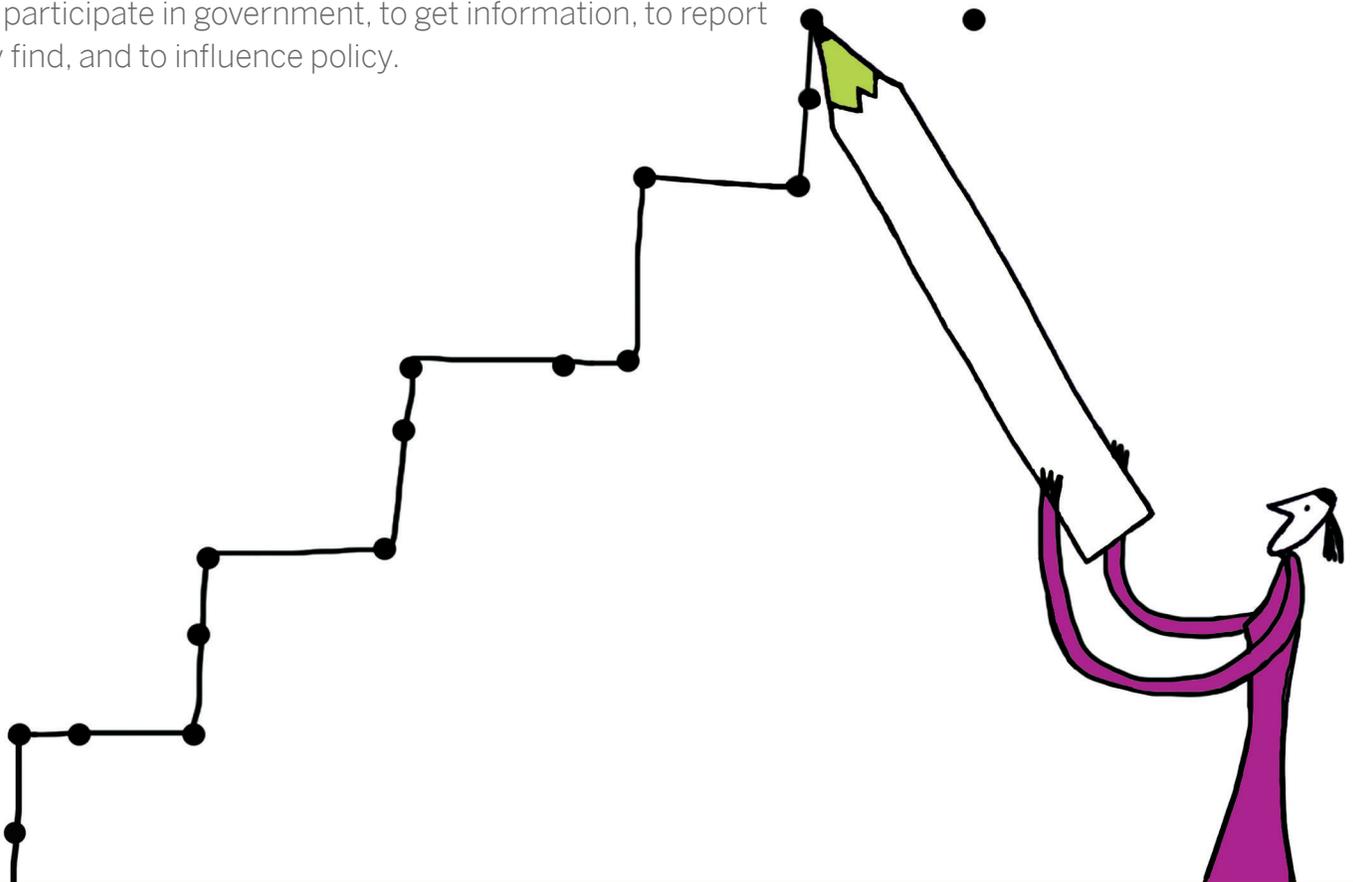


Personal Empowerment

Today's business management practices are a legacy of the last century. Exponential increases in connectivity, data, and mobile devices, as well as the rise of young people who have grown up online, are fueling unprecedented demand for openness, interaction, participation, and flexibility in the workplace.

These demands are crossing into the public domain in a similarly disruptive way. In a hyperconnected world, citizens increasingly expect to participate in government, to get information, to report what they find, and to influence policy.



The SAP Center for Business Insight discovers and develops new research-based thinking to address the challenges of business and technology executives.

Personal Empowerment

The Customer's Customer

Resource Optimization

Business Networks

Many governments are seeking new ways to engage citizens in creating new services that improve lives, foster community, and build trust. Businesses and governments must respond to three trends that are being driven by the increasing autonomy and empowerment of individuals:



A future without layoffs

In the past, product lifecycles were long and demand cycles more predictable. Companies responded to changes in demand and economic cycles by laying off employees and rehiring them when times improved. But this reality has been replaced by a world of ever-shorter product lifecycles and increasingly volatile financial environments. Globalization has eliminated jobs for massive numbers of skilled professionals. Predictably, businesses face low levels of employee loyalty and must often spend large sums to replace skilled people, if they can find them at all.

Meanwhile, these same forces have enabled the rise of freelancers, who are using technology to build their skills, identities, and support networks. This self-organizing ecosystem will interact with companies in a more flexible, project-oriented, and demand-driven way. Models of engagement between employees and employers will emphasize creativity and individual empowerment on the employee side over command and control on the employer side. As a result, companies must come up with ways to predict what skills will be needed and redefine the leadership, management, and systems required to shape and empower their workforces. Done well, not only will companies be more competitive and agile but the workforce will be more motivated and highly trained.



Employee-driven learning

Waiting for schools and universities to produce individuals with the right skills for today's market is not enough. Full-time employees will be a smaller part of an organization; the majority will be freelancers, partners, and other third parties, flexibly reconfiguring to fit the needs of the moment. At the same time, companies must take a more active role in working with schools and universities and empowering individuals to find practical education with a faster return on investment in a more practical approach.



New methods of citizen engagement

While the first steps that governments take toward openness will be citizen self-service and the sharing of relevant information, such as road conditions and parking availability, this trend will lead to a future of a much stronger engagement of citizens in their cities and neighborhoods. In the future, services will be broadened beyond those that are purely government driven and will include many third-party services that support a richer community life. Increasingly, that community life will converge in urban centers. As cities compete for people and business, services will become a competitive advantage.

Why We Wrote This Series

Throughout history, breakthrough innovations have pushed individuals and civilizations forward. Today's technologies – mobile, social, big data, and cloud – are the modern-day equivalents of Gutenberg's historic printing press, giving individuals new ways to express themselves and interact with their worlds. Whether as customers, employees, partners, citizens, or consumers, **individuals are once again at the center of massive change.**

Yet even the most basic changes can arrive unnoticed. If you'd asked a typical Venetian in the 1400s if he was feeling the Renaissance yet, you'd have been met with a blank stare. Change was everywhere, but its true importance wouldn't be understood for generations.

Fast-forward to today and we find ourselves living in a new renaissance: an era when the availability of vast amounts of real-time information promises a better-run world. In this new world, businesses will be able to drive higher economic output, and society, connected globally as never before, has the potential for significant improvement for all of its citizens, from the

wealthy to the impoverished. Just as the Renaissance propelled civilization out of the darkness of the Middle Ages and into the Enlightenment, today we have the possibility to be thrust into a new kind of enlightenment, one that balances the needs of a global citizenry and business community with the resources of a healthy planet.

In this series, we examine how new technology is reshaping the way businesses and governments engage with their customers and citizens, empower and inspire their employees, optimize their resources in real time, and harness the potential of social and business networks.

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