



## Democratising Process Transformation

### Who needs Process Transformation: We all do

It has always been true that organizations that can offer more tend to do well (a better product or service, faster response, simpler customer experience or equal performance at a better price). Organizations that offer multiple kinds of 'more' tend to do best of all. For example, Apple is where it is today because they took product (iPod, iPhone, iPad, ...), services (iTunes and apps) and customer experience to new heights simultaneously.

Business has always been a competitive endeavour, but I'm sure you'd agree that the pressure to improve organizational performance seems to be higher than ever. Part of that is just the relentless march of progress: Today's cutting edge tool for improving something is next year's standard way of doing it. However,

“Regardless of the product or service you sell, you are in a position where you are marketing to a user base that, in the span of a few seconds, can have a dozen of your competitors up on their screen. From their smartphones, prospects can instantly see comparative pricing, testimonials, features and contract terms.”

Kasim Aslam, The 7 Critical Principles of Effective Digital Marketing.



part of the pressure is from forces never seen before the 2000s - the rise of the social internet and smartphone apps.

Potential customers can very easily find out how good your product or service is, how expert your support staff are, how helpful the customer service reps are, and how your price compares to the competition. This means, in order to prosper, your product or service, customer experience, support, customer service and pricing all have to be top notch. Your organization literally has to be good at everything these days.

So, how can you step up your game in every aspect of your organization? Obviously there are many facets to that answer: Hiring and training the right staff, customer focused product development, a well crafted digital marketing strategy, and many other vital areas need to be addressed. However, there is an aspect that runs through all others, and it can help to underpin your efforts in all of them.

While it may not be as sexy sounding as hiring a new Product Manager or getting an agency to start a killer new marketing campaign, the successful automation and fine-tuning of back-office processes can often be the cornerstone of organizational optimization. It also tends to have an amplifying effect: Whatever other improvements you are also making will benefit from the improved efficiency and timely delivery of accurate information, leading to an even greater improvement.

## How to Maximize Process Transformation

Until fairly recently you didn't have a choice if you wanted to computerize a process. You would have to go to IT and wait for them to send a developer and project manager to get your project started. If the use-case was small it might never get done as the ROI on it would always be too small. There are many issues with this situation:

- Projects often take a long time to get started.
- The software is mostly fixed once completed: If you want updates, to change or improve the app, that's a whole new project cycle.
- Really small projects are usually overlooked forever by formal IT.

Business units with processes that need automating will usually do what they can. That's how we end up with people building spreadsheets to manage the required information. They then have to email the spreadsheet, or links if its cloud based, to try and create some form of approval process. It is certainly better than paper, but it's no match for what can be done with the right tools, as we'll discuss later.

Business units who were lucky enough to get automated are also likely to have issues in the long run. They have a fixed software solution that might perfectly match their requirements now, but will likely need re-working to meet process changes. These updates can often face even greater hurdles in getting started than the original project, as the return will likely be lower this time.

All over organizations, ordinary line-of-business people are having great ideas about how to improve the efficiency, effectiveness or timeliness of the processes they are engaged in. Trouble is, there are few good tools available to let them try out their ideas, let alone get them safely into production.

## No-Code can Change the Game

A no-code development platform like GW Apps will help you automate more processes far more quickly and at a much lower cost than traditional development techniques. It also outperforms low-code platforms in terms of speed and costs.

If a line-of-business (LOB) person is capable of building a spreadsheet with some basic formulas, or a website with Wix or Wordpress, then they can build and deploy a complete business process app with the right no-code platform. With this, business units and LOB people can automate their own processes, without having to rely on IT. Also, as no expensive developer resources are required, the cost of automating a

process drops significantly. Suddenly, the ROI of solving certain process issues changes from insignificant, hence killing the automation project, to healthy enough to more than justify the project.

	No-Code	Low - Code	Traditional Development
Development Cost	\$	4 - 5 times higher	10+ times higher
Return	Very similar return for all approaches, as a similar app is built in each case		
ROI	400%	100%	40%

With the cost benefit ratio tilted so nicely by the no-code platform, your budget will now allow you to tackle far more projects than before. This leads us to the next potential issue. If many new apps now fit in my budget, will I be able to actually create them all? Do I have the time and the resources? With a self-deploying, no-code platform (like GW Apps) the answer is usually a resounding “yes”. One of the ways that such platforms greatly reduce app creation costs is by removing the need to pay expensive developers, but the other part is that it greatly speeds up the app building and deployment process.

The actual building of an application is transformed from a process that typically takes many days or weeks, into one that takes a matter of hours. Our consultants have frequently built simple apps in under an hour, even including an approval process with emails. More complex applications will take hours, but we have never built anything in GW Apps that took ‘days’.

So, now your budget covers more automation, and no-code lets you work quickly enough to them all done. This means you can automate and improve almost any process you identify, without any additional cost and little impact on your resources. You are free to improve processes whenever you see a meaningful opportunity, and any time you have a good idea.

### Can’t we just do it with Spreadsheets and Email?

As we said earlier, using spreadsheets and email is certainly better than using paper based forms. However, you don’t end up with an full-function, tailored application, and so you don’t get the full benefits of process improvement.

While using email and spreadsheets does allow you to enter and manage information, and inform people of tasks or status changes, it is clearly more limited than a custom tailored app can be. In the following table we compare just a few feature areas, to see how spreadsheets and email compare with a capable no-code platform like GW Apps.

	GW Apps	Spreadsheets & Email
Security	Security is highly configurable and flexible. Read and edit rights can be assigned down to the individual field level, and can change at each step in a approval process and for each group of users.	You can only control read and edit rights for the whole spreadsheet. You can't control who gets to see or edit different parts of a spreadsheet, nor have different security for a row if it references a task that is now completed.
Process Automation	Records automatically email the required parties at each step in the business process, and the approver only gets that single record to deal with.	While you can email a spreadsheet, or a link to a cloud based spreadsheet, the person would have to know exactly who to email it to. Also, all the rows of the spreadsheet get sent and the recipient has to find the row that covers their item, and make sure not to accidentally mess up anything else.
Advanced Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Digital signatures</li> <li>● Emails with record values automatically inserted</li> <li>● Attachments</li> </ul>	Features not supported
Code Required?	Simple drag, drop & configure, with no typing instructions of any kind.	You need macro formulas to lookup data from other "apps" or to lookup multiple fields in one step.

## Conclusion

Unless you work for a perfect organization, you will have internal business processes that can be improved. Often this can be helped by using an application to organize and track information, and to keep those involved up to date with where everything stands and what needs to be done. By now, this is common knowledge. Unfortunately, just knowing that you should computerize a business process doesn't solve the issue: You need to actually do the work of developing the right app. This is where things tend to get difficult.

The costs and resource requirements of traditional development mean that many of the smaller projects simply get left behind, as a low ROI or resource limitations mean the organization simply won't get to them. A no-code development platform like GW Apps can dramatically improve the ROI and free the project from waiting on developer availability.

We have also shown that just using spreadsheets and email is certainly low cost, as you already have them, but it isn't really the best solution. Spreadsheets and email just don't offer the features required to really bring about efficient and simple to follow business processes. Most people using spreadsheets and email today would likely admit it isn't a great solution. It's simply all they had available to them, so they did the best they could.

To summarize it in a simple analogy. If a common backend business process could be likened to dropping your child off at school:

- Traditional development might be like buying a Ferrari to make the run: It has superb capabilities but it is really expensive and needs careful maintenance.
- Using spreadsheets and email might be like using the RV you own: A great tool for its intended purpose, but not really suited to the school run.
- GW Apps is more like minivan or midsize SUV: Practical, ideal for the task and with very reasonable running costs.

GW Apps can help you reduce waste and improve productivity by streamlining your processes and speeding up your response times. Interested, then contact us:



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