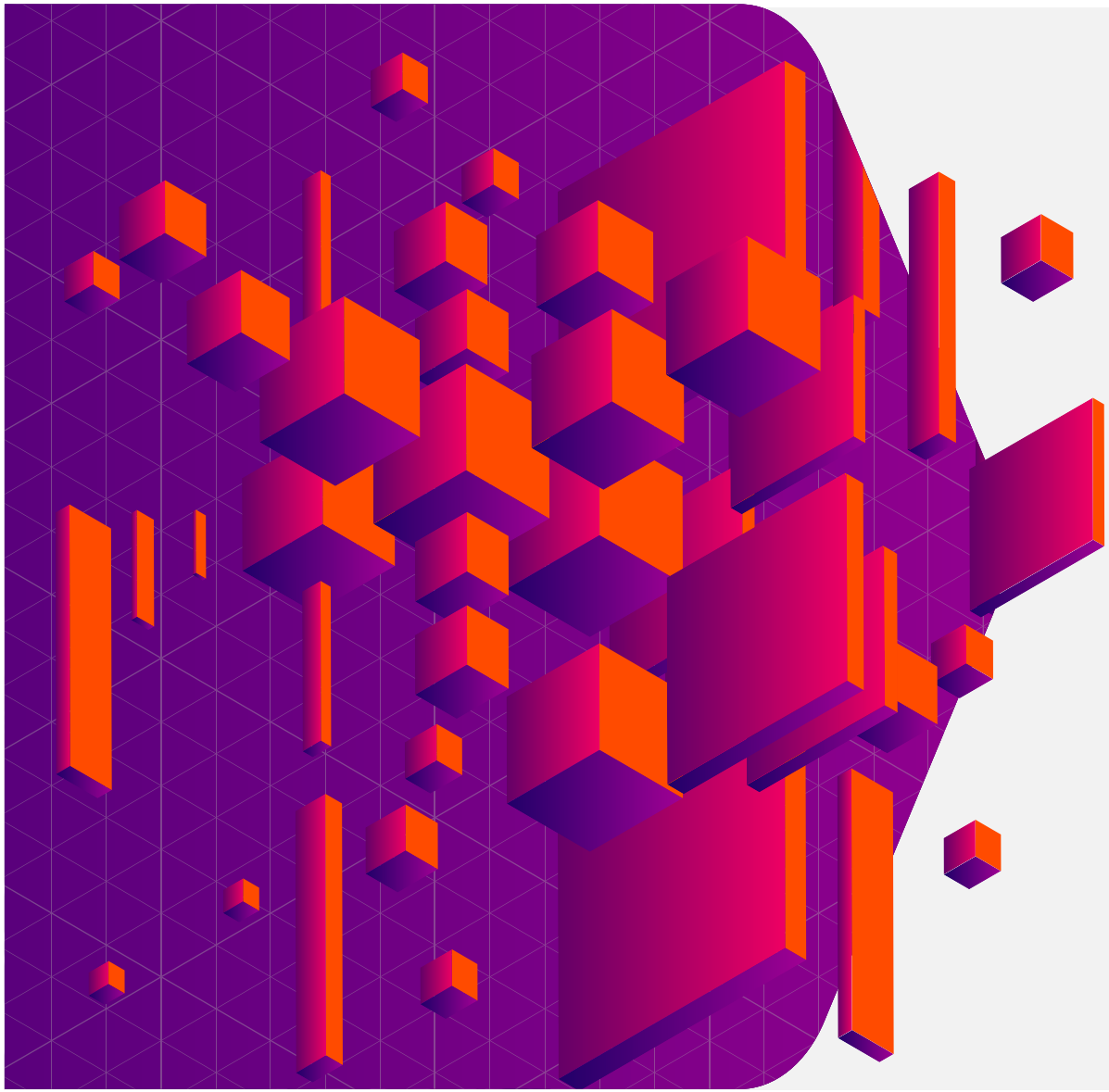

SLK

The Ultimate Guide to Automation Success

An essential knowledge resource for enterprises taking the first step to automation

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Content

Automation is to the 21st century what plumbing was to the 19th century. It works quietly in the background, making our lives easier. Process automation is one of the biggest buzzwords today, and chances are that you've heard of it before. You might have even been part of this transformational journey or have already witnessed the benefits of it. What you might not know is that most organizations have only utilized automation in parts.

Despite fantastic benefits—over 90% improvement in compliance, quality, productivity, and up to 60% cost savings in operations—only a small percentage of organizations have been able to scale their automation program. A recent Deloitte survey revealed that even with 70% of the enterprises who are well on their way in their automation journey, only a minuscule fraction of them have been truly able to scale their automation programs to transform their enterprise and continuously deliver value.

What stops them from scaling automation?

A study by McKinsey brings up the following factors as key to limiting enterprises in the automation pursuits.

Underestimating the process complexity

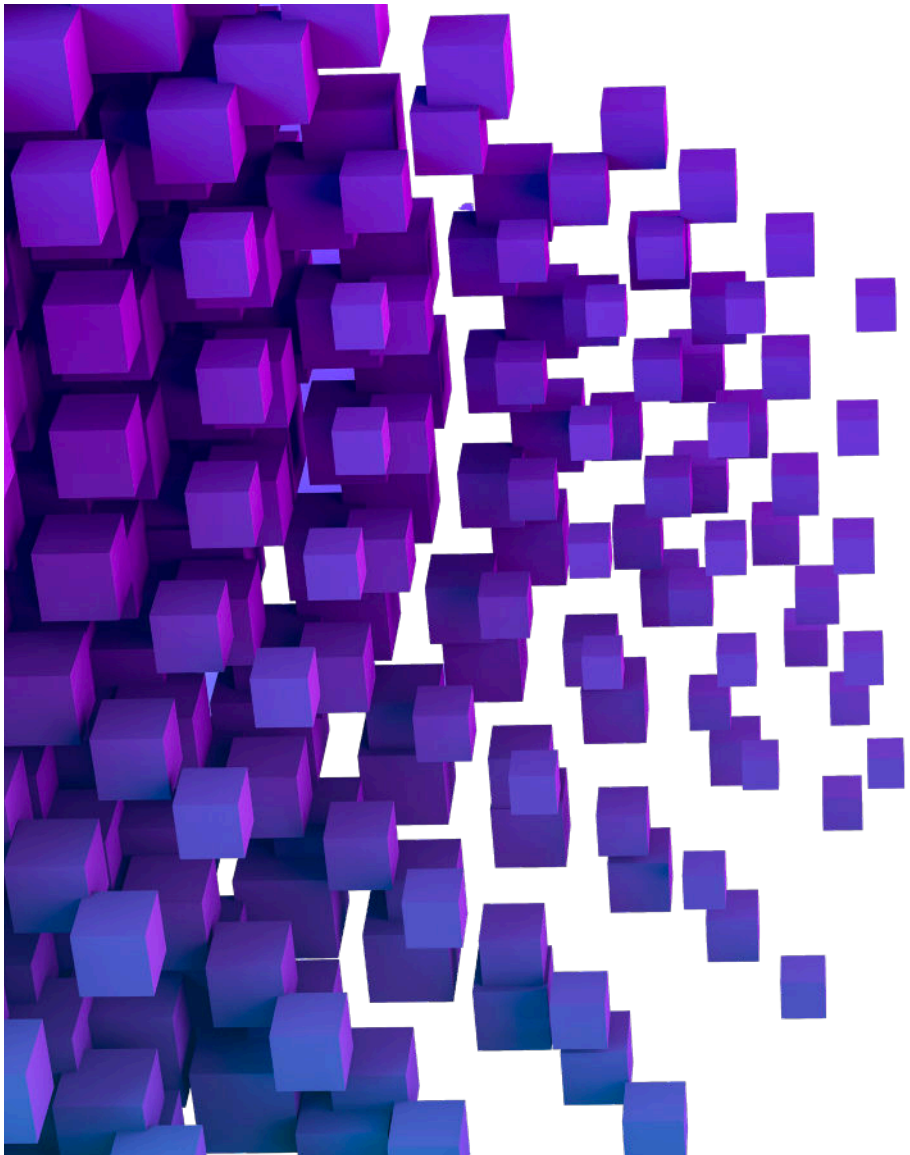
- Lack of quality operating procedures and documents
- Nuances and details of the processes are not provided to the automation team (either by lack of knowledge or due to mistrust)
- The ground reality is significantly different from the expected coverage of automation and the level of automation planned

Automating inefficient and complex processes

- Inefficient automation due to underlying process inefficiencies
- Lack of standardization and multiple variances
- Time to automate, test and go live is high

Under investing in change management

- Lack of robust automation governance
- Siloed teams—operations, automation and application engineering
- Prevalence of misnomers:
  - Robots are the whole solution, people and strategy can come later
  - Robots can auto-heal and manage themselves



However, the lens from which different teams involved in the automation journey view these failures is different. Here are some perspectives we often hear:

The Business perspective

- There was a lot of buzz on what automation can do, but the value being realized is far too limited and falls short of expectations
- Lack of stress on automation that lifts the 'speed to market'

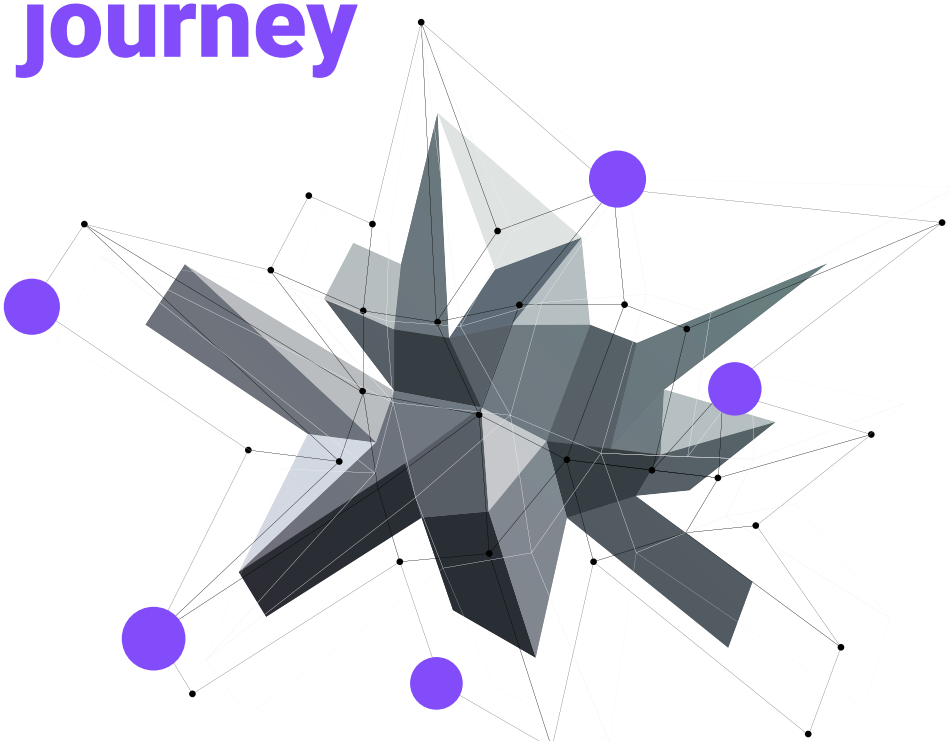
The Operations team's perspective

- Since the Automation team has an extremely limited understanding of the process, quite a lot of effort is spent on knowledge transference
- The percentage of automation is too low—there are still quite a lot of scenarios and exceptions that come up for manual processing. In effect, very few personnel are getting freed
- Automations are not reliable—either quality issues or break-downs

The Automation team's perspective

- Process information is either limited or absent
- Processes are not standardized
- Lack of visibility in process changes, and even more when it comes to applications catering to these processes
- Automation technology has its boundaries

5 things to focus on in your automation journey

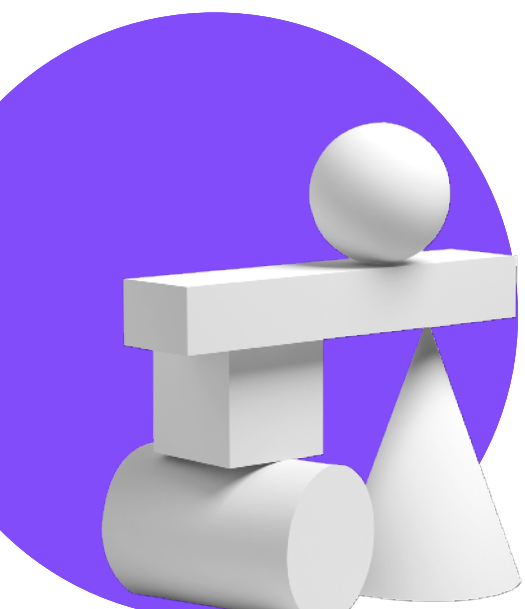


Now that we are aware of these varied perspectives, let us look at the 5 ways to focus on:

- **Goal:** Everyone involved in the automation process need to have clear goals. These goals help realize the purpose of automation, driving more value into the entire process.
- **Approach:** Knowing what to automate, how to automate, and when to automate are critical to the automation journey. Having a systematic approach that aligns with your goals will make the entire process seamless and efficient.
- **People:** Like any process, people are at the center of automation. It is equally important for all stakeholders and teams to understand that automation helps free them from repetitive and mundane tasks so that they can scale up to decision-making and handling exceptions.
- **Tools:** Having a clear idea of the various tools involved and the technologies these tools employ will help enterprises realize better and more efficient ways of automation.
- **Controls:** Once the goal of automation is set and the approach is determined, the process requires effective governance and guidance so that the automation journey benefits enterprises in the intended manner.

1 Goal

Now, let us visit each of them in detail...



Enterprises get on to the automation bandwagon in a bid to save on operational costs and to improve service quality and speed. However, it is critical for the enterprise to have an overarching vision that can translate to tangible and relatable goals—goals that are based on each process or business unit. For automation, each unit needs to imbibe the spirit of the vision into respective goals that they will relate to and work towards making them a reality.

Say, for instance, a bank sets a goal to reduce staff across their branches by 50% through automation. If it is acted upon without a clear vision, the banks would cut staff equally in lower footfall locations as well as those with higher footfall. This will lead to an overall slide in efficiency, and the intent of automation will fail. However, if the goal is aligned to reducing operational costs branch-by-branch, the enterprise can focus on categorizing them by business transactions, tellers, officers, and so on. With this assessment in hand, the bank can set realistic goals and determine an approach that will suit them best to achieve their goals.

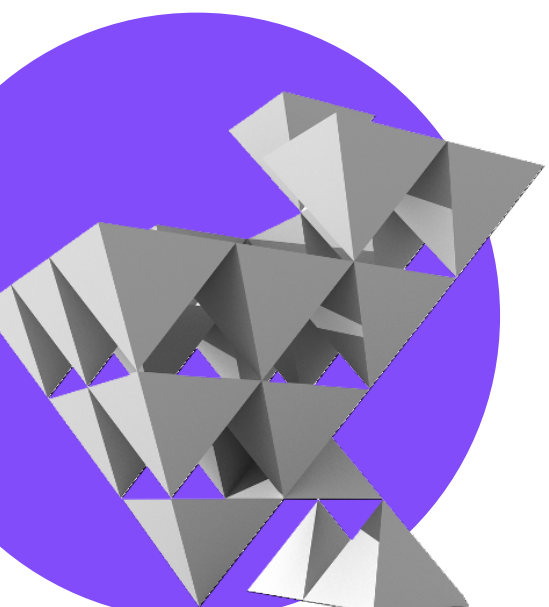
The translation of vision to goals would differ from unit to unit.

In the example of the bank above, the goals for a retail unit and a commercial unit would differ from each other, and so would the means to achieve them. The retail unit might be doing well in terms of operational cost, but they might be struggling with the ability to scale and service seasonal spikes. The commercial unit might be faring well in terms of cost and scale, but they might be lagging with respect to employee satisfaction.

It is important to enable your units to come up with specific goals for their processes that align with your vision. This can be done by focusing on the tenets of improving customer excellence, employee satisfaction, improving the speed of operations and quality, reducing the operational spend, improving operational resilience and scale, risk management, and so on.

Setting a goal enables enterprises to revitalize and align initiatives to a common purpose. Having a clear understanding of the current state and mapping an aspirational future state, accounting for the market projections, is critical to setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time bound) goals.

2 Approach



What to Automate

It is important to know what to automate depending on the goals that each unit sets. However, assessments tend to be subjective at times. Especially, when there is an emotional attachment demonstrated by SMEs. In such instances, when an analyst tries to determine what to automate, their limited background of the process, the servicing unit and the domain, result in inaccurate and ineffective assessments.

To reduce this, enterprises can create a process selection matrix—using metrics of each process and create a scoring system on them. These metrics can range from the volume handled, personnel involved, time of processing, variants, frequency of occurrence, SLAs, hand-offs, business rules, nature of decision making, type of applications, ease of use and input documents or datasets. Once a score is determined, enterprises can map the score against the ease of automating.

However, do note that such assessments will also need to consider the various tool sets available for automation.

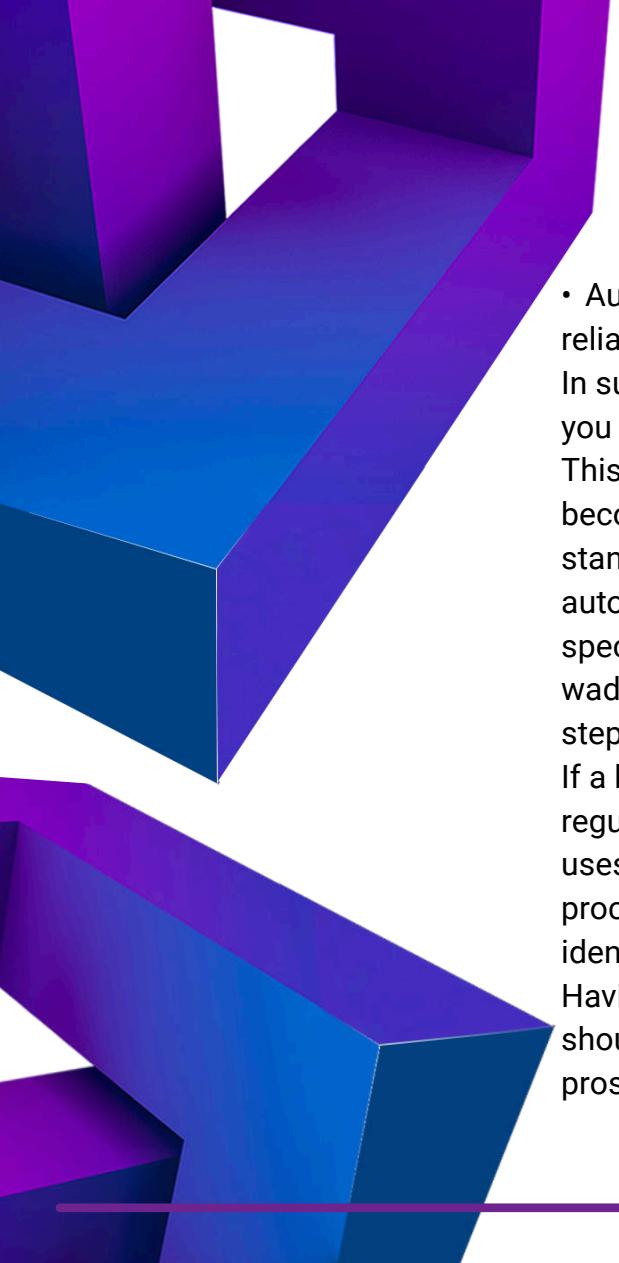
Today, multi-tech platform and tools are at your disposal that can cater to your ecosystem, problem statement and enable you to attain the goals.

When selecting what to automate, prioritize the processes that are easier to automate but have high business and operational benefits. Demonstrating impact in the beginning gets all hooked on to the program, enabling the enterprise to take up more complex and daunting processes. An enterprise that pursues end-to-end automation or task clusters can achieve touchless execution or straight-through processing of automation. If your focus is on task automation, you aim at as-is process automation, delivering quick wins leading to limited gains

When to Automate

Before we determine when to determine, let's take a look at what to steer clear from:

- Beware of non-standard, unstable processes—setting out to automate them sets you on a wild goose-chase.
- It is extremely tedious to keep up with the automation of processes that are prone to frequent changes due to external factors



• Automation in unstable applications are not reliable and they tend to breakdown

In summary, if you automate a broken process, you end up with a faster broken process.

This is why the stage of knowing when to automate becomes important. It is always recommended to standardize and optimize a process first, before automating. For instance, a trained Lean Six Sigma specialist can easily audit the process, point out and wade off wasteful steps, get it ready for its automation steps.

If a business unit expects an overhaul in the regulations or changes to applications/products it uses, it is only prudent to hold off on the automation of processes or tasks until the changes have been clearly identified or after the new state is stabilized.

Having said that, knowing when to automate should be determined through an honest evaluation of pros and cons of automation.

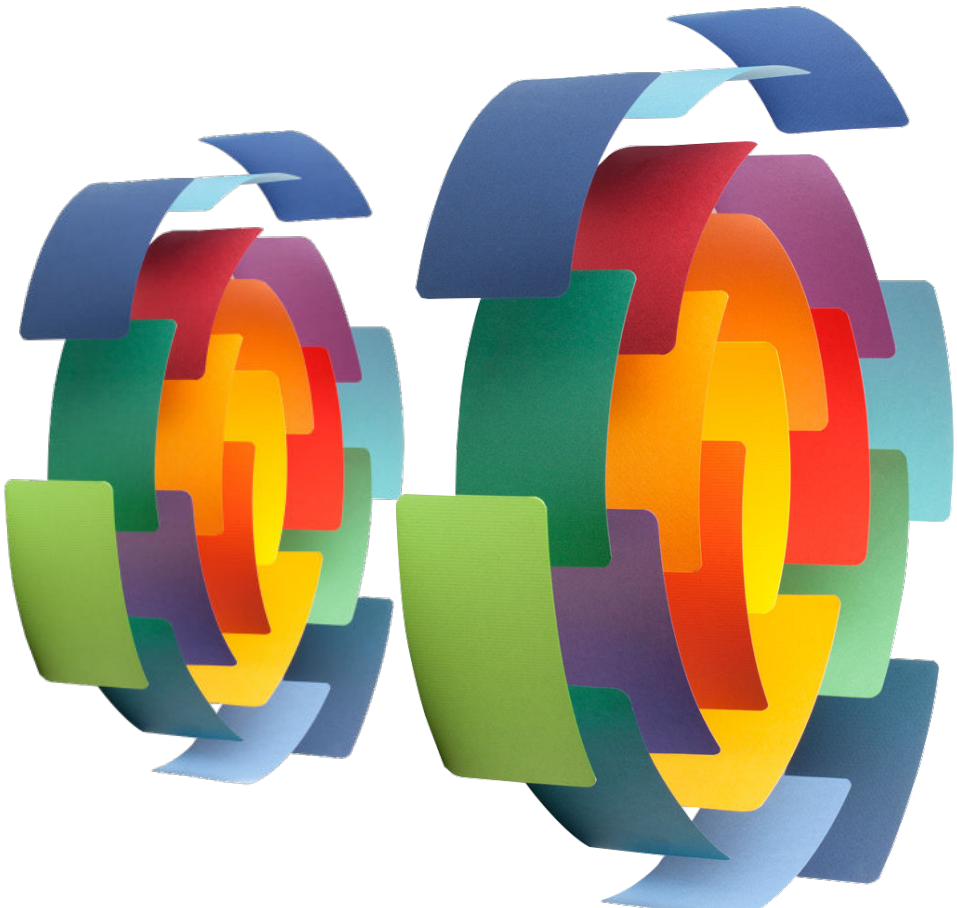
To do that, enterprises need to expand the current business case evaluation

—I.e., cost of execution today vs. cost of automation

—To the projected cost of future execution that accounts for market projections, cost of error, cost of rework, cost of servicing gaps, cost of training, and so on. This projected cost should be evaluated for a minimum three-year window

—From the post-automation state to the account for the upkeep of automation, manual exception processing if any, disaster handling, etc. Once these factors are determined, the need for adherence to regulatory, risk and compliance often shifts the vote in favor of automation.

However, it is essential to note that there are automated use cases with a short shelf-life as well—especially in situations of integrations as part of mergers and acquisitions. Enterprises have benefited from swift and accurate automated processing, due to the sheer diversity and limited time available in accomplishing the transition.



During the COVID19 pandemic, several quick automations enabled the healthcare organizations, insurance companies and banks to service customers by arming themselves with small-yet-powerful capabilities such as triaging emails, segregation and prioritization of requests.

How to Automate

An automation project is very similar to a software development project. The automation solution becomes better, more reliant and easier to maintain depending on the engineering practices you adhere to. These include automation requirements, design, development, testing, user reviews, deployment plan and the seamless hand-over to execution teams. The presence of standard templates, review guidelines, checkpoints along with these practices ensure a quality output.

To ease the process of automation, each phase is categorized into three distinct towers: **Process Discovery, Automation build,** and **Automation Run**. Let us visit them in detail.

Tower 1: Process Discovery

- High-level study of the process to arrive at the automation feasibility, overall automation potential and the Automation Solution Outline. The solution outline is an indicative view of the automated state, enabling process owners to understand the future gains, the technology owners with a wishlist of elements or features to be built etc.
- Selection of the tool platforms for automation
- Creating the business case for automation
- Drawing the plan for process automation implementation

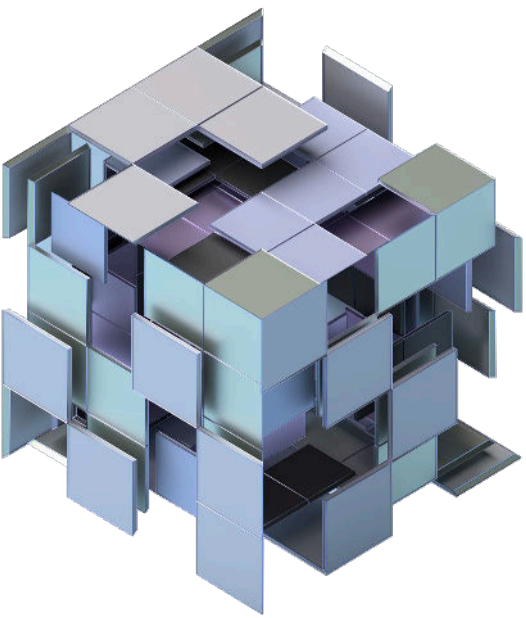
For this tower, it is best suited to use the iterative approach.

The Automation Team needs to work closely with SMEs and project sponsors/process owners to determine the solution outline and then create a plan and business case. Automated Process Discovery tools can be a catalyst for accelerated process capture and helps quantify variances, system interactions etc.

The Automation Team sometime tend to target 100% automation and over engineers solutions. In most cases, the SMEs and process owners come up with simple alternatives to automation bottlenecks. Close collaboration can yield optimal solutions. Another proven technique to handle large processes is to logically break the process into steps or variants to automate in a phased manner.

Tower 2: Automation Build

- Create a process definition document (PDD) after a careful study of the process,taking into account the to-be state, accounting for all variances, business exceptions, application errors, logging and reporting, etc.
  - -The PDD needs to be reviewed closely by the stakeholders to ensure coverage of the process in the automated form
  - -Project manager and Process Owners need to ensure that the resultant state caters to the objectives of the unit and the agreed business case



- Make a solution design document that outlines the technical design to achieve the automation that caters to the PDD.
  - -This document needs to be reviewed to ascertain its alignment to the design standards of the enterprise
- Automate the process, adhering to the solution design, industry standards and enterprise standards
- Test the automation, through independent testing along with focused testing by the end-users
- Create user guides and end-user training sessions to help users to work along with automations
- Creating run books and hand-over sessions with the Automation Run Team
- Configure for run, monitoring, performance assurance
- Roll out to production and hyper-care

For this tower, Agile Scrum is best suited as against the Waterfall lifecycle. Keeping SMEs in the automation through show-and-tell sessions are a good way to keep tabs on whether the automation aligns with the process in action. This also helps the SMEs to understand the upcoming automation, and they gain the ability to explore variances and exceptions better. This leads to effective feedback, which in turn helps designers and developers to make the automation more robust.

Tower 3: Automation Run

- Continuously monitors the automation
- Handles the downtime of systems and applications
- Reports anomalies, executes remedies in line with run books or Known Error Databases (KEDB).
- Facilitates with application teams, business user groups and automation specialists for speedy resolutions for new issues
- Updates run books as necessary
- Maintains the systems for seamless execution of automation, ensuring periodic upkeep
- Handles performance tuning and scaling of automations
- Generates service requests on schedule changes, ad-hoc runs, ad-hoc reporting, process logs, etc.

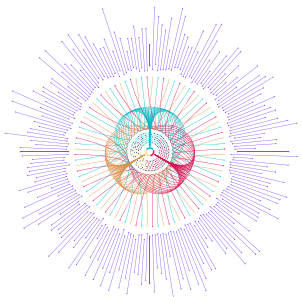
The ITIL v4 approach, due to its focus on value delivery, is the right methodology for the automation run tower.

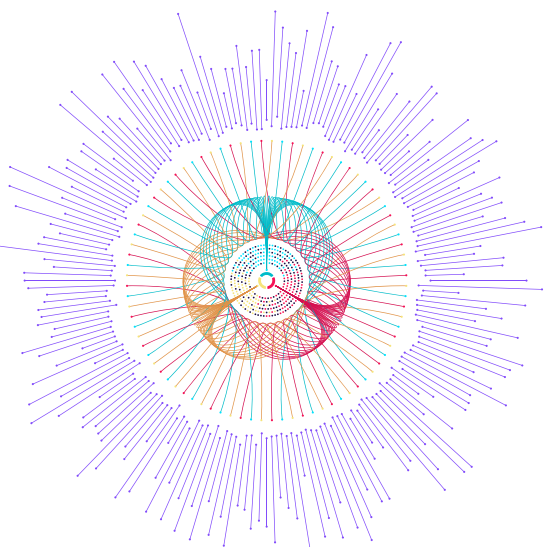
3 People

Change, however small, has always been met with resistance from people. It is human nature.
For the ready adoption of automation and its success, the folks on the ground need to be on-board. The buy-in from the leaders, SMEs and operators are critical right from the start—from mapping the landscape, baselining the operating metrics, automation assessment, automation solution outline, design, development, testing, and so on.
The expertise of SMEs and operators is critical to maintain customer dynamics, despite the reliance on automated process mining, task mining, process discovery, and contextualizing actions to the business ecosystem.
So, why wouldn't the SMEs and operators welcome automation?
There are three major reasons: **fear, seeing no value for oneself** and **being left out from the automation culture.**

Fear

Rampant reports alleging that "automation will wipe out jobs" do no favors. The SMEs and operators see automation as a threat to their own jobs or their colleagues.
This fear leads them to be protective of the work they do, sharing very little en route to the automation. In some instances, employees mislead automation exercises by withholding critical information or, at times, eulogizing a small fraction of exception processing as the main work to heighten the complexity of the work.
Enterprises might pursue automation for cost reduction as their primary objective. Nevertheless, they need talented and experienced staff to expand on their business offerings and footprint. For instance, when a bank automates data extraction and data entry, an operator in the Loan Processing department who used to do the same might fear losing their jobs.





The best way forward would be for the company to communicate to the employee that they can now scale up to document validation and customer relationship, instead of manually entering data.

Unit leaders and CXOs need to be transparent and communicate with confidence to absolve fears of job loss. They can approach it in a way that the staff being freed from automation become candidates who could be reskilled into other jobs that need cognitive skills, human touch, customer interactions, etc. It is extremely hard to attract talent and infuse the ethos of an enterprise. Re-tuning your existing staff and helping them grow in their career because of automation makes them buy in to the theme of automation and they become keen to see the success of automation.

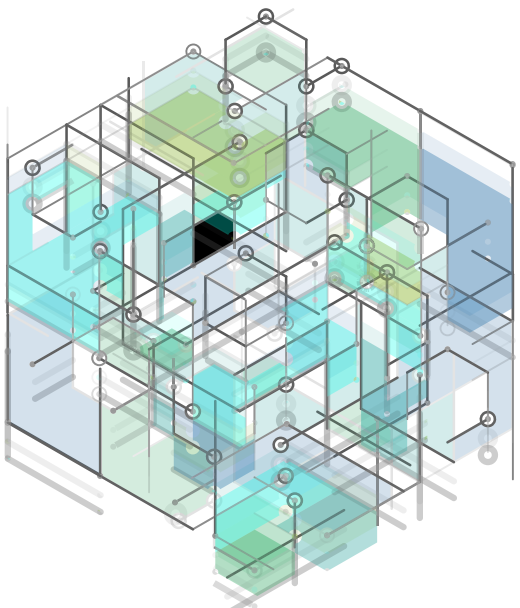
Seeing no value for oneself

Transformation initiatives, at times, tend to focus on fueling the growth of the enterprise alone. This makes the employees feel like they are being left out. When the visions and goals become too narrow and too ambitious, employees fail to see the value this would bring to them. This becomes an insurmountable hurdle during automation.

Enterprises need to take a conscious effort in communicating their vision and goals with automation and highlight what it means to the employees. By doing this, employees, in time, will recognize themselves as part of this goal realization journey. For a successful automation journey, the goals of the enterprise should be a part of their aspirations and career growth.

The Automation Culture

Branding the culture of automation as an exercise in recognizing and appreciating inputs from every employee makes them contribute to the cause of automation. Publish successes and learnings from automation and highlight the contributions of operators and SMEs. Welcome ideas from your employees on automation. Make them part of the automation projects as consultants.



Now, let us take a look at some of the important stake holders of automation. This automation team will be the heart and soul of the process—from its inception to implementation and testing.

The automation team consists of

- Process Discovery Team
- Automation Build Team
- Automation Run Team
- The CoE (Center of Excellence) Team

The Automation Team

Process Discovery team

This is a multi-function team comprising of process SMEs, automation business analysts and automation technology experts or CoE (Center of Excellence) members.

Automation Business Analysts are business system analysts who have experience with automation projects, a knack to collaborate with operators quickly, and who are inquisitive and curious. This role is pivotal in the discovery stage of automation. Apart from being experienced in the automation process, ample exposure to the business domain make these employees ideal candidates for the team.

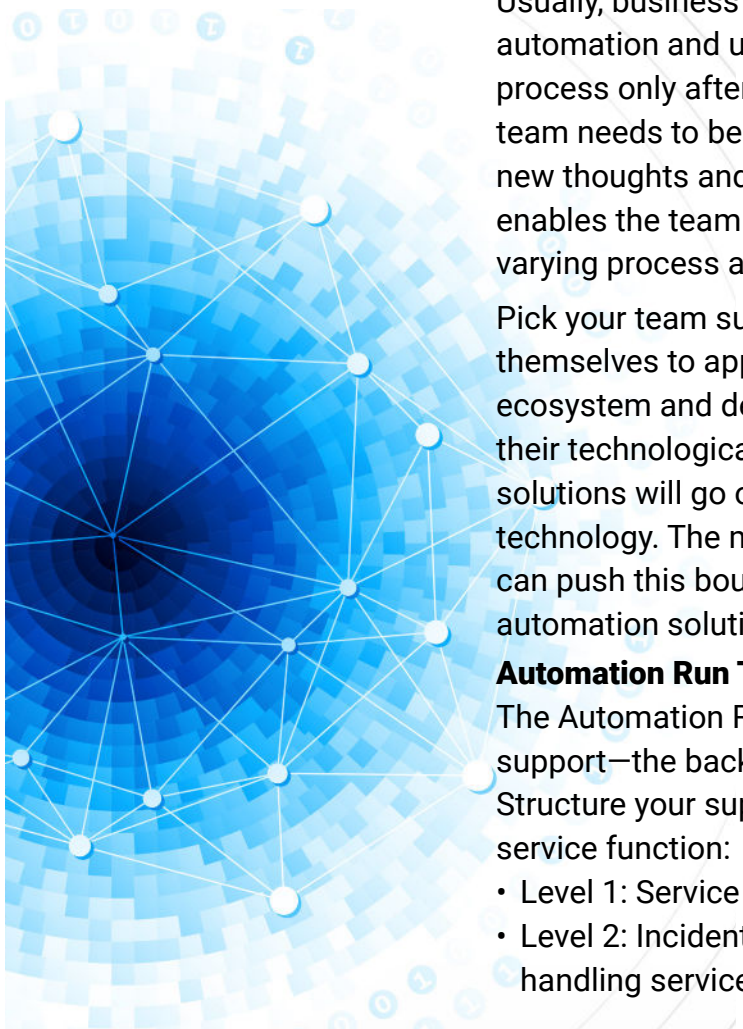
When there are personnel certified in Lean Six Sigma, and having good experience in process study, value stream mapping and optimization techniques in the team, it will fuel an impactful transformation.

Another important section of team are technology experts, who have a wide array of experience across the automation tool spectrum and delivering IT solutions in both the automation space as well as custom applications. This team enables the automation build team with necessary handoff and insights on the prioritized opportunities.

Automation Build Team

This team comprises Automation Business Analysts, Architects or Technical leads, Developers, Test Engineers and a Scrum Master or a Project Manager.

The Automation Build Team focuses in developing automation solutions for the prioritized opportunities using the solution outline provided by the process discovery team. Agility and dexterity are key for this team to deliver an impactful automation.



Usually, business teams realize the possibilities of automation and understand the aspects of the process only after watching a demo. Therefore, this team needs to be agile in absorbing and adopting new thoughts and findings. Dexterity in technology enables the team to conquer the challenges of varying process and application landscapes.

Pick your team such that the members align themselves to application landscape and IT ecosystem and develop a keen attitude to expand on their technological prowess. The technology solutions will go only as far as the limits placed on technology. The more the automation build team can push this boundary, the more "future-ready" the automation solutions would be!

Automation Run Team

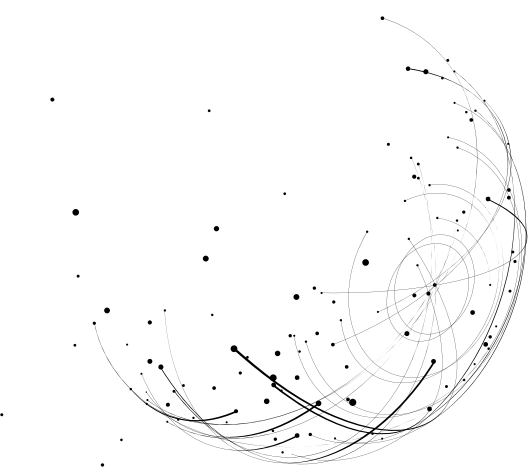
The Automation Run Team is essentially the support—the backbone of automation.
Structure your support services team in levels by service function:

- Level 1: Service Desk and Event Monitoring
- Level 2: Incident and Problem Management, handling service requests
- Level 3: Platform management, problem management, in-charge of minor changes

This is a team of personnel with good interpersonal skills and trained on the automation-technology sets, with a keen eye for service delivery.

This team needs to collaborate with the Automation Build Team to:

- Understand the working of a process
- Build a rapport with process owners/SMEs /operators
- Align and draw out workarounds
- Cater to service requests from process owners/ SMEs/operators
- Cultivate a working relationship with application /system owners for collaboration during system upgrades
- Be in the know of changes that could impact automation
- Represent the business's (process owners/SMEs /operators) teething issues with the Build, CoE and Discovery Team to outline and implement permanent resolutions.



Automation Champions

Identify leaders from business units who can further the cause of automation, the value of automation enterprise, employees and clients. These champions can not only help socialize the positive impact made to their areas, but they can also help clear concerns and hurdles to automation. With the value they saw, they themselves will be in the search of newer opportunities. They expand the reach of automation pursuits and become the ambassadors for the program.

The CoE team

"The constant increase of entropy is the basic law of the universe; it is the basic law of life to be ever more highly structured and to struggle against entropy."

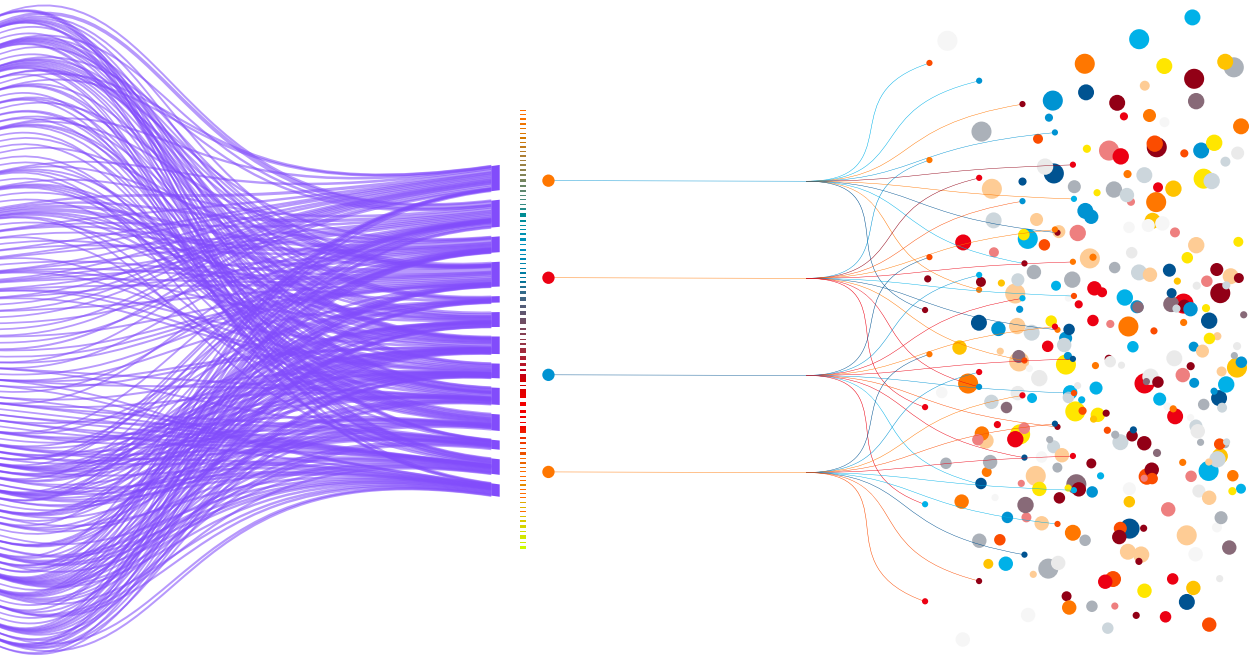
In automation, the CoE team provides the structured setup for your automation journey and the guard rail for a smooth sail.

Automation teams generally face hurdles in various levels of the life cycle—be it discovery, build, project-level or program-level runs. They can range from, "can I even automate this?" to "how to integrate it with this application?" and "how to create live reports?". Your automation team needs an all-supporting wing that can guide, mentor and pitch in as needed. **CoE is that wing**.

CoE is your "high impact" team. Candidates who are focused, self-driven, process-oriented and experimental make this "A team". Project owner, Architect, Business Analyst, Sr. Developer and Developers make this self-sufficient, all-knowing, all-powerful set who can be your "front runners" as well as "final defenders".

The primary tenets of the CoE are:

- **Govern**: Delivers governance and structure to the mode of operation of the automation team by governing platform, design, choice of technology and license management
- **Guide**: Provide directions for challenges and issues. Deliver knowledge to the team through sharing sessions on new tools and technology, tool evaluations, design patterns, etc.
- **Provide**: Standardize and circulate to maintain a centralized, homogeneous environment/platform which is in alignment with the enterprise



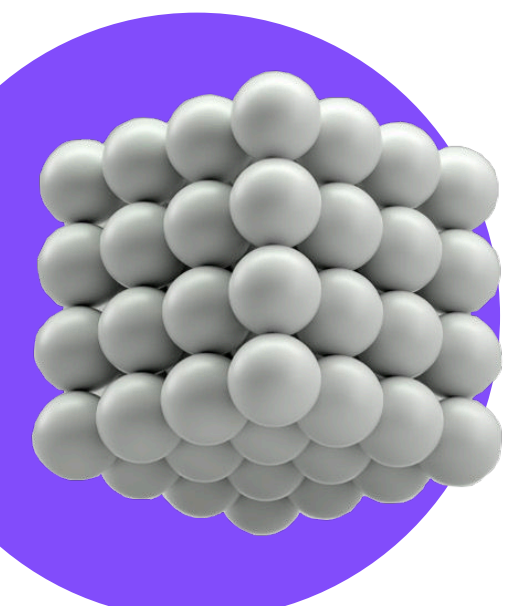
standards and guidelines. Thus, improving delivery quality and reusability

- **Mentor**: Key to educate and align all resources in the team to standards and practices to improve outcomes and reduce the platform maintenance footprint. Here, the team would mentor individuals for the upcoming challenges with roadmaps

- **Measure**: It is critical to measure the success and quantify the outcomes for automations. It is equally important for the team to manage an effective and successful environment—the measuring platform, license and operational costs. CoE collects standard reports from all subordinate structure to evaluate and review data and provide analytics to the automation head

When you start the automation process, the enterprise encounters a vast and varied mix of use cases and technologies. CoE is the critical SME mix you need to "visualize future, clear the path ahead, and make the right decisions for tools, platform and design as well as govern, standardize, and measure your automations and platform".

4 Tools



With the adoption of automation comes a large variety of short-term challenges. When you have the right tools, these challenges become lifting steps that help your enterprise grow further. Therefore, knowing what tools to use, what their capabilities are, and what they deliver is critical. Let us take a look at the diverse variety of tools that you would have in your arsenal during automation.

All the toolsets can be classified as follows:

- Non-RPA
- Standard RPA
- Intelligent RPA
- Hyper-automation

Non-RPA Technology

Take a common scenario of a non-integrated system with digital data, where an operator moves data manually across the two systems that do not talk to each other, despite having interpretable data. In such cases, the best approach to take is:

- Integration with minimum system enhancement: Can these systems talk to each other with minimal tool enhancement outside RPA? If automation can do this, it would be the best outcome for the systems as well as the enterprise.
- Enterprise integration solution: Can these two systems be connected using an enterprise solution such as ETL or ESB?

Standard RPA

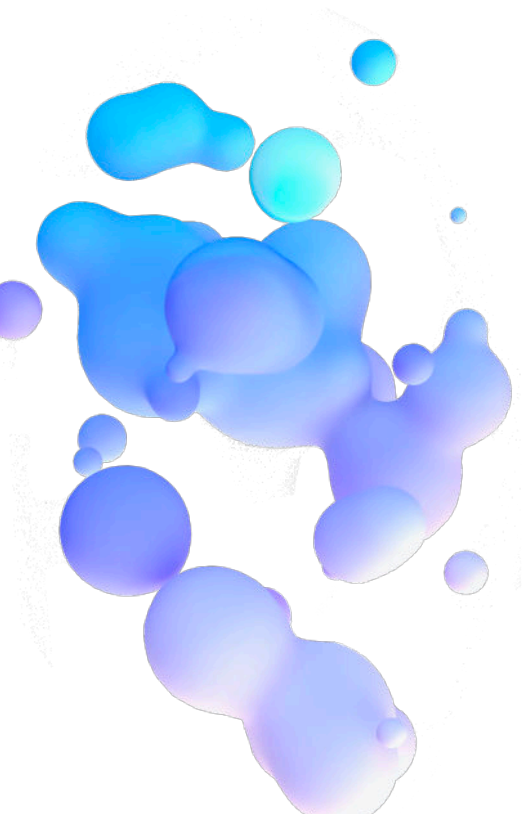
If organizations have rule-based and repetitive processes, RPA is the way to go. Unattended automation is the most common type of RPA. It is triggered on a system action or schedule, and it executes the steps independently from there on. A typical unattended process includes data entry, data validation, monthly reporting, scheduling and queue management. Attended and hybrid automation are used when there is a combination of rule-based and experience-based tasks in which automation can act as virtual assistants by automating the rule-based tasks and relying on humans for decision making. All leading RPA platforms—be it UiPath, Blue Prism, Automation Anywhere, etc.—provide this capability.

Intelligent RPA (RPA + OCR/ICR)
OCR/ICR is employed when a process consists of extracting scanned or handwritten documents. These tools help in extracting the required data fields for processing. Abby, HyperScience, Google Tesseract, etc., are platforms that can be integrated with RPA to provide the additional power for automation.

Hyper-Automation
Based on the process complexity and feasibility, multiple add-on technologies can be utilized to automate the process—including AI/ML, Data visualization tools, BPM/Workflow solutions, third-party solutions. These solutions enhance the existing applications to achieve the intended goal results. For instance, hyper-automation uses an AI/ML solution to classify or extract data from unstructured data. This can be used in tandem with RPA, which can be employed for preliminary collection of documents or post-processing activities.

Now that we know how the tools are classified, let us go to the critical part—determining which tool to use and when.
"If your only tool is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail." It's very important to use the right tool for the right job to achieve the best outcome of automation.
Let's take a look at this using a sample scenario:
A commercial loan processing unit of the bank manually reviews the borrower's financial documents. The operator collects granular financial information and feed it to the analysis system at the bank for a risk review. Once the risk review is complete, the operator captures the risk rating and updates the data across two destination systems.
Let's now review the solution feasibility through the approaches:

Non-RPA Technology - Integration with minimum system enhancement
When we take this approach, the scope only covers the final data feed from the analysis and review. Therefore, the analysis system can be enhanced to provide an API or batch-data feed to destination systems to speed up the process. However, the biggest hurdle is that the system enhancement needs to be taken up by the team owning the application and they would have a substantial backlog.



Non-RPA Technology - Enterprise integration solution

The integration solution can be provided by batch data integration systems like ETL (Extract Transform Load) or by real-time integration systems like ESB (Enterprise Service Bus). These systems can retrieve the risk rating from the analysis system and feed it to destination systems. This solution will be non-intrusive and outside the team owning the application, implemented by the enterprise integration team. However, the gain is quite minuscule, and document handling is not performed.

Standard RPA approach

RPA can download documents from outlook and extract data from PDF text-based documents as much as possible. This is in addition to the retrieval of the risk data from the analysis system and feeding to the receptor systems. However, in this case, scanned documents cannot be handled, and all extracted data need to be reviewed with the user.

Intelligent RPA (RPA + OCR/ICR) approach

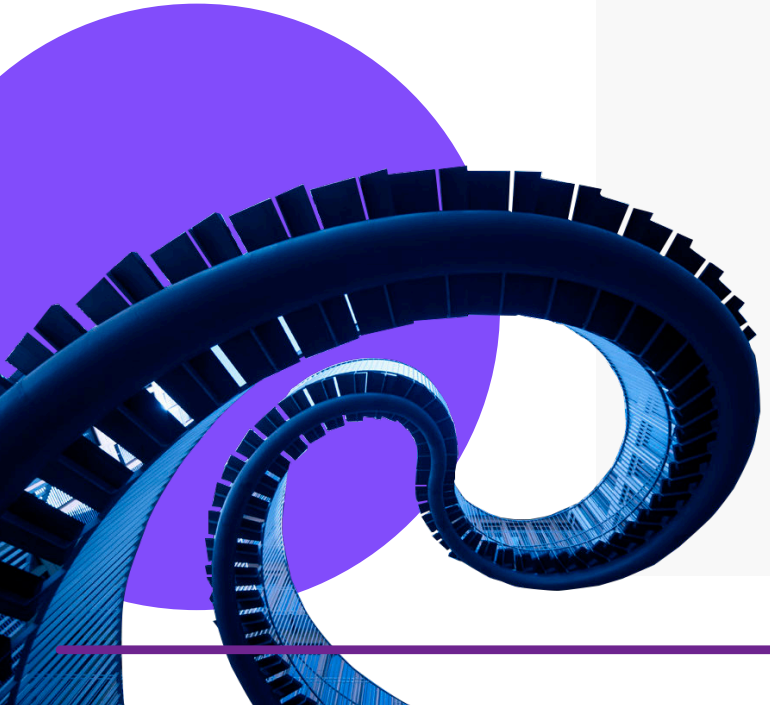
With Intelligent RPA, the solution can now cater to the extraction of data using OCR and provide the non-confidence data for user review, thus bringing in more savings and higher automation percentage. Now, the solution can perform on standard datasets. However, it still does not have the ability to adapt and evolve for changing document structures.

Hyper-Automation approach

In addition to Intelligent RPA, this solution can now interpret the data in documents and take cognitive steps. Any feedback from the user will now become a learning experience for the AI to evolve. This will further reduce the user intervention in the use case bringing in more savings. With this, the solution is now able to bring the best automation to the table. Based on the desired automation objective, choose a technology lever or a combination of tools such that the automation can stand the test of time.

5 The Controls

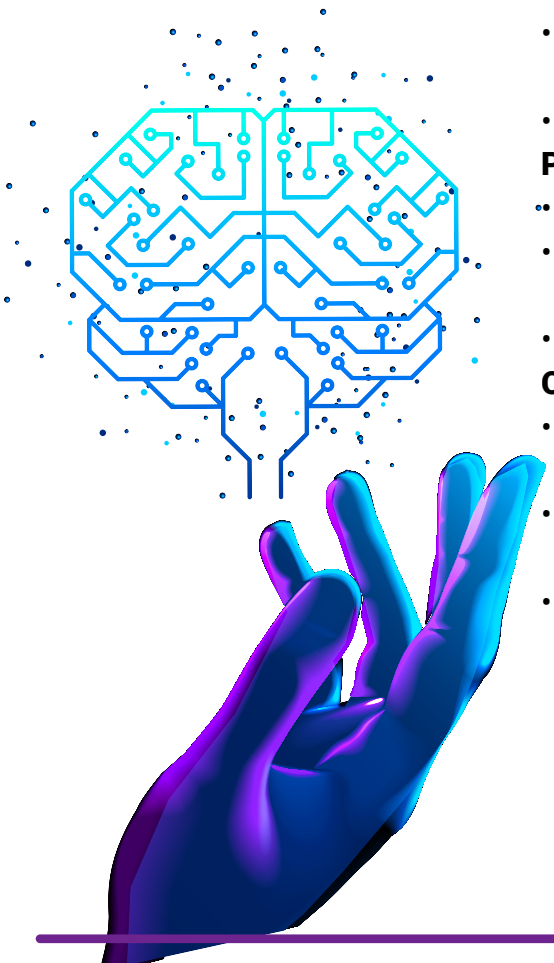
If the process of automation is highly influenced by the clout of a specific situation or the leader, applying an automation solution or using a platform for any problem will lead to gaps in realizing the overall goal. This hampers the ability to keep the automation in vogue through the evolving business dynamics.
For the smooth sailing of the program, it is important to bring a structure to the automation pursuit—the rails on which it would run—through a metric for measuring the success of the program. These guardrails ensure the alignment of automation to critical enterprises business operations and IT system operations.
The following multi-level governance structure can be adopted to bring about the same:



Strategical Governance
- Automation Strategy & Vision for the Enterprise
- Assess & Approve Automation Business Cases

Project Governance
- Project Progress Review
- Solution alignement with overall Optimization & Transformation
- Code quality, Design, Test adherence to Enterprise Standards

Operational Governance
- Release & Change Management
- Bot Service Quality, Performance
- Bot Upkeep to maintain Process & IT needs



Strategical Governance

- Provides the strategy and vision of the enterprise
- Define the Prioritization Matrix Business case assessment model
- Provide direction for business functions on transformation, automation, reimagination, etc.
- Assess and approve the business case

Project Governance

- Automation project progress review
- Alignment of solution with the goal, enterprise standards, other initiatives, etc.
- Automation implementation plan and execution

Operational Governance

- Routine bot management, maintenance, or upkeep
- Performance assessments and action, scale-up or scale-down
- Plan and action for application changes, software upgrades, etc.

Automation Implementation Plan and Execution

Handoff between the Automation Build and Run Teams

Clear Run books with details on the automation functionality, schedule of runs, reporting known errors with resolutions and workarounds, an escalation matrix, parameters to be monitored, dependent applications and contact details, etc.

Configuration in production

Configuring the automation to the right application instances, whitelisting URLs, firewalls, etc., for smooth processing is vital. It is also important for the Run teams to assess performance expectations, logging and reporting needs for the process to establish the right monitors and configure dashboards for continuous monitoring of the automation. Leverage systemic and automated monitors wherever available.

Automation Rollout

It is better to check the automation run and output with a smaller volume to validate the vital parameters of automation, ensuring that it executes the steps without any glitch, without any quality

issues and rate of execution. Have the Process SMEs validate the output quality and output rate. Keep the downstream teams updated on the introduction of automation and seek feedback on the input they receive. As you get the green signal, increase the input volume at a steady interval. We recommend planning the rollout schedule, intervals, and volume along with the Process Owner, Application owners, and Upstream and Downstream Units to arrive at the best-suited day and time to validate the automation execution. If you plan to have the automation run alongside another rollout, it might be hard to qualify errors, if any, or at times the execution rate.

Hyper Care

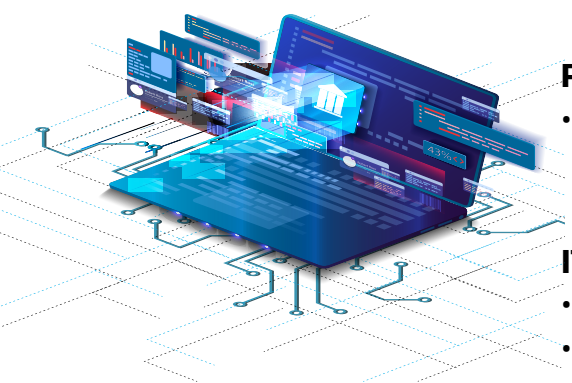
We recommend a hyper care window of one-to-three weeks for automations where you should have member(s) of the automation build team and the process SMEs closely monitoring the automations exception and performance for anomalies with the automation run team. The automation run team leverages this time to polish their understanding of the said automation's features, performance vitals, and business user expectations. Anomalies identified during this period must be addressed by the Automation Build Team swiftly and delivered to production after due validations within the test region.

People Planning

If the automation program is said to enable a reduction in workforce, ensure that the people transition is planned alongside the successful automated processing. Plan for a suitable buffer period to hold your staff, while you retrain automations to overcome any glitches during your Hyper Care. Plan for building a staff reserve to process the exceptions manually or to cater to process your critical functions should you encounter a showstopper issue with automations. Work with your HR function and automation team to train your staff to work alongside the digital workforce (also known as automations).

Robust Change Management Cadence

A well-thought change management cadence, documented clearly and accessible to all participants—Processing Team, Automation Team, IT Support Functions, etc.—and management support enables in adherence to the practices.



The automation run team works closely with the change management office of the enterprise for handling updates to the automation in production. The automation run team should qualify the change trigger and action accordingly.

Service Quality

- Any defects reported in the functioning of the automation
- Observations around performance of the automation

Process Updates

- Change in upstream or downstream processes resulting in the need for enhancement to the automation

IT System Updates

- Change in application part of the process
- IT upgrades—server, desktop, browser, Office suite, etc.
- Automation platform patches and upgrades

Across these change triggers, the automation run team should perform an impact analysis to qualify the change type, category—issue fixes, platform updates, minor changes and major changes. Major changes would be added to the backlog of the automation build team. For other changes, based on how critical they are, it would be pertinent to make the updates in consultation with the automation build and the CoE teams. This ensures that there is no ripple effect.

The change rollout requires the same span of attention as the automation rollout. This ensures that the process owners, upstream and downstream systems, and processes are all in sync to facilitate smooth execution and validations.

As automation takes the center stage in the 21st century, more enterprises look to an improvement in compliance, quality, productivity, and—last but not the least—cost savings in operations. But like any technology, approaching it with the required knowledge is as important as its efficient implementation. This guide aims to arm you with the required know-how so that your automation journey is effective, efficient, and fulfilling.

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SLK takes an Intelligent automation first approach to achieving an enterprise's central goals. Being a go-to technology & consulting firm for some of the Fortune 500 companies, we recognize the pace at which technology is transforming & its impact.