Your RPA Journey
From an idea to a fully functioning robotized center of excellence

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RPA represents a low-cost solution for process improvement. It is a relatively simple and inexpensive software-based technology, it sits on top of other applications, requires no special hardware, and works well in almost any IT environment. The immediacy of the gains can be attractive in comparison with a lengthy system overhaul or the cost of a globally sourced employee, whereby a "fully loaded" robot may equal about one-third of the cost of a globally sourced employee. RPA is particularly suitable for processes with a high human error rate, helping to avoid rework and aiding to produce 100 percent accuracy as well as other error implications like reputational or regulatory risks. For example, a process with an error rate of 10 percent done by 20 FTEs, would equal the savings of two FTEs.

RPA is an optimal solution for managing highs and lows in workloads. A process performed by robots is much easier to manage than one performed by a human. Multiple robots operating on a certain process can easily be redeployed or reassigned depending on workload, avoiding temporary hiring, training, and relying on a traditional learning curve.

Fast progress of digital technology and business models will also continue to shift the balance of global economic power, putting more pressure on CIOs to stay ahead of existing and emerging competitors. The many tools at the disposal of CIOs make up a long and comprehensive list. This paper will look at the journey a CIO would take if he or she settled on robotics as a tool to stay ahead of the technological curve.

Use of robotics

Robots used in RPA work by interacting with applications mimicking human actions, and can perform many of the mundane tasks such as rekeying data, logging into applications, moving files and folders, copying and pasting, and much more. Robots can be seen as a virtual workforce and can be assigned to middle and back-office processing centers. There are also front-office processes that robots can perform, for instance prompting contact center agents during customer interactions and automatically capturing call close notes. These types of activities and processes have been adopted in industries with intense manual or administrative processes, in sectors such as financial services, insurance, and healthcare.

One of the common features among financial service providers is that of dealing with large volumes of data and transactions. In the banking industry, there are simple processes like deposits and transfers that make for perfect RPA targets. For those businesses in the financial sector who have already adopted RPA, it has effectively transformed this transaction-laden industry into one that is fast, effective, and reliable. This has helped to improve customer service, as well as made the lives of those who work behind the scenes much easier and more efficient.

In the insurance industry, there are many processes that can be automated; examples include managing policies, filing and processing claims, underwriting, and the countless other administrative tasks. RPA enables insurance providers to manage all the necessary tasks across multiple platforms with ease. It also provides the scalability necessary to deal with the many changes and challenges businesses in this industry face on a regular basis.

The administrative side of healthcare involves lots of paperwork, large quantities of file and data management, and mostly manual repetitive tasks. RPA has helped encourage an already forward-thinking industry by streamlining the backend of operations to maximize efficiency levels, reduce errors, and reduce costs.

In summary, RPA can be used as a tool to increase engagement and satisfaction, and is an enabler of ongoing transformation that touches upon many dimensions of the workforce. It therefore needs to be connected to a broader talent strategy, and companies will need to change their operating models to maximize value. Simply put, the benefits of RPA easily transcend headcount and cost reduction. RPA offers great potential for businesses to become smarter and more efficient.

The RPA Journey

The successful implementation of RPA requires a comprehensive and inclusive approach. When it comes to leveraging RPA, companies generally fall into one of two camps: those that have launched pilots and are now trying to scale the technology, and those that are at the early stages of exploring its possibilities. One viable way to begin is with a prototype or pilot that will allow you and your organization to become familiar with RPA. It is important to identify sponsors with vision to promote

the new technology and approve the future financing of the program in case of a successfully launched pilot.

Implementation begins by identifying the processes in your business that could benefit from RPA. To commence, conduct a high-level assessment of the potential process candidates for automation, document the resulting efficiencies and cost-saving opportunities to confirm whether RPA is a good fit. Not every process in the company may be suitable for RPA implementation. This savings baseline confirms a business case and is the starting point for internal discussions with sponsors and stakeholders to spark interest and obtain direction. Most importantly, this phase includes technology demonstrations of selected RPA vendors to serve as a proof-of-concept and platform for knowledge gathering.

Once the scope for applying this technology has been defined, the crucial next step is to define the objectives of the RPA initiative. The biggest mistake companies make during this phase is trying to avoid risk by selecting smaller processes without significant business impact. In fact, the main finding of the sixth MIT Sloan Management Review and our Deloitte Digital Global Study was that risk-averse companies struggle most with any kind of digital transformation. This will result in an unattractive business case for stakeholders and sponsors who approved the initiative.

Overall, RPA represents an opportunity to accelerate business strategy and maximize both growth and organizational performance through the automation of select processes and the redeployment or removal of excess capacity. As with any large-scale business transformation, the implementation of RPA should be considered holistically, covering business strategy, people strategy, process, and technology.

Integrating RPA into your organization's DNA
The demand for implementing emerging technologies no longer poses most organizations much concern, however scaling and a clear strategy often prove difficult for less digitally mature organizations. Establishing a clearly defined vision is the first step when designing a strategy. Understanding the company's holistic objectives and desired automation capabilities (e.g., RPA, machine learning, cognitive automation), will help to define the actual purpose of RPA implementation—reducing costs, accelerating growth, or other drivers. In order to meet the set objectives, an organization should define the delivery model, operating model, business case, and roadmap to deliver scalable robotics across the organization.

Re-envision corporate culture
A move to RPA will likely require a shift in working norms to enable the effective use of virtual teams, increase trust in technology, and embrace innovation and analytics. Technology has become a fundamental part of business, however the advantage and disadvantage of technology is that it constantly changes in order to further improve and create value. A flexible and changing corporate culture that can be easily shaped and enhanced plays a vital part of technology acceptance. RPA is no exception; in order for RPA to be truly successful and produce sustainable results, it has to be integrated into the corporate culture of an organization and fully embraced across the entire company. Stakeholders must be aware of how RPA will benefit them directly—providing them with additional flexibility, enhancing autonomy, or enabling them to focus on more demanding and value-adding tasks. Only then can RPA become an integral part of the work environment.

Organizational design
The necessity to understand the future state of human/robot interactions will have implications on organizational target design, changes to roles and responsibilities, spans of control, and workforce planning, among other things. Digital governance is a framework for establishing accountability, roles, and decision-making authority for an organization's RPA program. A complete governance framework is crucial to successfully execute a RPA implementation, manage organizational change, redesign processes, manage future RPA demand, and communicate with stakeholders. Workforce planning and talent strategy will also play a key role in the success of an RPA implementation. Based on the outputs of workforce planning, organizations will need to reconcile the capabilities they have with the ones they will need, and devise a plan to develop and acquire the latter. An end-to-end review of the organization's talent lifecycle, from recruitment through to transition, will be required. ⬤

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Change management

Successful change management is essential for a successful incorporation of new technology into corporate culture, but can be challenging, especially when trying to redefine a company's DNA. A good assessment of the potential obstacles is the first step to take. For example presenting employees with the possibilities of RPA will encourage their acceptance rather than resistance. It is critical that employees understand any and all impacts on their roles and how RPA will contribute to the bigger picture. A clear communication strategy will play a definitive role in the success of change management and RPA acceptance. All employees involved in and affected by RPA implementation will most likely have to deal with a role change, role elimination, or capability change. A targeted transition plan that addresses each of these types of change at both the individual and department levels will mitigate unnecessary confusion and enable a quicker arrival at a "steady state." It is important to identify and close the skill gaps. An end-to-end review of the organization's talent lifecycle, from recruitment through to transition, will be required.

Working with RPA

Once RPA is firmly incorporated into the organization's DNA, it is important to incentivize the use of RPA and aim at continuous identification of further RPA opportunities. Not all processes fit for RPA will be identified or implemented from the very beginning. Companies can set up different initiatives to accelerate the growth of RPA, including asking for suggestions from employees and set up a demand management process in order to forecast, plan, and manage the future ideas and demand for RPA.

Performance management set during the implementation phase focused on the RPA will help track the lessons learned through documenting prioritized opportunity business cases, including robot process design, challenges, complexity, dependencies, and benefits enabling easier and smoother expenditure of RPA technology on other processes. Capacity management on the other hand will ensure that IT resources are properly allocated and sized in order to meet current and future RPA requirements in the most cost-effective manner.

RPA Maturity cycle

A center of excellence (CoE) is frequently used when an organization needs to adopt and manage a new technology. Establishing CoEs for RPA will contribute to effectively deal with a rapidly evolving business environment and embed RPA into the organization's DNA. The CoE should have senior sponsorship who believes in RPA, champions RPA, and gets buy-in throughout the organization. The creation of a CoE should be considered from the very beginning when setting up the RPA vision with all the anticipated future technological changes and strategy in mind. To avoid the future rework or any quality issues it should be set up before any delivery has been started. Onboarding IT to the CoE will help create internal buy-in while allowing IT to build the knowledge and expertise of running and maintaining the robot workforce as RPA is scaled across the business.

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How to move from RPA to RCA

RPA should be viewed in the full context of where it sits on the automation continuum. Organizations that have successfully integrated RPA will inevitably ask, "What's next? How do we traverse the path to more advanced cognitive automation?" Whereas for some organizations it may make sense to leapfrog RPA and go straight to cognitive automation; it does not have to be a linear progression.

Some companies are beginning to combine RPA with other technologies to automate not only human actions but human judgment, and eventually, intelligence. By combining RPA with cognitive and artificial intelligence capabilities, natural language processing, generation, and other emerging technologies, companies can create toolsets that can tackle processes that include judgment-based processes, predictive decision-making, and conversational user interfaces. Seen through this lens, RPA becomes a foundational technology for a digitally transformed enterprise that can evolve in step with other quickly advancing technologies. ●

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