

What Is Your Business Missing Out On?

How The Digital Revolution Has Changed Business and How it Will Continue to Drive Change



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Return on Experience with Unit4 Business World Milestone 5

The Digital Revolution is all around us. It touches our lives from the moment our smartphones wake us until we turn our Kindles off last thing at night. Apps, devices, social networks and huge databases hidden from view but accessible in any connected part of the world are constantly reshaping what we expect from technology. The Digital Revolution has put all human knowledge in the palms of our hands and the latest leaps forward are happening quicker than ever. Our ability to routinely access information, to add to it, publish and consult on it is unparalleled. Except in one place. The place where we spend most of our lives.

Only at work are we routinely denied access to the Digital Revolution's new models and capabilities. The pace of change has been so great that many enterprise solutions installed in the last decade were developed before the emergence of the social, cloud, mobile and analytic tools we take for granted in our personal lives. These new models and capabilities have given rise to new ways of working, but too many organizations fail to achieve the potential productivity gains. Advances in user interfaces (UI), cloud access, subscription models, in-memory analytics and in-context communities are intrinsic to solutions released in the wake of the Digital Revolution. Those installed before they emerged are not making full use of the available technology nor are they giving their users the tools they expect and need to compete.

Milestone 5 – the latest version of Unit4 Business World – helps you unlock the best from your team and adapt to new opportunities and challenges – faster, more cost-effectively and without disruption. Business World leverages the latest innovations of the Digital Revolution, such as predictive analytics and sentiment analysis, to transform complex information into smart information. It makes the concept of “Self-Driving ERP” a reality, empowering your people to make informed decisions, collaborate better and focus on the tasks that matter.

This paper discusses the ways that new and emerging technologies can liberate skilled people from the mundane and menial, so they can focus on high-value activities. It will look at how Unit4 Business World Milestone 5 is harnessing the technology we demand in our personal lives in enterprise applications, and places people at the heart of dynamic organizations.

Our New Technological Expectations

An interesting characteristic of the Digital Revolution is that has subverted the tradition of innovations in business technology feeding the personal tech market. Programming languages, floppy disks, microchips, Ethernet connections, the internet and countless other advances were driven by demand from businesses and government entities. Today personal technology is moving so quickly and is so ubiquitous that many enterprise solutions have been left behind. But not all enterprise solutions are made equal. Solutions exist today that do leverage social, mobile, cloud and analytic technology, and allow organizations to change their perspective on what is possible. It can be tempting to put investments in technology on the backburner when the solutions already in place are familiar and, to one degree or another, get the job done. But consider the enormous advances in technology that have happened since you installed or last upgraded your current solution.

- Smartphones
- Touch screens
- Cloud storage
- Streaming
- Social networks
- E-Commerce
- Software as a service (SaaS)
- The Internet of Things (IoT)
- Driverless cars
- Crowd-sourcing

The list is far from exhaustive, but gives a picture of the elements we demand as consumers: specific functionality, easy-to-use interfaces, flexible on-demand payment structures, collaborative functionality, mobile, connected and with the ability to automate processes.

Meeting User Expectations

At Unit4 we have long recognized the need to bring these elements into our enterprise solutions. Before the Digital Revolution, it was fine for business software to be flexible, agile and meet the needs of the core finance, HR or projects teams. Users would use the systems every day and could be taught to use interfaces that would baffle most millennials. The expectation that software is primarily built for functions – and you had to learn how to use it – disappeared with the arrival of iPhones and iPads. Suddenly you could perform operations via a UI that made it easy to use both for experts and the uninitiated.

This upheaval in expectations coincided with the credit crunch and the subsequent global downturn. Public sector organizations and the corporate world were both forced to work with reduced budgets and often upgrades and software purchases were delayed or even cancelled.

At the same time the Digital Revolution turned the world upside down. The world's largest taxi company, Uber, owns no vehicles. The world's largest accommodation provider, Airbnb, owns no real estate. The world's largest media provider, Facebook, publishes no content.

All rely on excellent, appealing, intuitive UIs that people can access from any device. But although this is an eye-catching feature of the digital revolution, these digital natives do not herald the fate of all industries and sectors. Universities, government departments and large swathes of industry are not going to be swept aside by the emergence of swaggering digital upstarts.

However, if these organizations want to remain relevant and compete, they will have to embrace user experience, data analytics, system integration, cloud deployment, collaborative tools, business analytics, and project management expertise. As the global economic recovery develops, now is the time to look at how enterprise technology has developed. Legacy ERP systems, spreadsheets for planning, email for collaboration, and presentations for stakeholder reporting are no longer capable of supporting the dynamic nature of modern business. In ways both subtle and pronounced, outdated tools contribute to the status quo, resulting in missed opportunities and limited organizational responsiveness.

Solutions have been developed that use state-of-the-art technology to increase competitiveness, manage costs and deliver results.

Unit4 Business World Milestone 5

Unit4 Business World's latest upgrade – Milestone 5 – is that solution. Designed for a mobile future, and supporting a suite of separately installed and upgraded, task-focused Experience Packs, it empowers the business to become self-sufficient and your finance teams to provide the insight and strategic support that your organization relies on.

Our focus when developing the improved user experience was the principle “The Best User Interface is Less User Interface”. Often, UI improvements are merely cosmetic and the underlying processes are the same. Instead of making slight improvements to UIs based on the same processes, the goal must be to simplify business processes by digitizing and automating them to the extent that the majority of traditional business processes will be almost 100% automated, liberating people from tasks that in essence provide no value to the business.

We should challenge every ERP-business process and rethink why a user interface is needed as an interaction point in the process; even ask why we have these processes in the first place.

By using machines and computing power to do what they are best for and applying advanced analytics and intelligence, systems can eliminate the majority of manual steps related to business processes as well as eliminating some business processes altogether. With all the computing power and the data available, there is no need for many of the traditional processes anymore. We can move towards a self-driven, intelligent ERP.

Return on Experience with Unit4 Business World Milestone 5

Unit4's Experience Pack streams combine specific functionality to handle the core tasks finance, HR and projects teams perform. The streams have been designed to allow organizations to easily deploy the technologies discussed, to access key data and capture the context of discussions, plans or projects.

The Return on Experience streams have been developed to achieve:

- Empowered Finance Planning
- Smart Team Work
- Successful People Management

Empowered Finance Planning – Less manual routine work and more high-value activities.

Is your finance a bottleneck? The Finance Office is key to facilitating an organization's success. Yet cost pressures, growth expectations and market dynamics tend to overload finance teams. The traditional way of just working harder doesn't work when you're asked to constantly digest more transactions and deliver more insights at ever greater speed.

The Analyzer, Budget Books and Financial Information Centre Experience Packs combine with Milestone 5 to:

- Improve your data quality
- Speed up analysis
- Empower business teams

Smart Team Work – Less time-consuming tasks and more productive project teams

Are your teams productive? Working in teams is the norm in today's organizations. Yet, teaming up, providing input and sharing insights is often perceived as an overhead and therefore neglected. The traditional way of capturing hours, team meetings and to-dos off-system can never be correct and complete.

The Absences, Communities, People Planner, Task Management and Timesheets Experience Packs combine with Milestone 5 to:

- Reduce overhead
- Enable easy collaboration
- Improve resource planning

Successful People Management – Less rigid structures and better support of employee success

Is performance visible? Organizations are like organisms – they constantly evolve. Yet, if performers are overseen it's hard to evolve in the right direction. The traditional way when only managers appraise their people fails to capture lots of insight when shaping the organization for the future.

The Appraisals, Absences, Communities and Modeler Experience Packs combine with Milestone 5 to:

- Speed up adaptation
- Gain performance insight
- Extend intelligent workflows

Experience your Return on Experience.

Unit4 Business Milestone 5 puts the tools and capabilities of the Digital Revolution in your hands. Together with our Return on Experience Streams, you and your people can put the routine and repetitive in the hands of your enterprise solution and focus on making the core skills and performance that really make the difference to your organization.

The next steps to unlock the power of Business World's latest innovations

- Identify the limits you are currently facing and choose the stream(s) that works best for you.
- Find out what version of Business World you're currently running. If it's before Milestone 4, check out our upgrade guide for the best ways to benefit from the latest platform technology.
- Explore all the new capabilities and online product tours at ERP.Unit4.com
- Give your local account manager a call to discuss the options available.

To find out more about how we can help, visit erp.unit4.com



About Unit4

Unit4 is a leading provider of enterprise applications empowering people in service organizations. With annual revenue north of 500M Euro and more than 4000 employees world-wide, Unit4 delivers ERP, industry-focused and best-in-class applications. Thousands of organizations from sectors including professional services, education, public services, not-for-profit, real estate, wholesale, and financial services benefit from Unit4 solutions. Unit4 is in business for people.

unit4software.co.uk

Unit4 Business Software Limited
St. George's Hall, Easton-in-Gordano
Bristol BS20 0PX, United Kingdom

T +44 (0) 1275 377200
E info.uk@unit4.com

unit4software.com

201 - 4420 Chatterton Way
Victoria, BC V8X 5J2, Canada

T 1-888-247-3776
B blog.unit4software.com
E info@unit4software.com

unit4.com

Unit4 N.V.

Stationspark 1000
3364 DA Sliedrecht, Postbus 102
3360 AC Sliedrecht, The Netherlands

T +31 (0)184 44 44 44
F +31 (0)184 44 44 45
E info.group@unit4.com

1000 Elm Street, Suite 801
Manchester, NH 03101, USA

T 1-888-247-3776
B blog.unit4software.com
E info@unit4software.com

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