Deep Analysis

Nintex

Founded 2006 | HQ Bellevue, WA | 500+ employees | $150M revenue (approx. 2019)

Nintex is one of the most inventive digital process automation companies in the market. The company is successfully executing an innovative sales and marketing plan targeting enterprise-wide deployments of workflow while also pursuing sophisticated process implementations and technology innovations that set it apart.

The Company

Nintex is a privately held company that started in Melbourne, Australia, in 2006 and relocated its corporate headquarters in 2007 to the US (thereby moving closer to its strategic partners – Microsoft, Adobe, and Salesforce). In 2018, Thoma Bravo acquired a majority stake in the firm, giving the company deeper financial pockets. After launching with a successful, inexpensive workflow product for Microsoft SharePoint, Nintex added a workflow offering for Office 365, then launched the platform-independent Nintex Workflow Cloud. Nintex further expanded its portfolio by acquiring Drawloop Technologies (2015) for document generation, Promapp (2018) for process mapping and modeling, and EnableSoft (2019) for robotic process automation (RPA).

Nintex targets the "process automation for everyone" market.[1] Initially focused on Microsoft platforms, it has expanded with a platform-independent offering, Nintex Workflow Cloud, and also has established strategic partnerships with Salesforce, Adobe, Box, and Dropbox. Nintex has gone beyond the typical low-code process automation software for application developers and business analysts by creating easy-to-use, intuitive automation tools that use clicks, not code, for everyday businesspeople and technology professionals.

Nintex's no-code software is targeted specifically at manual and semi-automated processes that workgroups and departments have previously been unable to automate without large and expensive IT projects. The company's goal is to make process tools pervasive in the enterprise, available to virtually everyone who owns or participates in a business process. And yet, Nintex has not rested on its laurels with low-cost software that is sticking in the market. Through rapid-fire acquisitions, Nintex has moved ahead of many other process automation vendors – particularly with expansions that integrate process automation with RPA, process modeling, and document generation.[2] As a result, the firm has also positioned its portfolio

to support more complex and strategic business processes in the back office, front office, and across departments.

Our advice? Put Nintex on your watchlist. The firm shows significant innovation in its easy, no-code approach toward businesspeople, its integration with process modeling and natural language processing (NLP), a new data lake offering, and its recent acquisition of RPA software integrated with both process modeling and workflow automation.

Market and Technology Positioning

Nintex early on adopted a stealth strategy combining low cost and easy, low-code/no-code deployment to win traction in business groups and IT departments. This successful approach allowed Nintex to grow quickly, making strategic acquisitions along the way. The firm now has 12 offices serving more than 8,000 customers and a global network of implementation partners with vertical and regional expertise (in addition to its strategic technology partners).

Nintex targets a number of industries, particularly financial services, public sector, manufacturing, healthcare, and life sciences. Although Nintex's competitive advantage is its easy-to-use software for citizen developers in workgroups, the vendor also targets complex, strategic low-code processes that require deep process visibility, compliance, and complex orchestration. As part of its growth strategy for automating complex, large-scale business processes Nintex combines easy-to-use software with a strong technical underpinning, such as a data lake on the back end to support AI/ML.

Nintex's sweet spot is organizations that have 500-600 discrete processes that decision-makers seek to automate, with many of these processes mission-critical to supporting and servicing the customer journey. Given its no-code footprint, Nintex also has numerous enterprise customers that have automated thousands of processes, and a government customer that has automated approximately 120,000 processes. The key to this sales and marketing approach? Nintex focuses on being easy to use and highly intuitive, and it offers low price points that encourage expansion and keep total cost of ownership (TCO) low.

Figure 1 provides a high-level overview of Nintex's strategic positioning. (Note: this radar graphic is not a product analysis or product rating; rather, it represents vendor positioning within the digital process automation market.)
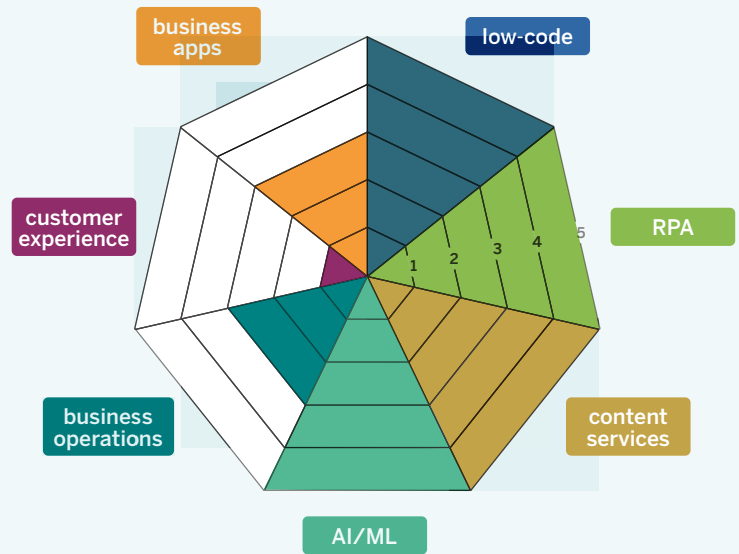
A deeper analysis of the categories on the graph shows:

→ **Nintex shines at low-code; in fact, the company can legitimately claim to have a highly innovative *no-code* product that spans process modeling and workflow design.** The software is highly visual and intuitive, offering an ease of use more commonly found in consumer apps. Customers that implement process mapping and modeling (Nintex Promapp) alongside Nintex Workflow Cloud can describe processes in plain English, then use natural language processing to match the text to standard workflow actions and automatically generate the skeleton of a workflow process. (See Figure 2 for an example of a process model generated by Promapp.) These descriptions are stored as parent/child process snippets that can be reused in multiple processes. Other no-

code innovative features in Nintex Promapp include:

→ A user can make a Google-like search request in Nintex Promapp to find a previously automated process – for example, "how do I submit a purchase request?" The software will find the relevant process and guide the user through it.

→ Process descriptions are reusable snippets; the Nintex workflow designer looks to see if tasks have already been created by prior applications and then reuses those pre-existing tasks.

→ Workflows can be generated automatically from simple-to-use process documents.

→ A businessperson can use a filter, for example, to request all processes that integrate with SAP.

→ Users can click on any activity associated with an automation and the software will display the associated workflow.

→ Checklists provide instant visibility into the status and progress of any mapped process – including keeping all participants notified when their input or participation in a specific process is required.

→ The software automatically examines activities and tasks to determine how much time is spent on tasks, the wait time between tasks, and how to improve the process, and it provides that information to the businessperson.

Figure 1
Nintex's Strategic Positioning

Legend

low-code
0 – no emphasis on low-code
1 – business developer focus
3 – extensive low-code tooling
5 – general purpose low-code market

RPA
0 – no RPA offering
1 – custom integration
3 – 1+ partners/OOB connectors
5 – deep partnership/native RPA

content services
0 – no content support
1 – native content support
3 – partnership with 1+ content providers
5 – native content services/ management

AI/ML
0 – no focus on AI/ML
1 – initial insights/ experimentation
3 – multiple AI/ML deployments (e.g., capture, next best action, NLP)
5 – native AI/ML in DPA product

business operations
0 – focus on CX only
1 – targeting the back office
3 – pre-built use cases for back office
5 – strategic focus on complex business operations

customer experience
0 – focus on biz ops only
1 – focus on CX for biz ops
3 – targeting sales and marketing
5 – strategic focus on end-to-end CX-centric processes

business apps
0 – no focus on business apps
1 – pre-built templates/forms for specific processes
3 – 1+ pre-built apps >50% packaged
5 – fully packaged apps

➡ **Nintex entered the RPA market in 2019 by acquiring EnableSoft (product name: Foxtrot RPA).** *This positions Nintex as one of four digital process automation vendors 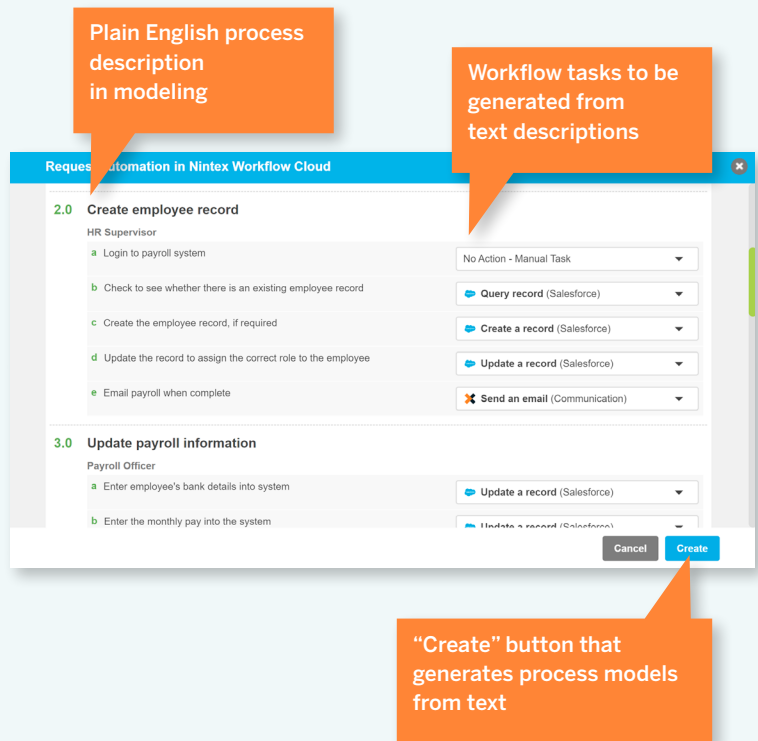to add RPA to their portfolios.* Nintex recently released a gateway between workflow and RPA – called Nintex Gateway – that allows workflow users to get lists of available bots, determine what data needs to be exchanged, and call and schedule bots. Nintex Gateway gives Nintex a lever for expanding RPA within its process automation-installed base and in winning new RPA/process deals.

Strategically, Nintex is not pursuing the standalone RPA market but instead is focused on combining RPA and digital process automation. The firm sees RPA as a type of automation that belongs under the digital process automation umbrella given that many critical processes span multiple departments and can involve hundreds of actions and people. Nintex also sees RPA as a transitional technology on the path to AI/ML and will most likely add AI/ML modules to RPA over the next 12-18 months. Nintex foresees that AI/ML will provide design guidance by identifying three elements: the best process design to use, patterns, and best practices.

➡ **Nintex's process-centric workflow offerings are built on and/or easily integrate with the Microsoft stack for document support.** Workflow offerings include Nintex Workflow for SharePoint (on-premises); Nintex Workflow for Office 365; and Nintex Workflow Cloud (platform-independent). Nintex has built integrations with Salesforce, Box, Dropbox, OneDrive, Google Drive, and several others, and can integrate with (and store records such as proposals and quotes in) any system of record.

Figure 2
Example of a process model generated by Promapp (Workflow Generator)

Nintex Workflow Generator takes text descriptions of tasks and activities, uses NLP to match descriptions with standard workflow actions, then (with one click) generates a workflow.

Plain English process description in modeling

Workflow tasks to be generated from text descriptions

"Create" button that generates process models from text

The product's ability to generate documents from workflow is both innovative and a significant differentiator from other process automation solutions. Document creation examples include creating marketing content, invoices, and other on-demand PDFs as email attachments. Note, however, that the Nintex Process Platform is not in the traditional customer communications market but offers a document generation capability that is designed for the Salesforce ecosystem (Nintex Drawloop) and also functions independently. The Nintex platform also is capable of coupling Nintex RPA with Nintex's native DocGen; for example by creating a spreadsheet with names and addresses, having a bot read each row, and calling DocGen to send outbound letters that may need to be e-signed (using Nintex Sign powered by Adobe Sign, or other solutions like DocuSign). In essence, this example is high-volume document/mail merge coupled with compliance and audit trails.

→ **Nintex already has a deep, innovative commitment to AI/ML** by 1) using natural language processing to create user-friendly, text descriptions of processes, and 2) providing a data lake within workflow to store process data then accessible to AI/ML. Using NLP, Nintex Promapp creates process definitions as user-friendly, descriptive text (see Figure 2), which is then integrated with the workflow designer and interpreted by NLP so the user can click a button to generate a process model. Alternatively, a bot could conceivably "click the button," although this feature is not yet available.

The company is also launching a new data lake within the process automation product to collect process data (e.g., how many workflows are running, who is interacting

with them, how they are performing) and then use AI/ML to analyze the data and suggest improvements, identify and remedy bottlenecks, and design new workflows. For example, AI/ML could ascertain that the user is creating a certain type of process and recommend additional steps for it. Nintex is considering many more integration points with AI/ML, such as 1) monitoring processes that execute at night to determine if certain of them are fragile, and then firing off an alert, or 2) using customer response data to determine the happy path when designing processes.

→ **Nintex has a deep focus on business operations, particularly with processes for everyone and processes that involve complex case handling.** For example, Nintex works with eight of the top 10 pharma companies to tackle critical workflows such as clinical patient trials and FDA submissions. Nintex also concentrates on helping with organization-wide provisioning processes and employee onboarding. Customer examples across industries include Abu Dhabi Department of Transportation (worker productivity), ANZ Bank (loan applications), Arizona Electric Power Cooperative (engineering drawings), and Northumbrian Water (safety and compliance).[3]

→ **Although most deployments automate back-office processes, Nintex also targets customer experience within state and local government.** Several government agencies use Nintex to process constituent correspondence. Others rely on Nintex to not only survey constituents anonymously but also capture and process the data results. Examples of the content managed and captured by customers include survey responses, client input/requests, external partner information collected for orders,

agreements, proposals, quotes, and correspondence.

→ **Nintex provides users with a robust gallery of process accelerator templates rather than selling packaged apps.** This includes pre-built process workflows, bots, and connectors to other systems, all of which can be downloaded by customers.[4] Because the Nintex platform does not require coding, it is relatively straightforward for users to move from these accelerators to deployable processes.

Our Opinion

Nintex is one of the most inventive digital process automation companies in the market. The company is successfully executing an innovative sales and marketing plan targeting enterprise-wide deployments of workflow while also pursuing more sophisticated process implementations. The company's technology innovations are also leaps and bounds ahead of what many competitors are doing, particularly in integrating NLP with process modeling, adding a data lake to the process automation product in support of AI/ML, integrating RPA with workflow and process modeling, and supporting document generation capabilities. Nintex stands out from the crowd because it has been aggressive in adding complementary products (i.e., modeling, document generation, and RPA) to its workflow software product and then integrating them into a holistic offering.

Advice to Buyers

Put Nintex on the short list if you are interested in a broadly targeted, no-code product that enables businesspeople (also known as citizen developers, or, more specifically, operations professionals and business analysts) within workgroups and departments to build their own applications. Also put Nintex on the short list if looking for a digital process automation vendor for structured processes that is integrated with SharePoint, Office 365, Salesforce, or other popular back-end databases and systems of record. And finally, put Nintex on the list if you are seeking strong process mapping and modeling capabilities for a no-code workflow product for wide-area deployments and departmental applications, and/or a workflow solution integrated with RPA. When evaluating Nintex, compare its innovations in no-code and NLP with other digital process automation products. Also get a deep briefing and roadmap as to how the new RPA product will be integrated into existing Nintex software.

Endnotes

1   Nintex doesn't necessarily use the phrase "process automation for everyone." The terminology was coined by Deep Analysis to describe vendors that are focused on creating a market for a general purpose business tool that is widely used throughout an organization. Their objective is to make process automation software usage equivalent to other widely used, packaged end-user tools such as Microsoft Office, Visio, Adobe Acrobat, and so forth.

2   See RPA and Process Automation – It's An Upside Down World, https://www.deep-analysis.net/2019/10/rpa-and-process-automation-its-an-upside-down-world/

3   Other customer references include:
    City of Garland (Texas): https://www.nintex.com/case-study/city-of-garland/
    San Francisco Metropolitan Transit Authority: https://www.nintex.com/case-study/san-francisco-municipal-transportation-agency/
    Hillphoenix: https://www.nintex.com/case-study/hillphoenix-digital-inspections/

4   The gallery can be accessed from https://gallery.nintex.com/

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Strengths

→ Strategy that spans workflow for everyone and also process automation for complex business processes

→ Quick to acquire and integrate products that enhance its existing portfolio

→ Easy-to-use, intuitive no-code software for businesspeople, operations professionals, business analysts, and application developers

→ Well-positioned to capitalize on Microsoft, Salesforce, and other strategic platforms

→ Generating $150 million in annual revenue and strong financial backing from private equity firm Thoma Bravo

→ Innovative, low-code combination of document generation, NLP, and process modeling

→ Native data lake on the back end for storing process data accessible by analytics and AI/ML

Aspirations

→ Gain market share in sophisticated complex workflow deployments (i.e., beyond wide-area workflow for everyone) in SMBs and enterprises

→ Use workgroup/departmental deployments to win deals for larger digital process implementations (back office, front office, cross-functional)

→ Significantly grow the process modeling/mining business (Promapp)

→ Aggressively integrate RPA with process modeling and digital process automation

→ Aggressively leverage AI/ML throughout process modeling, workflow, and RPA

→ Develop (or acquire) process discovery capabilities, integrating process insights with Nintex Promapp process modeling

Opportunities

→ Capitalize on its recent RPA acquisition to open new opportunities for digital process automation product

→ Sell RPA to existing process automation installed base

→ Capitalize on innovations in AI/ML

→ Replicate state and local wins in correspondence management and surveys throughout other government agencies

Results

→ Grew its worldwide employee count over 10 years from less than 50 in 2010 to 500+ now

→ Recently acquired an RPA product, becoming one of only four digital process automation vendors with RPA

→ Acquired a process mapping and modeling vendor (Nintex Promapp)

→ Established a strong foothold in no-code/low-code for all

Research Series: Digital Process Automation State of the Market

This report is part of Deep Analysis's Digital Process Automation State of the Market research series, which includes these reports:

→ State of the Digital Process Automation Market: Current Assessment 2019

→ State of the Digital Process Automation Market: Trends 2020-2025

→ Vendor Vignettes for Digital Process Automation Vendors

About Deep Analysis

Deep Analysis is an advisory firm that helps organizations understand and address the challenges of innovative and disruptive technologies in the enterprise software marketplace.

Its work is built on decades of experience in advising and consulting to global technology firms large and small, from IBM, Oracle, and HP to countless start-ups.

Led by Alan Pelz-Sharpe, the firm focuses on Information Management and the business application of Cloud, Artificial Intelligence, and Blockchain. Deep Analysis recently published the book "Practical Artificial Intelligence: An Enterprise Playbook," co-authored by Alan and Kashyap Kompella, outlining strategies for organizations to avoid pitfalls and successfully deploy AI.

Deep Analysis works with technology vendors to improve their understanding and provide actionable guidance on current and future market opportunities.

Yet, unlike traditional analyst firms, Deep Analysis takes a buyer-centric approach to its research and understands real-world buyer and market needs versus the "echo chamber" of the technology industry.

About the Author

Connie Moore is Vice President and Principal Analyst at Deep Analysis. She joined the firm after four years as Senior Vice President, Research, at Digital Clarity Group, and more than twenty years as Research Director and Vice President at Forrester Research. Connie is a widely acclaimed speaker, advisor, consultant, and expert in digital process automation, customer experience management, digital experience platforms, and content services. In 2014 Connie received the Workflow Management Coalition's globally recognized Marvin Manheim Award for influence, contribution, and distinction based on standout contributions to the field of workflow and business process management.

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