

Digital Business and Ecosystem-Enabled Innovation Requires a New Kind of IT

Introduction

Digital transformation initiatives to date have targeted operational effectiveness and bringing together disparate customer channels. While yielding short-term gains, digital transformation has not helped with growing revenue, making companies more relevant to their customers, or in removing the risk of disruption. While emerging technologies remove certain barriers to market entry established in a pre-digital age, an organization's business model — how it makes money including the products and services offered to customers — remains unchanged. Additionally, companies are failing to capitalize on partner ecosystems to drive innovation that better meets their customers' needs. Most still prefer to work in a linear value chain and maintain a closed garden business.

This paper explains some of the challenges that companies now face as they transform to become a digital business and engage with partner ecosystems to meet customer expectations. It shows why a new type of IT — digital business platform (DBP) — enables business models that deliver value in the domain of where customer problems reside. This means moving from product silos and becoming "the destination" customers go to for answers. The paper also explains the required capabilities for managing complexity within a frictionless partner model while optimizing time to market and risk.

Business Evolution — How to Remain Competitive?

The challenge for any business is how to grow topline revenue in ways that make it harder for competitors to copy but also avoids disruption by more agile digital competitors. It requires continuous business model innovation with a differentiating partner ecosystem arranged around a digital platform-based marketplace driving network effect (volume and economies of scale). Such a journey starts with far better insight into what customers want, coupled with a faster way to validate new ideas. The strategy is therefore setting the vision for business model transformation and ensuring it then perfectly aligns with changes to operating model, processes, organizational structure, IT systems, and metrics that drive successful execution.

A second issue is momentum and how to initiate transformation in an organization built for a pre-digital era, where its sources of competitive advantage have been dismantled by digital, while facing constraints on investment and on the need to deliver shareholder dividends. For these businesses, competing against start-ups with a very different funding model, along with overcoming barriers to change such as the governance and control mechanisms that enabled them to be successful in

the first place, is an ongoing struggle. There are many reasons to delay the journey, but then the scale of change becomes that much greater.

IDC predicts that by 2022, over 60% of global GDP will be from digitally enhanced offerings, operations, and relationships. Digital transformation is no longer a strategic discussion, but rather a call to arms for organizations in all industries to enhance their business strategies by incorporating partner ecosystems and continuous business model innovation to stay ahead of their competition.

Digital Transformation and Partner Ecosystems

Successful digital transformation is a well understood set of business capabilities (strategy, business and operating model, processes, structures and systems) enabled by evolving technologies (mobility, Big Data/analytics, cloud, and social) and innovation accelerators (partner contributions). The journey is iterative, requiring frequent validation, particularly of the market for new products and services. Any initiative to become a digital business means pulling at least five different levers underpinning business model change. Which levers to pull and in which order depends on the organization's vision and strategy:

- **Contextual automated customer experience.** Expand from a partial to a full view of customers by integrating across internal product and data silos to create a full view of customer challenges and behaviors. Then, redefine business processes using these richer insights to better tailor and innovate more compelling offerings with the right digital services so that it becomes easier for customers to buy. Doing so will maximize revenue generated per customer and will bring the customer closer to the organization.
- **Compelling new products and services.** Rapidly introduce new digital services and bundled solutions into the market. Move from products to services (XaaS) and from one fixed and linear value chain to a multisided value chain that leverages an ecosystem and builds new adjacent revenue streams. Manage the complex interactions, business rules, and dependencies across the partner ecosystem that this requires, while also providing the agility and flexibility to continuously develop, test, launch, and monetize joint solutions and services.
- **Partner sales channels.** When a sale relies solely on the internal organization, growth is high cost. Instead, businesses should expand this model to include "sell with" channel partners as they closely define what they sell directly and what is sold through partners.
- **Operational efficiency.** Remove internal silos to better operate and sell own offerings while developing an integrated platform that automates, orchestrates, and monetizes the end-to-end value chain spanning across own IT systems as well as partners' IT.
- **Speed to value.** Success in digital requires a dramatic reduction in the time to test and launch offerings to the market, while maintaining focus on cost and risk. Organizations must have the agility to start small to test market fit using a minimum viable product (MVP), then monitor success, rapidly adjust, and scale up fast with minimal IT adjustments.

Companies within a partner ecosystem should evolve from focusing on static market offerings in business-to-business (B2B) or business-to-customer (B2C) relationships to focusing on more advanced multisided business models (B2B2x) that are clearly differentiating and drive revenue growth faster. With this approach, new opportunities open, and the organization is constrained only by its business operations and monetization systems and their ability to support these new opportunities.

This model requires individual partners to be able to:

- Directly onboard and manage their own services so they can provide XaaS
- Source services from other partner providers (B2B)
- Sell products to end consumers (B2C) that can be based on a partner's own services, services from other partners on the platform, or product bundles as a combination of own and partner services (B2B2C)
- Onward sell services to other partners on the platform including own services and services sourced from other partners on the platform (B2B2x)

This multiparty ecosystem exemplifies what IDC calls "multiplied innovation" — several solutions knitted together to create a more significant customer-focused solution. The platform on which such solutions reside must be able to manage the complex interactions, business rules, and dependencies across the partner ecosystem, and following the delivery of a service, the platform should compensate the contributing partners based on the consumed resources.

A New Kind of IT — Digital Business Platform

The underlying systems for many businesses, including those within the telecom, automotive, financial, technology, and IT industries, were designed and built for a single company to sell, bill, and support the products the business brings to market. Products are built on internal capabilities only. These systems were never meant to address the needs of multiparty collaboration, nor was it a part of their design to combine digital services and experience with products sold. These installed systems offer minimal flexibility, are unsuited for rapid prototyping, exhibit little agility, and lack any means to support experimental ways of developing and testing new products. Inflexible systems shackle the ability of any organization to respond to evolving market conditions and competitive needs. With long lead-times to make any system change, the business is often forced to scale back ambitious growth plans, partnering strategies, or innovative pricing offers. The business must accept what its systems can address rather than what is right for the business.

A DBP is purpose-built to overlay and abstract an IT landscape for both the organization and its partners. A DBP should be able to pull in existing products and services to enhance other services or combine them to form new ones. A DBP enables a compelling new digital experience to be built on top of using a clean set of APIs, while from a business perspective the DBP forms a marketplace enabling a multisided business model for multipartner solution developments and multichannel selling with powerful network effects. A DBP is therefore designed to

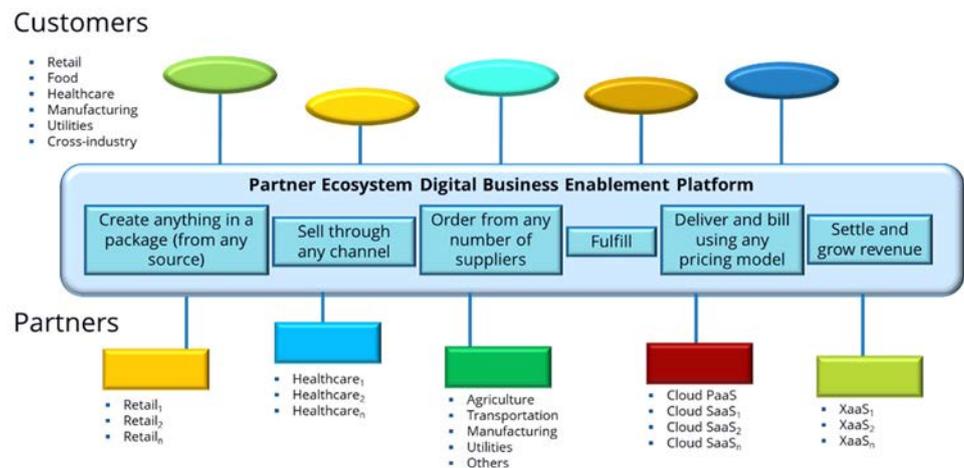
work in tandem with existing IT, extending to partner ecosystems and enabling a quick start to agile ways of working.

A DBP also manages complex multiparty monetization relationships that can be leveraged in minutes to produce service offers using a variety of revenue models according to industry preferences, partner relationships, and business need. With flexible and open APIs, the DBP can also integrate, and then orchestrate, business flows that call on new and existing systems to deliver customer value. For example, Internet of Things (IoT) solutions comprise several discrete services that typically come from multiple suppliers. This includes the IoT device that is likely the finished product from several supplier contributions, communication service to each device, software to manage these devices, analytics functionality to monitor the devices, and data management tools to output results to a user (machine or human).

Key Requirements of a Digital Business Platform

New business models for the digital economy involve multiparty interactions requiring a flexible monetization and partner management strategy that can engage companies from all industries to control their direct and/or combined offerings as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Digital Business and Partner Management



Source: IDC, 2019

Several requirements are standard for any DBP, chiefly being (not an exhaustive listing):

- **Single platform for orchestration.** Onboard partners, interface with own and partners' installed systems, define offers, track resource consumption, monetize customer usage, and settle partner interactions, all through a common platform.
- **Multipartner ecosystem administration.** Enable each partner to directly onboard and manage its services while enabling it to source services from other partners for resell to their customers. In addition, enable each partner to sell services directly to end-user customers and to sell services to other partners in the ecosystem. Control the dependency rules for each partner's

services to ensure the correct sequencing of service delivery. Support and fully track each partner's activities in relation to the multiparty business models in which they participate.

- **Open APIs and ease of integration.** Connect with other systems, facilitate onboarding of new partners, and incorporate other services using open and well-documented APIs.
- **Customer management.** Provide omni-channel support for all service offerings and enable customers to switch channels as needed for defining and ordering new services. Provide a comprehensive view of customer interactions; provide knowledge of all customer product and service inventory; show status for all disputes or inquiries; show billing and payment arrangements; provide collections status; outline loyalty points status; and deliver customer-level usage history. For partners, the DBP must also show an inventory of customized product offers, service accounts, and trigger bulk product and service inventory operations.
- **Order management and fulfillment.** With the growing complexity of product offerings and service orders, manage the end-to-end order life cycle across different business segments, partners, and customer touchpoints. Validate orders against technical constraints and business rules. Track all partner relationships to ensure that the onward sale of offers is correctly instantiated and activated for billing in the relevant product and service inventories. Decompose orders based on structures in the product/service catalog, trigger fulfillment of each piece, and report back to the end-to-end process when all fulfillment steps complete.
- **Product and service management.** Deliver a technology-agnostic ability to define product and service bundles with the appropriate business rules, customer experience definitions, and language for packaging the service, then have it ready in almost real time for customers to order, purchase, and pay all without IT intervention. This approach involves a product catalog for defining usage and functionality rules along with defining features and attributes of services sold to a customer.
- **Monetization (billing and collections for multiple partners).** Monetize the usage and consumption of services in real time from both a customer and partner perspective. Support event-based, time-based, and volume-based usage events along with any other usage trigger in any combination and for any type of business configuration. Support non-usage-related charges in a multiparty environment. Address each partner's revenue sharing model — there is a broad range of multiparty business models that all need to be supported simultaneously — and provide the automated revenue allocation or settlement due to each supplying partner.

Using a DBP provides the flexibility for a business to get closer to the customer and rapidly innovate as market conditions and business relationships change, as new service opportunities are identified, and as organizational structures become more complicated. Most importantly, as business relationships between partners become

dynamic, innovation increases and gives companies a competitive advantage in the digital economy where speed to innovation is essential.

Getting to Market Fast With the Right Offer at Minimal Risk

Collaboration requires that the partner ecosystem creates a multiparty business model that executes quickly and at low cost. This means a DBP must:

- **Overlay and abstract** partners' existing IT landscapes (so business as usual is not impacted for all partners). The DBP must be technology and industry agnostic.
- **Support the creation of XaaS** usage-based services out of existing physical products. This can be quickly and easily added and combined to create an amazing digital experience for the customer. Abstraction must enable creation of XaaS.
- **Bring a cloud-native architecture** to facilitate collaboration, rapid prototyping, and more agile ways of working. This involves everything from more microservices architecture, open APIs, and easy upgradability through rapid onboarding of new partners. A cloud-native approach creates a mash-up with other cloud-based applications.
- **Use cloud delivery** for starting with what is right for the business and rapidly scaling up when needed.
- **Offer pay-as-you-grow** in this more experimental environment, as an important means to match opex with revenue growth. Consuming the DBP and associated services as SaaS keeps upfront costs low, benefits from economies of scale, and avoids the complexity of managing non-essential activities with upfront costs such as IT infrastructure and set-up.

Innovating with ecosystems and interactive partner relationships are still new to most organizations. Investing in a long-term DBP strategy can be filled with concerns. Choosing a SaaS-based DBP is the best choice to eliminate these concerns, reduce risk, optimize the initial cost of deployment, and minimize the time to market. More specifically:

- **Reducing risk.** Rolling out new business solutions via a SaaS model is more likely to succeed than new IT implementations that follow traditional methods. SaaS means the buyer is not concerned with IT infrastructure or architecture, which is a major cost and time driver for traditional IT upgrade projects.
- **Optimizing operational cost.** SaaS operational costs are lower than traditional IT-based systems. A SaaS solution subscription is typically sold as a recurring monthly opex charge at a fraction of the capital investment usually needed by traditional IT upgrade projects.
- **Minimizing time to market.** Faster time to market is strategic. Typically, success in getting a SaaS-based digital solution operational is measured in days or weeks, compared with the months or even years needed by IT-directed, multisystem projects.

Another benefit of using SaaS is delivery of an environment that encourages market experimentation around new ideas and pricing strategies. This approach enables the organization to rapidly create a complex service and then deliver the new service to a selected customer base to test the market, adjust as needed, launch, and scale the service to a wider market. This is accomplished through business analyst involvement, rather than IT programming help. It also comes without disruption to existing customer systems and processes; and then, at the proper time, it can enable a near transparent transfer of customers to the new solution. Additional benefits include:

- Enabling the business to focus on its customers without the need to manage the issues with operating complex enterprise software such as infrastructure, operating system, software functionality, and security
- Eliminating the need for IT technical resources pertaining to software operations
- Delivering elastic capacity to meet increased (or decreased) user uptake or in addressing market expansion plans
- Providing continuous delivery of new features, technology upgrades, maintenance, and configuration focus of the solution to meet business-specific requirements when needed, without the risk of replacing older software for new
- Creating the opportunity to start small in both delivery approach and deployment architecture for testing market fit, monitoring success, adjusting through short iteration cycles, then scaling up quickly once solutions hit traction with the market
- Providing a lower barrier to entry through a more simplified sign-up and commitment process
- Supporting quicker trials of new digital services with a lower risk pay-as-you-go cost model for functional needs, technical requirements, delivery strategy, and deployment architecture
- Enabling partners to pay for what they use, including digital service owners who pay for the combination of all partners that combine to deliver a service

The group of solution suppliers that can provide the full functional capabilities of DBPs is small, and smaller still are those that can deliver DBP capabilities via a true SaaS solution model. IDC believes that the BearingPoint//Beyond Infonova Digital Business Platform is one such solution.

DBP Operational Examples

Suppliers are now finding that more of their customers want to experiment with new business ideas enabled by DBPs, especially those involving interactions with other business partners. Each one of the use cases below is implemented solutions (except for 5G) that benefit from using a DBP strategy.

Amazon Web Services

Amazon Web Services (AWS) works with BearingPoint//Beyond to enable communication service providers (CSPs) to create, manage, market, and sell solutions defined with AWS services, a CSP's own services, or other third-party services associated with the BearingPoint//Beyond Infonova Digital Business Platform. For example, this partnership enables use cases that involve:

- Expanded CSP offerings to B2B customers by enabling CSPs on the platform to quickly bundle new B2B offers, leveraging AWS, AWS Marketplace, and their assets
- Growing IoT business seamlessly by packaging the AWS IoT suite with CSP services and any third-party offerings
- Compute, database, storage, and other cloud infrastructure services from AWS
- IoT services from AWS, including IoT Core and IoT Analytics
- Services from third parties (e.g., device management)
- Reducing risk and time to market for companies that are looking to build an MVNE platform or to launch an MVNO and need CSP network capabilities

This partnership and platform combination enable CSPs to create customer-driven solutions using several different components, leveraging the AWS cloud platform and AWS marketplace.

Internet of Things and 5G

IoT solutions are created from an evolving set of technologies delivered via an ecosystem of technology partners. Organizations that offer leading IoT solutions must have an agile DBP that enables them to easily onboard, manage, and settle with these partners. It must also support rapid innovation based on use case and the location where a solution is deployed. As 5G networks continue to be deployed, nearly all 5G use cases involve some level of IoT interaction and B2B2x use cases. However, not all IoT use cases need 5G, as noted by the following example:

- **Mass transportation.** A municipal transportation operator in Europe created a solution that is now a forerunner to a countrywide digital fare collection system. Connected transportation services, using a common payment method, offer urban commuters a seamless way to travel when involving services from both public and private outlets. This "smart transportation" solution involves around 10 local and national transport operators to date participating in an e-ticketing system that provides an interconnected, interrelated service. Through a DBP approach, passengers pay for travel on metros, trams, buses, and trains using a common payment card or interactive app. Over time, additional services and business capabilities are planned to enhance this public-private joint value offering.

Deployment of 5G networks is slowly rolling out in North America and some Asia/Pacific markets. European deployments will first appear in 2020. Deployment

of 5G networks, coupled with virtual network functionality and IoT devices, globally will roll out over the next five to seven years. Universal use cases for 5G are not likely but planned regional implementations in several industry sectors will take place in the automotive, logistics, industrial automation, health and wellness, smart city, and media and entertainment sectors. Examples of complex business models involving 5G networks include:

- **Autonomous police patrol vehicles.** Used for neighborhood patrols in urban and suburban areas as a crime deterrent. Communication logs containing both audio and visual images are cataloged and sent to any security agency as needed. One dedicated network slice would be for autonomous vehicle operation, while a second using different network parameters would transmit data to a designated location. Information access and possibly cost sharing between local business owners, local police agencies, and even federal bodies could be possible according to the type of information needed. Further, DBP capabilities could enhance a public/private data exchange of non-sensitive information with store owners, concerned citizens, and regulators.
- **Industrial automation.** Connected or smart factory use cases are emerging quite rapidly, where numerous sensors already deployed on a factory floor and/or assembly line involve robots. Previously, any connectivity requirements for measuring telemetry and other key performance indicators (KPIs) needed WiFi but this was not a satisfactory solution. Now, with 5G networks, there is a distinct move toward enabling new private networks, either as standalone networks or as a network slice. For example, a factory may order a low latency slice from a network operator for industrial automation, enabling robots in the production line to be controlled and monitored, while ordering a second (less expensive) slice to manage and record on high-definition video all robot actions. A DBP enables a communications service provider to work with its partners to provide such businesses with other offsite productivity, data storage, or industrial product enhancement capabilities.

Automotive

Each year, automobiles become smarter, connected, and more of an entertainment platform for passengers as cars become autonomous. This transition requires ubiquitous low latency connectivity and a multitude of innovative systems working together no matter where the automobile is operated. The use cases for mobility services are massive, including rich infotainment, fleet management, parking-space detection, usage-based insurance, and over-the-air software upgrades. Deployed use cases include:

- **Commercial tire usage.** In Europe and the U.S., trucking companies engage with a global tire manufacturer for "tires by the mile." Telemetry is transmitted to the cloud across a mobile network, often in real time, concerning temperature, inflation pressure, moisture conditions of the driving environment, and tire tread thickness. The manufacturer uses this insight to proactively resolve emerging problems before a harmful

situation develops. The trucking companies benefit from consistent tire cost management and reduced liability from the avoidance of accidents caused by worn tires. A DBP could facilitate additional commercial interaction with the trucking companies relative to regulatory documents, uniform log records, safety check inspections, driver behavior, inter-company shared freight transport, fuel contracting, and cargo delivery planning.

- **Balancing city traffic.** To balance the amount of traffic in a city, solutions were created to gather location data from vehicles, their intended destinations, and traffic control systems to provide key benefits for drivers, fleet managers, and public authorities. They include informing the driver of traffic on parking issues, notifications of approaching emergency vehicles, traffic light timing, and congestion tax monetization. Through a DBP strategy several municipalities around the world have discovered the commercial value of "aggregated traffic data" to the hospitality industry, planning groups, construction companies, and consumers.
- **Connected vehicles.** The emerging class of modern "connected" vehicles all require an extremely versatile network that can simultaneously deliver high throughput for in-car entertainment matched with low latency communication for assisted/autonomous driving, data gathering and analysis from telemetry sensors, device-to-device communication, and similar uses. As these vehicles are driven, CSPs must account for roaming scenarios and ensure that they are providing continuity of service when moving between different operators' networks — not only for domestic transportation scenarios but also for international roaming, which is an important feature for autonomous trucking services. These diverse requirements will be best served by a business bundle negotiated by the end user with a service provider in the form of a network slice that includes SLAs for throughput, latency, and analytics, and that also provides roaming services, both within and across borders. In other aspects, a DBP strategy has already benefited Hyundai when it introduced an upgrade to its information console about two years ago. Newer model Hyundai vehicles can now pair (via Bluetooth) with gas station pumps in certain locations. Paired also with a customer's smart device and payment authorization method, the car can be refueled without the customers inserting their payment card in the gas pump. Hyundai is planning to regularly make additional DBP-based enhancements to its vehicle line.

Conclusion

A digital services strategy can help organizations create contextual customer experiences, define compelling new services, enhance partner channels, increase operational efficiency, and add speed to value. To grow topline revenue, organizations now understand that business model innovation must become a key part of their ongoing business strategy, as technology evolution, competition, and regulatory change alter the global landscape.

In the quest to become digital, many companies have found that going it alone to meet today's diverse set of customer needs is not prudent, too costly, and not fast enough to satisfy changing expectations. This is where partners add significant value regardless of industry or geography. But orchestrating partner contributions and interfacing with installed systems to maintain continuity between a company's past and its changing future means complexity in service design, partner expectations, and revenue-tracking needs. Installed IT systems in most businesses today fall far short in meeting the needs of multiparty collaboration, combining digital services and experience with products sold, or simultaneously processing real-time revenue flows for both customers and partners as resources are consumed. Meeting these new business requirements, while bridging the gap between "old business" and "new business," requires a new type of IT — a digital business platform — which can deliver the capabilities that customers value when addressing real problems, rather than continuing to offer traditional predefined services.

The DBP should be accessible by any partner and a cloud-native architecture is far easier to work with and continuously upgrade, especially when it comes to onboarding new partners, technologies, and capabilities. Using a DBP delivered through a SaaS model enables the digital business to get to market quickly, encourages market experimentation around new ideas and pricing strategies, minimizes the level of investment needed at the beginnings of a partner ecosystem strategy, and reduces risk because the buyer only needs to be concerned with functionality rather than the underlying IT architecture that often stymies traditional IT-based projects.

Most importantly, DBPs that enable partners to directly onboard and manage their services through open and well-documented APIs, while enabling partners to source services from other partners for resell to their customers or for a partner to sell services directly to a customer or other partners, are platforms truly designed for the complex multiparty business model environment.

The best-performing organizations — armed with digital-native culture, tools, and process — are speeding away from the rest, creating a bifurcated and unequal landscape where a few firms exhibit high productivity and profits. The new imperative is to keep pace with business change while increasing the speed of business operations, the speed at which changes are delivered, and the speed and scale of innovation.

[Why BearingPoint//Beyond Infonova Digital Business Platform?](#)

The largest digital businesses are successful today because they were first to identify change in customer expectations as new technology enables new ways to do business. This change, centered mainly around new digital services and offerings, often includes building value from working with ecosystem-enabled partners while positioning the business as the preferred destination of both customers and partners. But many other organizations face a daunting task in considering how to embark on change and are looking for advisory help to answer the question "how can we grow revenue?"

- IDC believes that building the right offerings to grow revenue requires a strategic approach to recognize ideas, identify use cases, quantify the growth potential, prototype solutions, and test market traction with MVP before full-scale engagement.
- BearingPoint//Beyond combines business consulting with its Infonova Digital Business Platform. These combined resources enable BearingPoint//Beyond to guide and design its customers down the road to new digital services and ecosystem-enabled offerings. This approach leads to a more holistic view of helping customers evolve business models and to address the factors that might impact their ability to grow revenue. This includes answering such questions as, how do we support the sales organization to sell more complex products and services? Is the customer journey on the right course? How can we rapidly test ideas in the market without impacting existing operations? Will the target customer audience be able to buy the products and services we offer?

New technologies and new digital services are emerging at speed, opening attractive revenue growth opportunities for businesses. But the underlying systems for many businesses, especially those in the telecoms industry, were designed and built to specifically sell, bill, and support the core services that the business presently brings to market. These systems have limited design features to address the needs of multiparty collaboration, which naturally introduces new digital services into the mix, nor was it a part of their design to combine these new digital services and experience with the core products sold. On the flip side, solutions designed specifically for the orchestration and monetization of new digital services are generally unsuited to interact, integrate, and scale seamlessly with traditional business services, resulting in added complexity through even more siloed systems.

- IDC believes that a DBP should overlay and abstract an IT landscape for the organization and its partners, for core services *and* new digital services, thereby forming a marketplace working in tandem with existing IT. To do this, the DBP must be technology and industry agnostic.
- The BearingPoint//Beyond Infonova Digital Business Platform is rooted in both traditional line business and digital services with a long track record of spanning cross-industry plays. Other suppliers are strong in one area, but usually not in both.

To go faster, many organizations struggle under a legacy of silos. Innovation stagnates with redundancy and inconsistency. "At scale" innovation eludes all but the elite few while the distance between companies that thrive and those that just survive continues to expand. Some organizations adapt to new models and ecosystems and move from automation to autonomy; others struggle with the basics and continue to fall behind. In traditional businesses such as telecom, installed systems offer minimal flexibility, are unsuited for rapid prototyping, exhibit little agility, and lack any means to support experimental ways of developing and testing new products.

- IDC believes that organizations need systems in place that minimize time to market — success in getting a digital service operational should be

measured in days or weeks, not the months or even years needed by most IT-directed, multisystem projects. A system that encourages market experimentation around new ideas and pricing strategies enables an MVP-mindset — rapid creation of new services, test and adjustment, and scale as market traction is seen — without disruption to existing customer systems and processes. A DBP must therefore be designed to enable a quick start to agile ways of working.

- With the BearingPoint//Beyond Infonova Digital Business Platform, using configuration and lightweight interfaces, new services and new business models can be trialed and introduced to the market quickly, unlike other solutions that often require a new project and a new IT stack for each new opportunity.

A digital business platform is ideally suited to enable solutions that include partner contributions and to address end-to-end customer problems. However, not all DBPs are created equal. For example, enabling a partner-engaged service in simple, linear business models as static market offerings is not a differentiator and so will not drive revenue growth. However, more advanced partner ecosystems supporting multisided, multiparty business models are clearly differentiating.

- IDC believes that the route to becoming a digital business is to define and execute a strategy that uses a DBP to drive an advanced partner ecosystem that simultaneously leverages both linear and non-linear multiparty business models. This portfolio business model approach stands the best chance of success in a rapidly changing post-digital age.
- The BearingPoint//Beyond Infonova Digital Business Platform meets these requirements with few, if any, other suppliers capable of providing the same set of critical capabilities. Its multitenant and cross-tenant architecture facilitates creation of a marketplace that enables a digital business to be center stage in the value chain, enabling it to monetize this position and the relationships it has in multiple industries.

There is another aspect to partner ecosystems that involves the business itself — organizational structures are becoming more delineated and complex, not only through mergers and acquisitions, but also through geographic locations, company group holding structures, cost-center delineation, and the creation of separate innovation labs for new business experimentation.

- IDC believes that a DBP as a single platform for multipartner ecosystem administration is equally ideal to manage the complex internal relationships of a large organization, in addition to the relationships with external partner businesses — the principles are the same.
- The BearingPoint//Beyond Infonova Digital Business Platform enables a diverse group of companies under a holding company to combine their operations on a networked platform catering for all business functions in the group and with their partners.

Finally, to facilitate collaboration, new digital services, rapid prototyping, and more agile ways of working, IDC believes that a digital business platform requires a

cloud-native architecture. This involves a microservices approach, open APIs, and easy upgradability.

- The BearingPoint//Beyond Infonova Digital Business Platform is cloud-native and has a unique architecture with a strong core independent from any customization, which is achieved through plug-in microservices and industry-standard APIs. It is a good choice to future-proof businesses.
- The platform offers quicker, lower-cost, lower-risk upgrade scenarios than most other solution approaches, which it achieves not as a standalone system for innovative service experiments, but by offering a BSS solution that takes advantage as a core design principle of the entire domain combination of catalog, order, customer, and billing.

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