

# Digital Transformation and the Trend toward Intelligent Process Automation

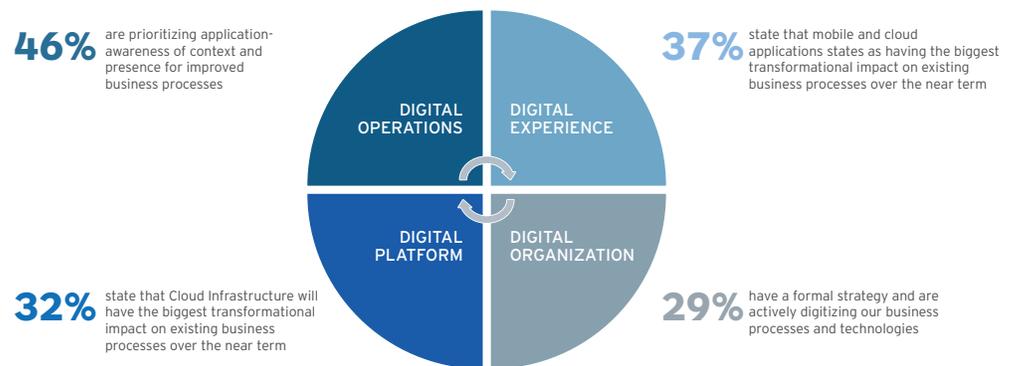
## The 451 Take

Enterprises are in pursuit of transformative means to better serve their customers, enable new business models and extract greater operational efficiency to fend off rivals. They now seek new means to design, develop, deploy and manage intuitive, engaging and smart applications that orchestrate business processes and run across on-premises infrastructure, clouds, devices and ‘things.’ This will be the role of next-generation business process management (BPM), enterprise content management (ECM), application development and platform-as-a-service (PaaS) offerings. They, too, are transforming into digital automation platforms capable of uniform development, integration and runtime functionality that enable intelligent process automation.

As businesses adjust to the age of aggressive rivalry and empowered customers with changing expectations, it is important to realize that digital transformation is more than just an IT initiative. Industry leaders are taking a four-pronged approach to digital transformation, as illustrated in the graphic below. While digital experience garners a lot of attention, it will not be successful without full consideration of an organization’s strategy, platform and operations.

### Understanding the Dimensions of Digital Transformation

Source: 451 Research VoCUL: Corporate Mobility and Digital Transformation Representative Survey, 1H 2017 (n=494)



Common to all the dimensions of digital transition is the need to improve, transform and digitize intelligent and adaptable business processes. The traditional vehicles to do so were typically specialized platforms designed to automate business processes, manage enterprise documents and content, or enable general-purpose application development. While effective, they were redundant and often did not interoperate. Moreover, they required different skills, making them costly and inefficient.

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# Business Impact Brief

## The 451 Take

(continued)

## Business Impact

## Looking Ahead

This is no longer the case. In recent years, BPM and ECM, dynamic case management, workflow orchestration, application development and PaaS providers have converged and transformed these offerings into process- and content-oriented application development and runtime platforms. They now enable a low-code approach that uses graphical drag-and-drop tooling and preconfigured templates to compose, rather than code, applications. Vendors are positioning their new offerings as the means to enable digital transformation – creating next-generation development environments we now refer to as digital automation platforms.

A digital automation platform (DAP) is a set of tools and resources structured within a uniform framework to enable application developers to rapidly design, prototype, develop, deploy, run, manage and monitor a range of process- and content-oriented applications – from simple task-related workflows to dynamic, unstructured collaborative activity streams, and even highly structured cross-functional enterprise applications. To do so, DAPs are equipped with a range of new capabilities.

DAPs include new means to assist in user interface and application design; synthesize the use of new and emerging technologies found in next-generation devices; and simplify collaboration among business and IT professionals to jointly design, prototype and develop applications. They can make applications 'smarter' using machine learning and artificial intelligence technologies that can learn from process execution to improve automation of tasks and decisions, and extract insight from data payloads. Perhaps the most interesting and valuable capability of next-generation DAPs is that they create a visual representation of process designs that can be employed to generate executable code, combining both development and runtime IT environments into a simplified DevOps platform.

**REJUVENATE APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY.** Enterprises seeking to better serve their customers, achieve greater operational efficiency and potentially enable new business models should reevaluate their current application development strategy with a view to enabling intelligent process automation, and should begin budgeting to include DAP tooling.

**RAPID DEVOPS DEPLOYMENT.** DevOps unifies application development and operations resources to streamline and accelerate application creation and deployment, but it can be complex and costly to enable with legacy development environments. With their collaborative features and combined development and runtime capabilities, DAPs can simplify and accelerate enterprise DevOps strategy and capabilities.

**ENABLE NEW COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE.** When an enterprise does roughly the same things as its rivals but in a different way, or it does different things that are acknowledged by prospects and customers to be superior – and therefore win it new business – competitive advantage is created. In other words, 'how' and 'how well' an enterprise does things to deliver customer value can create competitive advantage. Business processes define 'how' things are done, and when designed intelligently and automated effectively, they can determine 'how well' things are done. DAPs represent a way to achieve this intelligence and automation.

DAPs will be more than just feature-rich development platforms for content- and process-oriented applications. They will emerge as uniform development, integration and runtime environments that enable intelligent process automation – a managerial discipline focused on intuitive user experiences, contextual awareness and transparent execution. Intelligent process automation provides a new means to accelerate business operations and make them more efficient, as well as extract knowledge from automated execution to meet the innovation, operational efficiency and transformative needs of enterprises.

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