3 CRITICAL STEPS TO MAKE YOUR RPA IMPLEMENTATION A SUCCESS
Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is quickly becoming a must-have initiative for modern businesses. According to a recent study from the Process Excellence Network (PEX), nearly 60% of surveyed companies are either implementing or currently running RPA programs to transform internal processes like Accounts Payable, Purchase to Pay, and Order to Cash, all with the expectation of saving up to 60% on process costs.

RPA has significant time and money saving potential, but there are equally significant challenges to maximize RPA’s potential. In fact, according to Ernst and Young, half of RPA implementations fail due to lack of adoption, and the cost of training robots can surpass 10x the cost of the robots themselves.

So how can you ensure you are in the correct 50% of RPA users, getting the most significant savings out of RPA? In this whitepaper we will examine the 3 most important tasks to ensure the success of your RPA deployment.
Process costs, efficiency and quality have been the focus of many process optimization initiatives for a long time. Companies have invested heavily in standardizing and harmonizing processes and used offshoring to transform the execution of their back office and customer-facing processes.

While a lot of these initiatives payed off, the potential for further improvement is significant. In a recent study, EY found that the costs of existing manual operations can be reduced by up to 40% without changing underlying IT systems, yet improve service and generate return on investment (ROI) in less than a year. To untap this significant potential, companies are looking at leveraging an innovative technology called Robotic Process Automation (RPA).

**WHAT’S THE VALUE?**

Once the robots are deployed, the only costs are related to servicing and maintaining the software.

**LOWER LABOR COST**

The results of a successful RPA program are impressive: A major European telecom has seen has 800% ROI from its RPA program.

**INCREASED THROUGHPUT**

Robots can do manual tasks hundreds of times faster than people, shortening your time to market. Furthermore, they are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

**INCREASED ACCURACY**

Configured correctly, robots will have near-perfect accuracy, increasing quality throughout your value chain.
In order to automate your processes, you need to understand what you actually want to automate. Most enterprises have complex workflows for dealing with different situations, and training the software robots to understand these workflows is usually the most time consuming step.

Once you understand your processes yourself, you’ll have to teach your software robots to understand your processes too. Different robots have different ways to capture this data, from drag-and-drop to simple coding.

Once your robots are deployed, you’ll need to monitor them regularly to ensure that they are operating properly. Are all the cases being processed as expected? What sort of improvements can you make? Are your business processes changing in the future?

GOOD TO KNOW

A purchase order process could have 600+ variants, based on industry, order value, geography, if the initial order was rejected, price changes, and more. Furthermore, many of these steps are handled by different roles and teams. The more effort you invest in understanding your current processes and its shortcomings, the less errors your deployment will encounter.

BEST PRACTICE

In this whitepaper, we’ll go over the best practices in step one of your deployment cycle. You’ll see how to best run the discovery process through evaluating your current business process, prioritizing your automation needs, and aligning the organization around the RPA initiative.
“IF THE ORIGINAL PROCESS IS BAD, RPA JUST MAKES A BAD PROCESS RUN FASTER.”

Before getting started with automating your processes, it’s crucial to take a step back and assess whether your current processes are efficient and scalable. Deploying robots to run your process is challenging if there is no standard process to follow.

If your organization runs very complex and non-standardized processes, automation can even make things worse. Replicating a complex process with many variants using RPA is typically tedious and requires a significant investment. Moreover, the cost of maintaining and servicing your robots could outweigh your savings. It is therefore crucial to understand the maturity of your processes and decide which processes are standardized enough to benefit from RPA and which processes would benefit from harmonization and standardization prior to starting an RPA initiative.

THE “STANDARDIZED” PROCESS

THE “NON-STANDARDIZED” PROCESS
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IN PRACTICE

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Once you standardize your processes, it is time to identify where you have the most potential for automation. Most systems have some form of automation already in place, so looking at current automation rates within your processes is crucial to define your targets. Furthermore, there might be specific cases, by geography, vendor, material, etc where manual work is widespread. By comparing automation rates, you’ll be able to uncover low-hanging fruit where automation could be high impact.

**HOW CELONIS CAN HELP**

Celonis gives you immediate insights into not only how your processes are executed, but also which activities are manual or automatic.

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**IDENTIFYING THE LOW-HANGING FRUIT FOR AUTOMATION WILL HELP YOU BUILD QUICK SUCCESS STORIES**

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<th>PROCESS STEPS WITH HIGH AUTOMATION RATES</th>
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CREATE PO vs GOODS RECEIPT
As part of their RPA initiative, a Celonis customer looked at current automation rates by vendor and geography to identify the segments where automation is low.

**A HIGHLY TARGETED APPROACH**

In one instance they discovered that their Accounts Payable Process has very different automation rates by department, even though an electronic interface was put in place to increase automation. Looking at the root causes, they found that some departments of that vendor were still sending out manual invoices that had to be scanned. The central accounting team did not have visibility of the operational scanning processes and were not aware of this deviation. Pushing the departments to use the electronic interface provided a quick fix, and increased the automation rates for the overall process.

In another instance, Celonis guided the customer’s attention to significant manual efforts within their incident handling process. Employees were manually consolidating information from different IT systems, wasting time and introducing errors. After evaluating the ROI of automating this process, the company deployed an RPA application.
“GET YOUR MANAGEMENT BUY IN WITH A CLEAR AND TRANSPARENT BUSINESS CASE.”

Evaluating your current processes and prioritizing your automation potential not only helps you save time and increase benefits when implementing RPA initiatives, it also tackles one of the key challenges of every RPA initiative: Getting the organization behind the project and securing management buy-in.

According to a recent study by PEX, a lack of internal alignment is the most common reason that RPA initiatives fail. Senior management teams are unsure about the value of RPA, and RPA project members pursue different priorities during the RPA implementation. So how can you make sure you get the right people behind the project?

By evaluating your current processes, you will have identified the areas that involve manual effort and high process cost, so you can build a strong business case. Then, using current automation rates and benchmarks, it’s possible to create a forecast of cost and time savings from a RPA initiative. Lastly, by prioritizing your RPA potential, you can better scope out the project and align your team.
Using Celonis, companies can easily show the potential of RPA in their processes and build a concise argument for deploying RPA use cases.

The technology supports the organization throughout the lifecycle of a RPA initiative. Celonis provides a visual and fact-based proof for automation potential, and supporting the customer along the journey, with monitoring and benchmarking robots to ensure sustainable benefits.

One Celonis customer had significant challenges to get the buy-in from key executives since the potential for process automation was not tangible. The organization leveraged Celonis to develop a clear value case for RPA, and even tested RPA benefits during a pilot on their Accounts Payable Process. The project team was able to reduce the throughput time of invoice processing for one of their regional organizations by 25%, not only proving the technology during the pilot, but making the benefits for a full roll-out clear to the key stakeholders.
Getting that first step of your RPA initiative right is critical; skills and methodology can be reused for additional RPA use cases.

Automating tasks is never a one-time job; adopting RPA to changing processes is vital to generate sustainable benefits.

Lots of things can go wrong with RPA: from automating the wrong process to changing a process for the worse.

Implementing robots can be tedious, with a lot of iterations to improve your robots.

For every dollar you invest in an RPA application, you will spend another 10 dollars for consulting.

Better prioritize and allocate your consulting spend with Process Mining.

Cut implementation time by getting a clear view on how your processes work and how to train your robots.

Make sure that mistakes are avoided or made instantly visible to reduce project risk.

Monitor your RPA performance continuously to keep your RPA up-to-date with changing processes.

Hire a partner that can get the job done from Day 1, when you set up your first RPA application, to the company-wide application.
IN A NUTSHELL

With the right preparation, RPA offers a lot of opportunity to customers to reduce process costs and free up resources in the organisation. Focusing your RPA initiative on the right process and prioritizing your efforts according to automation potential are crucial to getting started. Aligning the organization, both management and project members behind the RPA initiative, will help you to sustain the benefits from RPA.

ABOUT CELONIS

Celonis is the leading enterprise-ready process mining platform. Leveraging modern data analytics and artificial intelligence, Celonis enables management and operational teams to streamline processes and implement initiatives like RPA, Lean Six Sigma, and Process Excellence. Over 300 global companies use Celonis to run efficiently and deliver better service.

HOW TO GET STARTED

IS YOUR ORGANIZATION DEPLOYING A RPA INITIATIVE?

CONTACT US TO SEE HOW CELONIS CAN HELP!

REQUEST DEMO

Get more information: www.celonis.com