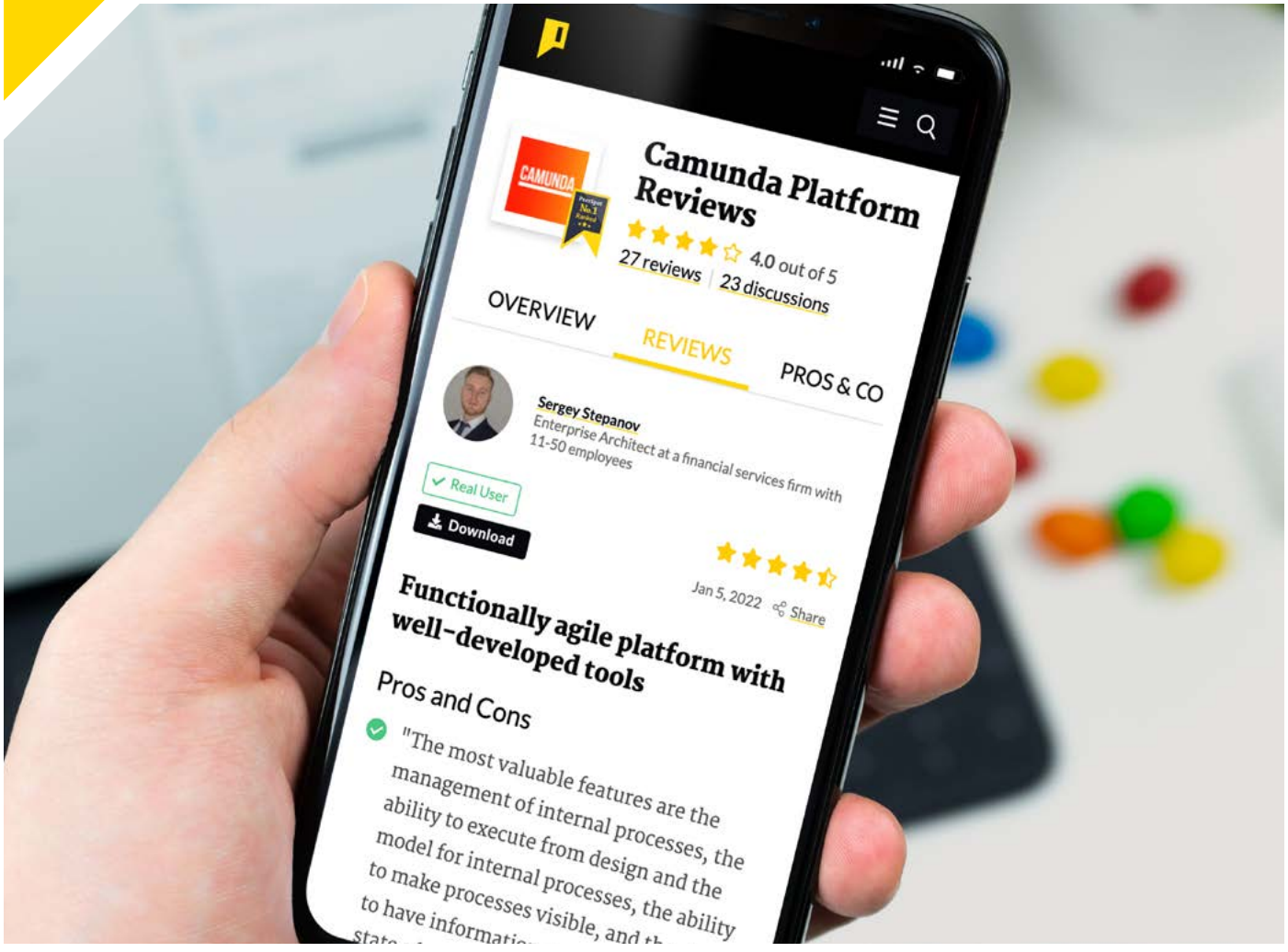
PeerPaper™ Report 2022

Based on real user reviews of Camunda Platform

Replacing Legacy BPM: Solution Selection Factors



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Introduction

The BPM field is undergoing a fundamental shift that affects how companies approach process management. As businesses demand more flexibility and agility in BPM, reliance on traditional BPM systems is causing organizational strain. The older systems tend to be proprietary. They're relatively slow and costly to change — the domain of expert users. BPM projects tend to take longer than anyone expects, and may prove difficult to adapt as the business environment inevitably shifts over time.

Instead, businesses want to meet customer demand by quickly designing and implementing processes. To remain competitive, they then want to modify workflows easily and at high speed. For example, as a Technical Manager at a comms service provider observed, "The environment where we work is very dynamic and is changing a lot. We need to constantly go around the dependencies and change things back and forth."

These new preferences are causing companies to rethink their commitments to legacy BPM platforms in favor of a new generation of lighter, faster and more agile process automation solutions. This paper examines the current BPM landscape and reasons why organizations are moving away from a legacy BPM solution, and offers key considerations for choosing a new process automation tool. It is based on real user experiences with Camunda, as described on PeerSpot. Key issues include ease of use, flexibility and the potential for collaboration. Use of open architectures and APIs are also factors in the selection of a replacement BPM solution.

Current BPM Use Cases

PeerSpot members are finding a wide variety of use cases for BPM and process automation. For example, Trask Solutions, a tech services company with more than 500 employees, uses process automation for credit flow processes such as loan approvals in the banking industry. According to their senior business consultant, "The [Camunda] solution offers good automation, and it is pretty simple to build a business process." An IT-services manager & solution architect at Stratis, a tech services company, uses process automation to track user subscriptions on their website — streamlining a 20-step process.

An engineering manager at a tech services company with over 1,000 employees mainly uses Camunda Platform for workflow management with his investment banking clients. He shared an example of the kind of workflows he modeled: "The onboarding can be from one box. So, when the client comes, the sales guy would collect the documentation. Then there would be another task, and someone would be reviewing those documents then upload those documents into some other third-party application. This is just one example, but we have a lot of complex use cases."

"Camunda is a way to push the rules to the downstream systems."

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Creating a rules-based API is how a lead of technology innovation at a construction company with over 10,000 employees is taking advantage of process automation. In his case, they are using Business Process Model and Notation (BPMN) for this purpose. They run a development server running on Azure and an on-premises version for the client.

Modeling processes is the primary use case for the co-founder of Dr. Agile, a small consultancy. OTP Bank Romania S.A. has the same need, according to their senior process Analyst. He said, "We are a bank and use this solution for process modeling, organizing, and process architecture like line of business, and to be able to make process interfaces between each diagram." Their activities include client enrollment and opening client accounts with a process for loan granting.

"Our primary use case for Camunda is as a process orchestration layer to help prioritize tasks for users as they were designing downstream systems," said a vice president & account CTO at a tech services company with over 10,000 employees. He added, "Camunda is a way to push the rules to the downstream systems."

A senior product architect at a small tech services company related that "we have done a lot of flow automation for the return and authorization, like vehicle return material authorization. We have done a lot of automating their campaign systems. It purely depends on the customer's requirements." The comms service technical manager similarly noted, "We use Camunda for the automation of the workflow and business process designer. We use the module Cockpit and the Workflow Engine to orchestrate the process."

"The collaboration capabilities have proven to be a great asset during this [COVID-19] pandemic. We can share, discuss, and develop the model together from a distance. It's really helped us during these times of isolation."

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Things to Consider when Replacing Legacy BPM

What should one look for in a new BPM technology? A new process automation tool should enable fast design and deployment to empower teams to get things done. Simplicity is essential, especially compared to the traditionally complex, expert-dominated world of legacy BPM. The solution should be flexible and developer friendly, with strong collaborative capabilities.

Selecting a solution for its open architecture and Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) is a wise practice when looking to move to the new generation of process automation tools. Figure 1 depicts how these new, desirable qualities become relevant in the context of the process automation lifecycle. At each stage, a replacement solution can improve upon traditional practices and capabilities.

Speed for Designing and Deploying Processes

Speed counts in process automation. Businesses cannot afford the expense or loss of competitive advantage that comes from spending a prolonged period of time designing and deploying processes. The construction company's lead of technology innovation spoke to this issue when he

Works quicker than competing solutions

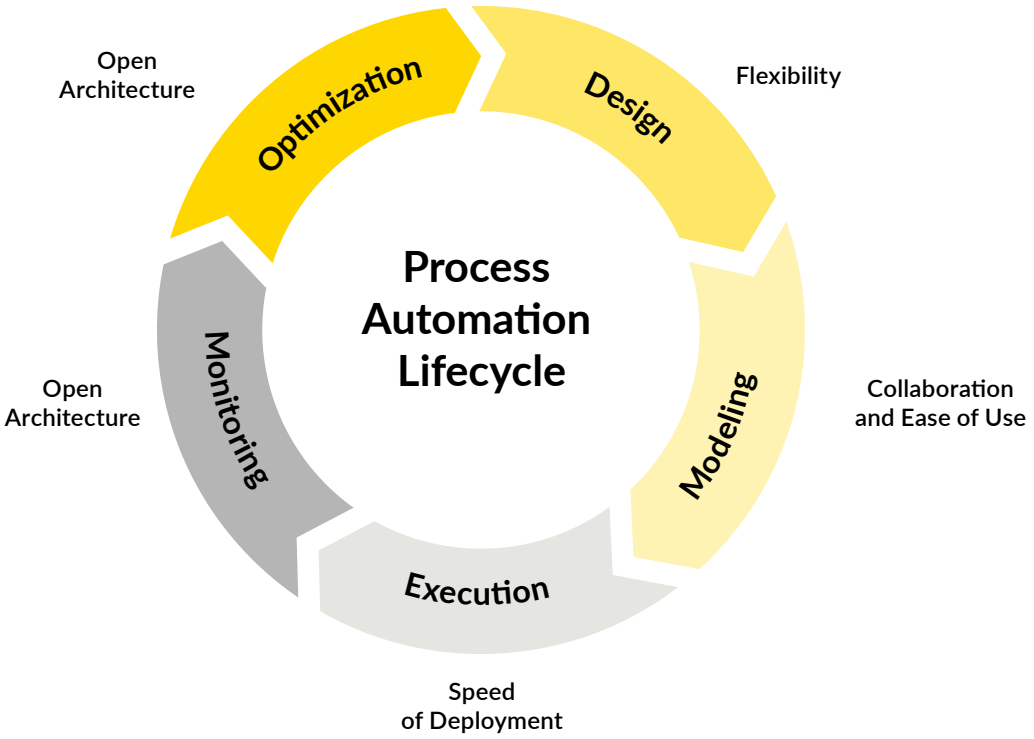

Figure 1 – The process automation lifecycle, with the new qualities users want in a replacement BPM solution highlighted at each stage.

said, "[Camunda] is quicker to do things when compared to competing solutions." He evaluated many options before choosing Camunda, remarking, "We did a POC [Proof of Concept] with the base of the solutions, and we were able to get further with Camunda more quickly."

For a senior software engineer at a non-profit, the solution's fast prototyping for innovative government processes was what made the most favorable impression on his team. He said, "Camunda has enabled us to do quick prototyping with an end-to-end team consisting of information architects/ process architects/developers and product owners to form a consistent view in business value, architectural compliance and technology."

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Easy to use

Simplicity

A process automation solution should be simple and relatively easy to use. As the senior process analyst at OTP Bank Romania put it, "The most valuable features are the ease of use and the ability to streamline a process model on a BPM diagram." This latter remark reflects the solution's desirable lightweight nature. The construction company's lead of technology innovation simply stated, "We found it

easy to get the DMN working," while a chief operations officer (COO) at a tech services company similarly shared that Camunda was "easy to use. It is really not that complicated and can be used by anybody. It doesn't have to be operated by IT people."

Stratis' IT-services manager & solution architect added detail to the need for ease of use. He said, "There's this graphic that tells you how many lines or how many tickets are in each step. In that way, you know where you stand. I find this feature very valuable. These are your bottlenecks, and you can see what the tasks are, the problems, see how much time must be spent on them. Then you can propose to fix it or make some improvements to make things go faster."

For the tech services vice president & account CTO, the fact that Camunda is an open process automation tool makes it easier for users and developers to work together to define the rules and define the process. He commented, "This also allowed us to expose the rules and the business process itself into a standard model, which wasn't possible with other tools and software we've used in the past. Finally, the engine itself is lightweight, so it was easier for us to handle deploy-

ments and in production it didn't have a great demand of the infrastructure."

Flexibility and Collaborative Potential

Flexibility is a sought-after quality when replacing a legacy BPM tool. Collaboration is also an essential part of process automation in today's business world. People have to be able to work together with few obstacles in realizing business process outcomes. As the tech services COO claimed, "The most valuable feature is that it provides flexibility."

For a gerente do escritrio de processos (process office manager) at SEAD, a government agency, "The collaboration capabilities have proven to be a great asset during this [COVID-19] pandemic. We can share, discuss, and develop the model together from a distance. It's really helped us during these times of isolation." Further to the idea of collaboration, the construction company's Lead of Technology Innovation described how the most valuable feature is the ability to share the logic within the rules engine with the business, so you can put it up for everybody to read. He added, "Everybody understands what it's doing and you can make changes to it in real-time."

Not having to resort to PowerPoint or Visio when presenting a business process flow was an advantage for the co-founder of Dr. Agile. He shared, "Once it is validated visually by the

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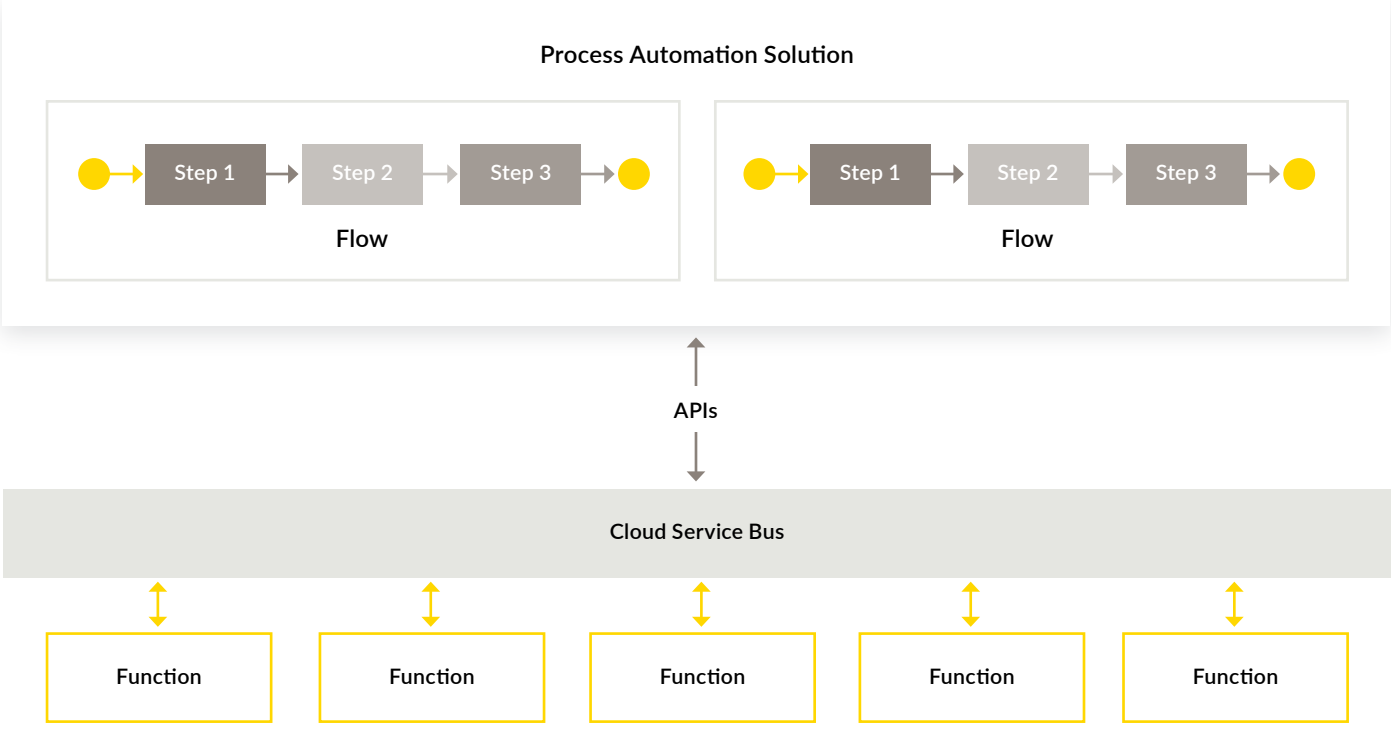
Facilitates Collaboration



business people, then it can be enhanced into a full-blown process model."

Figure 2 – A simplified reference architecture for process automation and its interactions with varied endpoints. New, open architecture and APIs facilitate a more flexible and easier-to-change approach to process automation.

API / Open Architecture

An effective legacy replacement tool will feature an open architecture and API support. This means supporting open standards for process automation such as BPMN and Decision Model and Notation (DMN), along with communication standards like JavaScript Object Notation (JSON) and Open API. In this context, the construction company's lead of technology innovation said, "What won us over was the extensive API and the ability to actually get the DMN working easy." Figure 2 shows a simplified reference architecture that depicts how APIs work in the process automation use case.

Open source with extensive API capabilities

It is also a wise practice to work with a solution that supports the use of open-source plugins and libraries that the community has developed. For instance, an IT architect at Levio,

> "Very pluggable compared to other BPM engines out there."
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a tech services company with more than 500 employees, revealed that they evaluated a variety of options, but, as he said, "We were looking for something that was open source." The non-profit senior software engineer similarly noted, "We wanted an open source engine. Therefore we did not evaluate other engines such as Mendix, Pega."

"The feature that I like most is the decoupling architecture," said the owner/CEO at IT SPHERE, a tech services company. He then remarked, "I can use any other tools to create services and the UI, and then use them together with the Camunda BPMN engine." The non-profit senior software engineer values the number of client implementations and cross-language capabilities that Camunda has to support multiple frameworks – calling it "very pluggable compared to other BPM engines out there." In his view, it is also more portable. His models are made in HTML, so they can be embedded in a website with relatively little effort.

For the tech services senior product architect, what made a difference, in architectural terms, was the number of connectors Camunda provides. Microservices support stood out for the comms service provider's Technical Manager, while a Digital Engineering Manager at a larger comms service provider felt the solution's Docker support was its most valuable feature.

Conclusion

For many businesses, now is the time to think seriously about replacing legacy BPM solutions. As PeerSpot members have discussed, a new BPM toolset should speed up the design and deployment of business processes. It should be easy to use, flexible and simple in design — suitable for non-expert users. Ideally, the solution should facilitate collaboration, as BPM increasingly involves a broader set of stakeholders than it has traditionally. An open architecture is also preferable, one that embraces APIs. When these factors are present together in a new solution, it offers a viable path to replacing older, more heavyweight legacy systems. Its characteristics provide the basis for improved BPM now, but also as the field continues to evolve into the future.

About PeerSpot

User reviews, candid discussions, and more for enterprise technology professionals.

The Internet has completely changed the way we make buying decisions. We now use ratings and review sites to see what other real users think before we buy electronics, book a hotel, visit a doctor or choose a restaurant. But in the world of enterprise technology, most of the information online and in your inbox comes from vendors. What you really want is objective information from other users. PeerSpot provides technology professionals with a community platform to share information about enterprise solutions.

PeerSpot is committed to offering user-contributed information that is valuable, objective, and relevant. We validate all reviewers with a triple authentication process, and protect your privacy by providing an environment where you can post anonymously and freely express your views. As a result, the community becomes a valuable resource, ensuring you get access to the right information and connect to the right people, whenever you need it.

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About Camunda

Camunda is an open source software company innovating process automation with a developer-friendly approach that is standards-based, highly scalable and collaborative for business and IT. A community of thousands of users across companies such as Allianz, ING and Vodafone design, automate and improve mission-critical business processes end-to-end with Camunda. Our workflow and decision automation tools enable them to build software applications more flexibly, collaboratively and efficiently, gaining the business agility, visibility and scale needed to drive digital transformation. To learn more visit: www,camunda.com