

SCALE THROUGH AUTOMATION

The Fastest Way to Grow Your Business is to Automate it!

Most Common Business Processes You Can Automate with RPA...

One of the first steps in your Robotic Process Automation (RPA) journey includes the selection of the best business process or processes to automate with RPA in the proof of concept (POC) phase.

The goal when choosing the right process for the POC and Pilot program is looking for characteristics that will ensure successful results by automating tasks that are:

- *High in volume and repetitive: High transaction volume, routine processes running periodically (daily or weekly)*
- *Rule-based: Standardized processes, decision making based on predictive rules*
- *Mature and stable: Documented, stable, and with predictable operational costs*
- *Low exception: low variation scenarios in the activities that could lead to different handling of procedures*
- *High ROI potential: Choose processes that can provide significant automation savings, usually 2 Full-Time Employees (FTEs) work-effort*
- *Not subject to methodology changes: Does not process in systems that are due to undergo fundamental changes to interface or configuration in the short term*
- *Readable inputs: Processes that are triggered by standard and readable electronic inputs like MS Word, Excel, XML, PPT, PDFs, and if working with scanned images, optical character recognition (OCR) add-on would be needed*

Operations that tend to have these characteristics and are commonly suitable for automation are generally back-office processes in F&A, HR and IT as well as front office processes such as Customer On-boarding and Support.

Below we outline 8 of the most common back-office processes that are suitable for RPA:

1. Invoice Processing

Organizations of all sizes and industries deal with sending and receiving invoices, and it is a critical operation for most finance departments as it relates back to the overall functionality of companies.

Challenges: Invoice processing often carries many challenges including the disparate formats in which vendors can submit the invoices: paper copy, email, fax, PDF, MS Word Doc, etc. forcing finance analysts to manually transfer the data from various sources into the unified financial database system the company uses, therefore making it a time consuming and error-prone task.

RPA Solution: RPA can be set up to automatically process invoices upon receipt, whether they arrive electronically or on paper formats (using OCR). The software robots can automate the data input, error reconciliation, and even process certain decision-making required throughout the invoice processing, which minimizes the need for human intervention. It also won't ever lose track of a form or make a calculation error reducing at the same time they need for exception handling. The overall process typically can be performed end-to-end from receipt to payment in a matter of minutes.

2. Sales Orders

Sales operations are a crucial part of any business, it includes tasks like data entries to CRM systems, ERP accounting updates, etc.

Challenges: Ensuring data consistency across enterprise systems has never been an easy task, sales reps often need to spend significant amount of time entering data to the CRM system as well as the ERP system, and perhaps even a third or fourth proprietary application that connects in between, then finances and accounting analysts would potentially have to replicate the data and enter it in another system or module. These type of processes clearly generates opportunities for data duplication, errors and hinder staff productivity.

RPA solution: RPA could perfectly perform the sales operational activities from end-to-end, automating tasks such as sales order entry, invoicing, etc. It will help maintain a clean database, improve customer experience, and of course increase your sales employees' satisfaction by removing all the time-consuming tasks that were taking away precious time from their main goal - prospecting, and generating more business.

3. Accounting Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a key responsibility of the accounting department, where records and balances are verified for accuracy by comparing a different set of documents from varied formats and sources.

Challenges: Reconciliation might be one of the most boring yet important tasks that the accounting department need to do, as the process can be tedious and sometimes heavily manual, but it is key to secure the reliability of the records.

RPA solution: RPA bots can automate the process of data extraction from various sources of documentation such as bank statements or bills, increasing the chances for accuracy in the comparison process when finding and approving matching orders. RPA can also reconcile purchase orders with delivery notes which ensures compatibility of orders and deliveries.

4. Data Entry

Data entries are one of the most common processes back-office staff spend the majority of their day doing, no matter if you are a business analyst in finance & accounting, HR or supply chain, chances are there is a good portion of your day spent in entering data.

Challenges: Data entry is often time-consuming and error-prone, analysts need to gather data from multiple sources and applications, if data is entered incorrectly, it might cause serious problems that lead to a ripple effect.

RPA solution: With RPA, organizations can automate entire workflows of data entries, from data gathering to logging, updating, processing and validating data. It can maximize productivity by reducing transaction times from hours to minutes, freeing up valuable time for analysts to focus on strategic work, it will also minimize errors and maintain a clean and organized data for better business intelligence and compliance results.

5. Systems Queries

Data queries across multiple portals and applications are a common process that employees have to perform to gather data for a specific transaction.

Challenges: The process for systems queries is often a manual process that analysts have to do when compiling data for specific transactions, as organizations tend to maintain a variety of data housing systems from commercial enterprise applications to legacy custom-developed applications that can be cloud-based or on-premise, these applications would usually lack integration with each other, making it a very time-consuming process for your staff to complete.

RPA solution: When automated, RPA would provide smooth data integration between your information portals, as RPA can be used to link all your applications and provide staff rapid access to gathered data. It can also be used to provision data from servers, by executing a query to extract data and write it out into the output panel.

6. Payroll

The HR department is responsible for tasks that are usually time-consuming, repetitive, and highly reliant on manual-driven processes, payroll is one of those processes that are rule-based and repetitive, it also requires a large volume of data entry efforts.

Challenges: Payroll faces many challenges related to standardization of processes due to local statutory and compliance requirements, it is also bound to data inaccuracy issues that can cause delays in payment and employee dissatisfaction.

RPA solution: RPA can verify employee data consistency across multiple systems, validate time records, load earning and deductions, run batch extracts or event benchmark market data for new hires and terminations. It can also automate paycheck creations, administer benefits, and reimbursements. RPA can take care of most payroll related transactions from end-to-end to avoid inaccuracies and delays.

7. Employee On-boarding

The process of onboarding and setting up new hires is labor-intensive for HR and IT analysts, it includes an array of transactions such as the creation of new user accounts, email addresses, profile creations, access rights, mailing lists, IT equipment requests, and not to mention the training and induction schedule.

Challenges: With the plethora of activities involved in the employee on-boarding process involving diverse systems and parties to orchestrate a smooth onboarding, the process can be extremely time consuming and can often lead to delays for the new hire to be 100% equipped from day 1, hence reducing productivity and ROI of overhead expenses.

RPA solution: With the rule-based and repetitive nature of employee on-boarding activities, it is a prime candidate for RPA to automatically trigger a pre-structured onboarding workflow once the new user account is created. Rules and triggers can be assigned to the profile of the new hire to support robots take action. RPA can also be configured to send out notifications and documentation via email to new employees.

8. User Termination

Exit management involves a variety of activities to ensure that the existing employees' accesses are properly removed and their entire know-how and data trail organized and safely stored. This requires IT and HR to go thru multiple systems to deactivate credentials and gather termination records into the system.

Challenges: Just as onboarding, employee exit management also requires multiple parties and systems to come together and perform the necessary activities to ensure that the exit process is consistent and error-free to avoid audit flags or security leaks, but as is the case of other manual procedures, errors can not be ruled out.

RPA solution: Organizations can implement RPA to ensure an organized exiting and de-provisioning process by automating activities such as ERP user termination, consolidate exiting employees input and feed to downstream systems, perform exit surveys, produce exit records, send out notifications to relevant stakeholders, and process final payments.

Conclusion:

Less than 1% of business owners and executives even know RPA exists. What does this mean for you? You will have years head start on any business and the education to take full advantage of automation every task and process possible. If you're ready to begin your RPA initiatives, we are here to help you take the right first step to harvest the results rapidly and effectively.