YOUR DIGITAL RPA WORKFORCE IS WAITING
... BUT MAKE SURE THE JUICE IS WORTH THE SQUEEZE!

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) provides a real opportunity to increase value by delivering a digital workforce – software technology that automatically interacts on high volume processes with established businesses and customers.

Many organisations are already starting to see the benefits of RPA deployment. But there are pitfalls; ensure you have the right tool for the job, don't separate the implementation team out, don't believe all the hype, use an agile approach to implementation, and finally, don't ignore the security and licensing implications of your applications.

WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION?

The best thing about RPA is that it can replicate the role of a human undertaking low-value, routine, and monotonous work. RPA works well where transactions for a business process are high in volume and where rules can be applied to their execution.

Many RPA activities still focus on Macro or Scripted Process Automation, with simplistic 'Bot' front-ends to provide clients/users with a humanlike interface. Examples of RPA implementations include insurance claim handling, or HR on-boarding processes, where software agents keep the 'paperwork' moving. Other examples include Customer Services, dealing with customer requests in real-time with software that mimics a human, and Customer Relationship Management, where tasks to follow up with customers, set meetings or gather customer research, are automated.

However, the real RPA innovators – producing the next generation of RPA – are taking the Cognitive Artificial Intelligence concept and stretching the boundaries of human imitation with intelligent thinking behaviour – merged with Optical Character Recognition, Intelligent Character Recognition, Voice Recognition and Speech Synthesis to potentially replace the human. This could be a whole new ball game.

THE BENEFITS OF USING RPA ARE REAL

Significant cost reduction, consistency of application, availability of the solution, resilience of the service you provide, and new opportunities for your workforce to focus and deliver on more complex and high priority tasks, to name a few.

RPA enabled processes don't need sick days, they don't get tired and then can run 24/7. Even better, RPA takes away the mundane repetitive tasks, enabling a business to realign its workforce to more value-adding activities that really drive customer loyalty and value.

Improvements in RPA (and links with the associated automated workflow and Artificial Intelligence technologies) are being made every day and there is a myriad of suppliers happy to provide your RPA business solution. RPA really is a powerful disruptive technology – it is revealing new business possibilities and customer benefit opportunities all the time.

> RPA IS REVEALING NEW BUSINESS POSSIBILITIES AND CUSTOMER BENEFIT OPPORTUNITIES ALL THE TIME.

SO, WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE?

A lower cost digital workforce doing the same job as humans but far more effectively. Your digital RPA workforce is waiting – but before you implement it, make sure the juice is worth the squeeze!

The real challenge with RPA is implementing it properly, in a positive way that supports your business strategy and the outcomes you want to deliver.

RPA can be difficult to implement as it's not a single system you just install, turn on and magically your business is automated. RPA is not a cloud service you log into, create an account and everything is there.

SO HOW DO YOU SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENT RPA?

Business change and digital expertise will help you understand how and where to start your RPA journey, what processes to target and how to build your own capability to continue your RPA journey.

Experts know the RPA market – with its many specialist vendors such as; Automation Anywhere (AA), UiPath, Thoughtonomy, NICE, Kofax Kapow, Pega and many others. We also have experience of most of the large solution vendors who covet this space, with Microsoft embedding RPA into some of its Macro development and SAP deploying scripted process management into its ERP portfolio.

In addition, experts know the pitfalls. Our advice would be to:

START SMALL AND GROW.

Get the foundations right before scaling RPA, target a manageable number of processes in the first wave, be mindful this may be new to the organisation and that you may need different internal technical capability for RPA. Ensure that the introduction of RPA will make a positive change for your customers – and that you will be able to measure the success of the implementation of RPA. Ensure that the case for RPA will deliver a return on the investment you are making.

BE CLEAR HOW YOU WILL ASSESS 'TARGET' PROCESSES.

You will need a clear approach for identifying processes throughout the organisation. Questionnaires, surveys and process discovery tools can be used by all business units to understand which tasks are manual, repetitive and use digital data. Have clear criteria for assessing those processes and prioritising them.

ENSURE THE APPROPRIATE SUPPORT.

Although RPA is a new technology, the 'rules' remain the same – a good support model is needed. If something happens that causes the robot to stop running, understand the business impact and have a strategy for continuous monitoring and a clear service model for support. Remember that this is not just about the technical implementation, you are also likely to need to implement RPA within a wider business environment; getting the service level agreements right will be critical.

BE VERY CLEAR ON THE BUSINESS BENEFITS OF RPA.

There can be efficiency and financial benefits of RPA, however it has the power to remove administrative tasks that inhibit your team's potential. Ensure that you are making positive changes to people's roles and responsibilities. Consider how you will harness additional capacity across your organisation that will be realised through the implementation of RPA.

SHARE KNOWLEDGE AND LEVERAGE EXISTING INVESTMENTS.

Be more proactive in sharing the knowledge and creating awareness you have gained on optimising business processes, whether it is through RPA or simple, human-powered actions. If you have already implemented Business Process Management (BPM – improving and optimising business processes) then leverage its capability. In some cases, RPA can be a valuable tool in boosting gains achieved with a traditional BPM system.

Project One helps organisations to think about RPA in a way that delivers the best business outcomes for them. If you need help on where to start, how to implement RPA or you just need some ideas on where RPA can help your business, get in touch. Learn more about our Digital Information Service on our website projectone.com.

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