

> DECISION MATRIX: SELECTING A BUSINESS PROCESS MANAGEMENT VENDOR (COMPETITOR FOCUS)

Choosing the next-generation business process
management platform

Ovum

03 March 2010

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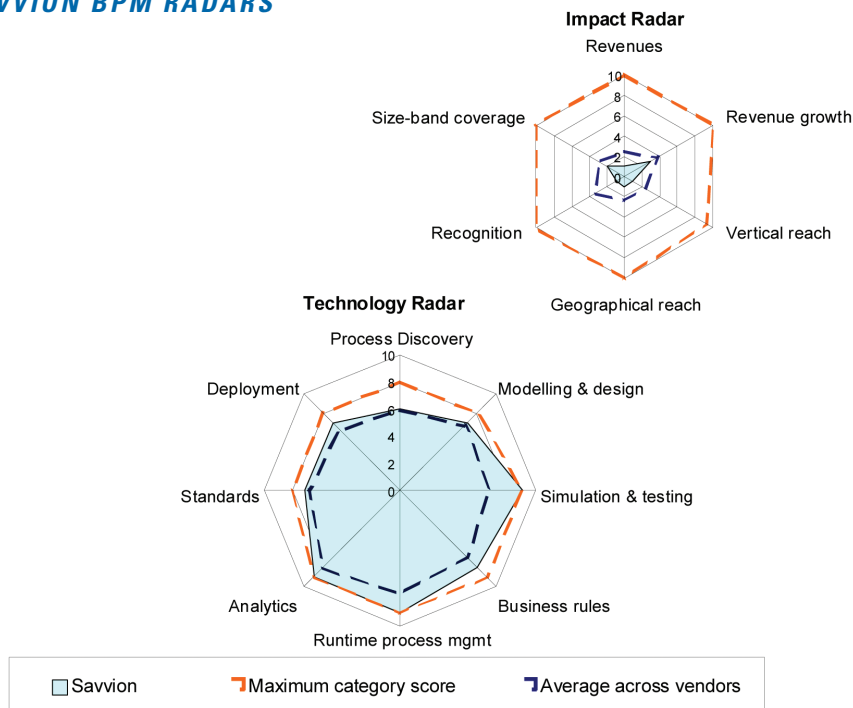
VENDOR ANALYSIS

Savvion: BPM Radars

Savvion's performance in the BPM Decision Matrix benchmarking proves that small, specialist vendors can excel in this format. Founded in 1994, Savvion was privately-held until January 2010, when it was acquired by Progress Software for \$49m. Over the last decade and a half, Savvion has garnered a reputation for innovation, embracing all process patterns, regardless of whether they are centred on documents, systems, human interactions, projects, decisions, cases or events.

Today, Savvion's BPM Suite is an integrated set of modules for process modelling, documentation, automation, optimisation, and monitoring. The suite is segmented into three principal areas, each corresponding to a stage in a typical process lifecycle: process discovery and analysis, traditionally associated with business analysts; automation of process execution, carried out by process developers; and process optimisation tasks, typically involving line-of-business executives.

SAVVION BPM RADARS



Source: Ovum

These three phases of the process lifecycle map very neatly onto Savvion's principal modules: business process analysis (BPA), BPM systems (BPMS) and business process improvement (BPI). These three modules can be deployed together as a suite, or entirely independently from each other. This is an advantage both for Savvion and for its customers. The vendor's customers are given more choice in what to deploy, and the vendor can enter a customer's account from several directions and engage with business and IT constituents alike. Of course, should the three modules be deployed in a suite, Savvion also provides a central repository, which ensures that all process artefacts can be handed over between the modules seamlessly and presented in a manner most appropriate for a given audience.

Each of the three principal modules has a clearly defined functional remit. The remit of BPA is to cover process discovery, analysis, modelling and simulation. Here, the mainstay tool is Process Modeller, a graphical modelling environment based on BPMN. The tool has several unique features, such as gestures for touch-screen devices, or a tabular process design view that ought to be familiar to developers. Process Modeller can also connect to Microsoft Project and import project descriptions in order to short-cut process definition steps. With Process Modeller's ability to handle Gantt chart views, Savvion can also support project-based process patterns. Throughout the BPA phase, all associated artefacts can be deposited in the Process Asset Manager repository and accessed by other modules.

Once the BPA phase is complete, processes can be transferred to BPMS for pre-execution modifications and execution. The first step is handled by Savvion BPM Studio. Here, process models are transformed into an executable format that can run on Savvion BPM Server, a proven scalable and fault-tolerant execution engine that supports high-throughput, mission-critical processes. Interestingly, Savvion has chosen XML Process Definition Language (XPDL), rather than BPEL, for process execution. The vendor justifies this choice on the grounds that XPDL allows for more powerful orchestrations than BPEL, which is a prerequisite for a single runtime to execute the full range of process patterns. It will be interesting to see whether Savvion will support BPMN 2.0 execution in the future. The latest iteration of BPM is executable, promises vastly-improved orchestration, and its earlier version is the graphical notation of choice in Savvion BPA.

In addition to the core BPMS features, Savvion also offers its native BRMS and document management capabilities. The latter was labelled Document Management System (DMS), possibly in order to avoid confusion due to the fact that Savvion can integrate easily with the incumbent enterprise content management (ECM) tools. Savvion's native BRMS was born out of necessity following SAP's acquisition of Yasu, Savvion's original BRMS OEM partner. The new BRMS combines a comprehensive range of rule execution features with a business-friendly rule design studio. As is the case with Savvion DMS, the vendor also provides out-of-the-box integrators for third-party business rules packages, should that be a requirement.

Although many of the process initiatives would not extend beyond process execution, Savvion offers BPI module. The vendor's BPI component can monitor and improve processes, regardless of whether these are executed within Savvion's BPMS or not, or indeed regardless of whether they are executed within BPMS systems at all. With Savvion's BusinessExpert, the vendor's core BPI module, business users can define, monitor and analyse metrics. These analysis capabilities benefit from the fact that Savvion embeds an online analytical processing (OLAP) engine, which means that users have access to the full range of BI capabilities. BusinessExpert also provides process notification, which can be used for event detection. Upon the identification of a combination of events, BusinessExpert can issue notifications and initiate process instances. While falling short of a fully-featured complex event processing (CEP) system, the prospect of connecting BusinessExpert with the market-leading Apama CEP product from Progress Software's portfolio is tantalising.

Recommendation: Shortlist

Based primarily on its outstanding performance in the Technology assessment exercise, Ovum places Savvion in the Shortlist category. Savvion extracted decent revenues for a privately-held BPM specialist, but without leaving a profound mark from the Market Impact point of view. Due to Savvion's market profile, further exacerbated by the vendor's focus on the North American region, the vendor did not obtain enough responses in the end-user sentiment survey and subsequently failed to register a score in this assessment. Following the takeover, Savvion's portfolio may receive a market

profile boost, and Ovum is looking forward to gauging users' perceptions of Savvion legacy products in 18 months.

In terms of the Technology assessment, Savvion achieves the second-highest overall score. Savvion shares the top score with another vendor in Simulation and Testing, Runtime Process Management and Analytics. The vendor also performs well in the Deployment category and in Business Rules, due to the recent addition of its native business rules engine. Although Savvion receives above-average score in all Technology assessment categories, Process Discovery is one possible area for improvement.

Much like other BPM specialists, Savvion adopted a go-to-market strategy that was predominantly sector-agnostic. The vendor had gained traction in the traditional areas of BPM spending, chiefly financial services and telecommunications, but also in energy, utilities, life sciences and manufacturing. The vendor approaches the market through a relatively orthodox mix of direct sales and market channels, based on relationships with systems integrators and local implementation partners.

Savvion also found a very good outlet for providing a strategic BPM platform for business process outsourcing (BPO) services providers, such as Genpact or Progeon. Prior to the acquisition, Savvion was exploring opportunities for providing further services around its process platform, such as services and education, or initiatives like the Business Solutions Alliance Program (BSAP), which offers domain experts the option to build process-driven applications on Savvion's platform.

Overall, Savvion's BPMS is impressive. The platform can handle virtually any process scenario with a single, modular and well-articulated product set. Also worthy of note are its user friendly interfaces, its clear hand-off between the modules and its ability to adapt user experience layers, depending on the target audience. Savvion also has very lucid positioning and a clear future improvement roadmap for each of its modules.

Of course, some of the plans may change following the vendor's \$49m acquisition by Progress Software. Ovum is optimistic regarding the take-over. Given Progress' success with its middleware technologies, it was always somewhat strange that its BPM strategy extended only as far as an agreement to jointly market and sell Lombardi BPM and the Progress

Sonic ESB. The relationship was cut short by IBM's acquisition of Lombardi in December 2009. Whether or not Progress made an attempt to acquire its former BPM partner Lombardi first remains a matter for idle speculation, but it is clear that in the long run, Savvion's technology should provide a better fit with Progress' product portfolio and corporate culture.

While Progress' CEP and SOA products are the logical points of overlap, BPM could be a very potent tool for the orchestration of legacy assets exposed by Progress' OpenEdge or DataDirect product lines. On the other hand, there is also an opportunity in boosting Savvion's incipient SaaS strategy. These were primarily related to the opportunities for serving web-based process analysis, but Savvion was not ruling out venturing into a multi-tenant process execution platform. While Progress may not be immediately associated with SaaS, with its proven track record of independent software vendor (ISV) SaaS enablement, Progress' experience should not be underestimated.

Sections extracted on: 03 March 2010

Reference Code: DMTC2329

Publication Date: 1 March 2010

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WORLDWIDE HEADQUARTERS

Progress Software Corporation, 14 Oak Park, Bedford, MA 01730 USA
Tel: +1 781 280-4000 Fax: +1 781 280-4095 On the Web at: www.progress.com

For regional international office locations and contact information, please refer to the Web page below:

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Rev. 04/10