



# **3 Steps to Accelerate Supplier Processes**

Using a Digital Experience Platform

# The Need for Digitization

With inflation and rising costs at hand, procurement teams like you are trying to figure out how to optimize operations and help business remain sustainable.

But how can you cut costs, save time, and better inform your strategy and decision-making? By digitizing the processes needed to work with suppliers.

**“Given today’s volatile and disruptive environment, supply chain organizations must become more flexible, and the solution is digitalization.”**

Dwight Klappich, VP Analyst at Gartner <sup>1</sup>

Some organizations have already started to connect key systems and automate tasks. Others still use email and phone to handle supplier onboarding, submit purchase orders, and track invoices manually. Whatever the circumstances, digitization is a critical strategy to not only reduce costs but also invest in your future long-term, increasing operational efficiency, visibility, and agility.

In this whitepaper, we’ll cover how you can digitize critical supplier processes to benefit your business and your suppliers.

## What’s Preventing Digitization?

Although digital transformation is not a new concept, organizations have struggled to digitize many of their supplier processes. In fact, 53% of procurement and supplier management processes have yet to be digitized, wasting more than 22% of procurement teams’ time each year with paper-based or manual processes.<sup>2</sup>

This lack of digitization can often be attributed to outdated legacy systems and technologies that have been in place for a number of years. These systems contain critical data but can’t connect easily to other systems or newer technologies, preventing the integrations necessary for process automation.

Even organizations that have digitized some of their processes can lack visibility into what is happening on their back-end systems. With so many separate processes throughout your ERPs, CRMs, etc., it may be difficult to gain total transparency, requiring teams to handle certain tasks manually when issues arise. For example, if a buyer needs to request adjustments to an invoice but is unable to do so digitally, they may call or email the supplier, taking up time for both parties.

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<sup>1</sup> Unpacking Key Insights from Recent Research on Supply Chain Planning - Resource Center - The Logic Factory

<sup>2</sup> Half of Procurement and Supplier Management Processes Have Yet to Be Digitized | Ivalua

Unfortunately, digitization is often halted because many organizations believe their processes are too complex or lengthy to digitize effectively. Although it may seem too challenging to try to digitize long-established processes, with the right tool, you'll discover how transformative digitization can be, revolutionizing the way you work with suppliers and increasing efficiency.

## 3 Steps to Digitize Supplier Processes for Greater Efficiency

So what can you do to digitize your supplier processes and streamline supplier management?

Overcome the roadblocks to digitization by leveraging a platform that can connect to existing and external technologies to expose data, providing the visibility needed to digitize processes: [Liferay Digital Experience Platform \(DXP\)](#).

Digital experience platforms are uniquely suited to support businesses because of their unifying architecture and flexibility. A best-of-breed DXP is designed to be an integration hub, bringing in content, data, commerce capabilities, digital experiences, and applications into a single layer.

Among DXP vendors, Liferay DXP is one of the most flexible platforms available due to our deep technical roots as a portal-heritage vendor. With APIs, native connectors, and an extensible architecture, organizations around the world have used Liferay as a window into their back-end systems, providing the visibility needed in order to digitize these processes.

## How to Use Liferay DXP to Digitize Supplier Processes

Start digitizing repeatable, multi-step supplier processes using the following Liferay DXP capabilities:

### 1. Integration

Integration is foundational to digitalization. A lack of visibility into back-end system interactions causes data silos, forcing teams to handle many processes manually, resulting in an increase in human errors and inefficiencies.

Use a platform recognized by analysts for its robust integration capabilities. Liferay DXP integrates with external technologies through:

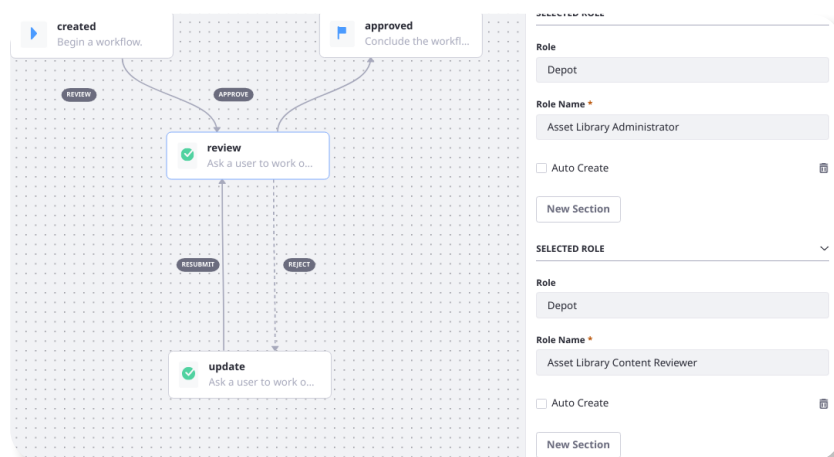
- **Native connectors.** Liferay provides pre-built connectors out-of-the-box to allow you to connect to common systems using basic configuration options instead of having to build your own applications. Liferay offers connectors to Salesforce, Mulesoft, Google Drive, and more.

For example, buyers can use Liferay's pre-built connectors for Salesforce to access and update records with real-time data exchange. This data never directly leaves Salesforce, but everything can be handled on Liferay. All this can be done through configuration—no coding required.

- **Integration tools.** Liferay supports integration tools, such as Talend Open Studio, to make it easier for developers to build and test integrations. An integration tool makes it possible to customize integrations so that you can support custom objects, fields, or functionality not supported in a native connector.
- **API integration.** If your developers already have their own integration tools or if you prefer not to rely on a third party for building complex integrations, you can use APIs, such as REST, GraphQL, and SOAP, to integrate different systems. APIs allow you to exchange data and perform different functions, such as importing catalogs or synchronizing purchase orders and accounts within your systems. Developers can also create integrations faster using APIs, since they can use their preferred tools instead of having to learn something new.

## 2. Workflows

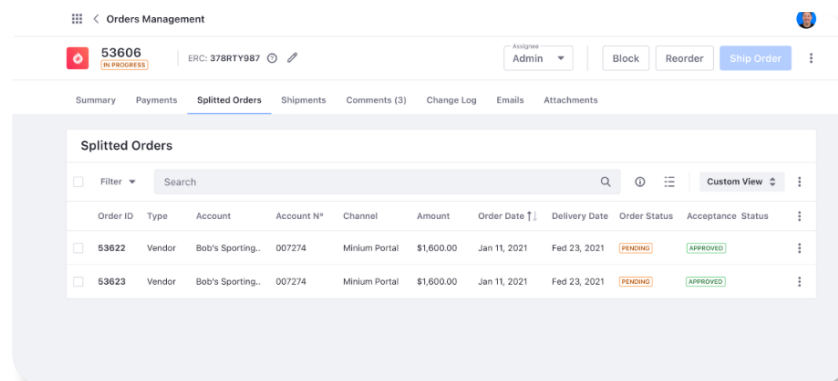
Now that you have connected your different systems through the platform, you can access data easily to automate processes that your teams are currently handling manually.



Liferay DXP provides a graphical, drag-and-drop interface, allowing even non-technical users to build and configure custom workflows. For example, you can design simple workflows to notify accounts payable teams to pay or request changes to invoices or digitize more complex processes to:

- **Set SLAs for suppliers** to respond to purchase orders and trigger notification reminders if no response has been received. This is possible because Liferay provides workflow metrics out of the box to give insights into the time spent to complete certain workflow events. Once SLAs are defined, Liferay can provide workflow reports to measure compliance with SLAs.

- **Automatically split orders** that require fulfillment by different suppliers. Users can create a workflow to seamlessly divide the order into sub-orders for independent fulfillment.



- **Define custom onboarding journeys** based on user segments and roles. Create roles according to your supplier network structure, and use Liferay's robust segmentation capabilities to group users based on supplier type, priority tier, and other relevant criteria. Then define specific onboarding workflows for each segment and role to ensure your suppliers are equipped with the necessary information to work efficiently.

For example, the supplier's finance team may need to accept the buyer's privacy and legal policies, whereas the supplier's sales team may need to take training to understand the buyer's business model.

### 3. Forms

Similarly to workflows, Liferay provides a graphical interface that enables non-technical users to create everything from simple surveys to complex registration forms to collect the information needed from suppliers more efficiently.

Not only can users build forms faster, but the data submitted gets stored in Liferay and can be leveraged to trigger workflows automatically. Build forms that can:

- **Accelerate supplier registration and validation.** Build a form for suppliers to register their interest in joining your supplier network. Add custom fields to gather the information and documents needed to determine the fit of a supplier, such as pricing, products, and compliance documentation.

Since Liferay's form builder is also integrated with the workflow builder, you can activate a workflow process for any forms created.

For example, buyers can automate processes like fraud detection, using the submitted data to check against UN trade sanction lists and other prohibited supplier databases to ensure that they select only legally compliant suppliers.

In addition, buyers can set up workflows to send the submitted information to the appropriate internal team for review and approval. Once suppliers are approved, the workflow could continue to create a new account and start the onboarding journey.

- **Send reminders for document/information collection.** To minimize the risk of regulatory violations, buyers need to continue to ensure that their suppliers are compliant with the latest regulations even after the initial onboarding is complete. Buyers can set up a workflow that will automatically send a new form periodically to remind suppliers to submit their latest tax and financial statements along with any other necessary compliance documentation. If not submitted within a specified timeframe, a notification can be automatically sent to remind suppliers. If no action still has been taken, the buyer is notified and can contact the supplier.

## Leveraging Liferay's Low-Code Capabilities

Some of the capabilities mentioned in this whitepaper are part of Liferay's low-code tools to empower business users to digitize processes without relying on IT. Here's a quick overview of our most important low-code tools and how you can use them to make your business processes more efficient and flexible:



### Workflows for Streamlined Processes:

Within the context of a supplier portal, users can leverage workflows to define and automate the steps necessary to propel processes like procurement or quality control. Whether it's a single or multi-step procedure, individual tasks can be assigned to specific team members, roles, or system automations, ensuring an efficient and traceable flow of activities within the supplier portal.



### Objects for Tailored Data Management:

Within a supplier portal, the objects capability allows users to design data models effortlessly using a drag-and-drop interface. This includes defining fields and their relationships to each other, validating data, specifying programmatic actions, and using headless APIs to map data from back-end systems to your objects if necessary. This allows users to structure and manage supplier-related data with precision.



### Intuitive User Interfaces to Complete Processes:

Create single or multi-page interfaces that allow users to view, edit, and update data related to your processes. You can also easily control the way data is displayed and sorted within your interface, or quickly add text, buttons, animations, and other graphical elements to your interface without coding.

Use Liferay's low-code capabilities to empower procurement, supply chain, and other business teams to automate and digitize the processes they use to work with suppliers much faster. Learn more about Liferay's low-code tools [here](#).

## Build a Supplier Portal with Liferay

Integration, workflows, and forms are just a few capabilities included with Liferay DXP. Liferay also enables you to leverage personalization, collaboration, and site-building capabilities to build a supplier portal that fits what your team and suppliers need to operate more effectively.

See how Liferay can support your business [here](#).

## Make Digitization a Reality

No matter how complex your tech stack is or how custom your sales processes are, you can configure the Liferay platform to build a supplier portal that is effective for your own teams as well as your suppliers' complex needs.

Want to see how Liferay can help your business?

**Get a demo here:**

[www.liferay.com/request-a-demo](http://www.liferay.com/request-a-demo)

**Contact an expert here:**

[www.liferay.com/contact-sales](http://www.liferay.com/contact-sales)



Liferay helps organizations build for the future by enabling them to create, manage, and scale powerful solutions on the world's most flexible Digital Experience Platform (DXP). Trusted globally by over a thousand companies spanning multiple industries, Liferay's open-source DXP facilitates the development of marketing and commerce websites, customer portals, intranets, and more. Learn how we can use technology to change the world together at [liferay.com](https://liferay.com).

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