

OPTIMISING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN REGULATED INDUSTRIES

Practical considerations when improving
critical processes across more than
one function

A Generis eBook

Digital transformation activity may have reached peak levels in non-regulated industries, but in strictly-controlled markets progress has been much slower.

This is costing organisations dearly, in compromised efficiency and productivity – not to mention a loss of insight and control along business processes spanning more than one business function.

Too often where attempts at transformation have been made, the focus has been very specific. The risk here is that one element of the organisation becomes more dynamic, while adjacent departments remain held back by the same bottlenecks and lack of visibility.

Wide-reaching transformation demands a different approach – where the emphasis is at least as much on restructuring teams and achieving consistent data governance as on finding the right technology solution. Certainly, putting in a new system without reviewing the way data is managed, or the way teams collaborate, will undermine any investment and compromise the outcomes.

Drawing on an extensive new paper Generis has published on the subject, this practical guide summarises the key considerations and steps needed to maximise GxP process transformation.

RETHINKING IT-ENABLED PROCESS TRANSFORMATION: **ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES**

High-impact process transformation - which transcends specific use cases and departmental divides - needs a new approach to IT projects.

Traditionally, companies would look to capture all main requirements up front and then identify a software system that ticked all of those boxes.

As well as being almost impossible, this approach is slow and laborious. It also leads to the same cycle being repeated every 2-3 years as new needs are identified or technology moves on. In the meantime, as employees change roles, any cross-functional knowledge that has been amassed may be eroded.

Continuous innovation and process improvement is a much more sustainable way forward. This involves business teams and technology experts working more closely together to keep pace with change, and to ensure that new requirements and opportunities are considered from all angles.

SO WHAT MIGHT THAT LOOK LIKE?



Assigning process transformation ownership

For transformations to extend beyond a single business function, you'll need to identify an individual attached to each critical business process to serve as its 'Head of Transformation'.

Bringing IT expertise closer to business users

Assign a member of the IT team to each process, too, to act as a liaison between those trying to effect transformation and the central IT department.

This role will involve guiding the process team so they understand what's possible, and how to maximise an individual's function's capabilities while also achieving a smoother flow of activity with adjacent functions.

Collaboration between respective Heads of Transformation

The heads of transformation for different processes should be in close contact, to build a rounded understanding of everyone's needs. (That could be why a particular format might be needed for a particular type of document, why data should need to be presented in a certain way, or how new industry requirements are perceived to be pushing changes in the way they work, etc.)

Such collaboration will help functions align their respective transformation priorities, and iron out any areas of overlap or conflict - optimising the overall roadmap.

Reusability & commonality are key

Basing everything on a reusable, common platform will ensure you can support the different ways teams need to view and work with shared data and content assets - in the context of their current work. It will also prevent new silos from forming.

From now on, business process owners will have more control over the design of their own technology capabilities too, without having to call on the IT department for help with associated integration or data mapping.

Think adaptable platform rather than an all-in-one solution

Once the collective requirements have been agreed, it's time to consider what the supporting IT environment should look like.

In this dynamic digital age it's unlikely that a single software solution will provide sufficient scope and flexibility, so look for a platform that transcends individual use cases. This will allow each team to adapt the design and implementation to their own needs, but without compromising the flow of a process or the exchange of related content with adjacent functions.

Same easy data & content access in a process-relevant context

By separating the very accessible look and feel of the system front-end from the data and content management layer, companies can empower each set of functional users to determine the data and content assets they need and how they want to view them to best deliver their workflows.

RETHINKING IT DELIVERY: **EMBRACING CONTINUOUS, CROSS-FUNCTIONAL INNOVATION**

This is not about throwing out everything that's gone before, but rather underpinning inter-function fluidity with a **foundational platform** – one that supports timely access to the right data and content at the point of need within a process.

This agile platform must suit the business processes of all groups and departments in the organisation. Gartner points to the trend in 'composable' platforms¹: highly-configurable, low-code or no-code platforms that can be adapted readily for each intended audience or use case. In the context of complex, regulated business processes spanning more than one function, such adaptability is ideal to support the particular functionality and design preferences of each team.

MAINTAINING A JOINED-UP APPROACH TO ONWARD IMPROVEMENTS

By maintaining strong lines of communication, and basing all digital process transformation on a common platform harnessing the same data and content, companies in regulated industries will find it much easier to innovate with GxP-governed activity – both now and in the future.

Without a cross-functional view and approach to process transformation, the danger is that old habits will re-emerge and individual teams will fall back into discrete budget spend, local apps and content silos – taking them back to square one.

A more open mindset and a holistic approach, on the other hand, will maximise the scope to keep innovating - with improvements to the benefit of all.



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