
Competitive positioning and dynamics in a rapidly growing market
Summary

Catalyst

RPA platforms represent a hyper growth market, with enterprises investing in new RPA platforms for process and task automation to achieve greater operating efficiency and agility, while allowing the human workforce to focus on more strategic and higher priority projects and tasks. Intelligent process automation (IPA) is in an early phase of its evolution and represents the next frontier for RPA vendors. This Ovum Decision Matrix (ODM) is a comprehensive evaluation to help enterprise IT and business leaders, including chief information officers (CIOs), enterprise and process architects, IT directors, line-of-business (LOB) leaders and process owners, and digital transformation leaders select an RPA platform that is well suited to their specific requirements.

Ovum view

Over the last couple of years, RPA has emerged as one of the priorities on business-IT agendas. If the current growth trends are anything to go by, RPA adoption will continue to accelerate, with more and more enterprises adopting RPA platforms for task and process automation. RPA as a technology discipline is evolving to support the automation of increasingly sophisticated processes (not just swivel-chair processes), and along with business process management suites (BPMS)/case management and artificial intelligence (AI)/machine learning (ML) capabilities, it forms a good combination for end-to-end process automation. RPA is not an entirely new approach to automation, but it would be naïve to think of current-generation RPA platforms as modular “screen-scraping” tools for basic task automation. Another argument in favor of the RPA value proposition is the increasing number of BPMS vendors that have partnered with RPA vendors, or even better, have integrated a partner’s RPA product into their own process automation suites.

We have seen enterprises implementing 5,000 to 35,000 software robots and achieving their key objectives for RPA, but there are cases where RPA was adopted without much thought or a clear strategy and enterprises have struggled to achieve any significant value. Throwing software robots at automation issues without a proper understanding of requirements or a clear strategy will fail to deliver any significant value. For larger implementations, enterprises must set up a center of excellence (COE) and have a proper governance framework in place to ensure that RPA initiatives remain on track and deliver business value.

RPA skills shortage, poor change management, lack of IT ownership, ill-defined success criteria, and disregard for infrastructure management considerations are some of the factors that have led to the failure of several RPA initiatives. RPA initiative leaders who do not spend enough time on analysis and optimization often think of RPA as a hammer and see most of the business processes as a nail to hit. This means that the automation of an inefficient business process with RPA will deliver only minimal gains.

A process-centric approach to robotic automation can overcome the limitations of traditional RPA products relying on user interface (UI) integration and can ensure a close alignment between the objectives for an RPA implementation and an enterprise's process automation strategy. In the end, the true value of RPA lies in its ability to function as an enabler to the automation of end-to-end processes (though not necessarily 100% automation) and not just mimic an end user to perform specific tasks in a prescribed way.
This ODM presents the results of a comprehensive evaluation of key RPA platforms and vendors to guide enterprise IT and business leaders in selecting an RPA platform that is well suited to their specific requirements. While some vendors have evolved from their origins of screen-scraping and optical character recognition (OCR) tools, others are the BPM vendors that have acquired RPA or process integration/automation vendors to develop a broader enterprise process automation proposition. We have evaluated the product orientation (not service orientation) of key RPA vendors, including how they align with the broader enterprise process automation objectives.

RPA platforms represent a rapidly evolving and highly competitive market, with billions of dollars in venture capital (VC) and institutional and public funding pumped into rapid product development and aggressive sales, marketing, and geographic expansion initiatives. Accordingly, the competitive positioning of vendors included in this ODM is very likely to change over the next 12 months. Enterprise IT leaders should consult this ODM to shortlist appropriate RPA platform vendors for a request for proposal (RFP) and subsequent proof-of-concept (POC) evaluation.

Key findings

- RPA adoption in many enterprises starts as a tactical initiative, and once that substantial results have been achieved and users are conversant with key features and capabilities, the use of an RPA platform is expanded to a wider range of use cases.

- RPA hype is at its peak and many enterprises are continuing to struggle to progress with their RPA initiatives, at times taking months to conclude POCs and subsequently realizing less value than they had expected from RPA implementations.

- Contrary to popular belief, not many enterprises have a clear upfront strategy for using RPA and BPMS in combination for end-to-end process automation. Specialized RPA and major BPMS vendors dominate this market, even though their evolution and routes to the current state of RPA products are quite different.

- RPA platform vendors have invested in improving key features and capabilities, including user experience (UX), user productivity tools, cloud deployment, hybrid automation, component-level APIs, BPMS/case management integration, process discovery, process analytics, and AI/ML capabilities for improving OCR and image processing, and continuous process optimization.

- Most RPA platform vendors have integrations with several commercial and open source AI/ML products to deliver an IPA proposition. Only a few vendors have developed dedicated AI intellectual property to deliver superior IPA capabilities. This is an area for improvement for most RPA platform vendors. With core RPA features and capabilities expected to be commoditized over the next two to three years, IPA capabilities have emerged as a key source of competitive differentiation for RPA platform vendors.

- In terms of monetization, marketplaces and software robot stores, robot-as-a-service (RaaS) delivery under a managed services model, and packed RPA platform-as-a-service (PaaS) available under a software-as-a-service (SaaS) pricing model are the key approaches adopted by several RPA platform vendors.
Leading RPA platform vendors provide comprehensive capabilities for supporting attended and unattended automations. Several RPA vendors are supporting or are working toward supporting hybrid automation where human and virtual workforces share work and pass tasks to one another.

RPA platform and vendor selection

Inclusion criteria
Ovum has closely tracked the emerging RPA platform vendor landscape over the last two years and we have used these observations as the baseline for inclusion/exclusion in this ODM. The criteria for inclusion of an RPA platform and vendor in this ODM are as follows:

- The RPA platform should deliver significant capabilities across three of the four technology assessment criteria groups: “development features and UX”, “automation and execution capabilities”, “security, monitoring, and governance”, and “AI capabilities”.
- The software product must enable task and process automation and its features and capabilities should not be limited to a subset (for example, just OCR capabilities).
- There is substantial evidence that the vendor is interested in pursuing a progressive product strategy that helps ascertain product viability and applicability to a range of process and task automation use cases.
- The RPA platform should have been generally available as of June 2017. The vendor must have at least 50 enterprise (paid) customers using its RPA platform, but the customer base should not be restricted to a few specific regions, with only minimal customers present in other regions.
- It should deliver enterprise-grade security, governance, and monitoring capabilities and an appropriate UX for less-skilled users (non-developers). The core RPA product should be architecturally coherent and provide product/component APIs.

Exclusion criteria
An RPA platform/vendor is not included in this ODM if:

- The core RPA capabilities provided by the vendor are restricted to an average level of task automation or a significant share of RPA capabilities (not applicable for integration with AL/ML products) are delivered in partnership with other vendors. For this reason, specialized AI automation vendors that do not offer any substantial capabilities for process automation use cases were excluded from this ODM.
- The vendor caters to the requirements of just a few use cases and does not really offer an enterprise RPA platform with a coherent architecture and good level of integration between various software components.
- The vendor is unable to commit the required time and resources for the development of research to be included in this ODM. Some vendors, which would otherwise qualify for inclusion in this ODM, opted out of the evaluation exercise and were unable to submit the required level of information in
response to the evaluation criteria spreadsheet by the cut-off date (August 30, 2018). WorkFusion opted not to participate after receiving an ODM questionnaire, without citing any specific reason.

- The vendor has more service orientation than product orientation, and there is not enough evidence that it is interested in expanding the platform’s features and capabilities to cater for the requirements of emerging use cases and exploiting new market trends. There are indications that the vendor is struggling to grow its business or defend its position in the market.

- The vendor did not feature in any of the analyst enquiries from Ovum customers (for example, enterprise IT leaders and users), and/or there were other indicators for a lack of investment and a dedicated RPA strategy.

Ovum ratings

Market leader

This category represents a leading RPA platform that Ovum believes is worthy of a place on most technology selection shortlists. The vendor has established a commanding market position with its RPA platform, demonstrating a high level of maturity, cohesiveness, innovation and enterprise fit, and the capability to meet the requirements of a wide range of use cases. Leaders have executed an aggressive product roadmap and commercial strategy to drive enterprise adoption and rapid business growth.

Market challenger

The vendors included in the upper half of the “challengers” section (Kofax, Kryon, and Softomotive) are “strong performers” in terms of technology assessment scores and would otherwise qualify as leaders if only the technology assessment were to be considered. However, these vendors did not achieve consistently high scores for the execution and market impact dimension, an essential requirement for achieving a market leader rating.

An RPA platform in this category has a good market position, offers competitive technical functionality and a good price/performance proposition, and should be considered as part of the technology selection. Vendors in this category have established a substantial customer base, with their RPA platform demonstrating a good level of maturity and catering for the requirements of a range of process and task automation use cases, as well as continuing to execute a progressive product and commercial strategy.

Market follower

An RPA platform in this category is typically aimed at specific task automation use cases and/or customer segment(s) and can be explored as part of the technology selection. It can deliver the requisite features and capabilities at reasonable pricing for specific use cases/requirements. This ODM does not feature any vendor in this category.

Market and solution analysis

RPA platforms have entered the mainstream and adoption is growing at a rapid rate

Ovum ICT Enterprise Insights 2018 survey results (see Figure 1) indicate that RPA adoption in Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and Europe will accelerate over the next 18 months. RPA software spending in North America will continue to grow at a rapid rate, albeit over a higher relative base. Another interesting survey
result indicated that only about 17% of respondent enterprises do not have an RPA platform or have no plans for investment in an RPA platform.

A closer look reveals that over the last couple of years, leading RPA vendor revenues have grown by several multiples. As part of our research for this ODM, we identified successful RPA implementations involving between 5,000 and 35,000 software robots. While the number of large enterprises implementing RPA initiatives at a significant scale is higher in comparison to midsize enterprises, we expect the availability of RPA software as a PaaS product and flexible pricing models to drive rapid adoption in the second category of enterprises.

**Figure 1: Enterprises inclination for investment in RPA solutions, 2018–2019**

In simple terms, RPA software can be considered a toolkit to enable the rapid configuration and subsequent management of software robots for the automation of rules-driven structured processes ("if this, then that"-style process execution, for example). The process/task automation aspect of RPA can be thought of as presentation-layer automation software that mimicks the steps of a rules-driven structured process to perform "prescribed" functions in a scalable way. RPA can enable 24x7 execution of rules-driven structured processes at a fraction of the cost associated with human counterparts.

AI capabilities are not intrinsic to an RPA platform, and enterprises should not think of these as core capabilities provided by an RPA platform. Just like other classes of enterprise software products, AI capabilities drive great ease of use and user productivity for an enterprise RPA platform. This is similar in to the way in which AI/ML capabilities are used in an integration PaaS (iPaaS) solution to offer suggestions to automate a significant part of an integration flow development.

Vendor marketing and the views of some industry pundits have created confusion in the market, with a lack of understanding in terms of how an enterprise RPA platform is different from previous generation OCR tools, and the limitations of robotic desktop automation (RDA) and RPA from the perspective of end-to-end process
automation. There is also a lot of noise around IPA and how integration with AI/ML capabilities provided by non-RPA vendors is completely changing the applicability to a range of use cases. In reality, only a few vendors have dedicated AI/ML IP, and IPA itself is at an early stage in its evolution. In this context, enterprises would benefit by asking about what is under the hoods and how the pricing/licensing for AI/ML capabilities works for different use case scenarios.

A modular and cohesive architecture, component- and platform-level APIs, enterprise-grade security and governance, dedicated environments for development and management of robots and automations, bot lifecycle management, prebuilt reusable components for development, dedicated environment/tool for monitoring, and visibility into bot operations and automation executions are some of the core capabilities of an enterprise RPA platform.

The first wave of RPA adoption was driven by the need to reduce the costs and errors associated with the involvement of humans in mundane, repetitive tasks in service centers or back-office functions. RPA enables the execution of a large number of tasks in a highly predictable way, and in case of an increase in the number of tasks, enterprises have the option of deploying additional robots. From a process perspective, RPA is suitable for structured and semi-structured processes involving:

- high-volume transactions
- workflow enablement
- multiple systems or dual data entry
- searching, collation or information updates
- data matching or comparison
- simple or less-complex decisions that can be handled via a rules engine and/or algorithm (no judgement call necessary)
- repeatable and rules-based processes.

Other factors impacting process suitability to RPA include:

- highly regulated activities
- compliance and audit-related activities
- data sensitivity
- fluctuating volumes

A combination of an RPA platform and BPMS can significantly accelerate process automation. RPA is a non-invasive approach to automation that does not require changes in legacy IT applications/systems. In terms of using an RPA platform and a BPMS in combination, specific subprocesses (tasks) of an end-to-end process can be automated via software robots and control can then be passed to the BPMS if there is a need for decision-making (case management). The BPMS can provide a connector for integration with an RPA platform, enabling RPA involvement to be triggered from within the BPMS's workflow. Exceptions in the execution of sub-processes via RPA can be handled by the BPMS as an actionable activity. Below is a simple use case involving a “BPMS and RPA” combination:

Use case: handling a customer request submitted via email.
An email with a specific customer request is intercepted by the RPA platform that applies logic to determine subsequent action.

Depending on the requirements specified in the request, the RPA platform passes the case onto BPMS for case management.

Knowledge workers add information and required actions to the case and forward this to the RPA platform.

The subsequent back-office actions are processed by the RPA platform. This increases the overall efficiency of the customer request-handling process, and reduces the amount of human involvement required for processing the request to completion.

Enterprises interested in using an RPA platform must not simply jump to total cost of ownership calculations after a proof-of-concept evaluation. We advise enterprise decision-makers to factor in costs other than the cost of implementing hardware and software for RPA (as applicable, depends on the deployment model and can vary from vendor to vendor), including the following:

- Monitoring costs such as tools for proper operation of robots and performance analysis for driving further improvement.
- Development/support/maintenance costs for RPA software.
- Upgrades and testing costs, such as software upgrades for adding new features and testing for proper functioning.
- Infrastructure management costs, including disaster recovery (DR).
- Costs of virtual machine (VM) and desktop/software licenses (for example, Microsoft Office).

We estimate that services spend on RPA implementations can range between 5x and 10x of the software licensing/subscription costs, but despite this level of spending, several RPA implementations fail to scale and/or deliver only minimal value. This is not a healthy sign for an automation software product that is aiming to drive user productivity and is often sold on the promise of substantial cost savings. Enterprises should be wary of vendors’ sales claims for conducting POCs within a few days, because business processes in the real world are complex enough to warrant POCs running from a few weeks to months.

A close look at enterprise RPA platform adoption indicates that the split between unattended versus attended automation is tilted toward the latter, and likewise, RPA platforms are used more for the automation of back-office processes. Some RPA vendors, however, are focusing on improving automation for front-office processes. In the near-term, we expect to see an increase in RPA implementations involving attended automation.

RPA hype is at its peak and vendor marketing spend is following a similar trend. It is therefore important for enterprises to conduct a thorough POC and have a clear plan for how to best leverage RPA for task and process automation. It is equally important to verify claims of SI/professional services providers that might have a conflict of interest owing to their strategic (deep) partnerships with specific RPA platform vendors. Lastly, enterprise decision-makers should focus on developing a holistic process automation strategy and not look at RPA platforms as just “band-aids” to provide a low-cost solution for automation issues.
Because RPA platforms are modular software products, vendor lock-in in most cases is not seen as major an issue as was the case with traditional on-premise software products. We already see a wave of implementations by enterprises that did not have a “first time right” RPA implementation and have switched to a new RPA platform provider better suited to their specific requirements. In 2019, we expect major BPMS vendors providing RPA solutions to target end-to-end process automation and IPA opportunities. For enterprise IT leaders, it is time to divert from BPMS versus RPA arguments and instead think about developing a holistic strategy for end-to-end process automation.

Ovum Decision Matrix: RPA Platforms, 2018–19

The ODM charts in Figure 2 and Figure 3 represent the results of a comprehensive evaluation of 10 RPA platforms and vendors meeting the inclusion criteria. Weightings for individual criteria groups under the “technology” and “execution and market impact” assessment dimensions are provided under the methodology section. We have provided an expanded view of the ODM chart (Figure 3) to magnify the competitive positioning of RPA vendors with small differences in the scores for two assessment dimensions. Table 1 provides a list of market leaders and challengers in alphabetical order (not in terms of scores), and subsequent sections follow this practice.
Figure 2: Ovum Decision Matrix: RPA Platforms, 2018–19

Source: Ovum (competitive positioning valid as of September 30, 2018)

Table 1: Ovum Decision Matrix: RPA platforms, 2018–19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market leaders</th>
<th>Market challengers</th>
<th>Market followers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Automation Anywhere</td>
<td>Jacada</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Prism</td>
<td>Kofax</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pegasystems</td>
<td>Kryon</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughtonomy</td>
<td>Redwood Software</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UiPath</td>
<td>Sofomotive</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ovum
Market leaders

Market leaders: technology

Table 2: Ovum Decision Matrix: RPA platforms, 2018–19 market leaders: Technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria group</th>
<th>Vendor</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development features and UX</td>
<td>UiPath</td>
<td>9.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Automation Anywhere</td>
<td>9.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blue Prism</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pegasystems</td>
<td>8.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automation &amp; execution capabilities</td>
<td>UiPath</td>
<td>9.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Automation Anywhere</td>
<td>9.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blue Prism</td>
<td>9.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pegasystems</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security, monitoring, and governance</td>
<td>Automation Anywhere</td>
<td>9.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UiPath</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blue Prism</td>
<td>8.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pegasystems and Thoughtonomy</td>
<td>8.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI capabilities</td>
<td>Kryon</td>
<td>6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pegasystems</td>
<td>6.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Automation Anywhere</td>
<td>6.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UiPath and Blue Prism</td>
<td>6.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ovum

Table 2 shows the vendors with top-four scores (on a scale of 1–10, including those with the same scores) for each criteria group under the technology assessment dimension. While the difference between highest and fourth highest scores for the development features and UX criteria group was 0.26, the corresponding difference for the automation & execution capabilities criteria group was only 0.20.
For the security, monitoring, and governance criteria group, the difference between the highest and fourth highest scores was 0.22. The difference between highest and fourth highest scores for the AI capabilities criteria group was 0.3.

Automation Anywhere, UiPath, Blue Prism, and Pegasystems are among the vendors achieving top-four scores across each criteria group under the technology assessment dimension. Thoughtonomy achieved a top-four score for one criteria groups under the technology assessment dimension. Kryon achieved the highest score for one criteria group (AI capabilities) under the technology assessment dimension.

**Market leaders: execution and market impact**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria group</th>
<th>Vendor</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product maturity &amp; innovation</strong></td>
<td>Automation Anywhere, Blue Prism, and UiPath</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pegasystems</td>
<td>8.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thoughtonomy and Kryon</td>
<td>8.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scalability &amp; enterprise fit</strong></td>
<td>Automation Anywhere, UiPath, and Blue Prism</td>
<td>8.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pegasystems</td>
<td>8.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thoughtonomy</td>
<td>8.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product &amp; go-to-market (GTM) strategies</strong></td>
<td>Automation Anywhere</td>
<td>8.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UiPath and Blue Prism</td>
<td>8.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pegasystems</td>
<td>8.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Market impact</strong></td>
<td>UiPath</td>
<td>9.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Automation Anywhere</td>
<td>9.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blue Prism</td>
<td>9.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ovum

Table 3 shows the vendors with top-three scores (on a scale of 1–10, including those with the same scores) for four criteria groups under the execution and market impact assessment dimension. Automation Anywhere, Blue Prism, and UiPath achieved the highest score for the “product maturity & innovation” criteria group. Pegasystems achieved the second highest score, while Thoughtonomy and Kryon achieved the joint third
highest score for this criteria group. The difference between the highest and third highest scores for this criteria group was 0.5.

Automation Anywhere, UiPath, and Blue Prism achieved the highest scores for the scalability and enterprise fit criteria group. Pegasystems achieved the second highest score, while Thoughtonomy achieved the third highest score. The difference between the highest and third highest scores for this criteria group was just 0.2.

Automation Anywhere achieved the highest score for the product and GTM strategies criteria group, followed by UiPath and Blue Prism with the second highest score. Pegasystems achieving the third highest score for this criteria group. UiPath achieved the highest score for the market impact criteria group, followed by Automation Anywhere and Blue Prism achieving the second and third highest scores, respectively. Leading RPA vendors in this ODM featured multiple times across four criteria groups under the execution and market impact assessment dimension.

**Vendor analysis**

**Blue Prism (Ovum recommendation: Leader)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: RPA products and/or architectural components evaluated, Blue Prism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue Prism Enterprise RPA Platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Blue Prism*

**Figure 5: Blue Prism radar diagrams**
Ovum SWOT assessment

Strengths

Leading vendor with a comprehensive RPA platform and a strong track record of success

Blue Prism achieved high scores across each criteria group under the technology and execution and market impact assessment dimensions. As the first specialized RPA vendor to trade on public markets, Blue Prism had an IPO in March 2016. According to its half-year results for the period ending April 2018, Blue Prism’s revenue grew by 145% on a year-on-year basis and recurring licensing revenue accounted for a 93% share of this revenue figure. Its current market capitalization is over £1.24bn.

In 2018, Blue Prism rapidly grew its customer base in the Americas and Asia-Pacific regions, while maintaining its strong position in the EMEA region. Blue Prism offers an API-rich platform and recently introduced the Blue Prism Digital Exchange (DX) that provides access to a range of AI/ML, analytics, OCR, and other capabilities. Blue Prism has a strong product roadmap for execution over the next 12 months and has invested in IPA-focused initiatives in areas such as adapting to evolving process patterns and deriving contextual meaning, understanding and contextualizing visual information, workload optimization, and autonomous resolution of business and system problems.

Strong technical credentials in terms of enterprise RPA capabilities

Blue Prism RPA platform has a cohesive, modular architecture with component-level APIs, and offers load balancing, high availability (HA), and DR and failover (active/active and active/passive) capabilities as standard features. It has certified reference architectures for major IaaS providers (Microsoft, Amazon, Google, and IBM), with resilient and elastically scalable topologies.

It achieved a high score for the security, monitoring, and governance criteria group under the technology assessment dimension. Other noteworthy features include centralized work queue management, intelligent scheduling, dynamic capacity management, role-based access control (RBAC), and encryption and credential management.
Weaknesses
Blue Prism would benefit from further improving ease of use for less skilled users and the introduction of an RPA PaaS product

These are more areas for improvement than they are weaknesses. Blue Prism follows a business user-centric approach to RPA UX. The RPA user base in enterprises includes business users (not experienced bot developers or RPA practitioners) that do not have a significant level of technical skills. In the context of less skilled users, customer references indicate that the Blue Prism RPA platform is easy to train on but in some cases (depending on the complexity of a specific process/task automation use case), its actual application may require more technical skills.

With its competitive positioning and growth ambitions, Blue Prism should focus on developing a fully packaged RPA PaaS offering the true benefits of a cloud service. RPA vendors including Thoughtonomy and Kryon have already introduced their RPA PaaS offerings, and Ovum expects the global spend on the RPA PaaS market to grow much faster than that for on-premises RPA software. Many enterprises are interested in using an RPA PaaS to implement and scale faster without having to worry about the underlying infrastructure and complexity associated with frequent upgrades. With the modular and API-rich nature of Blue Prism RPA platform and its experience in SaaS pricing, it would be easy to develop an RPA PaaS using these foundational architectural components.

Opportunities
RPA PaaS and AI IP as a source of competitive differentiation

For Blue Prism, RPA PaaS represents a key growth opportunity, and the development of an RPA PaaS will not require a strategic shift or extensive investment in product development. It already has foundational elements in place in terms of a modular architecture and experience of offering RPA hosted over partners’ IaaS clouds and sold under a SaaS pricing model.

Blue Prism has a dedicated focus in terms of developing a sound IA proposition and partnerships with several key AI/ML product vendors. Ovum believes that AI IP will be a key source of competitive differentiation in a market where core RPA product features are likely to be commoditized over the next two to three years. Blue Prism should therefore focus on developing AI IP to drive greater user productivity and maintain its edge in terms of product innovation.

Threats
Blue Prism has a critical position in a rapidly evolving and highly competitive RPA market

Blue Prism has capitalized on its early-mover advantage in the global RPA market, with rapid growth achieved over the last couple of years. Its nearest competitors, Automation Anywhere and UiPath, have similar attributes in terms of final muscle and a strong track record of success in an initial phase of growth, as well as aggressive growth ambitions. Blue Prism will continue to face stiff competition from its nearest competitors as they execute aggressive geographical expansion and sales and marketing strategies. It will need to continue to innovate and execute well against its growth plans to maintain its position and market share in a highly competitive market.

Methodology
An invitation followed by the ODM evaluation criteria spreadsheet comprising questions across two evaluation dimensions were sent to all vendors meeting the inclusion criteria, with 10 out of 11 vendors opting to
participate. WorkFusion opted not to participate after receiving the ODM questionnaire, without citing any specific reason and we decided to exclude it from this evaluation. Ovum had thorough briefings with the final 10 vendors to discuss and validate their responses to the ODM questionnaire and understand the latest product developments, strategies, and roadmaps. This ODM includes observations/inputs from Ovum’s conversations with IT leaders and RPA practitioners, including those conducted based on customer references provided by the vendors participating in this evaluation.

Technology assessment
Ovum identified the features and capabilities that would differentiate leading RPA platforms and vendors. The criteria groups and associated percentage weightings are as follows. Ovum will publish details on individual criteria groups separately.

- Development features and UX (weighting assigned =30%)
- Automation & execution capabilities (weighting assigned = 27.5%)
- Security, monitoring, and governance (weighting assigned = 27.5%)
- AI capabilities (weighting assigned = 15%)

Execution and market impact assessment
For this dimension, Ovum assessed the capability of an RPA platform/vendor across the following key areas:

- Product maturity & innovation (weighting assigned =25%)
- Scalability & enterprise fit (weighting assigned =30%)
- Product & GTM strategies (weighting assigned =30%)
- Market impact (weighting assigned =15%)

Appendix

Further reading
Key Factors to Consider for RPA Adoption, INT003-000146 (May 2018)
Using RPA and BPMS for Digital Process Automation, INT003-000150 (May 2018)

Author
Saurabh Sharma, Principal Analyst, Infrastructure Solutions saurabh.sharma@ovum.com

Ovum Consulting
We hope that this analysis will help you make informed and imaginative business decisions. If you have further requirements, Ovum’s consulting team may be able to help you. For more information about Ovum’s consulting capabilities, please contact us directly at consulting@ovum.com.

© Ovum. All rights reserved. Unauthorized reproduction prohibited.
Copyright notice and disclaimer
The contents of this product are protected by international copyright laws, database rights and other intellectual property rights. The owner of these rights is Informa Telecoms and Media Limited, our affiliates or other third party licensors. All product and company names and logos contained within or appearing on this product are the trademarks, service marks or trading names of their respective owners, including Informa Telecoms and Media Limited. This product may not be copied, reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior permission of Informa Telecoms and Media Limited.

Whilst reasonable efforts have been made to ensure that the information and content of this product was correct as at the date of first publication, neither Informa Telecoms and Media Limited nor any person engaged or employed by Informa Telecoms and Media Limited accepts any liability for any errors, omissions or other inaccuracies. Readers should independently verify any facts and figures as no liability can be accepted in this regard – readers assume full responsibility and risk accordingly for their use of such information and content. Any views and/or opinions expressed in this product by individual authors or contributors are their personal views and/or opinions and do not necessarily reflect the views and/or opinions of Informa Telecoms and Media Limited.
CONTACT US
ovum.informa.com askanalyst@ovum.com

INTERNATIONAL OFFICES
Beijing
Boston
Chicago
Dubai
Hong Kong
Hyderabad
Johannesburg
London
Melbourne
New York
Paris
San Francisco
Sao Paulo
Shanghai
Singapore
Sydney
Tokyo