

One platform to rule them all!

Newgen Software aims to simplify complex business processes by combining the power of process automation, content services, customer engagement, and intelligence. Vivek Bhatnagar, Head of Business, Middle East, Newgen Software discusses the past, present and future of Newgen with a focus on the company's flagship, the NewgenONE Platform

Robin Amlôt

Managing Editor, IBS Intelligence



Newgen Software was established more than 30 years ago with a vision to help organisations to achieve operational excellence. The company's first products in the early 1990s were for content management, for imaging and small workflows. Newgen was an early mover in digitalising the space – its first contribution towards productivity or operational excellence.

The next step was to add a business process management layer onto this solution. That was also a time where a lot of BPOs or shared service centres were being formed and, globally, 7 out of the top 10 BPOs were using Newgen's platform for servicing their customers.

As Vivek Bhatnagar, Head of Business, Middle East, Newgen Software explained, the company then began offering its solutions to the financial services sector: "Among the early adopters of our solutions was Citibank – Citi was the first to offer a 30-minute personal loan using our platform. I'm talking about the late 1990s, early 2000s, so 30 minutes then was a huge differentiator when other banks were taking 4-5 days to process a loan. That was the kind of productivity improvement we could bring in.

"Since then, we have continued to develop our product strategy and revamped our mission statement: 'To transform business by innovatively connecting systems, processes, people, and things.'"

You now offer a 'unified digital transformation platform'. What does that mean?

"One fundamental difference is that at the centre of this is the premise that the work should happen digitally, and people should be assisting the system, as opposed to automation where people are doing work, and the technology is assisting them to work. It is a reversal of roles.

"Our product, the low-code NewgenONE Platform, includes content management, artificial intelligence, robotic process automation, business process management, and communication management. It is a comprehensive digital platform and is our core offering. Using



Vivek Bhatnagar, Head of Business, Middle East, Newgen Software

this digital platform, we have also built applications including loan origination systems, customer onboarding systems, trade finance, supply chain finance solutions, and payment hubs. These are some of the solutions we have built on this platform for the banking industry. Our platform also has AI capability, machine learning capability, and generative AI with a conversational interface.

"This low code platform offers a very fast go-to-market for customers. We have done implementations in 6-8 weeks to go-live. Similarly, in the insurance sector we have built around claims, underwriting, and financial processes like payables, receivables, procure to pay, supply chain. These are all built on the same platform, which is advantageous for the customer, who gets a solution that is quick to deploy plus very easy to change because it is platform based. You can look at this as being like LEGO® blocks that allow you to create any structure you want very quickly."

Tell us about your experience in the Middle East and Africa.

"Newgen has successfully implemented its solutions for over 60



clients across in the region. From the business point of view, banks in Africa or in some parts of Africa, have very different business challenges compared to those of banks in the Middle East. For example, Middle East banks are looking at huge growth in new products both in retail banking and SME banking in response to Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia and various programs in Kuwait and Qatar targeting entrepreneurship.

“There is the challenge of how to serve end-customers across banking channels, how to have a 360-degree view. Something initiated in mobile banking must be reflected at the back end so that you can process in real time. Having a complete, integrated ecosystem running and serving the customer is the first challenge, then handling scale and at what cost as consumers become more cost-conscious? The third challenge, which is probably the most important, is how do the banks manage regulatory compliance and policy compliance, especially bearing in mind a lot of these institutions are also financing Sharia compliant businesses.

“The challenges in Africa are different and mainly revolve around the issue of financial inclusion, looking to get more and more people into the banking ecosystem. Financial inclusion is one of the major drivers of both government policy and hence the financial institutions in Africa. Onboarding is something which they latch on to, how quickly can retail customers be onboarded, at what cost and how easily may KYC be completed without missing any of the regulatory requirements. So, these are some of the challenges, different nature of challenges, but this is where our product is helping our customers.”

What future business opportunities do you see for Newgen?

“We are witnessing a very strong growth in supply chain finance, SME lending and trade finance. These are the new growth engines for us. And the other area that we are seeing some good traction in, is leveraging AI in all the aspects of an enterprise.

“We recently carried out analysis for a major auto finance company in the Middle East that has a huge number of collection agents. Each connection that you make with a customer is a cost of communication,

as well as time cost. An agent spends time talking to the customer. So, there’s a time cost and there is a direct cost in terms of communication such as a phone call. Using AI, the number of touch points could be significantly reduced because using the conversational data, as well as past data, as well as other accounting details of that customer, you can know whether the end customer will be paying or not with a huge degree of certainty. So, you can focus on those likely to default. You don’t waste a call on a customer who is likely to pay or is paying.

“We are also using AI to help increase revenue. Based on customer data that you already have and SLM or LLM data that might be available, the best product and likelihood to buy match will be thrown up. Marketing effectiveness or lead generation productivity will be very high based on that. We already did that for a bank in Oman and one year data shows about a 2.5x increase in hit rate.

“On the lending side, we were already using machine learning and AI to do credit analysis and things like that. But what we found was that, except for very small personal pre-approved kinds of loans, which could be done through rules-based technology, when it came to larger loans the banks still required a human underwriter. No one was willing to trust the AI recommendation to give a, let’s say, AED 500,000 loan to a person. Almost all the banks wanted it to go past the underwriter’s eyeballs before it could go through. Despite the model working, the banks were still doing parallel runs. They did not fully trust it. However, on compliance, on the cost side of things and on revenue generation we are very bullish about AI and customers are readily adopting it.

“Finally, it is worth understanding that the nature of our platform means it can be used for any vertical, including government. One example I’ll give you is for the government vertical. In the Sultanate of Oman, we have made 18 Ministries paperless in their working, whether it is files, records, archives, or even government-to-government communication. No longer does one Ministry submit a file to the other Ministries. It is done electronically, and it has all the security layers of priority. So, secretary to secretary, joint secretary to joint secretary, section officer to section officer. Those kinds of matrices are built in, and it is hosted on the government’s own cloud in Oman. The whole country is using it to work digitally.”