



INSTITUTE FOR
ROBOTIC PROCESS
AUTOMATION

RPA is Transforming Business Processes — Delivering Fast, Accurate Service, and Improving Customer Experience

Created by the Institute for Robotic Process Automation in association with NICE

Companies in virtually every industry today are facing a number of challenges related to their business processes, and if left unaddressed these issues could hinder the success of these enterprises in a big way.

One problem is that companies are relying on many different types of backend and front-end systems that need to interact in order to service customers. Speed and accuracy is vital, for front- and back-office operations. But many processes are still handled manually. That means they are not only slow, but prone to human error.

Other challenges include the need to share applications and data with business partners in a secure manner, and the monotonous nature of many day-to-day business processes that bores employees and leads to a high and costly level of turnover.

Organizations can address each of these challenges through robotic process automation (RPA). This white paper takes a look at some of these challenges and how RPA can help enterprises address them effectively.

Challenges Plaguing Today's Business Processes

No matter how much companies like to think of themselves as being modern, “digital” enterprises, the fact remains that many organizations are still handling common business processes the same way they have for decades: manually.

Many back-office operations and even some front-office functions are based on workers manually entering information into spreadsheets or even onto paper documents. Departments including accounting and finance, human resources, legal, procurement and even IT are still relying on labor-intensive, legacy processes.

In these scenarios, employees have to work with many different types of applications and memorize a number of different functions. When new processes, policies or software upgrades come out, oftentimes workers need to learn how to do things all over again.

At a time when organizations are looking for ways to improve efficiency, productivity and speed to market, the reliance on manual processes keeps them stuck in slow motion.

This not only occurs with the back-office processes that customers never see; it's true for many front-end processes that have an even more direct impact on customer service and support.

These manual processes and learning curves can be extremely time consuming for workers. That can cause delays in customer service, client transactions, new product introductions, crisis resolution, new employee

onboarding and all sorts of other business processes. At a time when organizations are looking for ways to improve efficiency, productivity and speed to market, the reliance on these manual processes keeps them stuck in slow motion.

In addition to being slow, manual processes are also prone to errors. People are not perfect. Workers sometimes are distracted, tired or

overworked, and this can lead to incorrect data entry, typographical errors and other mistakes.

Sometimes these mistakes can be quite costly for organizations, such as when wrong amounts are placed into accounts or delivery dates are mixed up. All companies should be striving to reduce or eliminate errors wherever possible, or they risk alienating customers, partners and others in their business ecosystem.

Figure 1: Efficiency Drivers for Process Automation

- 01 **High Volume & Handle Time**
Value of automation increases for high volume, longer processes

- 02 **Error Rate**
Error-prone processes will benefit more from automation

- 03 **Standardized vs. exception based process**
Structured, standard processes allow quicker development time and ROI

- 04 **Frequency of re-keying and collating of data**
Multiple copy and paste of information across systems, and data validation

- 05 **Process adherence problems**
Robots will always perform the process as it was programmed to do, eliminating non-adherence

- 06 **Customer experience KPIs**
Robots are much quicker than people, and can work 24*7, thus improving SLAs and Customer Satisfaction

- 07 **Stability of the process & underlying applications**
Robots are best applied in a stable environment, which doesn't incur frequent changes

- 08 **Thick client vs Citrix/Remote Desktop Protocol**
A thick client environment allows stronger connectivity. Citrix connectivity is supported via screen scraping

- 09 **Speed**
The automation is as fast and efficient as the underlying applications

Another challenge for many enterprises today is being compliant with a number of government and industry regulations. Some of these regulations govern the security and privacy of sensitive customer data. With lots of customer data being handled as part of manual processes, there is a greater risk that security will be compromised. This can result not only in lost or stolen data, but in significant penalties for being non-compliant with regulations.

Finally, manual processes can contribute to decreased job satisfaction and low morale for the workers who are responsible for handling these tasks. Companies frequently experience high turnover because employees don't want to stay in jobs that force them to perform mundane tasks over and over again.

People want more challenging and interesting work that enables them to feel they are contributing in a more tangible, creative way to the success of the organization. High turnover

means higher costs for companies, including having to train new workers on a frequent basis.

These types of business process challenges affect companies in all types of industries, including retail, travel, utilities, transportation, telecommunications and many others. They can especially hinder enterprises that have large back-office operations that rely on many repetitive tasks, but also businesses that operate critical front-office environments such as contact centers.

A Modern Solution: Robotic Process Automation

Enterprises can address their business process challenges by deploying a solution called robotic process automation (RPA). These platforms automate many of the mundane tasks currently handled by employees, freeing them up to take on more interesting types of work.

As defined by the Institute for Robotic Process Automation (IRPA), RPA is the application of technology that allows employees in a company to configure computer software or a “robot” to capture and interpret existing applications for processing a transaction, manipulating data, triggering responses and communicating with other digital systems.

Any company that uses labor on a large scale for general knowledge process work, where people are performing high-volume, highly transactional process functions, will boost their capabilities and save money and time with RPA software,

IRPA says. The technology can be applied to a range of industries.

By shifting repetitive, lower-end functions from people to software, companies can profoundly change the way they conduct business—boosting customer service and giving employees opportunities to pursue more interesting, challenging work.

RPA solutions address the various business process challenges, allowing companies to greatly enhance their front-end and back-end operations. For example, because RPA automates routine processes such as mortgage approvals in the banking industry and order confirmations in manufacturing or travel, human workers don’t need to spend time doing these tasks.

The RPA solution automates all of the steps needed to perform a particular task, from start to finish. Employees no longer have to worry about learning new applications, processes and policies each time there’s a change.

Automation leads to more efficient business processes that result in enhanced service to customers.

Automated processes are much faster than manual ones. Tasks can be completed in a much shorter amount of time, meaning companies can provide services to customers more quickly, leading to greater customer satisfaction. Enterprises can complete more work in less time and save money by eliminating most manual processes.

Automation through RPA also addresses the problem of errors in business processes. Because tasks are being completed by software, they are always executed accurately, and in the exact same way. That not only eliminates the cost of

errors, but can lead to more efficient business processes that result in enhanced services to customers.

RPA also addresses the challenge of compliance. With automation, there is much less risk of data loss or compromise that stems from the manual handling of customer or other sensitive information.

One key capability to look for in an RPA solution is whether it offers a collaborative environment that supports both robotic and human work side by side. Some processes can be fully automated and don't require any human intervention. Such automation can take place via a server. But other types of processes still need to be performed in part by a person while other parts can be automated.

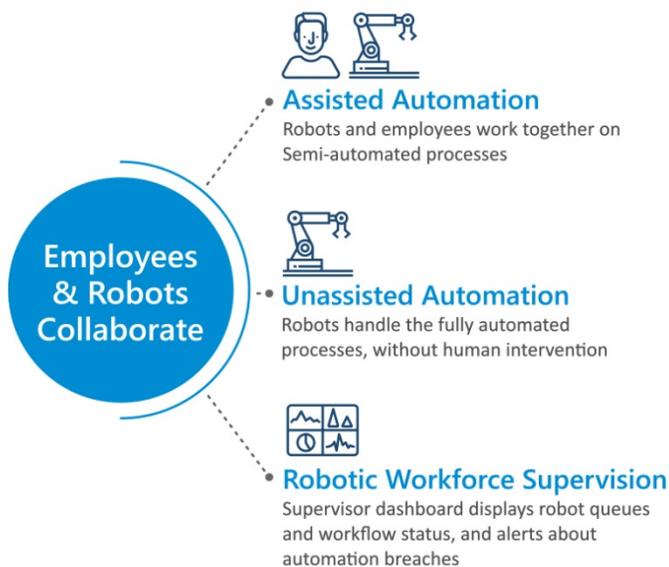
In these cases, automation takes place on an employee's desktop, supporting the employee and allowing him or her to perform tasks much more quickly and accurately. The point is, the solution should enable companies to choose the level of automation they want.

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An important complimentary component in an RPA project is desktop analytics. It allows users to identify further opportunities to automate processes within their organization. By collecting valuable information about

processes, such as how long it takes individuals or teams to handle certain tasks, companies can determine where there's room for further improvement through automation.

Figure 2: Flexibility in Choosing the Level of Automation



Case Study

Companies in a number of industries are benefiting from RPA. One good example comes from the banking sector. A major financial services group in Italy had established its own contact center company to provide business process outsourcing for financial and insurance organizations. But operations struggled as the contact centers reached capacity. Some 500 agents were handling about 650,000 calls per month and were under immense pressure to meet SLAs. Agents were spending a lot of time on data entry and follow-up activities after customer interactions ended.

The organization deployed an RPA solution along with desktop automation, to handle routine, critical jobs that require accurate, fast handling. The solution guides agents with on-screen pop-ups during fraud investigations and interactions

with credit card holders, reducing handling times and processing errors. Robots then complete the time-consuming wrap-up phase, including documenting cases and outcomes, freeing agents to focus on more value-added tasks and to begin the next interaction immediately after concluding a previous one.

The financial services group was able to drive quality, predictability and speed, and its contact centers experienced significant results across a range of key performance indicators. The company now handles more than 8,000 alerts per month with greater than 99% accuracy in preventing fraudulent activity. The RPA solution provided by NICE also reduced average handling time of the wrap-up phase by 82%, allowing the service group to meet process SLAs 100% of the time.

Summary and Conclusion

The days of relying on time-consuming, costly, error-prone manual business processes that bore employees into leaving their jobs should be a thing of the past. Technology such as RPA is changing the way enterprises conduct their back-end and front-end processes.

Many organizations are already implementing RPA. According to Everest Group, 28% of companies have deployed the technology, 40% think RPA is the most enabling technology today, and 50% of global in-house IT service centers are actively planning or pursuing RPA pilots. Transparency Market Research predicts that the global RPA market will reach \$4.98 billion by 2020.

These solutions can dramatically reduce the time it takes to complete tasks, reduce the number of errors in transactions, and free up workers to focus on more interesting, innovative work. By deploying the right RPA solution, companies can let robots work hand in hand with human

staffers and they can enjoy significant benefits.

RPA has tremendous versatility. As IRPA stated in a 2015 report that it produced in association with Carnegie Mellon University, entitled “Introduction to Robotic Process Automation: A Primer,” one of the most

powerful benefits of RPA technology is the scope of its usability across various industries and its ability to complete a variety of tasks.

“For a particular task to be a good candidate for automation by RPA, it must be definable, repeatable, and rules-based,” the report says. “Once these conditions have been met, the software’s flexibility allows companies to be creative in the tasks they choose to automate.”

These tasks might include closing and opening accounts, completing requests for proposals, handling various processes in the billing and customer service departments, or IT systems testing and monitoring, the report notes.

With RPA, companies can expect to see potential benefits including increased revenues, improved client satisfaction rates, reduced costs and a decrease in errors and rework. Those advantages are too significant to ignore.

The NICE Robotic Automation solution reduced average handling time by 82%, allowing the service group to meet process SLAs 100% of the time.

Credits:

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The Institute for Robotic Process Automation (IRPA) is an independent professional association and global network for the buyers, sellers and influencers in the robotic process automation/autonomics arena. IRPA is considered to be the go to/independent source for market trends, best practices, case studies, events, assessment services and channel opportunities. To learn more and opt into our free global community visit www.irpanetwork.com.



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