threats, Copado's Riedel reminds us that professional software applications developers have been moving towards DevSecOps for quite some time. But for this army of citizen developers, the idea of embedding and integrating security as a shared responsibility throughout the entire application life-cycle, simply does not occur.

clarifies Riedel.

The lesson from Copado is clear, i.e. businesses must understand that whilst the security within the technology may protect their platform, it will not automatically protect the logic and applications that are built on top of that platform. The second a user factors in an 'if/or' statement to drive a path of logic in how the technology is being used, so opens the potential for holes to arise.

Coming full circle then, we can surmise that like citizen lion taming, just having the hat is not necessarily enough to fully qualify the use of citizen technology platforms. In both fields, we need to know the scope of the arena we stand in, when to crack the whip - and we need to know just how sharp those teeth and claws are in the first place.

If we get all that right, then we could be headed for the big top. ■

Premises and





potentates for cloud in 2022

Quantum computing,
AI, DAOs and the metaverse
make for an interesting
cloud race after COVID-19

CLOUDS

Two years ago, when I last wrote about the state of the cloud race for ERP Today, the landscape was characterised by the amount of capital that enterprises needed to save, which led to more workloads being driven to the cloud. Converting CAPEX into OPEX has proved to be a winning strategy for enterprises, enabling them to drive enterprise acceleration. But since then, we have seen the era of infinite computing begin, meaning enterprises now need to build next generation applications to stay in the game. Meanwhile the war in Ukraine, COVID-19, rising interest rates and fears of an upcoming recession haven't increased the appetite of boards to put capital into data centres, not when the cloud offers a workable, viable and in almost all cases, a safe opportunity for enterprises to operate workloads in the 21st century.



BY HOLGER MUELLER

Let's look at the state of play as reached in the last two years, and the next-gen disruptions that are acting as game changers in cloud.

COVID-19 BOOSTED THE CLOUD

Uncertainty is a strong impetus to review the status quo. As many an enterprise struggled to both redefine itself and operate successfully under pandemic circumstances, the ability to tie operating costs to business performance has proved to be both highly desirable and critical. Moreover, board members who took a more cavalier approach towards the IT conversation on moving to the cloud have become keen experts on CAPEX allocation in the last few years, and in many cases had their eureka moment when it came to IT costs.

The results have driven a harder push to move workloads to the cloud than ever before. Not only did COVID-19 'boost' (pun intended) the

move to the cloud, but also the 'Great Re-Assessment' of employees towards working life. When people work from home, switch jobs more often and redefine their work/life balance, it becomes even more of a challenge to fill IT operations jobs to run on-premise data centres. Here is what CxOs are doing - or should be doing - to move to the cloud in these changing times:

Talk to your apps vendor. It isn't only enterprises that have to move to the cloud, but also the application vendors as well. Obviously they will be keen to keep their customers, and will offer ways to move an enterprise to the cloud.

CxOs should evaluate these offerings and consider taking advantage of them if they see their enterprise working long-term with its current business application vendor.

Select SaaS vendors that use IaaS vendors. As I laid out in my article

two years ago, it matters greatly when it comes to who is responsible for producing CAPEX. It should not be an enterprise's future SaaS vendor, as they would be better off investing in their software rather than infrastructure.

CxOs therefore need to ask their SaaS vendor if they run on another IaaS vendor, because if they do not, then they can't offer commercial elasticity. Which is what the move to the cloud is all about: pay less when you use less, and only pay more for IT when you use more IT.

Start building in the cloud. Software is eating the world, and enterprises must create next generation applications to differentiate themselves and operate new digital business models.

Suffice to say that CxOs need to build these applications in the cloud, with modern tools and with cloud-inherent economic mechanics as this is the only way to avoid creating bigger CAPEX challenges and higher migration loads to the cloud in the long run.

The AI imperative forces the enterprise into the cloud

A lot has been said about the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the enterprise. The long wait and anticipation phase is ending, and the benefits

THE CLOUD IS ESSENTIAL TO FUEL THE MOVE TO AI AS IT ENABLES INFINITE INSIGHTS, THE ECONOMICAL DATA STORAGE OF ALL THINGS DIGITAL IN THE ENTERPRISE

are becoming real - so real that enterprises which don't take advantage of AI will struggle to remain relevant towards the end of this decade.

The cloud is essential to fuel the move to AI as it enables infinite insights, the unlimited, economical data storage of all things digital in the enterprise, while not knowing what the queries to the data will be, in short fuelled by Hadoop data-scalable technologies.

AI also fosters infinite compute, the ability to ramp up and ramp down computing infrastructure to fuel AI processes in the volume as enterprises need it.

Quantum computing is becoming increasingly relevant

The next generation of computing paradigm that will be relevant for the enterprise is quantum computing. The technology has matured fast from a pure 'speeds and feeds' phase only two years ago, to the first commercial use cases being available since spring 2022.

Quantum computing will be the first computing platform that enterprises will not adopt on-premise (except for some government use cases, of course, and perhaps deep-pocketed banks and pharma enterprises) — but from the cloud. CxOs who want their enterprise to be able to take advantage of quantum computing better move their enterprise to the cloud, starting with data.

Deep learning is deep looming on the horizon

The ability of software to learn from data and then determine and even automate the right course of action is deep learning. Deep learning will be key for enterprises that compete to give their employees an attractive workplace with a compelling work/life balance, and the automation for that can only come from deep learning.

To be ready for deep learning, CxOs need to move workloads and data to the cloud so their enterprise can take advantage of deep learning capabilities and thrive in the marketplace with both its employees and customers.

QUANTUM COMPUTING HAS MATURED FAST FROM A PURE 'SPEEDS AND FEEDS' PHASE, TO THE FIRST COMMERCIAL USE CASES BEING AVAILABLE SINCE SPRING 2022

DAOs are powered by the cloud

Decentral autonomous organisations (DAOs) operate in the cloud, as they need to minimise CAPEX and need both the architectural and commercial economics only the cloud offers. And while the decentralised approach seems alien to the traditional enterprise, innovative CxOs will make sure that their enterprise can take advantage of both the talent and capital currently flowing into DAOs.

As the decentralisation trend will only get stronger, it is even more relevant to have both an enterprise's data and processes in the cloud so that it can take advantage of DAO dynamics powered on the blockchain.

The metaverse will transform all business

The metaverse merits a whole article by itself, and while we know very little about it, with it likely to be the last of these mega trends to materialise, we know one thing for sure already: the metaverse runs in the cloud, so to hedge and be ready whenever the metaverse fully lands, CxOs need to make sure their enterprise runs in the cloud.

HANDICAPPING THE BIG THREE - AND A NOT-SO-YOUNG NEWCOMER

The rich got richer in the cloud these last few years. As such, **Amazon's** AWS, **Google's** Google Cloud and **Microsoft's** Azure businesses are bigger and more relevant than ever before. The newcomer to the game is **Oracle's** Oracle Cloud, which has earned its spot at the table by building one of the most enterprise-friendly public clouds out there.

As you already know, when understanding technology vendors, it is always good to look at their organisational DNA alongside pure capabilities:

Amazon AWS leads and keeps leading. Nothing has changed at AWS: Amazon remains an e-retailer, and AWS is its IT platform. The cloud company's CEO Andy Jassy was so successful that Amazon founder Jeff Bezos recently handed him the keys to the whole of the business. And while Amazon struggles with overcapacity, AWS is doing just fine, partially benefitting from the extra capacity that makes for extra ammunition in the 'war' for cloud leadership.

AWS has also spotted in the hearts of developers an aspect that CxOs cannot overlook as people continue to build software and their preferences remain crucial. More and more we see AWS using its overall expertise in supply chain management, logistics and warehousing automation to appeal to customers. Amazon has massive internal and organic load from its e-commerce business which gives its cloud a lot of internal scale.

Google Cloud and the vertical twist.

In spring 2019, newly minted Google Cloud CEO Thomas Kurian started the vertical cloud promise, whereby enterprises will receive more value from a vertical cloud that knows and automates specific industry aspects. With that he took the initiative, and the rest of the industry was forced to react. This created a veritable additional differentiator for Google Cloud which relied a lot (perhaps too much) on scale and AI.

For AI, Google Cloud is maintaining its two to three year lead for algorithms on custom silicon over AWS and Azure. Google has the inherent advantage in that its cloud needs to scale to premier performance requirements to keep its internal use cases around advertisement, natural language processing, **YouTube** etc. going.

The result is a premier cloud infra-

CLOUDS

structure, which includes networking, and a setup where Google boasts its own cables. At the same time, Google needs to take market share from AWS and Azure and therefore is very competitively priced, to the point of Google Cloud continuously measuring losses for parent business **Alphabet**, as seen once more in the company's most recent quarterly earnings.

The Microsoft metamorphosis. After almost a decade, Microsoft has completed its transformation into a cloud vendor. Its CEO, Satya Nadella, came from the Azure business and led Microsoft into its cloud metamorphosis.

Across AWS and Google, Redmond understands the enterprise better than its competitors, and has decade-long ties into the IT organisation of practically any enterprise on the planet. More importantly, almost all enterprises have some sort of contractual agreement to boot with Microsoft, concerning at least Office and often also more of the Microsoft stack. Compared with its two key competitors, Microsoft has only little in-house organic load (e.g. advertising, Xbox etc.). With its focus on Office, Microsoft is also more advanced and active concerning data privacy and data residency, which comes part and parcel with the nature of the Office business containing sensitive data.

Good ol' newbie, Oracle

Oracle has been a long time partner of enterprise IT, carrying the 'old guard' label against competitors like AWS. And while it looked for a long time that the company would join the extensive list of former key IT partners that did not manage to move to the cloud, things have looked up for Oracle in the last five years, with particular focus on the last two.

Despite past and ongoing attempts to replace Oracle's database, its competitors have made little to no inroads. In the meantime, Oracle has built out its second-generation cloud, which is the optimum platform to run the Oracle Database. To serve customers, Oracle and Microsoft recently even announced a DBaaS service of Oracle Database running in Azure. This is a good example of the more IT-centric cloud vendors realising that the customer comes first, regardless of past animosities or competition.

In contrast to the other three competitors, Oracle has no organic load for its cloud (its SaaS Apps being the notable exception), something it must make up with large deals (e.g. **Zoom**, **TikTok** etc.) while it waits for customers to move workloads to Oracle Cloud. Being a software company, Oracle Cloud is margin-dilutive for Oracle as its equivalents are for Google and Microsoft. Nonetheless, Oracle

is investing massively, with its recent quarter showing the company's largest CAPEX expense to date.

THE TAKEAWAYS

CxOs should understand the core differences between these four cloud infrastructure vendors, all the way down to their organisational DNA, which remains immutable and cannot be changed by marketing and products.

All vendors bring distinctive value propositions to enterprises. AWS is and will be the preferred platform by developers for the near future, and, outside of the AI/ML space where they are catching up, has done very well for itself.

Microsoft works well with IT and most enterprises use the vendor already. Google will be ideal for enterprises who want to bet on the AI/ML strategy early. Oracle is a new player, which is definitely relevant for existing Oracle customers, but also for non-Oracle customers as it has the most enterprise-friendly cloud management.

It will be interesting to see how the companies handle disruption along the lines of quantum computing and the metaverse. Hopefully with their services, your enterprise will ride out the storm with aplomb. ■

The Big 3 in Cloud

CRITERIA	AMAZON AWS	GOOGLE CLOUD	MICROSOFT AZURE
DNA	E-commerce	Advertising	Software
Key value drivers	Retail, supply chain, cloud, devices	Advertising, search, Android, Google Workplace, cloud	Office, Windows, Cloud
Margin effect of Cloud	Accreditive	Dilutive	Dilutive
Organic load	E-commerce business	Search, YouTube, Android, Google Workplace	Office to Office 365, advertising, Xbox
Products to watch	RDS, Outposts, Aurora, Kinesis, SageMaker	Anthos, BigQuery Omni, Cloud TBP	Azure Arc / Stack, Azure SQL, Cosmos DB

SOURCE: HMCC & CONSTELLATION RESEARCH INC.

The Deloitte logo is positioned in the top left corner. The background of the entire advertisement is a vibrant, abstract composition of various patterns and colors, including blue and teal circuit-like patterns, white and grey polka dots, and a large orange and yellow brushstroke on the right side. Several white starburst graphics are scattered across the dark background. The overall aesthetic is modern and tech-oriented.

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| INTERVIEW |

SNOWFLAKE





Snowflake:
building
data
clouds
around
the world

Snowflake's EMEA
chief Alison Tierney
on adapting to
new regions and
dishing data across
all dimensions

BY ADRIAN BRIDGWATER

SNOWFLAKE



Leadership comes in many forms, but it is almost always characterised by confidence, determination and a passionate belief in a mission. Although these may not be the precise terms that she would use to describe herself, they do provide some introductory insight into the way Alison Tierney tables her approach to business in her role as senior vice president for EMEA region at a data cloud named Snowflake.

Working across a territory as wide as Europe, Middle East & Africa (EMEA) is obviously not without its challenges. The question of sheer territorial scale comes immediately to mind, so how should any firm tackle operations in this region?

“As we all know, EMEA is a hugely diverse space and what works for a company in Israel may not work in quite the [same] way for a similar company in Germany. Obviously, we recognise this reality, so we look to build our own business units in each country with a hand-picked set of ingredients designed to deliver long-term success and employee wellbeing,” says Tierney.

Combining this custom-aligned approach with an appreciation for regional cultural differences is also a key part of the Snowflake mindset; the organisation has grown from just under a thousand employees in 2019, to close to the four thousand mark in 2022.

A special mix of people

“Creating that special mix of people, processes and technology in each of our worldwide

headquarters is honestly the best part of my job. It’s one of the most fulfilling things you can imagine to see people flourishing, succeeding and growing at so many levels across so many diverse and different places,” says Tierney.

But people and processes can only go so far, so Tierney logically recognises and confirms that there is a point where the technology itself comes to the fore and takes the lead. In her organisation’s case, this all comes down to working with the Snowflake Data Cloud platform to deliver the company’s new breed of data workload capabilities.

A business strategist at heart, Tierney explains that she is comfortable with working at a technical level and knows a reference architecture from a command-line interface. Given the need to create conversations around data in the corporate boardroom, what kind of progress does Tierney think we have made in terms of getting the CIO, CTO and now the chief data officer (CDO) into this space to get their voice heard?

“Well, for a start, the CDO role in many organisations reports into the CIO or CTO anyway, but it’s a valid question and there is an important shift happening here,” she begins. “Now that C-suite boardroom meetings do include technology team leaders, we have the chance to show the rest of the business that IT can move from being a loss and cost centre to now exist and work as a profit centre. When a company starts to unlock the value of its data and work with it for competitive advantage, then the IT team really starts to drive the business to a higher level.”

Another key part of her approach, from both a global and regional level, is verticalising the company’s sales organisation in order to meet where customers are, speak their language and working to address specific industry use cases. Examples include ESG, supply chain and helping customers truly mobilise their data with a 360 degree view.

“Last year, we began the process in EMEA by building a financial services sales team in the UK. After a successful pilot programme, we built out our verticalisation efforts in four months and went live across the entire region. We are continuously expanding our vertical sectors, including retail, media and entertainment, and healthcare and life sciences,” she says.



Putting all data at your fingertips is by far the most important pillar, one place to access any data across a variety of dimensions

Snowflake Marketplace, let's go shopping

Integral to these efforts is Snowflake Marketplace. This cloud-based service layer is designed to give users the ability to share data directly without moving it or wrangling with it as the sort of burdensome data workload that we might find in a more traditional database environment. Some 260 providers and more than 1300 listings are currently on the Snowflake Marketplace, so how does it really work?

Speaking specifically on this area at the company's Las Vegas-based Snowflake Summit 2022 in June, was Unmesh Jagtap, Snowflake's principal product manager. Jagtap explained that customers can use the Snowflake Marketplace native applications function to take advantage of a serverless deployment model for deployment provisioning flexibility, access to Snowflake's customer base and in-app monetisation functions.

These native applications allow developers to bring together Snowflake 'first-class objects' like user defined functions (UDFs) and stored procedures, as well as the Streamlit integration to build data-rich applications. Given this technology proposition, how does Tierney see this work in real world use case environments and what kind of evolution does she hope this technology achieves?

"Native applications enable organisations to bring their applications directly to their customer's data, all within the secure and governed foundation of Snowflake. This means that customers can get access to data-intensive applications, whether an enrichment application, a data clean room, or ML insights, without ever having to move or transfer that data - or give the vendor access.

"For example, our customer **Goldman Sachs** has built an ESG enrichment native application that customers will be able to install directly in their Snowflake accounts. The customer doesn't have to expose their data to Goldman Sachs or do any of the cumbersome data engineering work to prep and join the data, so Goldman can feel secure that their data is never directly accessible to the user. The application moves to the data, and both sides' IP are protected and secure," she explains.

It's one of the most fulfilling things to see people flourishing, succeeding and growing at so many levels

The data-intensive application

Snowflake itself is fond of talking about what it calls the data-intensive application. We know that enterprise-scale (often mission-critical) applications today all have to shoulder a huge amount of data ingestion, processing, analytics and exchange, but Snowflake defines this application type one louder.

This is the point where applications reach a point of data-intensiveness that is an order of magnitude bigger i.e. data workloads are gargantuan (into terabytes today, but surely into petabytes and exabytes soon) and the very format of data itself spans multiple shapes and types. Where we once thought of 'just data' in a comparatively structured format, we now need to think about unstructured data, semi-structured data and everything in between.

If we remember that these data workloads will now span private on-premise, public and hybrid poly-multi-cloud environments in terms of where they reside and where they need to connect to, the task ahead is daunting. What comments would Tierney make in relation to Snowflake's approach to data-intensive application technology?

"Putting all data at your fingertips is by far the most important pillar for Snowflake. This means one place for you to access any data you need across a variety of dimensions: all types - including structured tables in a database; semi-structured application logs and IoT data; and even unstructured image files, videos and documents; all sizes - with the ability to scale to multiple petabytes to exabytes; and all origins - whether it's internally-generated, shared from partners and suppliers, purchased from third parties, or even stored in repositories outside of Snowflake," explains Tierney.

This then encapsulates Snowflake's technical mission and Tierney's customer delivery and outcomes mission, i.e. it's all about providing uniloed access to all data to make machine learning models more accurate, insights more actionable and applications more powerful to better deliver value to business. ■





**BUILDING
'SMART' ERP
DEMANDS
CONTINUOUS
SOFTWARE
INTELLIGENCE**

**IS IT TIME
TO INTRODUCE
ERPSI INTO
THE LEXICON?**



ERP TODAY 115

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ERP TODAY 115

SOFTWARE

The practice of software intelligence (sometimes shortened to SI) is the act of examining the structural condition of software assets, which may include applications, database structures, wider software frameworks/suites and source code. **BY ADRIAN BRIDGWATER**



In more granular terms, software intelligence is the process by which we decompose the structure of software and its requisite components, catalogue that information and then - typically - perform further analysis of it to look for relationships and structures between various sets of other software and components. Today we know that SI is needed because the software systems developers are building and modifying are frequently large, interdependent and complex. When a developer fails to understand the downstream impacts of a change they are about to commit, it invariably results in unseen bugs that are only uncovered when the overall system is in use.

ENTER ERPSI

An acronym that the technology industry should arguably have come up with by now is ERPSI (pronounced: erpsey), which obviously stands for the development of ERP suites with an inherent ability to exert software intelligence functions. The ERP arena is, very arguably, a perfect place to start analysing the internal relationships between different languages, frameworks, abstractions, architectures, data models and underlying (infra-structural) software services. So how should it work?

Software developers working to build enterprise-scale ERP software suites must maintain and evolve mul-

tifaceted systems which contain some software components that are often quite old (the ERP acronym itself dates back to the early 1990s).

Advancing and modernising these complex systems without 'breaking' them is increasingly difficult, if not impossible in some cases. This challenge is made even more daunting given that many aspects of the software comprising ERP suites is shifting to microservices and being scattered across cloud providers. For software developers tinkering away at their ERP suites, SI tools should perhaps be mandatory to help them navigate that complexity.

But ERPSI doesn't come in a can; this is not plug-and-play technology.

So what shape does it form?

Because, says Edwin Gnichtel, CTO of **CodeLogic**, the most important aspect of any such technology is the ability to comprehensively store and reference the relationships and dependencies between these elements of software. In practice, this makes SI in the ERP space highly logical, but best applied via a systematic and considered approach.

Known for its work with continuous software intelligence technology, the CodeLogic team insists that we need to properly analyse and understand the potential impacts likely to result when building or modifying any software inside an ERP system.



**THE RESULT IS
A TIME-LIMITED,
STATIC
UNDERSTANDING OF
AN EVOLVING SYSTEM,
USUALLY OF HIGHLY
INCONSISTENT FIDELITY**

EDWIN GNICHTEL
CODELOGIC

CUSTOMERS
HAVE INGESTED
SOME NEW
DNA INTO A
SOFTWARE
SYSTEM THAT
ULTIMATELY
ENDS UP



NATURALLY VARIEGATED AND INTERWOVEN ERP

This complex reality is underlined by the naturally variegated and interwoven nature of ERP software, which may span from systems of record to expense management, to user experience analysis and onward into field service management, and everything in between. However, argues Gnichtel, deep analysis of these kinds of systems is not reasonably possible in any manual, human-directed fashion.

“While large-scale efforts to manually map ERP software and other systems are common objectives of software modernisation projects, the result is a time-limited, static understanding of an evolving system, usually of highly inconsistent fidelity and accuracy,” says Gnichtel.

Even with the use of domain-specific SI tools (e.g. application performance monitoring (APM) software), the results fail to peer deeply enough into how software is actually running.

ABOVE ‘AS-BUILT’ DOCUMENTATION

Outside of such projects, attempts to comprehensively catalogue the highly detailed ‘as it is built’ documentation that ERP software generates is generally limited, with intelligence and analysis tools often siloed into areas such as static source code analysis, security profiling tools and APM systems. From

CodeLogic’s perspective, this results in disconnected sets of relationship and dependency data, again, of highly inconsistent fidelity.

“Looking at the application of these (basic) tools to the software within ERP systems, they provide ‘degrees’ of SI at best, but a second generation of comprehensive, unifying platforms are required to bridge the gaps between these systems and end ineffective manual discovery and documentation practices,” says Gnichtel.

To understand why comprehensive profiling, aggregation and analysis is required, we have to get to grips with the scale of the problem. A typical enterprise application consists of millions of relationships, or in graph terminology, nodes and edges. CodeLogic advocates a move to what it calls Continuous Software Intelligence (CSI). This more dynamic approach enables ERP providers to visually map out the networked relationship between all their software components and store it in a mechanically coherent form.

This, in turn, is argued to help ERP software developers innovate more quickly and more reliably. It also gives the enterprise users of those ERP software suites greater confidence in the robustness of the solutions that are, in many cases, running their businesses. Only then does the true scale of software complexity become apparent.

“While these systems capture and

organise information with speed and accuracy beyond that which is possible with manual or ad hoc methods, the power in such systems comes not merely from having highly detailed information; it’s the ability to rely on the CSI system to provide analysis of the data, provide focussed actionable information and allow users of the system to quickly profile for impact,” explains Gnichtel.

BLUNT TRUTHS

Bluntly put, breaking code and the often ugly unintended consequences of changing anything in a complex system like ERP software has become one of the biggest impediments to innovation and change in this space today.

Gnichtel says that in the past, abstraction models were implemented for the purpose of simplifying interactions between software, or to ease complexity when building new functionality. Increasingly though, abstractions are being implemented for the sole purpose of fault or change isolation; the theory being that it’s better to wrap new code around old code, than risk breaking unknown things further down in the stack.

“If the software development industry in general and ERP software in particular, doesn’t get serious about CSI and accept that modern software requires a systematic, automated approach to capturing and

SOFTWARE

understanding complexity, software will eventually be unable to move forward,” asserts Gnichtel.

Taking an equally holistic but perhaps slightly less fatalistic view of this space, Nick Jewell has seen his fair share of environments where customers have come close to breaking complex ERP systems, or at least ingested some new DNA into a software system that ultimately ends up being an unwanted mutation.

As senior director for product marketing at data analytics platform company **Incorta**, Jewell says he has worked with customers and seen them updating their ERP software suites and applications, a process that normally involves changes to configuration

ing from the core ERP product introduces future risks to the deployment, especially around handling upgrades in this new, modified environment,” says Jewell.

Companies today clearly have some extra reasons to consider using ERP Software Intelligence platforms to augment their technical capabilities and to mitigate against the risk of unexpected outages as a result of new code or configuration changes. However, the impact from changes to the ERP system’s configuration or source code has the potential to go beyond the software itself. So then, is there a knock-on impact to the health and wealth of ERP data and the analytics we perform on it?

ing progressively refined and shaped in enterprise data warehouses and often becoming summarised and aggregated for business users in subject-aligned data marts for end users, who access this final layer through traditional BI tools.

“Any change to the core ERP system will mean data pipelines will need updates too. This may mean adding new data attributes and relationships, or ensuring that changing ERP logic is reflected in the data structures that are presented to analysts, data scientists and other data consumers,” explains Incorta’s Jewell.

MANAGEABLE DATA-COMPLIANT CHANGE

Analytics teams can be caught off-guard by changes in these large source systems, leaving end-users unable to access or analyse new attributes to drive value in their work. Organisations in regulated industries especially need to ensure that their business processes remain governed and reconcilable, so they can prove compliance.

The word from Jewell then is clear enough, in that to achieve manageable data-compliant change in an ERP system, an organisation’s data pipeline must be as agile as its software.

“Ideally, you should minimise the presence of data pipelines themselves where possible, opting instead for real-time analytics against raw operational data derived from the ERP environment. With this approach, any changing attributes, structures or relationships can be seamlessly integrated into downstream analytics along with tracking the history of those changes, without adding technical complexity”.

If we fail to reach this higher level of software intelligence for ERP systems architecture and engineering management, then we a) risk making software engineers live in perpetual fear of change b) potentially create more brittle ERP systems going forwards and c) fail to coin a swanky acronym like ERPSI - and nobody wants any of these things to happen. ■

YOU SHOULD MINIMISE THE PRESENCE OF DATA PIPELINES THEMSELVES WHERE POSSIBLE, OPTING INSTEAD FOR REAL-TIME ANALYTICS

NICK JEWELL
INCORTA



or customisation. This configuration involves optimising basic system functions and components using a framework supplied by the ERP vendor, often in the form of extension tables and well-defined integrations or software ‘hooks’ such as APIs.

FRAGILE MODIFICATIONS

“Customisation introduces new features or options that were not present in the original deployment. This process is generally more expensive and time-consuming, but it has more potential to differentiate how the company operates. Making changes to operational source code when deviat-

“Naturally, any change to an enterprise software deployment at this level will also change the data that flows from within the application (‘the system of record’) into analytical systems that exist downstream in the organisation’s data flow (‘the systems of insight’). These changes can have dramatic or unintended consequences on how the data is captured, transformed or presented to end-users and decision-makers,” says Jewell.

In most legacy environments, ERP data flows into systems of insight through a complex series of data pipelines: landing in a raw data zone, often known as a data lake, becom-

cut through economic headwinds with aerodynamic operations from Sapphire

drive efficiency

streamline costs

improve productivity

make data-driven decisions

reduce friction

realise rapid time to value

partnering with the greatest in the industry



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FINANCIAL SERVICES

Process mining

THE LYNCHPIN OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN BANKING AND FINANCE

BY NICK MITCHELL

Technology is now central to the operations of almost all modern businesses, and this is especially true for organisations in the finance sector. But as the sector embraces digital transformation, are business leaders overlooking a key way to ensure they are delivering the experiences that customers need, while also trimming their own costs?

Spurred by consumer demand, businesses in the banking and finance industries are leveraging technologies from cloud to artificial intelligence to improve customer experience, drive efficiencies and win new business. This shift has advanced to an extent few would have predicted, with 85 per cent of CEOs having accelerated digital initiatives despite the challenges of the pandemic, according to research by **Deloitte**.

These businesses, though, first need to understand *what* to transform, and if the strides they're making are actually working - this is where process mining offers an opportunity. Process mining helps businesses understand their operations in a way that was previously impossible, gaining insights about how their business processes actually run, rather than how they think they might run, to truly be successful in digitally transforming.

Failing to make the leap

For some time now, companies in the banking and finance industry have been trying to keep up with the latest technologies, risking being overtaken by digital-native rivals if not. Faced with start-ups and challenger banks

powered by technologies such as machine learning, incumbents cannot afford to delay any longer.

While the pandemic accelerated a shift towards embracing digitisation, hurdles still remain for businesses in 2022 according to research by **The Hackett Group**. The study finds that business leaders fail to engage with digital projects due to fears over inflation, skills gaps and productivity.

Companies must act quickly to embrace digital transformation. Acting like an X-ray machine for processes within a business, process mining looks for the points where processes become stuck, leading to delays or costly manual interventions.

MINING HELPS UNDERSTAND HOW TRANSFORMATION IS ACTUALLY WORKING BY MEASURING BUSINESS IMPACT

Process mining delivers the data and insights leaders need to eliminate costly delays and hold-ups within their business operations and underpins successful digital transformation. Being able to find business processes gaps that impact customers and their needs is the first step to make businesses more efficient and resilient to meet today's supply chain and business disruption as well as inflation challenges.

There is still learning to be done though, and many business leaders

are unaware of the full capabilities of process mining and execution management and their potential to increase business efficiency. This is one of the reasons that some banking and financial services providers are losing out to competitors.

How process mining can drive success in banking and finance

Process mining can speed up and improve efficiency across the whole value chain in the banking and finance sector. It works by using data generated from business processes, which are recorded in 'event logs' by business software. Event logs are saved in scenarios like when a customer makes a request, a complaint is processed or a new credit application is made. Each stage of the process generates its own event log which the software can analyse. As a result, process mining can be applied to just about any process within banking and insurance businesses.

Process mining works across all stages of each process. This means leaders are not restricted to streamlining one part of the organisation, but are able to take a holistic overview and see possible starting points for a comprehensive digital transformation spanning multiple company divisions.

The technology digs into standard business data, making it transparent and revealing the hidden inefficiencies where manual processes are slowing the organisation down. It is built to 'iron out' the problems that consume time, create inefficiency and waste businesses' money. As businesses adopt new digital processes, process mining can pinpoint problems as they happen.

Why execution management matters

Execution management works alongside process mining to drive intelligent fixes which improve business performance, taking the data and intelligence delivered by process mining and translating it into action. Once inefficiencies have been identified, execution management presents the next-best-action recommendations to eliminate inefficiencies. Business leaders can see where these inefficiencies lie and speed up and automate processes where necessary. This translates into satisfied customers, happier employees and increased profits - plus reduced rework, better conversions and a more efficient workforce.

Process mining and execution management help banks with everything from regulatory reporting to payment processing, identifying 'pain points' where needless manual interventions are present and enabling managers to automate these.

For example, process mining can highlight where related cases are being directed to multiple agents, rather than being grouped together and directed to a single team or agent. Such interventions can significantly reduce overall case volume, freeing up employee time, and cutting costs. Even in high-volume products such as foreign exchange trading, process mining can automatically and continuously map processes, delivering insights on where failures are occurring.

Banks using process mining and execution management have reported being able to process credit applications up to four times faster and reduce the lead time in the retail process by six months.

As businesses transform, process mining helps leaders understand how their transformation is actually *working* too, by measuring the impact on the business. This means that at every stage, the technology can 'weed out' the time-consuming manual steps and speed institutions on the path towards seamless automation and greater efficiency.

It can also help to deliver improved

consumer-grade customer services that people now expect in the workplace. After two years of experiencing digital-first services, consumers now demand 'reliable service and rapid problem resolution', according to a **McKinsey** report from 2020.

Providing good customer experience is a business imperative. Process mining and execution management allow businesses to continuously evaluate in real-time how customers respond, weed out inefficiencies and take actions in customer service. For businesses that must digitally transform, data, insight and actions are invaluable, both before, during and after the transformation process.

Delivering a frictionless future

The banking and financial services industries must leverage data and

insights generated by processes to reduce friction so that their businesses can perform at maximum efficiency levels.

Process mining and execution management offer key data, insights and action advantages while reducing risks and quickly providing value in days and weeks rather than months.

Process mining empowers business leaders with the process visibility and insights, and execution management delivers the actions they must take to deliver truly frictionless digital transformation initiatives. It's the key to making banking and financial services businesses perform at levels they never thought possible. ■

Nick Mitchell is vice president and country manager UK&I at Celonis



From lipstick on a pig to the experience economy

The evolution of the user experience

BY MARK SWEENY

“ You can put lipstick on a pig, but it’s still a pig.” That’s how the saying goes, and it only seems like yesterday we were in the era of green and black screens when the arrival of the internet triggered record levels of investment in the technology market searching for the definitive killer app with a modern look and feel interface for users.

Looking back at the user experiences of past technology systems compared to today can fill you both with nostalgia and horror, passing through relatively short-lived technology innovations of client/server and thin client along the way. Spending vast amounts of money just to make something look good without the underlying functionality was - and still is - fool’s gold, as we’ll discover.



Technology should exist to make our lives easier and for the better. Accessibility and enabling capability to allow us to eschew mundane repetitive activity and maximise our time is the very essence of the digital experience. Great technology-enabled experiences always empower the user.

SaaS cloud applications continue to make quantum leaps in an era of design thinking where we are constantly reinventing work through the employee experience. This is done with the knowledge that everything now is about creating immersive digital experiences for customers and employees alike, which cross an enterprise architecture and the functional silos found in organisations and become reflected in ERP modular system design.

Early origins - back to the 80s

The battle for desktop supremacy and the user experience has its origins in the early 1980s and the **Apple vs Microsoft** wars. Then the user experience was tightly integrated into the operating system and, in Apple’s case, the hardware, hence the focus was more on overall functionality than just look and feel.

For those who appreciate the beauty of innovation, the idea was encapsulated in the much-quoted Steve Jobs principle of design: *“You’ve got to start with the customer experience and work back towards the technology - not the other way around.”* This ensured Apple in many ways had the jump on Microsoft regarding delivery of the end-user experience, although the opportunistic and entrepreneurial flair of Bill Gates ensured Microsoft Windows ultimately won and monopolised the Battle of the Desktop. The rest, as we know, is history.

“ Workday had the jump on Oracle in terms of look and feel, and quickly used this to capture market share

Dawn of the SaaS cloud era - the power of the user experience

At the start of the SaaS cloud era for enterprise applications, circa 2011-2019, the clear industry leader was **Workday**. The Pleasanton, California-based brand undertook a considerable amount of investment to ensure its human capital management (HCM) offering was highly intuitive, easy to use and provided an attractive experience.

Adopting the belief that ‘sex sells,’ Workday had the jump on **Oracle** in terms of look and feel, and quickly used this to capture market share and build product adoption momentum. Just to keep things balanced, one should note that **SAP** were nowhere to be seen, despite the siloed HCM functionality within the ERP giant’s moderately successful stand-alone offering, SuccessFactors.

The SaaS cloud era saw the user interface look and feel in the buyer’s mind as the superior re-

quirement over underlying system functionality. Organisation buyers were, surprisingly or not, prepared to spend significant sums of money on something that looked pretty. After all, comparing early SaaS applications' accessibility and usability against on-premise applications was an easy win, and this became the major recurring theme in the market.

Subsequently, all vendors increased R&D expenditure and focussed on the user experience, with simplification and ease of use being the constant drivers.

The extremes vendors went to was significant, like the example of retina eye scanning, recording how a user sees the screen and accesses functionality, then using the outcomes to reconfigure the system accordingly.

However, even with all the advances in user experience, the platform vendors were still locked into a suite of silo applications. People, regardless of whether being a customer or employee, knowingly and unknowingly touch many front of house and middle office systems to access a service.

Changing the conversation - systems of experience

With technology innovation moving so fast, the days of debating the field position on a screen, list of values, and how pretty the web browser screen is, for the true pioneers of the experience economy, are now far behind us. The buying criteria of early SaaS systems is no longer the sole overriding factor.

The dawn of the #experienceeconomy has seen the rise of the experience platforms, first touted around 2019, with the likes of **Salesforce** and **ServiceNow** leading the charge and taking the game to the ERP vendors.

Whilst such systems can easily co-exist, naturally the competitive nature of the industry has seen these platforms perceived as taking ERP market share. Experience platforms are not ERP systems, and whilst there are some grey areas, on the whole they can digitalise work in the way work is actually executed inside an organisation, and not necessarily reflecting the out of the box, siloed functional SaaS processes.

Equally the industry approach has evolved allowing multi-channel accessibility, noting most users would rather access technology via their mobile devices. There exists now a focus on creating holistic *systems of experience*, where personalised services are accessible based upon role and individual whilst residing and leveraging standardised business processes as and when necessary.

To combat this, the ERP vendors are having to move

into the new era, most notably Oracle's announcement of OracleME earlier this year, which in my view is a direct response to the advance of pure experience platform vendors. It does demonstrate that the large ERP vendors are not immune to market forces; in this case Oracle just so happens to be the first to positively respond.

Drivers of #experienceeconomy

The global pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital technology, and whilst the public sector appears to remain in the dark ages regarding the implementation of back-office systems, those in the commercial private sector that did not embrace or could not change fast enough simply went out of business, unable to weather the storm.

With the technology industry always taking note of consumer behaviour and demand, the following factors are driving continuous investment in creating experiences:

- Consumer need for greater user adoption - 'systems' must be intuitive and easy to use by default.
- Simplification of process - recognising many operational business processes cut across an organisation and that people do not work in operational silos.
- Continuous need for insight - the use of real-time data analytics to drive the experience is key.

The ability to deliver flexible, intuitive, easy to use applications that reflect the way people engage and deliver a service by creating data driven immersive experiences accessible at a given point in time continues to attract significant investment monies.

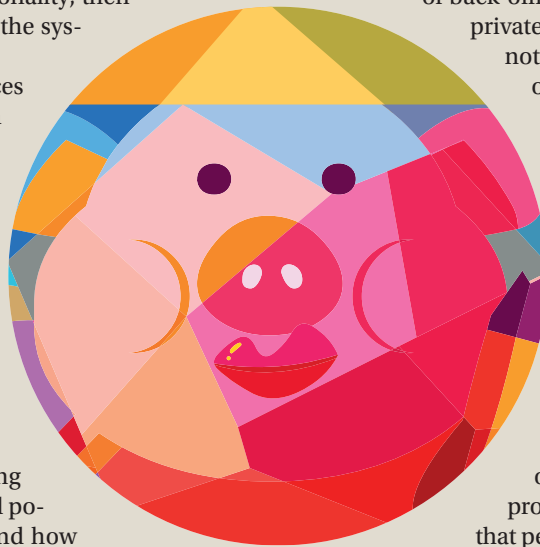
Where are we heading?

The divide between humans and machines comes ever closer with the advancement of technology, specifically with artificial intelligence and machine learning. Therefore, the natural question to ask is, just where is all this heading?

Looking now at the advances of technology in terms of virtual reality and avatars, and the predicted greater adoption of **Google Glass**, what we are seeing is the creation of an even more accessible and immersive experience.

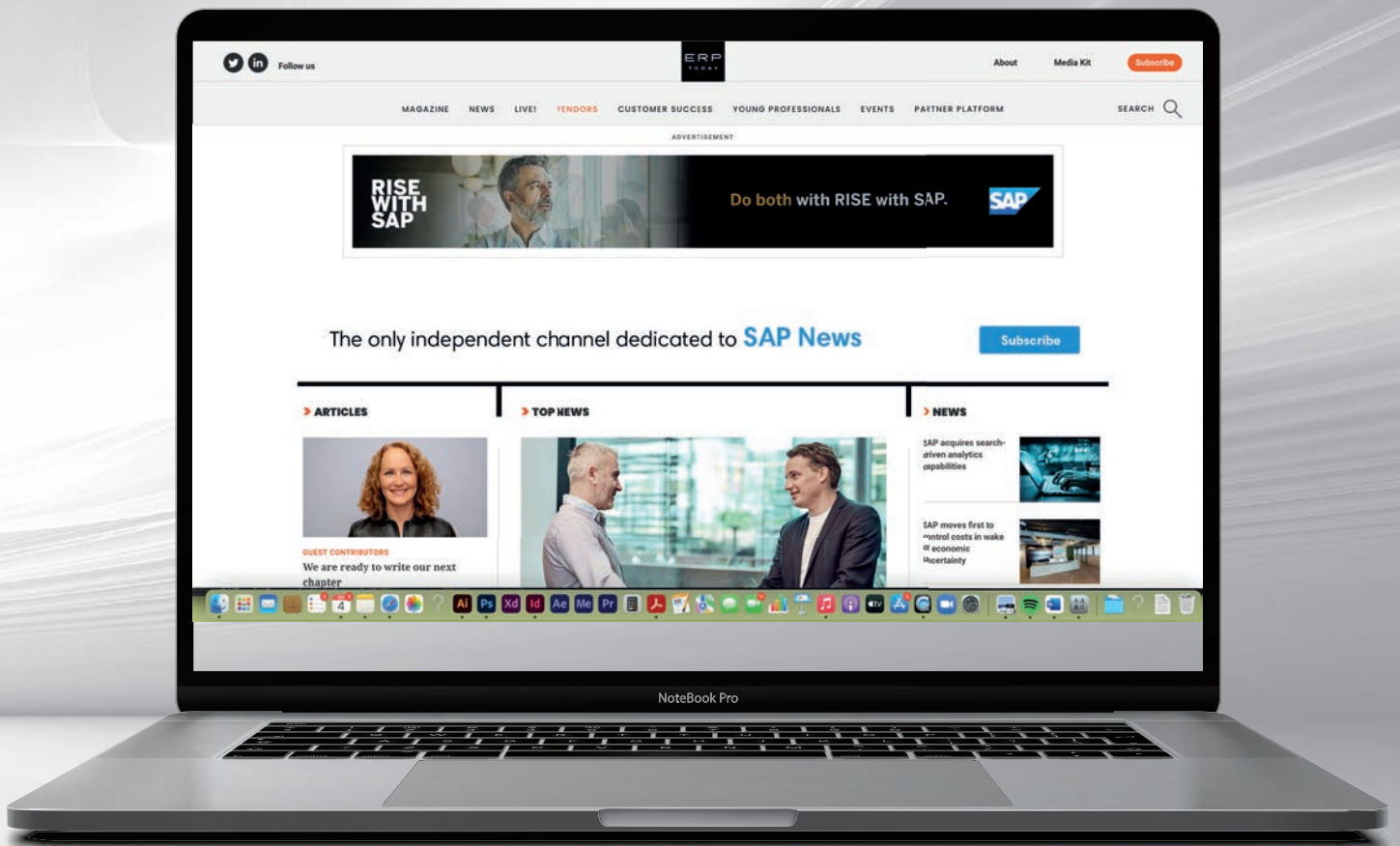
Welcome to the #experienceeconomy... it's not going away, folks! ■

Mark Sweeny, founder, de Novo Solutions



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Watch out for SAP silos

An aerial, top-down view of an office space. At the top, two desks are visible, each with a computer monitor, keyboard, and mouse. Below the desks, two black office chairs are positioned on a grey, textured floor. The central area of the image is dominated by the text 'in your cybersecurity'. At the bottom, another two desks are visible, similar to the ones at the top, with office chairs positioned below them. The overall lighting is soft and even, highlighting the textures of the floor and the sleek lines of the office furniture.

in your cybersecurity

CYBERSECURITY

ERP is central to business operations, with 27 percent of employees using ERP systems regularly to perform their daily tasks. This means unplanned, unmanaged downtime of business-critical applications can cause daily operations to grind to a halt, resulting in significant financial losses, productivity deficiencies and damage to brand authority and customer trust.

Given the potentially destructive implications, protecting ERP software and ensuring continuity of service is vital but as of today, our security measures cannot keep up with the pace of development in businesses. 80 percent of business leaders acknowledge that digitally fuelled innovation is being introduced faster than organisations' abilities to secure it against cyberattacks, with companies experiencing 270 attacks on average in 2021 - a rise of 31 percent in 2020.

Many threat groups are now sophisticated nation-state actors. Backed by immense resources, enabling them to continually advance their arsenal of attack methods, they are increasingly engineering their techniques in order to infiltrate business-critical applications.

Without question, breaking into a business-critical application is like hitting a jackpot for an attacker. Yet, unfortunately, these malicious endeavours are all too often unobstructed, enabling threat actors to carry out truly devastating attacks with little to no resistance.

Cyber side-lined

A recent **McKinsey** paper explains that while many organisations have hardened their systems, they are still vulnerable to attack. This is because of a lack of understanding about these threats and how best to protect their business-critical applications. Cloud migration comes first, side-lining cyber. However, even when organisations do understand the risks, they fail to secure the ERP systems properly owing to the sheer size and complexity of the task.



BY TIM WALLEN

Business-critical application environments are both intricate and expansive. Not only are they made up of a wide array of elements across process and workflow, master data and data warehouses, underlying computational infrastructure, and large storage networks, but they also comprise dozens if not hundreds of interfaces and integration points with other IT applications inside and outside of the organisation, each of which is a potential vulnerability.

This situation is further exacerbated by the fact that ERP systems are typically monitored separately from other IT infrastructure, prohibiting the necessary correlation of data. Companies are often simply unable to see what's happening within the ERP and the data passing through to the interfaces present within other systems.

The success of ERPs is often reliant upon integration with other internal applications and external data sources, such as HR systems or logistics databases. However, security gaps emerge when an enterprise finds itself in the position where it has a lack of transparency over these interconnections.

Such interdependency issues are further compounded where any one ERP is often separate from a company's other applications and infrastructure teams. Common instances of such separation occur between an operating team within IT and a process-design and process-maintenance team within a business unit such as finance. In such instances, each team is run like a silo within each organisation, creating even more interfaces between the security team and the ERP team.

Take **SAP** systems as an example. Leveraging something of an independent network that has its own unique rules, SAP applications use multiple logs to capture events relevant to security. However, not only do these use varied formats and structures, but the company also uses its own specific vocabulary to describe IT network equipment.

This lack of conformity with the security market at large makes it incredibly difficult for SAP to be part of

an organisation's central security strategy. While SAP does manage some of its own defences with an internal security information and event management (SIEM) solution, the key danger lies in the fact that it often remains siloed from a company's wider security architecture, limiting the ability of security teams to monitor attack patterns effectively.

Blind spots

Concerningly, a recent **Twitter** poll saw 40 percent of respondents admitting that their enterprise does not include business-critical systems such as SAP in their cybersecurity monitoring. In addition, 27 percent were unsure if it was included in their cybersecurity monitoring at all.

Further, when asked how they currently review SAP logs for cybersecurity events or cyber threat activity, almost 30 percent of respondents admitted to not reviewing SAP logs in any way, and again, nearly 30 percent said they didn't know if this was being monitored.

Given that SAP serves as the core business-critical application solution for many organisations, this is highly concerning. Indeed, not including this in the centralised security monitoring solution leaves organisations vulnerable and exposed to the risk of cyber threats.

Few companies recognise the importance of looking for divergent user behaviour in ERPs, making them a blind spot, with many executives simply unsure of where true ownership of business-critical applications lies.

Breaking down the silos and integrating business-critical applications as part of the central monitoring solution is therefore vital to improving ERP security.

By correlating SAP data with infrastructure data, it becomes possible to monitor events across the entire enterprise landscape. This holistic approach strengthens threat detection, enabling the organisation to respond to incidents at speed across various applications, protecting the SAP system from unnecessary damage.

40%
admitted
their
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monitoring
does not
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business-
critical
systems

Adopting BCAS

Fortunately, there are solutions capable of bridging this gap. A new raft of business-critical application security (BCAS) solutions are emerging, which mitigate threats quicker by incorporating business critical applications with IT security. These are designed to ensure critical software applications are monitored thoroughly and centrally, aligning people, processes and technologies to bolster visibility of all activities.

Not only can BCAS bring critical application activity under the central security monitoring of SIEM, but equally they are able to automate compliance monitoring of critical ap-

plications and unlock time efficiencies thanks to ready-to-use controls, checks, dashboards and comprehensive reports.

In the case of SAP, some BCAS solutions have been designed specifically to solve the language barrier, efficiently and effectively integrating SAP data into any SIEM system. When this divide between ERP and security is broken down, BCAs become empowered to benefit from an arsenal of solutions including SIEM, security orchestration, automation and response (SOAR) and user and entity behaviour analytics (UEBA), helping to unlock transformative threat insights.

By tapping into the respective benefits of each of these solutions, security teams are empowered to focus on important tasks, prioritising incidents to help analysts identify and resolve incidents fast and keep businesses safe.

Indeed, such technologies provide automated threat detection, investigation and response capabilities as well as accurate, risk-based analytics, assisting security teams in stamping out the threat of advanced attacks. Armed with this insight, the business is then in a position to respond much more effectively to, and mitigate threats, protecting ERP systems from avoidable damage. ■

Tim Wallen is regional director UK&I at Logpoint



The technology-first approach has lorded over implementations for the past few decades. But cracks in the tower are starting to appear. We meet with Emma O'Brien, founder and CEO of Embridge Consulting, to discover the pitfalls of the current approach and why people-centric system integration is gaining ground.

Toppling the technology pedestal

Why people-first consultancy is winning from the ground up

WORDS BY STEPHANIE BALL

PHOTOS BY JOEL CHANT

EMBRIDGE CONSULTING



Delving into the psychology of technology marketing, software vendors have mastered the art of making less than sparkly-looking ERP systems light fires into the C-suites of businesses across the globe, igniting a race to the cloud. Many businesses are convinced that a certain piece of technology is the key to unlocking success, efficiency, and reaching the top. They are sure that when it's implemented, it will deliver results, and to cap it all off, the promise of a relatively good ROI.

However, investing in new software like cloud-based ERP is not like buying a shiny new car. There is no real cooling-off policy, and after sitting through lengthy implementation periods, you can't exactly take backsies at the finish line. Nor can you claim a full refund if it doesn't live up to expectations. But while for some the race to the cloud is complete, with this technology-first approach, the view from the top can leave businesses spent up and underwhelmed. Last year, the **Financial Times** reported only 37 percent of companies believed they were getting the full value they expected from cloud technology.

At the Kent offices of Embridge Consulting, I met with founder and CEO Emma O'Brien to discuss why companies were encountering ERP pitfalls, and how to build in good implementation practices from the ground up.

O'Brien is immediately a welcoming and warm figure, with an air that suggests this isn't her first rodeo. After building a successful career in the technology sector, O'Brien branched out, founding the consulting firm back in 2009. Friendly, personable, and rightly proud of her cockney roots, she isn't woolly with her words. There is simply too much focus on a technology-first approach, she claims.

"Technology is just the enabler. Yes, there are

various technology platforms out there, but if they're in business, they genuinely can do what they say on the tin. One of the common things that you find working with different customers is that they don't know what 'good' looks like. They can quickly get down a rabbit hole, where all their focus goes on what the technology can do and getting wowed by the wonderful pre-sales demos that the vendor puts on show - but that's probably only 10 percent of the actual solution in achieving a successful change."

Many public service industry businesses fall into a catch-22 situation with technology implementations. The likes of healthcare, councils, education and not-for-profit organisations (NPOs) generally have more tightly stretched resources and less available funding for big innovation projects. These industries are often too slow to respond to new technology opportunities, while manual processes and siloed archaic systems are decimating the time and motivation of employees.

"There's not enough focus on the people aspects," O'Brien says, "both in terms of finding an implementation partner with the right industry experience and knowing what their internal teams need to provide for the required inputs of the programme.

"You've got to have a good modern technology platform. But if you don't get all of the other aspects sorted out, it's going to fail or it's going to cost a lot more money than you anticipated. It's not about if the technology can achieve something - it's about how customers can get a quicker return on investment and come out of a change programme with something fit for purpose, scalable, and which is going to support their futures."

The need for people-centric SI

With an increasingly implausible amount of micro-knowledge anticipated from software vendors, a crumbling point emerges where vendors offer a 'solve all' system without any considerations of the detailed history and evolutionary journey of a business. For the Embridge CEO, this is an issue she often sees in public service

"My toes curl when I see how much money has been spent on these digital tool programmes unnecessarily"



organisations, who experience major inefficiencies with their chosen system.

Sold the glitz of the cloud ivory tower, the lure of potential technology upgrades can seem like a fix-all solution to such clients. But with all the implementation considerations, many public service organisations end up finding it either too costly to complete their system implementations, or discover that after all the expense and time to go-live, the system doesn't work as well for daily tasks and operations as they had hoped. It's not that the software isn't a good solution, but the way it's been implemented simply doesn't allow these organisations to get the best value out of it for their specific industry requirements. So, for the people on the ground, it's a system that proves unworkable.

This issue often arises from software vendors lacking the necessary micro-industry awareness and from system integrators (SIs) that are inexperienced for that vertical.

"Vendor expertise is in creating the best possible functions and features, and SIs need to be used for a fine-tuned industry-specific experience," O'Brien explains. "But you can't provide that proactive advice and guidance to customers unless you know their business. I've recognised some really common pitfalls and frustrations in other implementations that needed to have an industry best practice approach.

"They can quickly get down a rabbit hole, where all their focus goes on what the technology can do"

Particularly in the public sector, businesses can get into a pressurised position, focussing on a replacement for a piece of unsupported technology.

"I was seeing a lot of time being wasted, where the customers were being asked to effectively design their own system, particularly when you looked at large-scale public sector and not-for-profit. It's a bit of a lottery for smaller and mid-sized organisations, too; they aren't always big enough names to demand the attention or the authority, and so they can get inexperienced people while still being charged the same high day rate fee for a level of service they aren't actually getting."

With the price of technology upgrades rocketing, end-user spending on cloud services is expected to grow 20.4 percent this year and reach nearly \$600bn worldwide in 2023, according to **Gartner**, and that's not to mention the business downtime and implementation costs.

"It just did not rest well with me that it was not good value for citizen money if you're not doing things in

EMBRIDGE CONSULTING

the most efficient way,” O’Brien explains, “and it’s certainly not a good use of donor money if you’re in a not-for-profit environment. There are many, many examples of where you’ve got failed technology programmes and my toes curl when I see how much money has been spent on these digital tool programmes where it’s just not needed.”

Pitfalls with the cloud

For many, O’Brien included, the cloud represents the future of business, with SaaS ERP a welcome solution for managing large, siloed databases. An advantage is that the offering lifts the burden of large in-house IT departments and hardware management that often soak up funding resources better placed on front end services. Gone are the days when businesses use the same version of their software for years on end. With cloud and SaaS technology, it’s never been easier to get the necessary updates and avoid redundancy.

But it is clear that whether getting on top of operational inefficiencies with cloud solutions, creating project profitability or tracking donation transparency, a successful implementation cannot be done without a great deal of knowledge of each organisation’s DNA. By centring implementation on each case’s particular needs and recognising what ground-up users are looking for, SIs will enable a faster route to an organisation’s vision of success.

As with our private devices, upgrades can slip beneath the radar, or are less than helpful. As the CEO confesses, “My kids mentioned playing

games in iMessage the other day, and I had no clue it had happened. You don’t tend to think about it when **Apple** downloads automatic updates to your phone and what will change.

“Now and then you’ll perhaps need a new phone because your phone runs out of memory, or the new operating system doesn’t back-date. Or when you upgrade your Office 365, does the average user know what the additional functions and features will be? The consideration isn’t any different for organisations adopting SaaS-based ERP.”

Not all new features are valuable for each industry, nor each use case. O’Brien argues that businesses need to understand the specific benefits for their case before upgrading or updating software, otherwise it could prove detrimental to their services. On this point, she believes, it’s the people-first approach that secures the stable foundations.

“I don’t think many businesses have really cottoned on to this consideration because we’re still in early cloud adoption days. It’s great that you can access the innovation and get blown away by the sales cycle of a technology vendor, but if you don’t know what that innovation, that function or feature is going to do for your business, then how the hell is that access adding any value? Quite frankly, you’re not going to get the benefit.”

With large backlogs of tasks for the likes of healthcare, education, councils, and NPOs, there isn’t the capacity to read through the fine print of every monthly software update, let alone understand whether it will be useful.

“If you don’t know what that innovation, that function or feature is going to do for your business, then how the hell is that access adding any value?”

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What good looks like

With SIs acting as an effective go-between for the vendor and the end-customer, a better picture can be created of the tools and use-cases that will be most valuable on the ground. For businesses attempting to unpack the complexities of technology partnerships to know what good looks like, O’Brien claims the best SI, vendor and client collaborations come from joint people-centred values.

“The challenge is how you make it more and more intuitive so that you can fast-track adoption of the software as quickly as possible. Part of that comes from the vendor presenting a user interface that’s friendly and as intuitive as pos-

sible. But part of it is also about how you implement knowledge transfer as part of the journey to fast-track that knowledge within your user base. It takes all parties to make it work. If your customer is going to get the best return on investment, you don't want two parties pointing at each other.

"We sign on the dotted line and we enter into a partnership with our customers," O'Brien continues. "That's exactly what it is - a partnership. It needs to be a completely open, transparent and collaborative relationship. We select our customers as much as they select us. Everything has to be a collaboration because these are complex programmes, and they never go according to plan."

The CEO also believes investing heavily in super-user and end-user training and tools, and being able to offer a wide range of complimentary software tools to mould the SaaS package together, is the best way to create successful outcomes. She advises that SIs should never stop looking for better avenues to faster, easier delivery with a network of like-minded partnerships:

"If a customer comes out looking for a wide range of solutions to deliver finance, HR, procurement contracts, management and recruitment," she explains, "we can knit together 'out of the box' with our industry model a number of different technology platforms, and they can know it's integrated because we've done all that work for them."

Here O'Brien points to Embridge's partnership with no-code service **WalkMe** as providing accelerators that the consultancy is looking to develop in the pipeline, making the entire experience of using the software "as easy as possible."

She also reminds ERP Today that a few years ago Embridge Consulting decided to become an exclusive **Unit4** partner.

"From an Embridge Consulting and Unit4 perspective, our go-to-market verticals are completely aligned, creating a fantastic partnership to work with. If those partnerships are also formed with customers from the outset, and you continue to engage with them for a long period of time, and provide that proactive guidance, then they're going to get much more value from their investment than they ever would do otherwise."

Putting people over profits

With a people-centric approach, O'Brien explains that it's not all about the immediate profits, but about securing the end results for both the SI and the customer, retaining customers and staff alike.




"It's hard for every organisation right now. You've got other organisations out there that are really struggling to recruit and then retain their staff. And we're heading for a bit of a crisis in my view. I think being a people-centric organisation isn't saying, 'we're people-centric.' It's about what you do and sometimes you get it wrong as well. It's addressing what you don't do and just listening to what people say."

"Through the pandemic, our training team ran **Zoom** sessions with local schools to train them on how to use Zoom and **Google** Classrooms," O'Brien shares. "We had the available resources to do it and the schools needed it. We're continuously trying to think how we can help and that sometimes does come at a cost of compromising profitability. But it's not all about cost. Profits are important for the valuation of a business going forward, but it's not the be-all and end-all of everything."

From apprenticeship schemes, charity fundraising and two-day voluntary leave for outreach work, to flexible working arrangements for parents, older workers and more, O'Brien ensures the Embridge Consulting team can practice what they preach from the ground up.

"It sounds really cheesy," she says, "but if you're able to build up a business, and actually be a business with purpose and feel like you've got some contribution to your community from a social value perspective, encourage that. Small things can have big impacts." ■



As hyperautomation
technology advances, is
the CFO about to see their
role subsumed by a CTO?

BY STEPHANIE BALL

The CFO is dead,



long live the CTO

HYPERAUTOMATION

The CFO, as many used to know the role, is dead. Once left to manage manual bookkeeping tasks, CFO duties have expanded to financial control and business-wide strategising. With each advancement in technology or turbulence in global affairs, business responses have had to become more nimble and fit for purpose than competitors. As a result, just in the past few years, businesses have contended with operational challenges and sudden rising costs on a scale that, collectively, has never been seen before.

Shovelling vital decision-making fuel, financial leaders have dug deeper and faster to keep businesses ahead in the wake of whatever economic disaster might come next. Tasks like reporting, predictive analysis, supplier/debtor negotiation and more have been piled onto CFO's shoulders, transforming the role under heavy expectations. Clearly then, it's practically impossible to operate as a CFO without increasing your own stack of technological solutions to spread the load.

Renaud Heyd, chief financial officer at **SAP**, shares an industry insider perspective with ERP Today: "The world is changing so quickly. If we had had this conversation last year, the environment would have been completely different. Now we have a war, resource shortages, and energy shortages, with inflation that we didn't have since the Second World War.

"Organisations have to change their strategies and operating models completely, and technology plays a big role in intelligence, compliance and operational efficiency. This is a tough issue in the UK because our productivity is pretty low."

In answer, the Fourth Industrial Revolution has seen hyperautomation technologies pick up the pace. So much so that many financial tasks once added to the CFO in-tray are already being managed by technology like AI-powered RPA. **Gartner** Insights claims that 80 percent of finance leaders have implemented RPA solutions or have plans in the works, with one solution displacing up to 30 times the work of a full-time human employee. Moreover, Gartner's analysts predict that combining hyperautomation technologies will lower operational costs by 30 percent by 2024, with AI-

driven solutions set to triple value generated from tasks by 2025.

Inescapably, these once-CFOs are seeing their roles distorted into hybrid technologist packages. With business change set to continue down the technology path, it begs the question, will the next evolution see the CFO role replaced by finance-savvy technologists?

The disappearing tasks of the CFO

The rise of technology tools for finance, including ERP, AI, RPA, IoT devices, SaaS and more, have been game changers in providing accurate and timely financial data. Specifically, finance teams are now combining RPA, AI and SaaS low-code solutions to create intelligent automated processes that replicate human actions much faster and most efficiently.

In effect, the tasks that once made up a CFO's daily role are quickly disappearing. Large swathes of time-consuming processes are tackled without information requests from people across departments and time zones. Document uploads, account reconciliation, and repopulation tasks can be pre-coded to perform automatically.

It's the human interaction, being able to think out of the box - something a computer might not do very well

Chatbots can help to categorise and simplify financial requests for easier assignments. Entire data sets can be analysed for non-compliance, and items such as approved internal expense claims can be completed and paid without manually submitting and accepting invoices, all from the original order master data.

Speaking to Heyd, the disappearing tasks of CFOs is a trend that is likely to continue: "When I joined SAP last century, I shadowed the CFO of SAP UK for a month - it was a completely different world. There was almost an entire floor of our building just for response people. It was pretty disorganised, not because we didn't have the right people, but because there was so much to do and the tasks were so diverse.

"No one could really specialise in anything," Heyd explains, "so they had to do a bit of everything, but not everything (correctly). Now 20-plus years later, I'm in the shoes of the person I shadowed - I spend only 30 percent of my time on core finance tasks or topics. In five to ten years from now, most of our tasks will hopefully disappear. We need to be prepared to anticipate that on an individual and an organisational level."

You would imagine the SAP CFO might be a little more worried and a little less hopeful that key financial aspects of his role will no longer be required. But, as Heyd explains, disappearing tasks in one area frees up the time to address the wider issues facing businesses and welcomes a shift in the ways CFOs operate moving forward.

"Automation and artificial intelligence shouldn't be seen as a threat," Heyd says. "The technology should be used to augment the experience of the humans involved. Instead of just pro-



RENAUD HEYD

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER AT SAP

ments of business uncertainty, having a CFO who can manage the dialogue with financial counterparties is essential. If venture capitalists or other funding providers are involved, they will surely want the certainty of a CFO presence rather than a stand-in CTO, CEO or external provider. Whether managing key supplier or creditor negotiations, or your business' assorted financial providers as a whole, a skilled human touchpoint is a must for relationships make all the difference in enterprise.

With so many elements to the CFO role as inferred by Heyd, it would be

In five to ten years from now, most of our tasks will hopefully disappear

cessing transactions, we will be able to help the business make better plans. We want CFOs and finance people to move from reporting to insight, from observer to key contributors, and from scorekeepers to business partners.

"Individually, we have to challenge ourselves and develop skills that will not be replaced by automation," Heyd continues. "Now, 70 percent of my time is supporting the business, talking to customers, thinking about the vision of the company, and being that person who challenges the business to ensure we are suitable and resilient. It's the human interaction; it's the ability to understand very complex scenarios and combine the old facets of a problem and the creativity, being able to think out of the box - something that a computer might not be able to do very well."

Heyd makes a valid point. In mo-

a relief to have the manual and mundane ones passed across to technology's bidding. The same was suggested by almost 40 percent of CFOs, who claimed in a recent **Brainyard** survey that their biggest challenge was juggling too many responsibilities.

It's unlikely that organisations would eliminate finance professionals from the workforce, despite the promise of advancing technology. Larger enterprises may have dedicated sales, stock management, purchasing and other teams to negotiate costs, but each regularly defers to the CFO and finance team for spending approvals, demanding a finance team to support these operations.

The vertical structure of a medium or small business would perhaps see a much smaller finance team, but the CFO would take on greater business responsibility, often stepping in as

HYPERAUTOMATION

deputy to the CEO. Even if accounting functions were outsourced, there would likely still be a resident finance team. Whatever the set-up, there will surely remain space for an experienced CFO.

Worth consideration also is whether the technology we are hoping to, in effect, create or 'low-code' our very own CFO with is up to the challenge. It was not too long ago that businesses investing in early RPA found that rather than speeding up tasks, they were merely mirroring the same inefficiencies of human actions in their code. Back in 2019, an **EY** study found that 30-50 percent of initial RPA projects failed due to factors including a lack of change control process and risk-based functional testing. Plus, without good data sets feeding into AI-powered solutions, the technology isn't able to learn the best ways to perform and automate efficiently. A single retail chatbot experience shows us that its functionalities are also far from perfect at understanding users.

"Of course, it can always be better and always improve," Heyd says, ever the technology advocate. "An intelligent enterprise learns all the time from its past performance and uses the technology to predict the future to make the best decisions. The tech-

ally efficient will be so high that the gap will be very difficult to close because you're learning years behind the others."

CFOs cannot afford to bury their heads in the sand

So, it's by no means goodbye for good for the CFO, but the role is undoubtedly changing. Improvements continue to emerge in technology offerings, and finance leaders cannot afford to pass the buck entirely onto CTOs to upgrade and utilise these new tools. A new kind of finance specialist is required, one that is not only technology-savvy but who can further help to shape the use of this technology for the benefit of the business and help to educate their team too.

For Heyd, more work is required for many CFOs to stay relevant long-term. It's not an either-or: CFOs are needed, but they have to be increasingly technologically literate to deliver more value in their role.

"How can I personally, as a finance individual, stay relevant in the next five, ten, 20 years? It's absolutely essential for the finance organisation to understand technology," Heyd says. "The CFO has to set the tone and educate themselves to understand what the art of possible is. Your technology



Like a child learning to become an adult, the more you give, the more interaction you have

nology is like that as well, learning as you implement it. Like a child learning over time to become an adult, the more you give, the more interaction you have, the more intelligent it will become and the earlier you start, the better.

"Your competitors are not waiting," Heyd continues, "and so their ability to react faster and be more operation-

shouldn't be a black box. We need to be tech savvy because if future tech is going to action up to 90 percent of our current tasks, we need to control what technology is doing and ensure that it's doing the right thing."

What is argued by Heyd is not that CFOs need to don fully fledged CTO hats amongst their many other roles, but that there needs to be an under-

standing of how the technology interacts with the business' financial functions.

"CFOs don't want to be CTOs. We are not solely responsible for making sure we understand all the technical details of the technology - we have to rely on technical experts to support us with that." Heyd continues. "But, surely, we need to be able to audit how

I don't see a competition between finance leaders and the CTO but rather a collaboration



the process runs because we cannot simply replace an erroneous manual process with an erroneous automatic process. We in finance need to counter any failures, comprehending how the tech works and how it's integrated and the data flow.

"The entire organisation relies on us - finance has a very high responsibility not only to auditors or investors but also to the business to make sure that the system of record is doing the right thing with no errors and with consistency."

With industry experts such as Heyd

predicting these dramatic changes in the role of finance teams within the next ten years, CFOs cannot afford to put off individual and departmental skills development. It's clear that a C-suite needs a finance expert on board. There will be key moments in the lifetime of a business where a steady hand at the wheel is needed during delicate negotiations. However, if that financial leader does not possess the skills to interact with the organisation's finance technology, huge gaps begin to emerge in C-suite capabilities to perform.

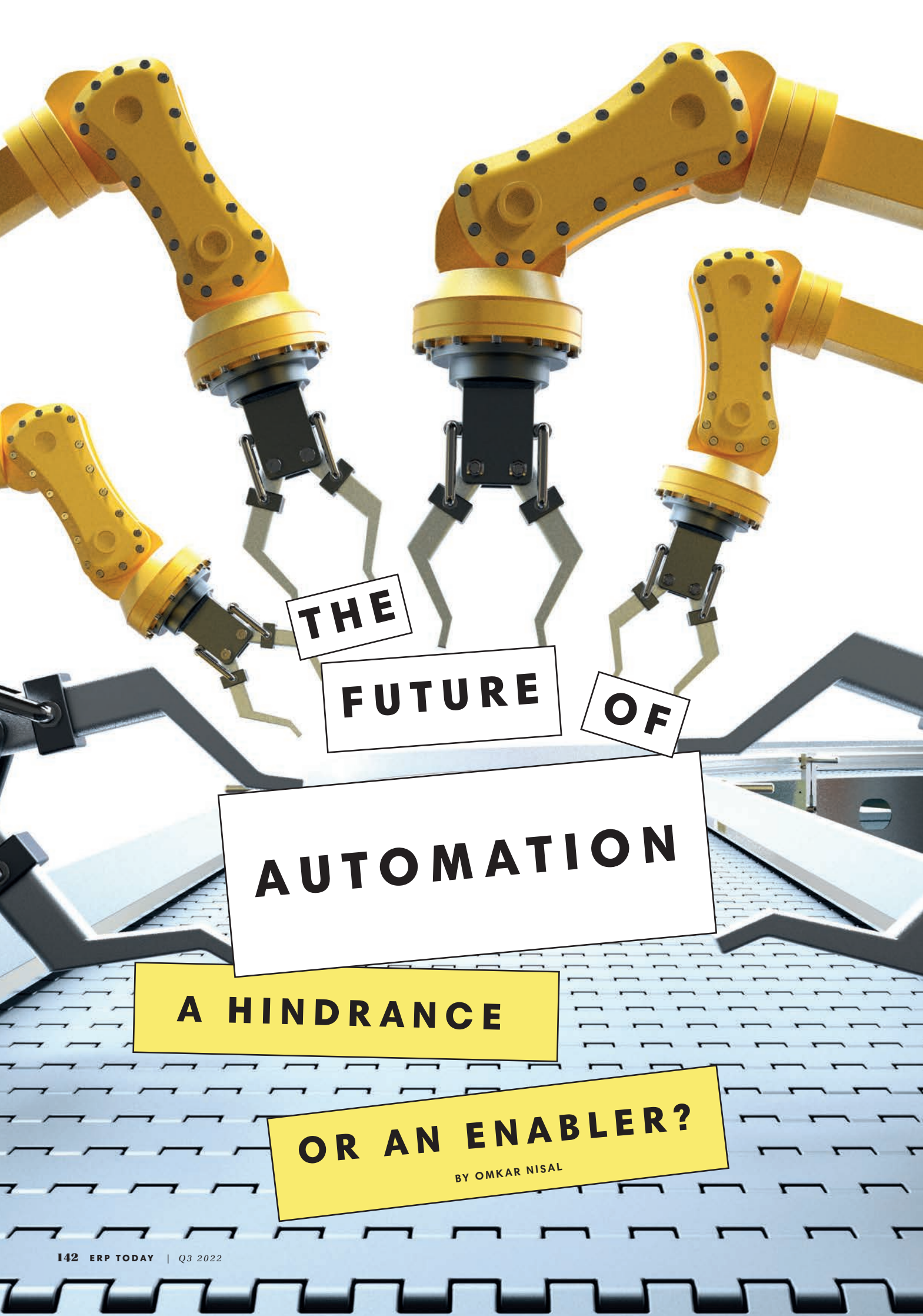
To begin bridging the educational gaps in the workplace, Heyd calls for team member development, taking the hybrid finance technologist approach head-on.

"My biggest asset is our employees, not a bank balance sheet," Heyd says, "So I'm working very closely with my human resource development to optimise the way we attract, retain and develop our employees. I don't see a competition between finance leaders and the CTO but rather a collaboration."

"Businesses need to have a hybrid team of finance people who are tech savvy and IT people who have finance understanding to exactly bridge those two worlds." The CFO continues, "With everybody understanding each other's language, business requirements can efficiently be translated into technical terms so that technology can quickly solve their pain points. It's about building bridges, not silos."

Though it is easy to label Heyd, coming from a leading business technology vendor, as being a CFO ahead of the times, it is difficult to deny that the CFO role is evolving and must continue to do so. Building a bridge between the finance and technology languages will become ever more pressing as businesses look to further utilise SaaS offerings for their finance tasks.

In the coming years, we are entering a finance landscape where technology such as blockchain will help to mitigate cyber risks, and hyperautomation will absorb growing quantities of mundane tasks. The need to invest in sourcing or to internally develop these educational unicorns cannot be understated. In fact, you could say the success of the CFO depends upon it. ■



THE

FUTURE

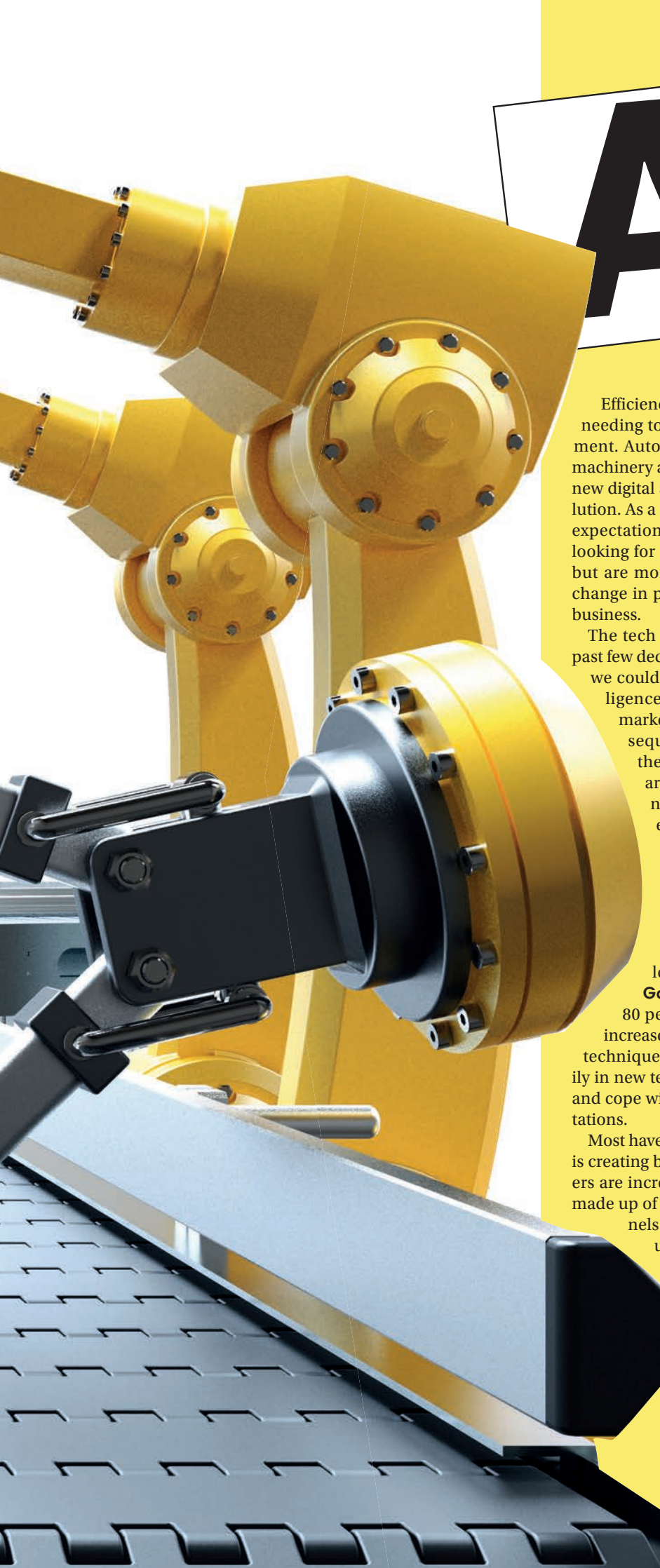
OF

AUTOMATION

A HINDRANCE

OR AN ENABLER?

BY OMKAR NISAL



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UTOMATION IS ABOUT EFFICIENCY

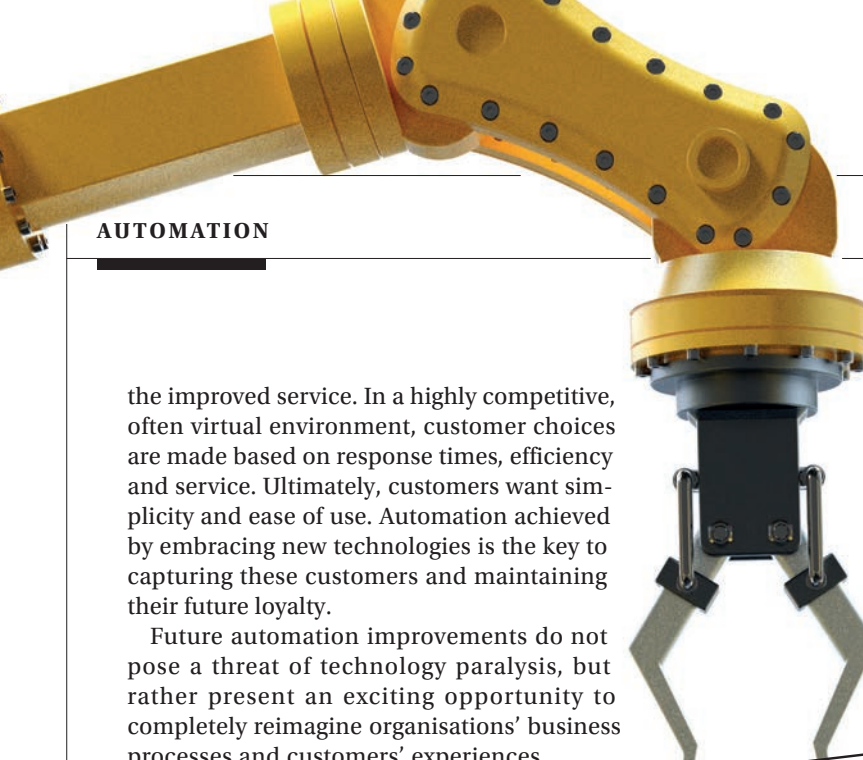
Efficiency is a priority for businesses and organisations needing to survive in an ever more competitive environment. Automation in the past revolved around updating machinery and equipment and improving processes, while new digital advances have given rise to an intelligent revolution. As a result, industries of all types now have different expectations of automation. Organisations are no longer looking for pocket solutions to address discrete problems but are more interested in end-to-end value and how a change in process has the potential to shape their future business.

The tech revolution we have all lived through over the past few decades is ongoing at speed and offers innovations we could only dream of a few years ago. Artificial intelligence, automation and machine learning promise marked improvements in safety, efficiency and consequently, greater productivity. However, despite these exciting opportunities, many organisations are facing challenges in implementing new technologies and wrestling with decisions about what enhancements would best suit their operations and moreover, what impact this might have on the jobs and livelihoods of their staff. The question they are often asking themselves: is the predicted future of automation a hindrance or an enabler?

However, businesses cannot afford to be left behind and this realisation is illustrated by **Gartner's** recent survey which reveals that over 80 percent of organisations consistently self-report increased or continued investment in hyperautomation techniques. It's clear that businesses are investing heavily in new technology to further automate their operations and cope with 21st century customer demands and expectations.

Most have recognised that the pivot in consumer demand is creating bottlenecks within traditional systems. Customers are increasingly seeking an omni-channel experience, made up of individual touch points, over a variety of channels that seamlessly connect, allowing them to pick up where they left off, often via a different channel on top of that.

Customers and suppliers expect a response from a business by return, and enhanced automation can provide this capability in an immediate manner. In this way automation can improve and heighten the human experience. That being said, customers themselves have very little interest in the technology that is powering and enabling



the improved service. In a highly competitive, often virtual environment, customer choices are made based on response times, efficiency and service. Ultimately, customers want simplicity and ease of use. Automation achieved by embracing new technologies is the key to capturing these customers and maintaining their future loyalty.

Future automation improvements do not pose a threat of technology paralysis, but rather present an exciting opportunity to completely reimagine organisations' business processes and customers' experiences. Automation can encompass a whole range of technologies, with the overall ambition being to reduce human intervention and subsequently, human error.

When deploying effective automation, it's important to lead with a data-driven approach. Using data-driven mechanisms can enable the mining of existing processes and then use insights gained to improve and decide on the best technology interventions. To ensure changes have the potential to affect all aspects and users of the business, organisations need to look at implementing automation services primarily through three key lenses:

- **Customer:** Process automation services are built to enable a cohesive, frictionless end-to-end consumer experience with ease. To do this, operating models need to have user experience at the forefront of every process redesigned and automated, staying laser focussed on the business goal.
- **Process:** Ensuring industry best practices are embedded in the design and automation should be done at the strategic, rather than tactical, level. Organisations must therefore use industry-specific domain experts to get their input. In addition to this, leveraging data-driven process discovery mechanisms like process mining, task mining, communication mining etc, can capture 'on the ground' reality at scale.
- **Technology:** Being able to utilise all types of technologies, platforms and partnerships to automate processes provides the best result and enables organisations to respond to factors including use case type, the existing technology landscape, security aspects, cost of implementation and most importantly, maturity of the organisation to adopt in terms of automation technology as well as processes/ways of working.

The reality is of course that different industries have different requirements and that this, in turn, creates different challenges and the need for different skill sets for each sector. For example, the healthcare industry is heavily regulated and retains a vast amount of confidential information, and this therefore calls for distinct

requirements from its automation processes. This contrasts with the manufacturing industry where supply and demand are at the forefront. Therefore, automation requires a tailored approach.

However, there are some challenges which seem universal. One such challenge is the need to deliver new processes at speed and scale. The typical business starts its automation journey at a low level, perhaps involving a pilot scheme or limiting innovations to a specific business unit or discrete process. The question that then follows, once the automation has been judged a success, is how to scale across the whole organisation to ensure business value is delivered by the investment? By this stage, having seen the benefits automation can deliver, the demand for changes to be made rapidly is likely to be considerable. In order to deliver robustly and at speed, vendors need to reconsider their automation models. Vendors need to focus on the following aspects:

- **Method:** The processes used to identify and qualify use cases. Qualifying the right candidates from a technology point of view
- **Machinery:** What tools and platforms they currently have
- **Talent:** Having the right kind of people with the skill sets required to maintain and manage the machinery and processes
- **Mindset:** Considering the stakeholders and people you are engaging with, is everyone fully on board?

Finally, it's important to consider the impact that sustainability initiatives are having on the changing business landscape. No business can ignore the future imperatives arising from climate change. Because of this there has been a fundamental shift in how businesses are looking at automation. No longer is it simply a case of making savings and achieving full-term benefits through efficiencies, it is now a global question of how each business is going to run sustainably. This means businesses are having to rethink their strategies and embed carbon footprint concerns into their design thinking. Automation can help achieve sustainability goals. For example, at Wipro, when analysing supply chain processes, we also consider the overall carbon footprint of the end-to-end value chain.

Automation via new technologies is the future. Specialist advice and input can ensure it is an enabler, streamlining processes and delivering success. ■

Omkar Nisal is managing director - UK&I at Wipro Limited

HOW TO SCALE AUTOMATION IN THE WHOLE ORGANISATION TO ENSURE BUSINESS VALUE?

RAPID AI MOVEMENT IS HAPPENING IN ENTERPRISE.
BUT IS EVERYBODY CHOOSING THE NEW RELIGION?

AUTOMATION FOR THE PEOPLE



LET ERP TODAY GUIDE YOU ON THE RIGHT
PATH TO AUTOMATION IN OUR NEXT ISSUE.

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO UIPATH



A collection of various coins and a banknote falling against a black background. The coins include US pennies, nickels, and dimes, as well as a Euro coin. A US dollar bill is also visible, partially obscured by the coins. The coins are in motion, creating a sense of falling or falling through the air.

Accenture, Alibaba and more explain why the future of finance

MONEY



doesn't necessarily involve cryptocurrency and extended reality

IN WEB3

NEEDS NEITHER CRYPTO NOR CYBERSPACE

BY GIACOMO LEE

WEB3

IS CRYPTO DEAD?

Recent market plunges in all things Bitcoin might give that impression. But a Deloitte survey from June suggests something different: out of 2,000 retail executives, 85 percent want the capability to accept payment in cryptocurrency. 54 percent have already invested more than \$1m towards enabling digital currency payments, while 83 percent believe crypto will be legal tender within 10 years.

More recent news saw the first pound-backed stablecoin launched in the UK with **KPMG** in place as auditor, in effect giving cryptocurrency the rubber stamp of enterprise authority.

But whether cryptocurrency stays afloat or vanishes into the ether may be a moot point when one instead considers it as the first wave of something new on the horizon. Web3 is the name of this looming tech, or Web 3.0 in some quarters. Touted as the next iteration of online space, Web3 would be a decentralised form of the current internet, with distributed ledger technology (DLT) as its backbone.

Out of DLT we get cryptocurrency, blockchain, self-sovereign identities (SSI) and decentralised finance (DeFi). The last in that list may either pose an existential challenge for today's financial enterprises, or a chance for the nimbler of today's bodies to undergo reinvention.

"DeFi is a broadly used term for experimental forms of finance that utilise smart contracts on blockchains to perform financial services functions but without relying on the traditional

intermediary model," explains Dr Joerg Ruetschi, chief operating officer at financial software firm **Cosaic** and author of new book, *Transforming Financial Institutions*.

Blockchain, the COO believes, is the key technology of this evolution, and one that can already be found in some enterprises' arsenals. Shane Rodgers, a veteran investment banker and CEO of cryptocurrency brand **PDX Global**, explains to ERP Today the significant inroads into the financial industry which have been made by the tech.

"Payment platforms utilising the architecture are now used by corporate CFOs, who seek to save cash by speeding standard digital payments and eliminating fees that typically go to middlemen," he reveals.

Accenture and Alibaba on blockchain

Outside of finance, blockchain has found use in the current supply chain crisis. Stephane Crosnier, supply chain and operations lead for **Accenture UK**, cites the example of a global energy major looking to establish a more connected supply chain across its ecosystem and what it poses for financial structures.

"The project aims to create a shared data platform for the industrial sector that both improves the buying experience and streamlines workflows among business partners," Crosnier explains. "Product movement information, inventory level, and available storage capacity is captured through IoT and track-and-trace capabilities."



"SELF-SOVEREIGN ID LETS SERVICES PROVIDERS FOCUS ON SERVICE PROVISIONS AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION"

DR JOERG RUETSCHI / COSAIC

Based on these inputs, he elaborates, the blockchain layer serves to create a shared record of product provenance, one with strong implications for current financing frameworks.

“Integration with partner systems of record, combined with purchase order and delivery data, eliminates most instances of transactional mismatch and reconciliation. Codified business logic contained within smart contracts minimises the need for manual interventions and drastically reduces the procure-to-pay timeframe.

“This reduction in cycle time enables zero-day financing, freeing trapped working capital within the supply chain and laying the foundation to transform trade financing models.”

Companies like **Alibaba Cloud** already offer blockchain as a service (BaaS) that, as its spokesperson tells ERP Today, offers an enterprise-level platform service which aids financial customers to build ‘a secure and stable environment.’

“In addition to a wide variety of security strategies and multi-tenant isolation on cloud, BaaS also provides advanced security protection leveraging advanced encryption technologies,” explains the Alibaba Cloud representative.

Looking away from the razzle-dazzle of all things cryptocurrency, it’s clear the underlying tech provides a security boon for today’s financial enterprises. As Rodgers at PDX Global puts it, current financial systems “are much more susceptible to fraud than a well-secured blockchain.”



“Yes, we have seen major attacks on crypto exchanges,” he elaborates, “but these are due to the cowboys running the industry who fail to install basic customer protections against hackers. I expect the crypto shake-out occurring right now to eliminate the players with weak security and weak management.”

“The peer-to-peer digital transactions are securely recorded on the blockchain; they eliminate middlemen in the payment process who create greater risk exposure; and eliminate the risk of lost cards and stolen PIN numbers.”

The same sense of security permeates the idea of Web3 as a whole, according to Jaco Vermeulen, CTO of **BML Digital**.

“Web3 tools are likely to push credit/debit cardless methods and tie accounts to individual identities with NFTs and biometrics,” he explains. “This would be both for payment account identifier and transaction validation. Thus is removed the need to know account or card numbers, making it more secure.”

Know your identity

What Vermeulen is hinting towards is the Web3 tenet of self-sovereign ID (SSID), tools with which individuals are able to prove their identity without sharing personal data. Using blockchain, it would be possible to create and manage digital identities that provide greater privacy and control of data using a decentralised identifier (DID). Users sign-up to an SSI and data platform to create and register a DID, coming away with a pair of encrypted private and public keys which are then used to prove or control an identity, such as when opening bank accounts.

According to Cosaic’s Ruetschi, this removes the authority of large, centralised corporations and returns the control of their own personal data to the customers. As such, it will not only become easier to switch service providers, but also the “core platforms that are owned and run by the incumbents in the industry’s new service model.”

“In the financial industry, onboarding and know-your-customer (KYC) processes are time and resource-consuming as well as cumbersome,” Ruetschi adds. “Self-sovereign ID represents a huge opportunity to resolve the issue, and lets financial services providers focus on their service provisions and customer satisfaction.

“At the same time, consumers can much more easily open new relationships and switch platform providers through whom they are accessing



“WE’LL LOOK BACK AND SEE IT AS ONE OF THE BIGGEST FINANCIAL INNOVATIONS, LIKE THE ORIGINAL 1400S’ LENDING AGREEMENTS”

SHANE RODGERS / PDX GLOBAL

WEB3

those services under the industry's new service model. As a result, the service provision becomes more consumer-centric and the ecosystem more competitive, driving towards best-in-class service access."

Peter Heywood, director, banking financial services and insurance (BFSI) at tech consultancy **ISG** sees SSID as an important part of the financial value chain.

"(In June) the **European Banking Authority** reached an agreement to provide such protections on AML/KYC and fraud under the proposed Markets in Crypto Assets regulation (MiCA). For a financial market to operate efficiently it must have these fundamentals in place.

"The Nordics are leading in this space. Norway uses VIPPS, a national payment and identity network that allows you to find a property and secure financing all within 30 minutes. This is using distributed ledger technology."

"REDUCTION IN CYCLE TIME LAYS THE FOUNDATION TO TRANSFORM TRADE FINANCING MODELS"

STEPHANE CROSNIER / ACCENTURE UK



sion within our blockchain-based digital banking platform, which then drops the fiat currency back into the POS."

The CEO and team are also developing for the metaverse, an immersive version of cyberspace that is developing adjacent to Web3, with a tool where gamers can make payments in cryptocurrency using gesture-based commands.

But, as Heywood reminds us, there remains a lack of interoperability amongst the current fragmented networks and protocols which make up

for Web3 in **Citi's** recent announcement of a custody service, with other Tier 1 companies working on similar initiatives. He's also excited by new possibilities made available by the advent of distributed ledger technology: atomic swaps, for example, which are exchanges of cryptocurrencies from entirely separate blockchains.

As such, Heywood can see DeFi and traditional finance (TradFi) co-existing in the long-term.

"Traditional finance is principally about risk management. DeFi is using the principles we learnt and applying this to a new asset class of digital and crypto assets. This will completely transform finance. We'll look back and see it as one of the biggest innovations in finance, along with events like the original lending agreements in the 1400s, the advent of brokers, and shipping underwriting in the 1700s.

"The way DeFi and TradFi will co-exist is through a mature financial markets infrastructure that provides the bridges between the TradFi world and the Defi world."

With years of investment banking experience behind him, Rodgers agrees, pointing to how financial institutions are already looking for replacement payment systems:

"There is little need for fear - a good crypto conversion solution will completely sidestep the legacy system with all its integration issues, offering instead a parallel system that simply spits the end result back into their enterprise software."

"Those financial institutions who get on board early," he believes, "will reap the benefits of offering more payment options to merchants and customers." ■

"WEB3 WILL ALIGN INDIVIDUAL IDENTITIES TO ACCOUNTS WITH NFTS AND BIOMETRICS"

JACO VERMEULEN / BML DIGITAL



Atomic Kitty

Use of Web3 on such a national scale could help the tech replace the internet as it currently operates. For now, though, a lack of integration will keep enterprises operating in Web 2.0 just that bit longer.

Going back to Deloitte's research, its survey of retail execs found 45 percent believe the complexity of integrating crypto conversion with existing systems and across other crypto currencies is a bottleneck issue. But Rodgers of PDX Global sees a solution in his company's offering, PDXPay.

"We have a small unit that sits on top of any POS system to make the conver-

the blockchain space.

"Currently, custody at the institutional level is a challenge. If you are trading on a self-custody decentralised exchange, it can't be managed by an asset manager. Normally a custodian would provide this service.

"There's (also) a chain link which bridges off-chain data (for example, weather data) to on-chain data. That presents a real challenge in how to verify data, and people, using a zero-knowledge protocol (the way one party proves to another that a given statement is true, without revealing additional data)."

The ISG director, though, sees hope



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Moving from mid-market to enterprise ERP

**WHEN
IS THE
RIGHT
TIME?**





When should you consider upgrading your mid-market solution for an enterprise-level ERP system?

BY CHRISTINE HORTON

In the last issue we talked about at what point should a growing business decide to swap its basic accounting software for a dedicated mid-market ERP system. So why not look to the next step after that? When should you consider upgrading your mid-market solution for an enterprise-level ERP system?

When is the right time to switch?

The fact is you're likely to think about investing in an enterprise ERP system as your company becomes larger, faster and more complex. This is when the entry level capabilities of a mid-market ERP will often start to creak, says Phil Lewis, VP of solution consulting at **Infor**.

"As complexity within operations increases, organizations may outstrip what the mid-market ERP has to offer, and a decision will have to be made about whether to use a best-in-class approach for the areas of weakness, or to take the step towards enterprise ERP. Enterprise ERP will still provide the same departmental coverage, but at enterprise level rather than entry level," he says.

The decision, ultimately, can be down to any number of factors: turnover, complexity, or expansion into new geographies, for example. But also key is that many companies are looking to offer a differentiated level of customer service and experience in the form of new sales channels, advanced configuration, or services.

MID-MARKET ERP

“They will also be looking to digitise their businesses,” says Lewis, who explains this could be IoT, prescriptive working, or harnessing data to improve business insight. “All these desires and changes will require the right functional and technical systems to be in place...the technical foundation is key. Bolting on new capabilities will result in sub-optimal outcomes if the core ERP engine is not comprehensive from a capability and data completeness perspective.”

What’s the difference?

The support for core business functions may be comparable between mid-market and enterprise ERP, although enterprise may include some specialist components as well, such as human capital management. However, the main difference is the depth and breadth of functionality, where enterprises will have capabilities to support large organisations, says Lewis.

“As an example, there is a big difference between a system required to support three people in the finance department versus the requirements of a finance department with 50 people. A company that has outgrown its mid-market ERP will become inefficient due to finding ways to plug the gaps that appear due to inadequate capabilities. Those that quickly acknowledge these limitations and explore enterprise alternatives will gain competitive advantage faster.”

Another important differentiator between mid-market and enterprise, will be the capabilities of the underlying technology, he adds.

“Most enterprise offerings will be delivered in harmony with a fully loaded technology platform, allowing customers to realise their digital vision, through built-in capabilities, including Big Data, AI, machine learning, IoT, extensibility, predictive and prescriptive analytics, and mobility. Mid-market ERP offerings tend to have limited platform capabilities, resulting in more bolted on tools to compensate

for the lack of breadth.”

Obviously the decision depends on the specific needs and growth ambitions of your individual business. And it’s not a simple decision-making process as you need to consider your circumstances today and balance that against your anticipated future needs, points out Nick Jackson, finance transformation leader at **Oracle**.

“What’s key is having a solution that can support today and adapt to the future; both in terms of scale, but, more importantly, coverage of the full range of capabilities needed in the future,”

“It’s time to think about the future and explore solutions that offer future-proofed, end-to-end integrated capabilities and technical platforms at the advanced level”



PHIL LEWIS
/ INFOR

he says. “For example, being able to have a single view across HR, operations and finance, providing a core with which to integrate those elements that are unique to the business.”

That’s not to say many companies won’t look for workarounds to substitute the limitations of the mid-market ERP before they start shopping for a new system.

“Spreadsheets become rife!” says Lewis. “When these workarounds start to become inefficient, error-prone and difficult to align, it’s time to think about the future and explore solutions that offer future-proofed, end-to-end integrated capabilities and technical platforms at the advanced level required by the organisation at that point and beyond.”

Contemplating clouds

When it comes to choosing an enterprise ERP solution that will scale to meet your future needs, more companies are today turning to the cloud.

A recent study by **Epicor** notes that 82 percent of ERP users were operating in a hybrid cloud environment, with 46 percent either primarily or entirely in the cloud. Ninety percent of decision makers indicated their move to the cloud was worth the effort, having realised a variety of transformational benefits including improved flexibility and adaptability, better security, simple regulatory compliance and enhanced business resilience.

“The beauty of cloud based solutions is that they can readily scale up and down to meet your needs; so the decision about ‘mid-market’ vs ‘enterprise’ really does come down to the capabilities you need now as compared to what you need for future growth – and how the provider of your cloud solutions support that growth,” says Jackson.



Elsewhere, Bert Schulze, VP S/4HANA product success and cloud co-innovation at **SAP** says a SaaS cloud ERP is surrounded by a complete enterprise value chain. It runs as an intelligent suite with a core that supports the managerial processes such as planning, execution and control of enterprise resources to satisfy customer demand at optimal financial performance.

“Cloud ERP is the enterprise management platform in the cloud, tasked to enable integrated business management from planning to execution across all core end-to-end processes at scale. The system is designed to support the managerial process, i.e. the planning and control of enterprise resources to satisfy customer demand at optimal financial performance along core end to end business processes,” he says.

External factors driving enterprise ERP

Additionally, Schulze says for mid-market clients, the difference between a mid-market and ERP solution is not necessarily the degree of complexity, nor a significantly different demand of business, but more external factors. These include the cost of licence and

“The new NRP expands traditional ERP resource optimisation and transaction processing, allowing visualising and executing unlimited complexity and individuality.”

of implementation and/or run rate of the solution, as well as the differentiation of roles.

“The larger companies are, the more we observe a trend of individualisation to better serve evolving roles in growing organisations. The ERP needs to allow for this higher degree of differentiation,” he says.

Additionally, startups that raise funds for the next round of growth often get requirements from financial investors to increase the transparency of operations and consider an auditable ERP with enough capacity and scalability for growth and compliance.

And those start ups and other fast-growing companies reach scalability limits regarding transactional volume, leading them to consider a next level ERP.

“Larger ERP solutions often provide a broader business ecosystem with much higher scalability and flexibility for skills, services and partnerships, a better scaling labour market. This became even more relevant in the post-COVID era, where expertise in almost all areas becomes a bottleneck for growth,” he says.

NRP – the new enterprise ERP?

Interestingly, Schulze goes further. While ERP systems have focussed originally on automating back office functions, he suggests it’s time for the next iteration of ERP: networked resource planning (NRP).

NRP describes a Software-as-a-Service that provides intelligent processing and real-time access to relevant planning, processing and steering information to employees and partners including internal resources, suppliers and customers, says Schulze.

“The new NRP expands traditional ERP resource optimisation and transaction processing,” he explains.

“Classical enterprise solutions are designed to keep the enterprise integer and ensure consistency and execution of critical processes. The architecture, as well as tools to describe processes, do allow high complexity and strong, tailored individual processes. This process-centric approach allows visualising and executing unlimited complexity and individuality. It helps enterprise organisations to execute processes with highest efficiency for the corporate organisation.”

Ultimately however, it is important not to view any decision about ERP in isolation.

Says Jackson: “Businesses need to determine the entirety of their data structure requirements, the complete IT architecture and how these will evolve over time - then ensure the ERP solution that best aligns.” ■

OPINION

Handling complexity Should we be scared of standardisation?

BY ANDY BIRD

Many organisations, whether they are implementing a new business system such as an ERP solution, or assessing their entire application landscape, struggle with the conflict between delivering simplification and standardisation. They also have trouble ensuring that the distinct needs of the industry and organisation they are required for are delivered.

In recent years, one of the most substantial attempts to address this challenge of complexity in the realm of back-office systems such as ERP and HCM, has been the adoption of industry-specific strategies. These assess business processes (and the underlying technology) from the perspective of identifying core capabilities, common to all businesses or enterprises, and then focussing on functionality and processes that are specific or unique to a given industry.

The goal has been to create a 'best of both worlds' scenario that enables a business to retain its unique footprint and competitive edge, whilst reducing complexity that can frustrate growth and time to market.

The impact of 'industry-specific'

The drive towards industry-specific software has led to a flurry of acquisitions and organisational changes at almost every major software vendor. These purchases have sought to acquire the capabilities, functionality and innovation that was created by industry-focussed vendors. **Infor** acquiring **GT Nexus** in the logistics and shipping space, **Oracle** buying **Cerner** for healthcare, and **SAP** taking on



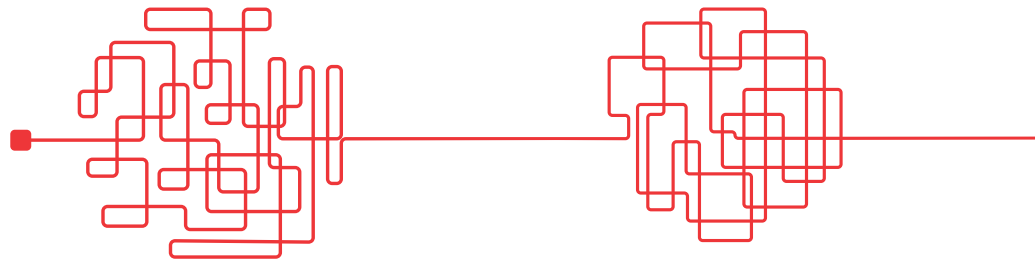
Concur for expense management are all examples of this. The goal is to deliver solutions with end-to-end business processes for a given industry 'right out of the box'.

System integrators enter this equation and add value to customers by

delivering to industry and your own unique needs. In our experience there are three broad layers.

The foundational layer begins with a recognition of what is common to all industries. These can be understood as achieving the best practices in the business functions common to enterprises, as well as similar processes, or indeed the backdrop of regulation. This layer should ideally be covered by the core functionality of enterprise software, such as Oracle Cloud ERP.

The second layer focusses on the consideration of what is specific to a given industry. For example the control of subcontractors in construction, management of grants in higher education and so on. This layer typically requires a blend of both industry software from the vendor and 'accelerators' from an industry expert system integrator - pre-defined templates, solutions and extensions that address industry-specific processes, analytics and outcomes.



knowing how to navigate the platforms that are developed following these acquisitions. They also help interpret the demands and needs of a customer, turning the promise of software into solutions that deliver. The question therefore becomes how to define the right roadmap for you to gain from all the standard capability you can, whilst

The last layer is what differentiates an individual company - the 'secret sauce' which makes that company unique. It is important to recognise that this is not just their proprietary or patented products. The edge that a company is often defined with is in terms of back-office capabilities. Examples could include better utilisation

of specialised resources, or the integration of processes to enable better planning across the enterprise – and if you have adopted leading capability and industry specific processes, this enables your organisation to focus on this area.

In practice, these layers are not of an even ‘thickness’. Our experience has been that when assessing successful technology investment and use, approximately 80 percent is covered by standard software plus configuration, 15 percent by industry accelerators, with the remaining five percent unique to a given company.

However, throughout all these three layers, it is vital to manage complexity by focussing on outcomes and doing business the right way. Companies should always prioritise the highest ROI and low hanging fruit to create momentum around these programmes.

The limits of industry-specific

Many vendors now claim they have best practice, standardised processes out of the box, as well as industry-specific accelerators borne of deep domain expertise. And at the same time, customer businesses will inevitably focus on what they perceive to be unique to them. When looking to address complexity, these two conditions combine in the question of what cannot be standardised.

This is the realm of specific IP in a business, and identifying it is no small

deliver standardisation and simplification in common areas. It can also ensure that the right time and investment is dedicated to the things that truly differentiate you. This can cause conflict between operational and technology leadership, so change management is a critical element of any attempt to evolve towards less complexity. The good news is that even if a process remains unique, the investment made by some vendors in their platform means that they can be delivered and supported in a standard way.

The search for standardisation is a calming influence against ‘burn bright and die quickly’ projects.

As an example of this blended approach, at Inoapps we have a customer that designs, builds and installs 5G towers across the globe. They have used Oracle ERP to standardise purchasing and HR, but still maintain the unique aspects of their speed of response in creating new, customer-defined projects by utilising the low-code development capability of Oracle APEX. The client uses process standardisation to accelerate the innovation demanded by customers and to do so at speed.

Handling complexity will always in-

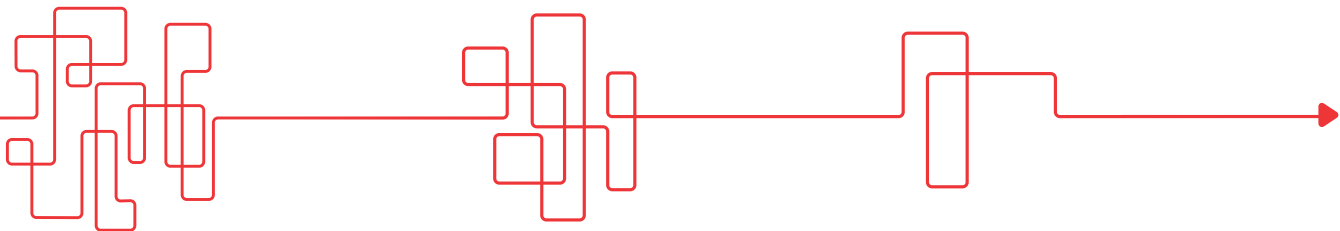
better. Again, this must be driven by a relentless focus on the best outcome or achieving the best process.

Technology and complexity

Businesses rightly prioritise incremental gains in the first instances of new technology investment, on a path of continual improvement, and optimisation, and most software platforms and vendors support this approach. But equally, businesses now realise that they need to make provision for genuinely new opportunities: the rise of the subscription economy, the opportunities of expansion and commercially exploiting new data are all examples of this.

Amidst this tension, IT is often a guardrail that prevents further complexity. The search for standardisation and assessing what can be achieved with existing technology investment from trusted partners is a calming influence against the threat of hundreds of isolated, ‘burn bright and die quickly’ projects. Indeed, the main threat of complexity is now often business departments that crave something new rather than just IT wanting to play with shiny new toys.

This is because IT has itself had to wrestle with years of complexity and the impact of new products and innovative technologies, changing the face of a market. The lesson learnt has been that to tame complexity, you must first embrace a level of standardisation and recognise that as a company, or indeed



undertaking. It may include material such as ‘project bibles’ in construction, different analytics for reporting, or even just the processes within a given company that are known to be different/better than the competition.

By working with your system integrator, you can both identify these areas early and develop your roadmap to

involve a sophisticated compromise. The demands of the industry and the evolving business world are always changing, but for a lot of businesses, the situation must be weighed up against how one has always done things. Consequently, managing complexity is perhaps more accurately described as handling the challenge of innovation

an industry, you may not be as unique as you thought. But once these layers of commonality have been stripped away, a business is left with what it does better than anyone else, and it can focus on those strengths to separate itself from the competition. ■

Andy Bird is CEO of Inoapps

Artificial intelligence

will revolutionise the customer journey

BY CHRIS BEDI

There has never been a better time to be a CIO. In today's challenging macro-economic environment - with high inflation, constrained supply chains, talent shortages and hybrid work among other challenges - the technology strategy drives the business strategy. Hence, the role of the CIO is essential to every organisation's success.

With companies facing multiple challenges in today's economy, it's crucial they uphold customer loyalty at a time when so many other uncertainties threaten business growth. CIOs will need to make the most of emerging technologies in the enterprise, such as artificial intelligence (AI), to maintain loyalty and enhance the customer journey - especially when consumer expectations remain high.

One focus area is utilising AI to enable account teams to make more informed decisions. Customer-facing staff have traditionally relied on past experiences and instincts to help manage expectations. However, connected AI models can make predictions to power decision-making capabilities internally, and these powerful insights deliver value for clients and employees alike. For instance, a 'decision-assist' approach uses AI to give staff recommendations on how to optimise each customer's user experience.

Let's say a business hires a new account executive in the sales team and they manage some of the key accounts. At any point in time, there are hundreds of actions they could perform on the customer to change the trajectory of the relationship. For example, they could fix an implementation issue, suggest tactics to increase product usage, encourage the client to take a training course, or fix a support issue.

By creating an AI system, a company can subsequently amass the customer's marketing, sales, success, product, and support interactions with their business. These interactions



An AI system will be the repository of things that happened in the past, things happening right now, and what could happen in the future

are organised, connected and enriched in the sales system. Companies can then run various action scenarios for every customer to figure out the best actions to yield a better relationship. It learns from the past successful actions based on the results and prioritises it for the future. In this way, the system learns from the best and scales everyone to be the best.

An AI system will learn from real-time feedback on the recommendations and the actions taken towards each customer. It will be the repository of things that happened in the past, things happening right now, and what could happen in the future.

A growing number of companies are realising that AI can also help reduce customer churn, a significant risk for any business. Preventable churn is when a company can intervene when the risk is known in advance and issues can be avoided. By analysing why certain client relationships have broken down and contrasting that with successful customer journeys, businesses can better understand the reasons for churn.

These reasons include product usage, customer experience, feedback, engagement and training data. When a new customer exhibits these risk factors, an AI model can assign the churn a risk score, which is computed for all the clients. Those with the highest risk scores are then used for intervention actions based on the specific risk factors to mitigate the churn.

This complements ERP as every action a company takes to improve its customer experience is an investment. Many of these actions consume resources and must be planned accordingly. AI-driven actions are not only creating positive value for clients but also increasing loyalty and driving business revenue. This shows how important technology is to a company's business strategy and proves there's never been a better time to be a CIO. ■

Chris Bedi is chief digital information officer, ServiceNow



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