Everest Group®

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The Case for Digital Experience Orchestration Platforms (DXOPs): When Work Comes to the User

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Introduction

In complex systems, scale is not achieved through individual components' strengths, but through orchestration. Whether in natural systems or engineered environments, coordinated interaction, and not isolated capability, determines outcomes. Orchestras produce coherent output because interactions are structured and flow is managed.

Enterprise technology has reached a similar inflection point. Organizations have increased investments across enterprise applications, data platforms, automation, and AI. Yet the central challenge is no longer access to capability; it is whether these capabilities can be coordinated and delivered into the way work actually happens.

This challenge is intensifying as enterprises deploy multiple AI agents across vendor ecosystems. Without a common orchestration and governance layer, these agents risk increasing fragmentation rather than improving execution. At the same time, employee experience remains tied to individual applications, even as organizations increasingly seek to decouple experience from underlying systems through headless architectures. This creates demand for fluid User Experience (UX), an experience model in which actions, intelligence, and interfaces are delivered into the user's current work context rather than accessed through another destination interface.

As a result, the CIO mandate is shifting from technology deployment to execution orchestration. Enterprise leaders are looking for ways to connect systems, workflows, AI, and experience without introducing additional complexity for users. Existing approaches, from Digital Adoption Platforms (DAPs) to workflow automation, partially address this need, but do not fully align work execution, governance, and user experience.

To navigate this shift, **this Viewpoint examines:**

- The evolving CIO priorities and structural forces reshaping enterprise technology strategy
- The hidden fragmentation cost and the resulting productivity illusion
- The enterprise experience gap as a reason for execution inefficiency
- How Digital Experience Orchestration Platforms (DXOPs) are emerging as a new orchestration layer
- DXOP value across use cases, stakeholders, and enterprise workflows
- How organizations can build a measurable business case and track value realization over time

As enterprises move from capability to execution, the ability to orchestrate work, across systems, data, and AI, will define the next phase of agentic transformation.

The CIO mandate: where priorities meet execution reality

Enterprise technology leaders are entering 2026 with a paradox: Organizations have unprecedented digital capabilities, yet employee experience and productivity remain constrained.

According to Everest Group research, the average knowledge worker now operates across 15-40 enterprise applications, spanning Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Human Capital Management (HCM), IT Service Management (ITSM), collaboration tools, and embedded AI assistants.

While each system may be individually optimized, the collective experience remains fragmented. Employees continue to switch between applications, manually carry context across workflows, and reconcile information between disconnected interfaces. At the same time, AI is adding new complexity. Enterprises are deploying multiple agents across Microsoft, SAP, Salesforce, ServiceNow, and custom environments. However, most organizations still lack a unified orchestration and governance layer to coordinate AI-driven actions across ecosystems.

This is reshaping the CIO agenda around five structural forces:

- **The complexity force:** Enterprise application landscapes continue to expand while coordination across systems remains inefficient and unmanaged
- **The multi-agent coordination force:** Enterprises increasingly operate multiple AI agents but lack a unified layer to govern and sequence AI-driven execution
- **The RoI accountability force:** Boards are demanding measurable returns from existing technology and AI investments, shifting the focus from deployment to realized outcomes
- **The human experience force:** Employee experience has emerged as a measurable business lever, with digital friction directly affecting productivity and retention
- **The governance force:** As AI becomes embedded into enterprise execution, organizations require stronger controls to ensure actions remain auditable, policy-aligned, and secure

As a result, CIOs are shifting focus from deploying more technology to orchestrating existing investments more effectively.

Exhibit 1 illustrates the CIO priorities shaping this shift.

Exhibit 1: Key CIO priorities

Source: Everest Group (2026)

AI embedded into the workflows

Move from standalone assistants to AI that executes in business processes

Human-centric experience

Deliver contextual, role-based interfaces in the user's current work environment

Multi-agent orchestration

Coordinate AI agents, systems, data, and policies across workflows

Governance by design

Embed guardrails, auditability, and policy controls into execution

Productivity accountability

Measurable RoI from AI and technology investments

The hidden enterprise fragmentation cost

The shift in CIO priorities is unfolding amid accumulated operational complexity that many organizations have not fully measured. Over time, incremental additions to enterprise technology stacks have fragmented how work is executed. These inefficiencies are rarely visible in isolation and are often absorbed into daily operations, making them difficult to quantify despite their material business impact.

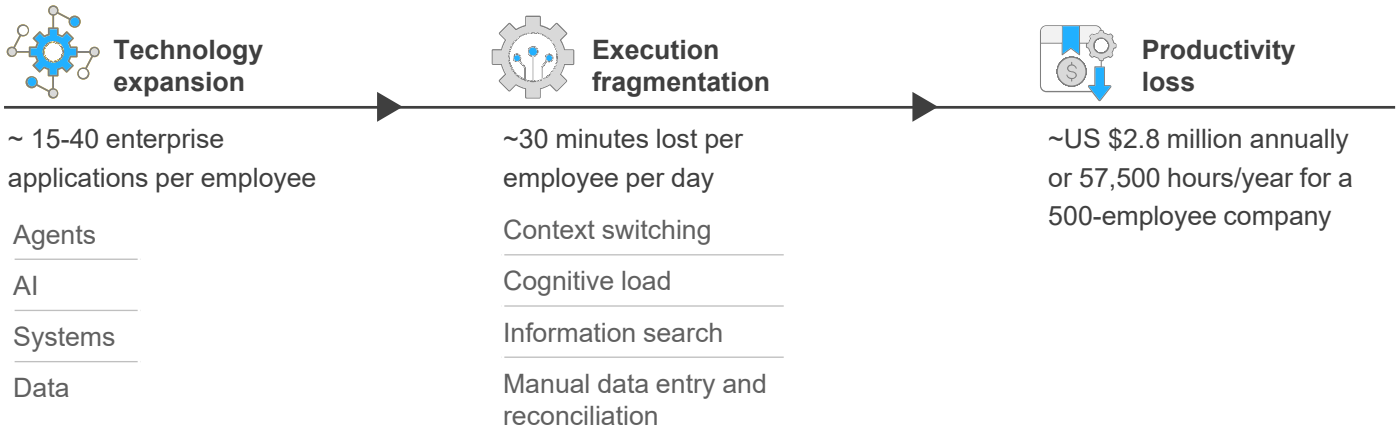
This creates the enterprise productivity illusion: the perception that growing investments in technology, AI, and automation are improving efficiency, while fragmented execution continues to constrain outcomes.

The challenge is no longer limited to application sprawl. AI is increasingly contributing to the same fragmentation pattern. As organizations deploy copilots, assistants, and custom agents across platforms, employees gain access to more intelligence sources without necessarily improving execution quality.

Exhibit 2 illustrates how expanding technology estates can unintentionally increase execution complexity and productivity loss, based on recent survey findings.

Exhibit 2: The enterprise productivity illusion

Source: Everest Group (2026)



The enterprise experience gap

The productivity loss observed across enterprises is not an isolated operational issue; it reflects a deeper structural gap in how work is experienced. While enterprise systems have evolved significantly in capability, the experience through which users engage with them remains fragmented. Workflows span multiple systems, but the user experience remains confined within individual systems.

This disconnect creates the enterprise experience gap: the mismatch between how work is executed across systems and how it is presented to users. Employees must navigate fragmented interfaces, manually carry context between workflow steps, and make decisions without a consolidated operational view.

Existing technology layers address important parts of this challenge, but from different perspectives:

- **DAPs** improve the interface layer by guiding users, reducing training effort, and enabling structured task execution. However, their primary focus remains on front-end interaction rather than orchestrating workflow across systems
- **Workflow integration and automation tools** strengthen back-end coordination by connecting systems and automating processes. While these tools improve system-to-system execution, the user experience remains fragmented, particularly in workflows involving exceptions, judgment, or cross-functional coordination

Together, these approaches partially address the execution problem, but they do not fully align how work is executed with how it is experienced. What is missing is a unifying orchestration layer that connects workflows, data, AI, and experience into a single execution model. This need is driving the emergence of a new enterprise category, DXOPs.

Introducing DXOPs

Everest Group defines DXOP as a unified technology layer that connects front-end human experience with back-end intelligence, orchestrating workflows, data, and AI across enterprise systems, without requiring re-platforming. At its core, DXOP introduces a new experience model for enterprise work: fluid UX, underpinned by a headless architecture.

Fluid UX shifts the interface from a fixed destination to a dynamic execution surface. Rather than requiring users to move across applications, interfaces adapt to workflows and appear within the user's existing work context. In practice, DXOP enables users to complete workflows without navigating across multiple enterprise systems.

Interfaces are generated when needed, shaped by role, policy, and process state, and removed once the action is complete.

This is enabled through a non-intrusive orchestration and experience layer that sits across the existing application landscape. DXOP transforms enterprise systems into headless execution endpoints while delivering contextual interfaces, such as micro-frontends, embedded widgets, modals, and AI-driven interactions, directly into the user's flow of work.

In this model, users no longer travel to applications. The right interface, with the right action and context, arrives at the user on demand.

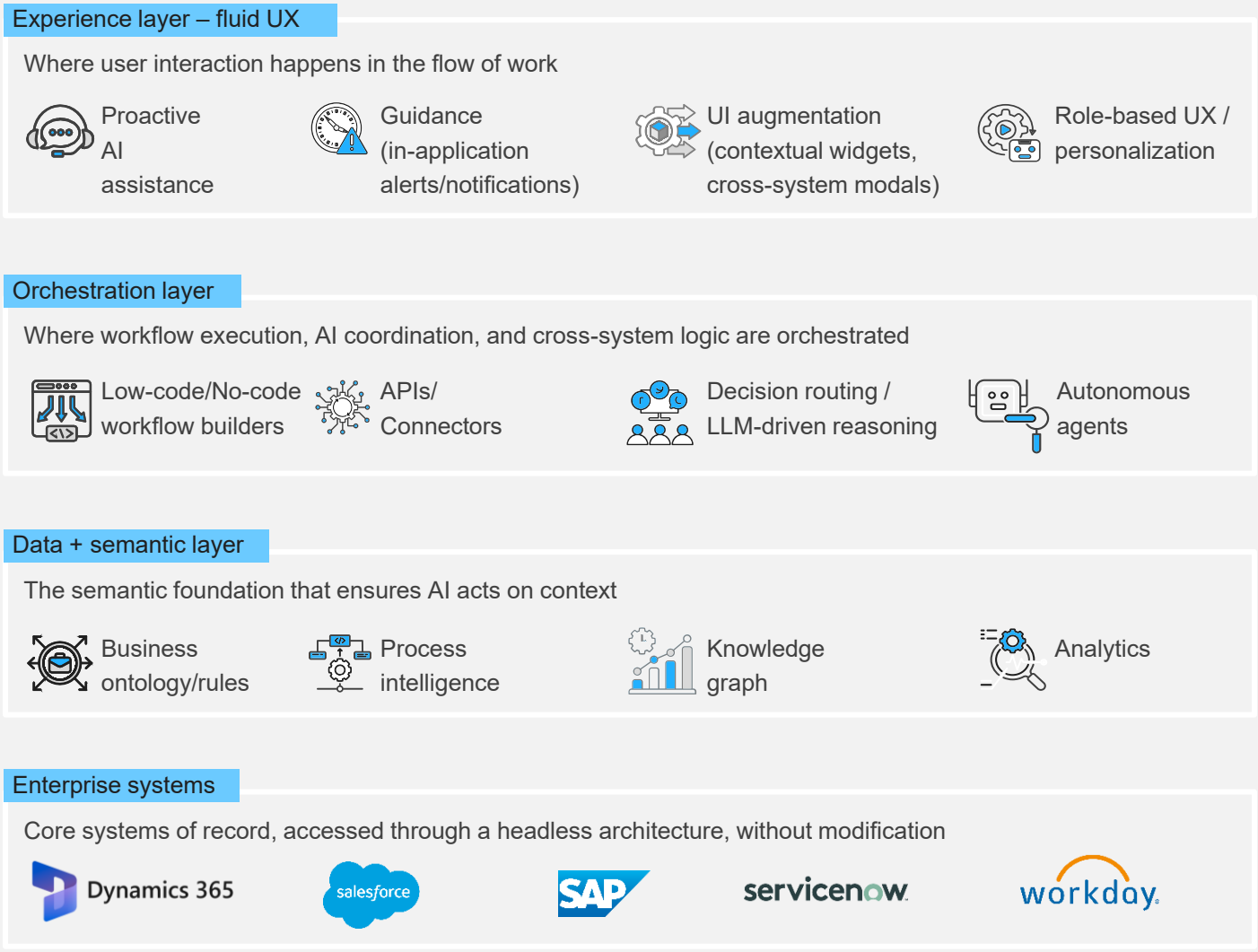
Case in point

An insurance firm developed a workforce risk model that identified attrition, disengagement, productivity, and discrimination risks. However, managers had to access the model separately from the performance management process. DXOP embedded these insights directly into the talent platform, triggering contextual dashboards at the start of the review cycle and surfacing employee-level risks alongside suggested discussion guidance.

Exhibit 3 illustrates how the DXOP architecture introduces fluid UX and the unified orchestration layer between users and enterprise systems.

Exhibit 3: The DXOP architecture

Source: Everest Group (2026)



At the top of the architecture sits the experience layer, where fluid UX is enabled through a headless model that decouples interfaces from underlying systems. Guided, role-based, and personalized interfaces abstract system complexity, and allow users to interact with workflows without navigating multiple applications or understanding where data resides.

At the core, the orchestration layer within DXOP manages workflow sequencing, decision logic, and AI coordination across systems. It ensures that actions are executed in the right order, with the right context, and within defined policy boundaries. Rather than triggering isolated automations, the orchestration layer enables coordinated, multi-step execution aligned to how enterprise work actually happens.

Together, the experience and orchestration layers form the DXOP overlay. This overlay connects directly to enterprise systems without modifying them, enabling organizations to improve execution while preserving existing investments and avoiding re-platforming risk.

Beneath this sits the data and semantic layer, which provides the contextual foundation for execution through enterprise data, knowledge, process intelligence, and business rules. Enterprise systems continue to function as systems of record. DXOP does not replace these systems; it orchestrates how they are used in together.

The DXOP architecture also changes how AI is operationalized. AI and agentic systems are no longer invoked separately from workflows; they operate within coordinated execution paths. Governance is similarly not applied after the fact, but embedded directly into how workflows are executed, ensuring visibility, auditability, and control.

What differentiates DXOP

DXOP introduces a distinct architectural position within the enterprise stack, defined by how it is deployed, how it interacts with existing systems, and how it enables multi-vendor AI orchestration. Its five key differentiators include:

1 **Web-native, zero-footprint deployment**
DXOP operates across web-based enterprise applications through a browser-native model. It does not require desktop agents, browser extensions, persistent runtimes, or endpoint installations. This lightweight deployment model differentiates DXOP from RPA and DAP approaches that rely heavily on endpoint dependencies.

2 **No re-platforming or system disruption**
DXOP preserves existing systems of record as headless execution endpoints. Organizations can improve execution and user experience without back-end modifications or migration programs. For enterprises with substantial investments in SAP, Workday, Salesforce, and Oracle, this approach enables modernization without disrupting core systems.

3 **AI orchestration with fluid UX**
DXOP combines multi-agent AI orchestration with fluid UX to embed intelligence directly into enterprise workflows. AI determines when guidance, context, or action is required, while fluid UX delivers the appropriate interaction within the user's current workflow.

DXOP's defining characteristic is that orchestration remains vendor-agnostic. Enterprises increasingly operate AI agents across Microsoft, SAP, Salesforce, ServiceNow, and custom environments. DXOP coordinates these agents within a unified execution layer. By contrast, platforms that orchestrate AI only within their own ecosystems do not meet the criteria for DXOP.

4 **Built-in governance and data control**
DXOP embeds governance directly into execution. The orchestration layer does not persist enterprise data, while policy enforcement, auditability, access control, and configurable data residency are integrated into how actions are surfaced and executed. For regulated enterprises, this is a foundational requirement.

5 **Applicability across cloud, on-premises, and hybrid landscapes**
DXOP is deployment-agnostic, provided the underlying systems remain web-accessible. This enables organizations to modernize execution across legacy, Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), and hybrid environments without waiting for broader infrastructure transformation.

Watch-out

SAP Clean Core and Workday extensibility constraints are central to enterprise transformation discussions in 2026. DXOP provides an alternative path by enabling role-specific UX, workflow orchestration, and AI-driven execution without modifying core systems. This allows enterprises to preserve compliance while improving execution across existing platforms.

Case in point

A manufacturing enterprise managed procurement across Coupa (purchase request), SAP S/4HANA (purchase order under Clean Core constraints), Workday (cost center approval), and an AI-based fraud-screening agent. However, buyers had to navigate multiple systems to complete approvals, increasing cycle time and governance risk. DXOP embedded a unified approval flow within Coupa, coordinating system handoffs and surfacing policy checks directly in context, enabling compliant execution without modifying core ERP systems.

Anything that makes AI usable will grow faster than AI itself.

DXOP use cases

There is a clear enterprise need driving DXOP adoption: improving how work is executed across systems rather than improving systems in isolation. In practice, DXOP enables:

- **In-flow execution:** actions delivered within the user's current system, eliminating navigation across applications
- **Front end-on-demand:** unified, real-time interfaces generated by combining data from multiple systems, with embedded actions
- **Cross-system workflow orchestration:** multi-step processes coordinated across ERP, CRM, HCM, and service platforms, while appearing as a unified interaction layer
- **Journey optimization and friction identification:** identifying workflow bottlenecks, delays, and breakdown points
- **Pre-deployment intelligence and continuous improvement:** using behavioral data to design and refine workflows before and after deployment

DXOP is particularly relevant when enterprises need to improve execution without changing the underlying application estate. In frozen SaaS or legacy environments, DXOP extends capability by delivering workflows and actions layered above existing applications, treating them as part of a headless architecture without back-end change. During multi-year transformation programs, such as ERP migration or platform consolidation efforts, DXOP provides near-term operational value by embedding execution improvements into the current environment rather than waiting for future-state architectures. DXOP is also relevant when workflows span multiple systems but cannot be rebuilt end-to-end. In these scenarios, DXOP assembles the workflow at the experience layer and delivers the required steps into the user's existing context.

Case in point

A retail enterprise sought richer employee skills and career data, but the update process was buried with disconnected profile systems and relied on manual employee effort. DXOP transformed the process into a fluid UX journey surfaced through the HR homepage and intranet using contextual banners, activity cards, and guided prompts. AI-assisted resume and LinkedIn extraction reduced manual effort and improved the completeness of workforce profile data.

Exhibit 4 maps representative DXOP use cases across enterprise domains and workflow families.

Exhibit 4: DXOP use cases

Source: Everest Group (2026)

[ILLUSTRATIVE]

Domain	Workflow families	Use cases
IT 	Application rollouts System adoption Feature activation User enablement	New system rollout delivered as a personalized, in-context experience rather than classroom training Adoption analytics dashboard that tracks feature utilization, drop-off points, and proficiency signals across the workforce Self-service resolution flows that reduce ticket volume by surfacing the right guidance at the point of confusion Pre-deployment intelligence that analyzes existing usage patterns to identify friction and model impact before changes go live
HR 	Hire to retire Manager self-service Learning digital flows Case handling	Role-based onboarding interface to orchestrate cross-system provisioning across HR, IT, and facilities in a single guided flow Dynamic dashboard that aggregates employee journey status, eliminating manual status checks Guided task flows that adapt to employee type, role, and location Performance and learning processes enriched with contextual data at point of need Manager self-service that shifts from navigation-heavy to decision-centric with embedded approval logic and policy context
Sales 	Quote to cash Partner operations Pricing approvals Field enablement	Personalized sales workspace that consolidates CRM, pricing, and inventory allowing checks to occur in context, reducing Finance round-trips Dynamic deal dashboard that surfaces real-time availability and credit signals without leaving the sales workflow Guided pricing-exception interface that routes approvals with embedded policy logic Customer service workspace that integrates multiple AI signals into a unified view, improving resolution quality and cycle time
Finance and procurement 	Source to pay Expense controls Close support Master data fixes	PO creation interface that embeds supplier risk and budget validation at point of entry, creating approvals route with context, not to generic queues Expense submission UI that enforces policy in real time, surfacing corrections before submission Close checklist dashboard that aggregates completion status across SAP, Oracle, and Workday, making financial close a governed, cross-system process Invoice exception workflow that classifies and resolves without manual triage
Service and operations 	Service desk Maintenance Claims Quality resolution	Incident workspace that classifies, routes, and pre-populates resolution context at creation, before the resolver opens the ticket Self-service portal that serves dynamic content driven by user role and issue type, improving deflection rates Maintenance dashboard that aggregates asset status, SLA position, and open actions in a single view

DXOP's impact is not confined to a single function or user persona. Its value extends across organizational layers, from executive outcomes to day-to-day employee productivity. Exhibit 5 illustrates how DXOP addresses stakeholder pain points while creating operational and strategic value.

Exhibit 5: Enterprise-wide DXOP benefits by stakeholder type

Source: Everest Group (2026)

	CEO / C-suite	IT leaders (CIO / enterprise architect)	End users (employees / managers)
Value created 	A unified experience layer that simplifies enterprise complexity, increases RoI from existing platforms, and operationalizes AI within governed workflows	A non-intrusive orchestration layer that unifies experience, logic, and AI across systems while preserving system-of-record integrity	A simplified, personalized interface overlay that reduces cognitive load and guides task completion across enterprise applications
Pain point addressed 	Fragmented enterprise applications AI pilots without measurable impact High transformation costs from re-platforming Limited visibility into digital RoI	Tool sprawl Costly customizations Back-end complexity AI governance risk Pressure to modernize UX without disrupting core systems	Complex interfaces Context switching across multiple tools Unclear process steps Reliance on manual interpretation of policies
Strategic outcomes achieved 	Faster business execution and measurable productivity gains through orchestrated, AI-augmented enterprise experiences Eliminate context-switching as a structural cost and preserve existing investments	Composable, future-proof architecture enabling controlled AI adoption, reduced technical debt, and faster value realization Higher data quality through guided workforce experiences	Faster task completion and fewer errors Improved confidence in decision-making A consistent digital work experience

Building the DXOP business case

As DXOP adoption increases, the central enterprise question is no longer whether the capability is relevant, but how its value should be measured and justified. Unlike traditional platform investments, DXOP does not create value through a single functional improvement. Its impact is cross-functional, influencing productivity, experience, governance, and operational efficiency simultaneously.

A robust business case, therefore, requires a structured framework spanning both cost and value dimensions, with clear linkage to enterprise priorities. Everest Group recommends evaluating DXOP investments across three primary cost categories:

- **Platform and enablement:** licensing, implementation, integration, and the effort required to configure workflows, data, and AI models
- **Run and risk:** operational monitoring, maintenance, governance, and fallback mechanisms
- **Change and adoption:** user training, communications, and continuous improvement initiatives

This structure reflects an important reality: DXOP is not a one-time deployment initiative, but an evolving enterprise layer that matures with usage and scale.

Once cost visibility is established, organizations must define how value is created and measured. In practice, DXOP generates value across interconnected operational and organizational dimensions, as illustrated in Exhibit 6. These dimensions move the conversation beyond isolated productivity gains toward a more holistic perspective on enterprise performance.

> "The future of enterprise AI will not be defined by how intelligent systems become, but by how effectively that intelligence is orchestrated, governed, and executed in real work."
>
> – CIO, a global technology company

Exhibit 6: DXOP benefits

Source: Everest Group (2026)

	Operational benefits	Example metric
Operational efficiencies 	Time recovered from fragmented workflows and process throughput improvement	Hours recovered per employee per day Process cycle time reduction First-time-right rate Transactions completed in flow
Process and error reduction 	Direct cost impact from workflow coordination and exception elimination	Exception rate reduction Rework cost avoided Compliance rate within guided workflows Escalation path utilization rate
Financial outcomes 	Cost avoidance through workflow automation and support deflection	Support ticket deflection rate Training cost reduction Onboarding cost per employee Exception handling cost per case
	Organizational benefits	
Adoption and experience 	Measures how employees and managers engage with orchestrated workflows	Platform/Workflow adoption rate Task completion rate Time-to-proficiency for new workflows Employee satisfaction with digital tools
Productivity and performance 	Measurable improvement in employee output linked to reduced friction	Throughput per employee Revenue per FTE Manager decision cycle time Process steps eliminated per workflow
AI value realization 	Return on existing AI subscriptions when grounded in cross-system contexts and embedded in workflows	AI recommendation acceptance rate Copilot/Agent utilization rate AI-influenced decision accuracy Time from insight to action

Evaluating the strategic alternative: DXOP vs. re-platforming

The most common alternative to DXOP is a multi-year consolidation, ERP migration, or re-platforming initiative. These programs aim to reduce fragmentation by changing the underlying application estate. DXOP addresses fragmentation differently: it preserves the estate while improving how work is executed across it. Exhibit 7 compares the two approaches.

Exhibit 7: DXOP vs. multi-year consolidation / re-platforming

Source: Everest Group (2026)

Low ○○○○○ High

DXOP	Dimension	Multi-year consolidation / re-platforming
Enables fluid UX on existing systems; can be deployed use case by use case ●●●●●	**Speed to value**	Value typically materializes only after migration and rollout milestones are met ●○○○○
Non-intrusive overlay; preserves existing systems of record ●●●●●	**Architectural impact**	Requires significant system change, data migration, and process realignment ●●○○○
Lower relative investment focused on orchestration and experience delivery ●●●●○	**Total cost of ownership**	High transformation cost across licensing, implementation, and testing ●○○○○
Lower disruption; core systems remain intact while execution is governed ●●●●○	**Risk and governance**	Higher transition risk due to migration, cutover, and business dependencies ●●○○○
Fluid UX delivers contextual interfaces and actions within the flow of work ●●●●●	**Experience model**	**Destination UX** is tied to a specific platform; requires new navigation patterns ●●○○○

This comparison changes the economic frame. DXOP is not positioned as a substitute for every transformation program. Rather, it enables organizations to recover value from existing systems while longer-term modernization continues in parallel. For many enterprises, this means the question shifts from “Should we replace the stack?” to “How much value can we unlock before replacing it?”.

Traditional RoI models often assume that value materializes only after users adopt a new platform. DXOP changes this assumption. With fluid UX, workflows are delivered into the user's existing context, significantly reducing adoption friction.

This affects the business case in three ways:

- Users are not required to learn another destination interface for every workflow
- AI recommendations can be presented directly at the decision point
- Policy enforcement and audit controls can be embedded directly into execution paths, reducing downstream remediation effort

Case in point

A global B2B enterprise managed revenue workflows across marketing automation, CRM, CPQ, ERP, CLM, and finance systems. DXOP transformed these underlying systems into headless execution endpoints and coordinated workflows across them. When a target account engaged with a campaign, the back-end orchestration layer drove the workflow, calling on AI to qualify the lead, create the opportunity, check product availability, recommend contract terms, and initiate pricing approval. Each action and interface was delivered directly into the seller's CRM through fluid UX, so the seller never left the system. If a generated discount exceeded the margin policy or a contract included a non-standard liability clause, DXOP blocked the action from executing, routed the decision to finance or legal, and surfaced a compliant alternative in the CRM.

Value realization over time

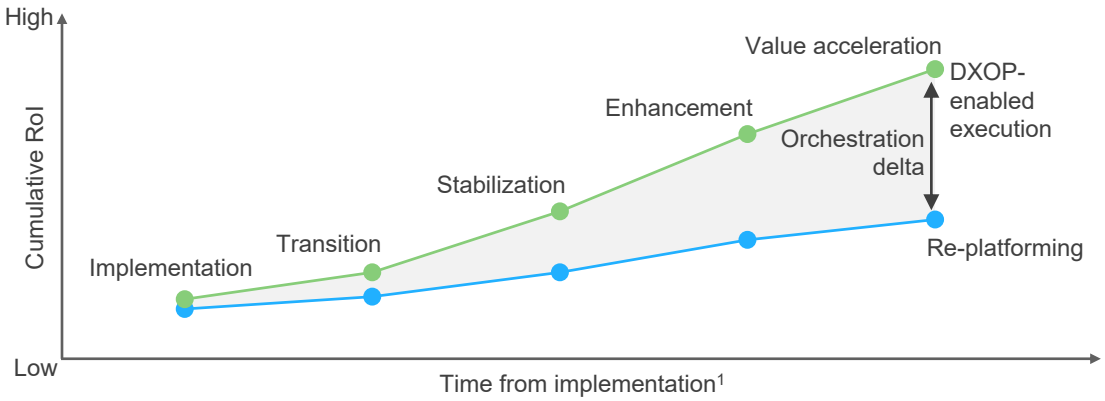
DXOP creates value that compounds over time as adoption increases and workflows become more orchestrated. Below are the different phases of DXOP orchestration.

- **Implementation phase:** investments are front-loaded while workflows and integrations are established
- **Transition phase:** early use cases begin generating measurable efficiency and experience improvements
- **Stabilization phase:** governance and operational consistency improve, while productivity gains become measurable
- **Enhancement phase:** AI-driven automation expands within defined guardrails, improving responsiveness and cycle times
- **Value acceleration phase:** orchestration extends across adjacent workflows, unlocking broader enterprise value and sustained RoI

This progression reflects a broader shift from point optimization toward systemic execution improvement. Exhibit 8 illustrates how DXOP value realization compounds over time relative to traditional re-platforming approaches.

Exhibit 8: DXOP value realization curve

Source: Everest Group (2026)



1 The timeline is illustrative and may vary by organization or the adopted platform

Conclusion

DXOP will become increasingly relevant as enterprises move from AI experimentation to AI execution. The next challenge will not only be whether organizations have access to intelligence, automation, or data. It will be whether these capabilities can be delivered into the user's moment of work with the right context, control, and interface, through a more fluid and adaptive approach to experience delivery.

Fluid UX will play a central role in this shift. As workflows become more distributed and AI agents become more specialized, users will not want additional destination interfaces to manage. They will expect guidance, recommendations, and actions to appear directly within the systems they already use. This shift will elevate experience orchestration from design consideration to a core architectural capability.

Three developments are likely to shape how enterprises adopt DXOP:

- **AI will become more execution-led,** with enterprises embedding intelligence into workflow moments, decision points, and approvals rather than deploying standalone assistants
- **Experience layers will become more dynamic,** replacing static portals and dashboards with contextual interfaces that adapt to workflow state, role, and policy
- **Transformation strategies will become more layered,** separating system modernization from experience modernization so organizations can improve execution while broader platform decisions continue in parallel

In this environment, DXOP's role will be to make enterprise intelligence usable at the point of action. Enterprises that operationalize orchestration as a strategic capability, aligning execution, governance, and experience, will unlock sustained productivity improvements. Those that do not will continue to face fragmentation that limits both AI and broader digital investment value.

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