One of the biggest challenges facing organizations in today’s fast pace of technology change is understanding evolution and determining how best to explore and exploit innovation. This issue is becoming particularly pressing for organizations exploring Robotic Process Automation (RPA), many of which are increasingly asking: what next?

Organizations – especially early adopters of RPA – are rapidly recognizing the technology’s limitations. Once a simple process has been automated, where are the opportunities to drive additional value?

A fully featured Intelligent Automation (IA) platform, incorporating traditional RPA and advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) capability, offers organizations access to a more skilled and feature rich Digital Workforce from day one, a workforce that can be deployed across a range of business roles, from finance to marketing or HR, and scaled to support business needs.

A DIGITAL WORKFORCE CAN UNLEASH THREE WAVES OF CORPORATE VALUE:

Wave One
Achieve new levels of efficiency and productivity by removing repetitive tasks and increasing employee output

Wave Two
Improve business performance by leveraging freed up capacity to enhance experience, reduce risk and improve revenue

Wave Three
Enable business transformation by creating new business models and products

This eBook explains the way organizations are now deploying Intelligent Automation to achieve fundamental and long lasting business transformation.
Functionality, Scalability and Expansion

By automating high volume, low value, low complexity tasks RPA can deliver a quick, one off win. But is that enough? RPA on its own is inherently limited, suitable only for a certain set of, often highly specific, process types, demanding multiple separate RPA solutions. There is a finite number of this type of mundane process within most organizations – and once automated, the business has rapidly reached the end of the RPA potential.

In contrast, a fully featured IA platform immediately provides a Digital Workforce with a broad range of AI skills and capabilities, from reading emails and documents to communicating in multiple natural languages and using cognitive functionality to identify patterns and trends, which means the same Digital Workers can be deployed across an incredibly broad range of tasks in multiple business functions.

The only option is to start to explore add on technologies – what many vendors optimistically term the ‘ecosystem’ – to add capabilities and skillsets to the RPA solution. Adding Optical Character Recognition (OCR) to read information contained within documents, for example, or additional language understand support. However, extending the capabilities of RPA in this piecemeal way adds complexity – from integrating and learning new software to on-boarding and managing new suppliers – and cost.

Mind the Gap – a Digital Workforce can unlock a raft of business potential far beyond the limitations of RPA.
Wave One

Immediate Wins

The efficient way in which organizations can start to automate work – but critically, to do so without the upheaval and business interruption traditionally associated with any form of business transformation.

Using a Digital Workforce with a broad skill set, a company can efficiently and effectively automate a range of tasks without changing any business processes or applications - essentially the Digital Workers can slot in to the role previously undertaken by a physical worker. Critically, while RPA is limited to very simple and task specific activity, the Digital Workers can be used to manage a wider range and far more sophisticated tasks and an ability to process more complex information – from financial invoicing to GP referrals.

The ability to deploy a 24x7 Digital Workforce to handle these tasks offers an immediate productivity uplift over individuals previously working 9-5, taking holidays, sick leave and, of course, coffee breaks.

THREE WAVES OF VALUE

The gap between the mundane re-keying activities enabled by RPA and the transformation achieved through automating a range of processes through IA is significant.
Wave Two

Medium Term Value

In addition to transforming operational performance, it is this ability to release highly trained, highly effective staff to add value to the business that underpins the second wave of value, as the quality of skills being redeployed back into the organization is so much greater.

Critically, these additional resources are people who already know and understand the business, the processes, the technology, the culture and are already committed to corporate goals. Releasing these individuals to undertake added value tasks is an incredibly rapid way of introducing new products, activities and operating models to the business. For example:

Customer Experience: The gap between customer service and customer experience.

As organizations attempt to move away from speed focused customer service, especially within contact centers, towards a more personalized and relevant customer experience, the ability to automate the less complex interactions has become key. Using a digital workforce, organizations can reconsider the way the business interacts with the customer base – such as the organization that uses a Digital Worker in the background to process the complex requirements across multiple applications when a customer moves to a new house.

Knowing it will take a set time for the process to be completed, the advisor is then freed up to confirm the customer’s information to ensure excellent data quality and discuss other products and services; or, if the customer prefers, put the call on hold while the process is completed. What was a complex, time consuming and often multi-interaction process, with disjointed waiting time and interaction, is completed in one call – achieving that essential first call resolution customers expect – giving the advisor the invaluable chance to focus on the customer, chat, advise and engage with the customer, while the work is carried out by the Digital Worker.

Revenue Generation: The gap between business expansion and unacceptable business risk.

For many companies, on-boarding new customers can be hugely frustrating: the process of credit checking can take days, time during which services could have been delivered, while there is always the chance the prospect could go to a competitor. The alternative of course, is to take a risk, deliver the service anyway and hope the credit check is successful. The business risk associated with each approach is significant. In contrast, using a Digital Workforce can streamline the on-boarding process by enabling end to end digital verification. Turning a seven day on-boarding model into just 20 minutes which completely eradicates the business risk, enabling companies to confirm a greater volume of new business and deliver services immediately.
**Business Risk: The gap between managing peaks and troughs in staffing and incurring unnecessary cost.**

Seasonal resourcing is a prime example of a business overhead that demands not only significant management overhead but also potential business disruption. From the financial institutions’ peaks at month, quarter and year end, to retailers often doubling, even trebling, staff numbers to handle the peak holiday season, many organizations rely heavily on contract staff to cover a raft of functions from the shop floor to IT and operations.

And while temporary staff will often have the right skill set, they will typically lack the business context and the training and process experience enjoyed by permanent employees. A Digital Workforce deployed over the cloud, in contrast, can be scaled up – and down – in response to business peaks and has already been trained in the business processes and systems. There is no need to go through the time consuming and costly hiring process or manage individual expectations: a Digital Workforce can be simply extended as required for a specific period of time, delivering huge cost benefits to the business.

**Turning a seven day on-boarding model into just 20 minutes which completely eradicates the business risk, enabling companies to confirm a greater volume of new business and deliver services immediately.**

**A Digital Workforce can be simply extended as required for a specific period of time, delivering huge cost benefits to the business**

Companies need to embrace a new mindset and understand that deploying IA will free up time and capabilities within an organization: as an IT, Finance, Marketing or HR Director, how would you deploy an additional 10% of the workforce?
Wave Three

Long Term Business Transformation

Wave Three: It is this ability to reconsider the way both the digital and physical workforce can interact with customers, suppliers and business partners that then opens the door to the next step: business transformation.

By changing the mindset and reconsidering the way in which products and services can be delivered, organizations have the chance to innovate, to disrupt the market and gain significant competitive advantage.

With a Digital Workforce that can be deployed 24x7 at no extra cost, are there opportunities to offer out of hours services to the customer base? Or, as one manufacturer discovered, process orders 24x7 as they are received to improve production efficiency, rather than being constrained by the 9-5 window.

Or consider the way in which best practice and new products or services could be almost immediately shared across a global organization. No more language barriers or time zone constraints; no more flying senior managers around the world to upskill staff in a different country. Simply place the knowledge within the Digital Workforce and allow those Digital Workers to service the new industry, market or geography. The speed with which new products and services can be trialled and then introduced globally is transformed.

“Meaningful innovation does not need to be based on outright invention. Rather, there is an exhilarating shortcut. It is based on bold, new combinations of already existing components that simultaneously unlock heightened levels of consumer value and reduce costs.”

— GABOR GEORGE BURT
Embarking on the IA Journey

IA is a journey – indeed, there is no need for companies to define the medium or long term vision up front before embarking upon short term automation. But it is, however, essential to understand the gap between RPA and what IA is able to achieve for the business – a gap not only in what can be achieved with immediate automation but, critically, in moving beyond task automation to achieving tangible medium and long term business value.

It may take months or even a couple of years to reach a point at which a company is ready to embark upon business transformation, but without the right IA platform, without access to a Digital Workforce with an incredibly rich skill set and an ability to achieve unlimited scale, companies will never move beyond very basic process automation and transformation projects will be long, expensive and arduous. The vision of redeploying staff to drive value or achieving market innovation and disruption through business transformation will never even be an option.

Once an organization begins to understand the potential of a Digital Workforce, the possibilities are amazing. Just consider: what could you do with a flexible and near infinite Digital Workforce that can operate 24 hours a day, understand 60 languages, interact with a range of business systems, and understand the context of an email typed by a person?

The opportunities for innovation, for change, for introducing new products and services into new markets are infinite – start your transformation journey today!

About Blue Prism

As the pioneer in Robotic Process Automation (RPA), Blue Prism is the trusted, secure Intelligent Automation choice for the Fortune 500 and public sector. Today, Blue Prism’s connected-RPA platform joins operational leaders with accessible, advanced cognitive technologies to strengthen the capabilities of the 21st century workforce. Available on-premises, in the cloud, or as an integrated solution in a hybrid cloud environment, Blue Prism empowers your people to focus on creative and meaningful work. Visit www.blueprism.com.