

Q&A

Turning bottlenecks into breakthroughs

Resource shortages and process management challenges are hampering digital transformation.

Annemarie Pucher, CEO at Papyrus Software, outlines how to stay at the forefront of innovation



Q What's getting in the way of companies working to build digital systems? Do we need a different approach?

A It's time to reconsider how we streamline value creation and applications within digital businesses, that much is true. There's a pervading idea - often stemming from tech-focused service providers - that the resources needed to implement critical applications must be deeply technical. But this notion is outdated.

As businesses scale their digitisation efforts, finding skilled individuals for application development remains a challenge. Many companies have specific requirements that either go unconsidered or remain unfulfilled due to IT limitations, and even when they are addressed, the process is excessively time-consuming. On one hand, you've got a wide translation gap between the business and IT, and the output often doesn't align with business objectives. On the other, standard off-the-shelf applications are simply not cutting it.

We need to empower business teams to do it themselves. Democratising how we build business value streams opens up that technical gridlock, enhancing both customer and employee experiences.

Q How can businesses settle on the best route forward?

A We need innovation, especially when it comes to inflexible systems. Backlogs aren't just about technical resource shortages and tool limitations. There's also the issue of process management, where decades-old methods are still very much at the centre of things. Traditional flowcharts and process definitions are good enough for documentation, but they fall short when it comes to moving at the speed of customer expectations.

Companies start out with a desire for customisation but end up with unwieldy processes resembling spaghetti code, as we call it. Before you can even consider what you want to achieve, there are a mountain of steps to take and decisions to be made.

So, start with defining the desired result. Business managers should play a key role from the beginning, setting outcomes which teams can work backwards from, and outlining tasks for each stage. You not only get to the result much faster, but you also get there as a business, fully aligned on your goals.

Q What can businesses do to break down barriers to digital transformation?

A One of the greatest advances will be letting users work in their natural business language. Many of the current issues associated with digital transformation are skills- and resource-related. We've developed Converse Designer-Composer as a no-code tool so that a business analyst, business consultant, or business manager like me should be able to use it.

In your own words, you define rules and actions in plain, declarative terms. Artificial intelligence can then help guide staff while they work on a business case. Conversations become an integral part of the entire workflow, and the need for code is ruled out. It's reinventing how custom business applications are built.

The feedback we've had from analysts, like Gartner and Forrester, has been intriguing. This level of user-friendliness is unusual among serious business applications. It's used by small task-driven tools, but not in the business context yet. Our broad perspective on business language, business rules, and conversational tech brings a new way of thinking to the table. It's a 'mind shift'.

Q In an increasingly digital world, are there ways to stay competitive, particularly when building value streams?

A Cost is always a consideration, but we're told it's not the primary focus among organisations. Speed and flexibility are, competitively speaking, more important than ever. You have to respond to new requirements efficiently and then implement the next version, and the next and so on, continuing to evolve without creating legacy systems.

That's the goal with Converse: ongoing development. If you have a brilliant idea a year later, it's easy to seamlessly expand on working reality. That's difficult with traditional programming because it requires coding expertise. If business users can drive these changes independently, they have a powerful advantage against typical transformation challenges and costly migrations.

The question a lot of organisations have is: "If everybody does the same thing and has access to the same tools, how do I compete?" That's why customisability is so important. We want companies to build custom process definitions for operational excellence and let them maintain their unique vision.

To learn more about building digital business value streams, visit isis-papyrus.com/converse

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