Overview

After upgrading to Flowable version 7.x, the organization has faced challenges with both BPMN modeling and forms management due to the removal of key features from the platform. This document explores the available alternatives and their trade-offs.

Challenges with Flowable 7.x

- The UI tools for BPMN modeling were removed from the open-source distribution due to the need for a complete rewrite.
- The forms modeling and runtime solution, which was previously integrated, was also removed from the open-source version.
- This means the organization needs to find alternative solutions for both BPMN diagram/DMN definition modeling as well as forms management.

Potential Alternatives for BPMN Modeling

1. Use Flowable 6 for Modeling
  - It would be possible to run an instance of Flowable 6 for BPMN modeling purposes.
  - The BPMN diagrams created in Flowable 6 are compatible with the Flowable 7 engine, but would lack new features.

2. Build a Custom Modeling Solution
  - Base the solution on the open-source bpmn-js framework.
  - This would require significant development effort to implement all the necessary Flowable BPMN extensions.

3. Use the Flowable Cloud-based Modeler
  - Flowable offers a cloud-based modeler for BPMN and DMN.
  - This would involve uploading diagrams to the Flowable cloud, which is outside the organization's infrastructure.
  - There are also usage limits on the number of models.

4. Go Enterprise (Licensed Version)
- The licensed version of Flowable would provide a more comprehensive modeling solution.

Potential Alternatives for Forms Management

1. Build a Basic Forms Solution
  - Develop a simple forms generation and execution solution on the server side.
  - This would provide very basic functionality and require significant ongoing maintenance.

2. Build a Fully-Fledged Forms Solution
  - Extend an open-source forms framework like Camunda's form-js.
  - This would require a large development and maintenance effort, adding technical debt.

3. Develop Custom Forms Applications
  - Create separate Vue.js applications for forms in each BPMN-based business case.
  - This approach is used in the Return investment tool, but adds significant overhead.

4. Go Enterprise (Licensed Version)
  - The licensed version of Flowable would reintroduce the forms modeling and runtime solution.

- This would address the requirements for the GDPR, Homer and upcoming applications.

Recommendation
Based on the information provided, the best overall option seems to be the licensed enterprise version of Flowable. This would provide a more robust and feature-rich solution for both BPMN modeling and forms management, addressing the key challenges faced after the upgrade to version 7.x. While building custom solutions may be possible, the development effort required is likely to outweigh the benefits, especially when considering the ongoing maintenance overhead.