

Automation is the great equalizer that promotes disruption, overcomes disadvantages of scale, and increases market velocity and efficiency.

In an increasingly disruptive and competitive environment, digital transformation looms as an inevitability for most organizations. If you aren't digital, you aren't leveraging the spectacular variety of disruptive technologies that have flooded the market in recent years. Automation technology is an example of disruptive technology that has evened the playing field in markets where the "bigs" have dominated for years. Now small, nimble, tech savvy companies, that are powered by "digital", are able to penetrate, compete and sometimes dominate stalwarts of the industry because they are faster, cheaper, and often better at adapting to changing customer needs.

Automation, including physical robots, software and artificial intelligence (AI), and customer self-service solutions are reshaping the workplace and the way digital businesses are engaging with their customers. The challenge that technology leadership and their business counterparts face is finding new and unconventional ways to automate and drive efficiency, accessibility, and quality, while driving down cost of service. Inevitably this trend will result in organizations implementing and managing a mixed human/machine workforce in order to hold on to market share, and compete.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is one such automation technology that is quickly gaining momentum, and one that we believe uniquely balances efficiency, ease of implementation, scalability, and return on investment. RPA will handle any process that the current knowledge worker does, and

transforms and streamlines your organization's workflow. The results are almost immediate, increasing resource capacity because knowledge workers can be reassigned to other facets of the organization, and flexibility to adapt to changing business processes and transaction volumes within the enterprise.

RPA technology essentially creates and implements software robots, or *bots*, that are able to mimic a human worker. These robots can be configured to log into applications, enter data, make calculations and complete a variety of other repetitive tasks. Software robots interpret, trigger responses and communicate with other systems just like humans do, only substantially better: a robot never sleeps, makes zero mistakes and costs a lot less than an employee (although the true value is not to replace but to reassign). Software robots are also easy to train(configure) and they integrate seamlessly into any system without being disruptive to the organization.

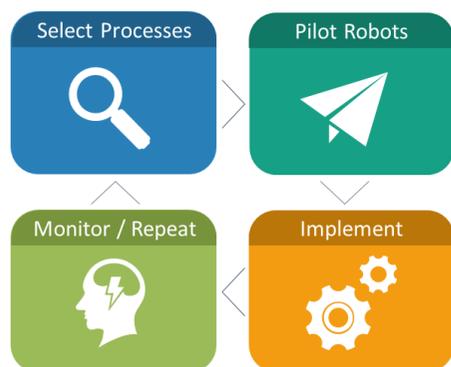
A study involving 16 companies that implemented RPA reported that return on investment varied between 30% and as much as 200% in the first year alone (Willcocks, Leslie, P; Lacity, Mary, C, 2016).

Willcocks, Leslie, P; Lacity, Mary, C. (2016). *Service Automation, Robots and Future of Work*. London: Steve Brookes.

Scaling is easy as well, simply clone an existing robot to improve throughput for existing processes, or create new robots to handle brand new processes or functions, and instantly deploy more as you go. Because robots can be configured to almost instantaneous report on progress and status, organizations have inherent predictability in their capacity model and can quickly adapt to fluctuations in the business. Based on a study conducted by Willcocks and Lacity, London School of Economics, on 16 organizations of varying size that implemented software robots to perform various processes, the return on investment was between 30% and 200% depending

on the type of process, scale, and number of humans replaced. But it's wrong to look just at the short-term financial gains, particularly if those are simply a result of labor savings. That approach does not do justice to the power of the software, because there are multiple business benefits.

Our Approach to Implementing RPA



RPA Implementation Approach

RPA may be thought of as a virtual employee factory. These *virtual employees* can take on routine, organized tasks to free up knowledge workers to focus on value additivity. RPA technologies are relatively easy to implement

and doesn't require changes to the existing IT infrastructure of an organization. In fact, RPA is implemented on top of the existing infrastructure, with software robots deployed to operate across the enterprise. Our approach to implementing RPA is built on 3 guiding principles and the understanding that RPA can be configured to replace any process that is repeatable, routine, and is currently performed by a human.

First, selecting candidate processes for inclusion into a pilot program is done in collaboration with process owners. Processes must be stable, mature, optimized, rules-based, repetitive, and usually high volume. We start with a pilot program on a visible bottleneck or pain point in the organization. For organizations that are new to RPA we recommend starting with a pilot program so that workers become familiar and comfortable with the robots and what they do.

Second, as part of this process we often take the opportunity to look for improvements that can and should be made to the process before moving on to designing the software robots, configuring the robots and testing the robots.

Third, is change management and persuading the organization to change and adopt automation. It is a key issue from the outset. It is critical that this initial venture into RPA is championed by the "C" suite. Additionally, having a continuous improvement capability and strong relationships between IT, governance, and security.

If the pilot program is successful, implementation is very quick. We can deploy the robots almost immediately, and the value is almost immediate. However, we do recommend that in the early

stages of production that a stringent protocol is established to monitor and administer the robots and the outcomes of the processes the administer. We recommend looking at RPA implementations as a continuous process of selection of manual processes, implementation, and monitoring.

Benefits of Our Approach

The benefits of implementing RPA and software robots easy to see and measure. RPA is most beneficial when considered as a strategic tool, although tactically it's impossible to look past the 30% to 50% cost savings that are possible. But if you use RPA as a broader strategic tool, you get a lot more out of it. Among the key benefits that organizations realize almost immediately include:

- **Frees up resources:** RPA automates repetitive tasks, doing them quicker, and more accurately than humans. Freed resources can be assigned to higher value tasks like customer service.
- **Scales quickly and is inexpensive to deeply:** RPA software is enterprise grade, and enterprise safe software that can be scaled and is reusable. This means organizations have access to capacity on demand.
- **Lightweight and portable:** RPA bots lightweight in the sense that you don't need a lot of IT involvement to get it up and running. Business and operations resources can quickly configure and apply bots.
- **Significant ROI, very quickly:** Studies have shown that organizations can expect between 30% and 200% ROI in the first year alone, depending on the industry. However, ROI alone doesn't account for the long-term value that RPA gives the organization.

About Strategic Systems

OUR GOAL IS TO BE YOUR BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION PARTNER. Since 2004, we implement technology solutions and provide services that allow our clients to realize sustainable competitive advantages. We focus on your unique needs, applying transformative, and cost-effective solutions that enable the digital business model.

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