



How to **Create a Single Source of Truth:** A Guide for Business Transformation



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1. Introduction

Who would have predicted that by 2018, more than 3 million workers globally will be supervised by a “robo-boss”? At least, that’s the way things are trending according to Gartner’s report “Top Strategic Predictions for 2017 and Beyond: Surviving the Storm Winds of Digital Disruption.” Change in every direction is affecting businesses faster than ever before, but this is especially true in terms of new technologies. The sheer complexity, volume, and cost of keeping pace is enough to keep most business owners and professionals up at night.

Many of the most critical challenges businesses face stem from new technologies and digital transformations. The evolution of technology has been on a continuous upward slope, bringing all kinds of new opportunities to businesses. But the opportunities aren’t without challenges, some of which include:

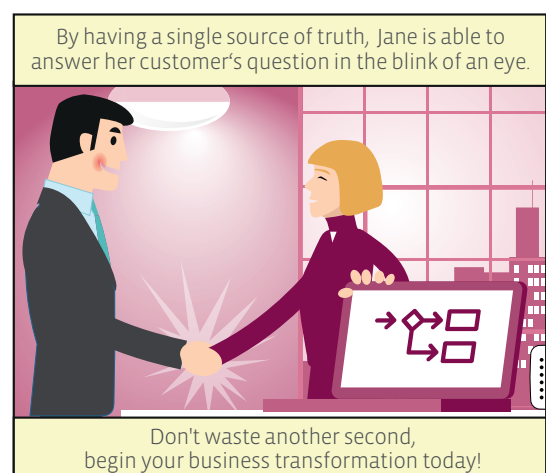
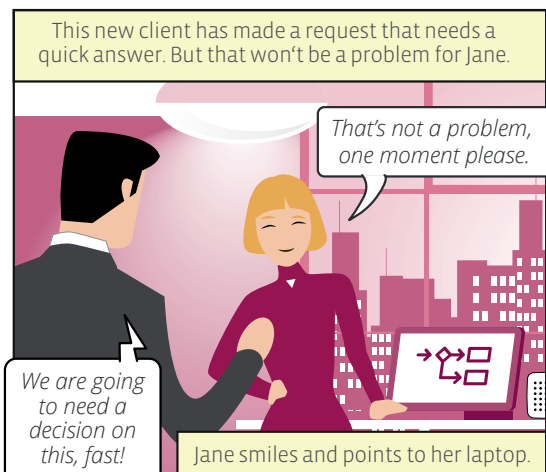
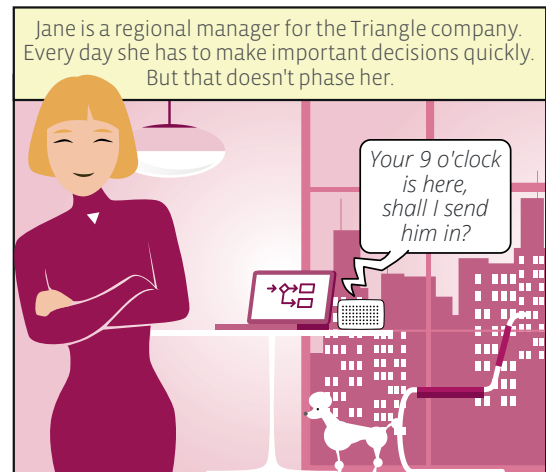
- › New, shifting, and complex regulations. Staying in compliance is more challenging than ever as more regulations are enacted to govern the increasingly global interactions between companies. How do you ensure that your company is not only up to date on all the latest laws, but also incorporating them immediately into daily processes? Delays in incorporating new regulations can result in costly mistakes.
- › Customer experience focus. Customer service and customer satisfaction aren’t enough any more. Now, businesses need to keep customers satisfied with flawless touch points throughout the entire customer journey.
- › The ability to decipher volumes of intelligent data. As companies gain more and more ways to capture information on their customers and potential clients, the amounts of data they need to analyze grows exponentially. Without a tool to process it or analyze it, that data becomes worthless and companies could lose out on valuable insights about their customer’s preferences and demands.
- › The battle for talent. Attracting and retaining top talent takes a lot more than ping pong tables and catered meals. Employees want to feel empowered and supported in their roles in addition to having access to company perks and professional development opportunities.
- › Organizational alignment and transparency. One of the most-repeated complaints from employees – no matter the sector or type of company – is a lack of clear communication from management. This is a challenge that many businesses have. Leadership is focused on customer-facing activities and often, awareness about internal changes or processes suffer from a lack of attention. Employees don’t know the latest metrics their managers are trying to reach or the new process for submitting expense reimbursement tickets. Sometimes, team or departmental hierarchies are unclear and transparency between departments is even more opaque.

In business, any one of these challenges could affect your bottom line. And if your company suffers from more than one of these problems, it could have far-reaching repercussions. How do companies keep pace with these changes and new challenges? How can they survive as new technologies replace old ways of doing business? There’s only one solution: to evolve and adapt.

But undertaking change within companies is often difficult – especially if it’s on a large scale. According to an Oracle/Forbes Insights survey of 534 global executives conducted for the “Making the Change: Planning, Executing and Measuring Successful Business Transformation,” 48% of executives believe their organization is only somewhat or not at all prepared to successfully execute a business transformation today. While those executives all probably have differing problems that they feel are preventing their business transformation, there’s one area that could help them all get closer to their goals: creating a single source of truth

A SINGLE SOURCE OF TRUTH SAVES THE DAY

by  SIGNAVIO



Signavio. What else?

2. What is a Single Source of Truth?

In this context, a single source of truth means having a definitive collection of all the information employees need to do their jobs effectively and efficiently. It will include information on roles and responsibilities along with tasks and workflows. This includes information on internal processes and procedures, such as HR-related activities like vacation requests or employee referrals, or internal operations, such as expense reimbursement or contract negotiations with outside vendors. It can also include processes specific to certain departments.

Most companies have many different sources of information that employees need to consult on a regular or semi-regular basis. These range from legal documents detailing regulations to onboarding manuals to specific process or software manuals. Consolidating all of these in one place will not only help your employees be more efficient with their time, it will also help in the case of an audit. It also makes implementing updates much easier because it eliminates the need for reprinting paper copies and updates automatically.

3. Why Do You Need a Single Source of Truth?

There are many benefits to creating and maintaining a single source of truth.

First, it creates a knowledge base that captures the current-state of all your business processes. It allows employees to contribute with their own processes and share institutional knowledge that might otherwise be shared in an ad-hoc way or lost altogether. The resulting knowledge base can then continue to expand and grow alongside your business.

Second, it serves as a single point of reference for you and your employees. Not only does onboarding and offboarding new employees become easier, but existing staff can now easily locate the answers to many of their common questions instead of pestering colleagues or other departments looking for resources. This saves everyone time and provides an opportunity for better collaboration on new issues, instead of wasting time re-creating resources that might already exist but no one can find.

Third, creating a single source of truth using the cloud solves accessibility issues stemming from using a local drive. Instead of forcing all employees to work from one location or a designated office, you can equip your employees to better face the globalization of your industry. This not only allows you to focus on hiring the best talent regardless of geography, it also means your current employees aren't tied down to their desks.

Creating a single source of truth presents an opportunity to go beyond typical collaboration and enter a new phase: crowdsourcing solutions for problems. If you've utilized a single source of truth and are benefiting in the ways mentioned above, employees can begin to see where there are inherent problems with certain processes or where pieces of information are missing. Colleagues can share information more conveniently and brainstorm solutions in one place. This takes collaboration beyond the typical sharing of information and into a new level of sharing solutions.

4. How can a single source of truth change your business?

In addition to the benefits listed above, establishing a single source of truth can also assist with business transformation. While everyone's business transformation project is different, a single source of truth can lay a strong foundation for success in three ways: by creating a process-based

approach, by establishing a culture of transparency, and by providing an opportunity for analysis and retrospection. Each of these things will go a long way in making sure your business transformation project will not only succeed, but will be sustainable and more widely accepted.

Any business transformation project will impact the company's processes, sometimes in ways that you didn't predict, especially if not all processes were documented or if there wasn't a central repository where updates could be made. But if you have a single source of truth established, you have a central meeting point for all employees where all processes are visible. Everyone is working off the same source. This also eliminates paper-based documentation, which reduces the risk of updates or changes being buried in a confusing revision history.

Another must-have for any successful business transformation project is transparency. Change can be challenging enough on its own, not to mention when it's cloaked in secrecy or rolled out without explanation. Instead, use a single source of truth to keep employees updated on current and future plans. This way, everyone knows or has the ability to find out the same information. Keeping plans and materials visible will improve collaboration and encourage knowledge sharing across the organization. And an added benefit: employees feel more satisfied at work because they know what's going on with the company and what's expected of them.

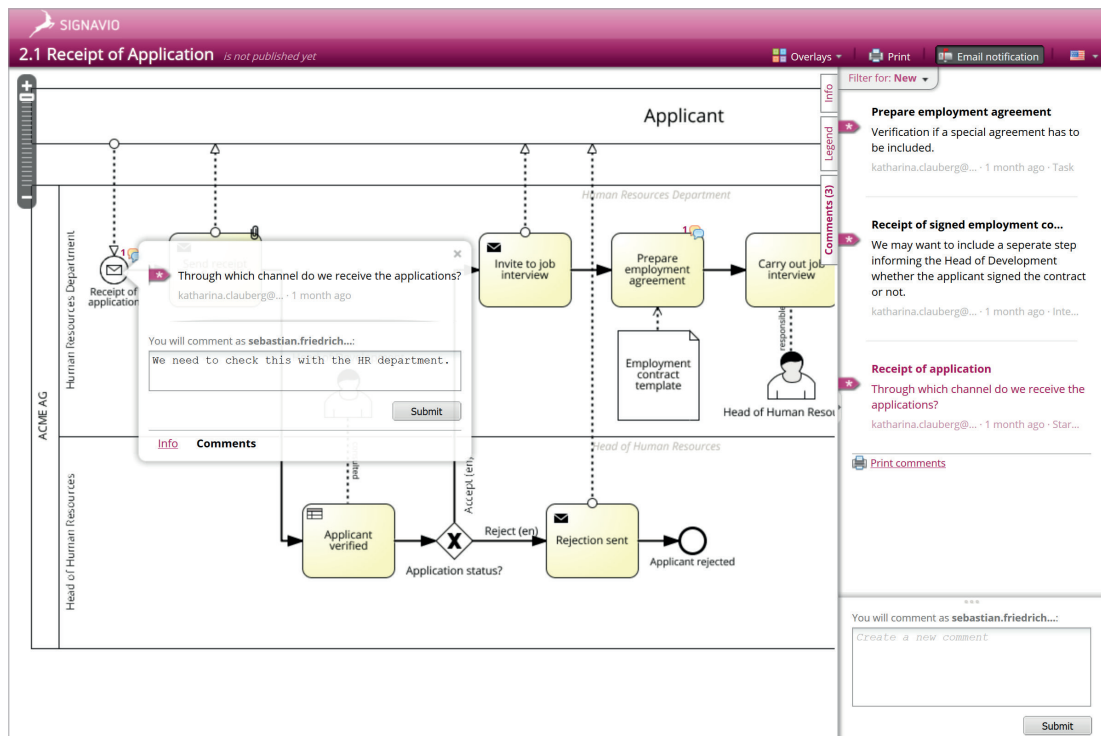
Before, during, and after any business transformation project business professionals should analyze their processes. Many focus solely on the "to-be" state that they are trying to achieve without taking the time to document the current-state. This often means that they don't fully understand how the processes will need to change in order to complete the business transformation project. Then, after the project is finished, there's a hesitancy to evaluate it and analyze how successful it was. But all of these are necessary steps in undertaking successful business transformation projects. With a single source of truth, it's easier to see gaps in knowledge and address them throughout the transformation project, instead of dealing with them afterwards. It's also a convenient way to leverage the data collected from processes to gain insights. These can highlight places where bottlenecks occur or where processes could be more efficient.

5. Using Signavio to create a Single Source of Truth

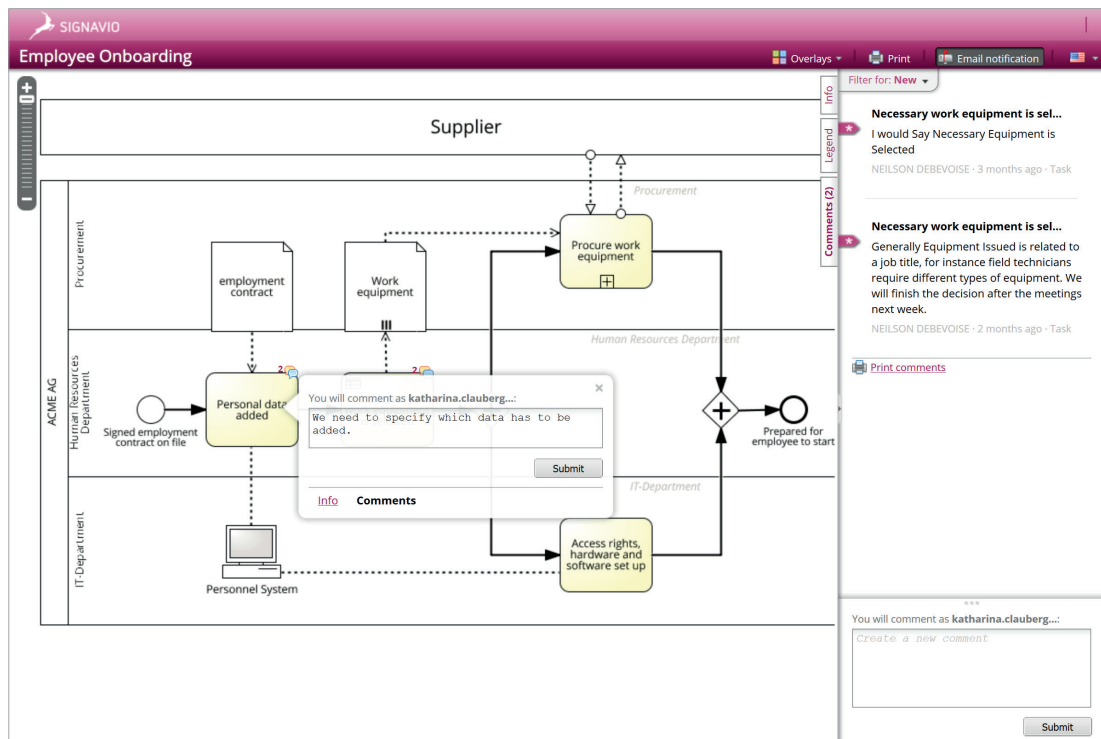
Signavio's Business Transformation Suite makes it easy to establish a single source of truth. Since it was designed with collaboration in mind from start to finish, commenting and sharing functions allow users to conveniently access information and contribute knowledge. In fact, the very heart of the suite lies in Signavio Collaboration Hub, a central meeting point for all employees to exchange ideas and share information.

Let's look at a specific example so you can see how it works. We can take one of the issues discussed above – improving the employee onboarding experience – and see how it plays out at a process level. Businesses want to ensure that their company is recruiting, onboarding, and retaining top-notch talent in order to differentiate themselves within the market. The easiest way to do that is at a process level.

The first step would be to model your current state process. This is the best way to see how many people from how many different departments and external vendors are involved in the process from start to finish. Then, you can conveniently share the mapped process with your entire team or even participants who don't have licenses. Simply invite all stakeholders to comment on the process by e-mail. The user receives a personalized link, which opens the diagram in a web-browser. They can then comment or provide suggestions for improvement directly on the individual process steps. This not only lets you see everyone's comments in one document, it also ensures that all the institutional knowledge relating to the process is collected in one place.



For this example, the application and onboarding processes are modeled in Signavio Process Manager. Employees and managers can comment with questions or add input about the process very easily. Once their comments are addressed, the process owner can mark them as “factored in” and this archives them for easy reference later, if needed.



After all the comments are collected and factored in, if applicable, you can start to improve your process based on the feedback. Using Signavio, you can see the revision history and save each version with comments that let others know exactly what was updated between versions.

Once the final process is approved and published, all stakeholders can refer back to it at any time using a web browser from anywhere. If you're using Signavio Business Transformation Suite, whenever an approved change is made to a process, it's updated automatically in Signavio Collaboration Hub.

Signavio Collaboration Hub provides all the details you need to know about a process in a simple format. In a dashboard, it lists the description of the process, the trigger activity and all activities in the process, the process owner, and the roles and responsibilities involved throughout the entire process. You can navigate to another tab that summarizes all of the activities. Another tab provides a diagram of the process. Comments on the process are also easily viewed at the bottom of the dashboard.

The screenshot shows the Signavio Collaboration Hub interface for a process named "Procure parts". The interface has a purple header with the Signavio logo and user information. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Documentation:** This process concerns the purchase of production parts and is held regularly during the execution of the order as well as product development instead. This process can occur at various points within the company.
- Process trigger:** Receive purchase requisition
- Activities:** Source Material, Specify and quantify requirements, Complete a purchase order, Check purchase order
- Roles:** ACME AG, Business Department, Approver, Purchase Department
- Process Maturity Level:** high
- Process Owner:** Peter Doe
- Input/Output documents:** Purchase Order, Delivery Report, Delivery Exception Report
- Relevant for Audit:** Yes
- Process level:** A diagram showing a pyramid with a red triangle at the top.
- Process result:** Deliver from stock, Parts Procured, Parts Not Delivered
- IT Systems:** ERP-System, ERP-System (en)
- Linked documents:** Delivery Exception Report, Delivery Report, Purchase Order

At the bottom, there is a section for "Comments (0)".

Signavio Collaboration Hub allows you to store all the relevant information about a process in a single place, while encouraging users to interact directly in the portal. This creates a level of transparency not attainable with any other tool.

Using this method to create a single source of truth allows you to avoid cumbersome, time consuming email chains or searching through folders for the latest version of documents because it's a self-service portal allowing everyone to easily access relevant information. Responsibilities, roles, process hierarchies, and process steps can all be viewed at a glance.

If you're interested in seeing how you can create a single source of truth with Signavio, you can request a demo or sign up for a 30-day free trial at www.signavio.com/try.

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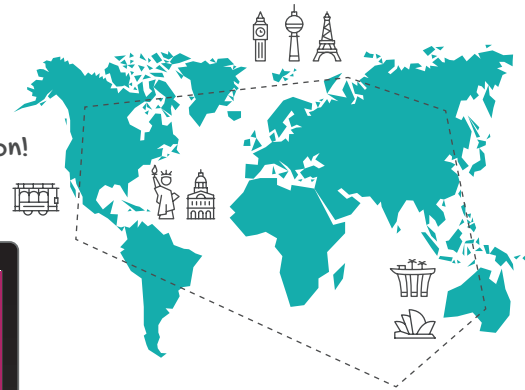
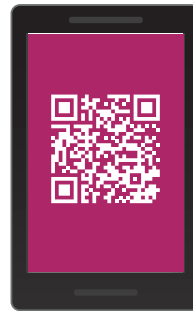


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