



HFS Hot Vendor: FireStart

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Introduction

The HFS Hot Vendors are an exclusive group of emerging players, each with a differentiated value proposition for the HFS OneOffice or HFS OneEcosystem. HFS analysts speak with numerous exciting startups and emerging players.

We designate a select group as HFS Hot Vendors based on their offerings' distinctiveness, ecosystem robustness, client impact, financial position, and the impact in our OneOffice and/or OneEcosystem Frameworks. The HFS Hot Vendors may not (at the time of writing) have the scale and size to be featured in our Top 10 reports, but they have the vision and strategy to impact and disrupt the market.

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Organizations with thousands of applications and fragmented processes that want to drive automation and digital transformation initiatives often set out to propel change from within business units. While this can promote organic uptake across an organization and is laudable when it works, too often, the IT department's absence or late involvement creates challenges. Process automation at scale still eludes many that seek to increase business performance.

FireStart was founded on the tenets of simplicity and collaboration. The idea was to bring an easy to use, model-driven approach to enable business and IT to begin the automation journey by first modelling processes and co-working on process engineering (or re-engineering) - therefore democratizing process design. Once this process modeling and redesign phase is completed, it's time to build the next better version of the business case and tackle automation without heavy coding, using low-code platforms that support collaboration with different stakeholders. This way, customers can move to a process-first approach in the design and maintenance of core business processes, setting up workflows in alignment with IT strategy.

HFS' conversations with FireStart's clients reveal that while initially, they needed professional support from FireStart, in-house staff were soon able to implement and use the low-code platform. Clients like working with a smaller vendor; one said, "They really care about customers." Another was pleased to have the ability to influence new features on the product roadmap; customers praised flexibility, too. Clients were also happy with the ease of integration to Microsoft Outlook and called out the platform's ease of use. One of the clients that we spoke with for this assessment said of project teams that require process improvement, "They want to start straight away when they see FireStart. Prioritization is hard, the funnel is long, there are many potential projects." Clients mentioned the capacity to handle large workflows and release management as areas they had previously flagged for improvement and where FireStart had already made much progress. There are areas where FireStart can develop further; one client was eager to see more dashboarding and suggested the rich client could be replaced with the cloud and web-based access. Clients were quick to commend FireStart's support, however, especially its responsiveness and promptness in resolving issues with the platform as they are encountered and raised.

HFS' take

FireStart is recognized as an HFS Hot Vendor as its model-driven approach to intelligent process automation (with both modeling and workflow capabilities) neatly aligns with HFS' view of integrated automation. HFS' believes that to rid an organization of process debt, it's important to take a holistic, methodical approach. FireStart combines BPM and BPA at the backbone of the process, with governance embedded. There are frequent hand-offs to RPA for end-to-end process automation with support for strong and weak data structures. Process debt, as discussed in [enterprises, must beat down their process debt to help their humans achieve automation success](#), is the creation of awkward and often manual processes that are designed to buttress aging technologies. Process debt must be beaten down for automation to do anything more than deliver minor, incremental success.

FireStart views business unit and IT department collaboration as an imperative, and it contests that IT departments are essential to making BPM platforms come alive. FireStart's approach tackles process debt, always keeping IT in the mix and working toward a target architecture supporting process, data, and communication goals together with the FireStart BPA platform and a process-oriented IT strategy. In its efforts to help its customers scale automation, the holistic approach that FireStart advocates is, by its own admission, hard to do, but necessary to get broad benefits.

Vendor factsheet

- FireStart was founded in 2008 in Austria by Robert Hutter and Roland Hemmelmayr, with the goal of building a platform that bridges the business-IT alignment gap between organizational process development on the business side and integration/automation on the IT side
- The first version of FireStart's BPM Suite was launched in 2010 after two years of research and development (R&D)
- FireStart expanded into the DACH region, grew the customer and partner bases organically, and launched further major product versions
- With 50+ employees, FireStart's operations focus on the EMEA and North American regions
- 150+ clients across all industries, including Swarovski, KTM, Vienna Energy, Zurich Airport, Austrian Airlines, NGE, InSite, LENZE, BWT and, Vienna Healthcare Association
- FireStart was awarded Microsoft Partner of the Year in 2016, and it started its expansion to the UK, the USA, and Canada
- FireStart is mainly owned by Robert Hutter and the operational management team, with Series A funding led by Paua Ventures (a Berlin-based VC fund) in 2019

Solution portfolio

BPM Suite: FireStart's BPM Suite is a unified BPM system comprising process modeling, workflow automation, and process intelligence.

Partnerships

FireStart comes with a strong partner network spanning process expertise and implementation resources. Partner profiles include collaboration partners in the Microsoft ecosystem (SharePoint, Office 365, Dynamics), system integrators and SAP partners like Atos, and strategy consulting partners like PwC and BDO. On the technology side, FireStart works closely with Celonis for process mining and UiPath for robotic process automation (RPA) to build an end-to-end automation strategy for its customers.



About HFS

Insight. Inspiration. Impact.

HFS is a unique analyst organization that combines deep visionary expertise with rapid demand side analysis of the Global 2000. Its outlook for the future is admired across the global technology and business operations industries.

Its analysts are respected for their no-nonsense insights based on demand side data and engagements with industry practitioners.

HFS Research introduced the world to terms such as “RPA” (Robotic Process Automation) in 2012 and more recently, the HFS OneOffice™. The HFS mission is to provide visionary insight into the major innovations impacting business operations such as Automation, Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Internet of Things, Digital Business Models and Smart Analytics.

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