

Rethink How You Work:

Grow Your Business with Intelligent Automation



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This information is for you if:

- You are a business decision-maker looking to grow your business through automation.
- You also want to understand the types of automation solutions available and when to use them.



Estimated reading time: < 10 minutes



Introduction

The disruption of 2020 and the rapid, massive shift to remote operations have pressure-tested the global business community like never before. Organizations across industries and sectors, regardless of their prior level of digital sophistication, are now faced with the challenge of adapting to an unprecedented pace of digitization and navigating an uncertain future in a changing world.

This heightened focus on digitization is propelling a new wave of automation. A key capability in helping companies advance their digital transformation efforts, automation gives businesses the power to innovate by helping them do more with less. However, as the scope of what you can automate has evolved, so too have the questions.



This e-book will help business leaders understand the changing automation landscape and make smart decisions about the automation solutions that are best for their business.



The automation boom

Automation is accelerating rapidly. The market for automation technologies is growing at 20 percent per year and is likely to reach \$5 billion by 2024.¹ The variety and complexity of available solutions can make choosing the right one challenging. The various categories of automation, like marketing automation, network automation, and industrial automation, along with vendors flooding the market with new offerings, can lead to solution overload for business leaders.

Automation technology available today promises benefits ranging from improving processes to increasing productivity to

building on existing software to solve more sophisticated problems. But the crowded marketplace makes it hard to determine which solution is right for your business and what benefits you can expect to experience.

This decision paralysis leads to untapped opportunities. According to McKinsey, for 60 percent of all companies, 30 percent of their activities could be automated.² Clearly, while many organizations have enjoyed rapid progress on their digital transformation journeys, many others still have abundant room to grow their business through automation.

Understanding the key components of automation technology and when to use them is a good starting point.

¹ [Automation With Intelligence](#), Deloitte, 2019.

² [A Future That Works: Automation, Employment, and Productivity](#), McKinsey, 2020.



Understanding DPA vs. RPA vs. AI

Digital process automation (DPA), robotic process automation (RPA), and artificial intelligence (AI) are three components of “intelligent automation” that can work independently or together.

DPA

Digital process automation

DPA is a method of automation that uses software to perform processes and automate tasks with the goal of completing and optimizing a workflow. DPA automates workflows between modern (API) cloud-based services and connects them together.

DPA is commonly used to automate tasks that typically require some form of human interaction, often in business workflows related to sales and marketing, IT, management, and production.

RPA

Robotic process automation

RPA allows you to configure software, or a virtual “robot,” to emulate and integrate the actions of a person interacting with digital systems to execute a business process. RPA automates workflows between modern and legacy (non-API) systems. It automates the user interface (UI) of the desktop through a designer or recorders that automate your mouse and keyboard actions.

RPA is often used for large-scale automation of human activities that are rules-based, manual, and repetitive, as well as for exchanging data with legacy, on-premises software that is still essential in many enterprises.

AI

Artificial intelligence

AI is the capability of a computer system to mimic human-like cognitive functions such as learning and problem-solving. AI technologies augment human judgment and behavior using unstructured inputs—unlike RPA, which replicates rules-based human actions. Increasingly, AI and RPA are used together to automate more complex processes that allow people to work smarter and faster.

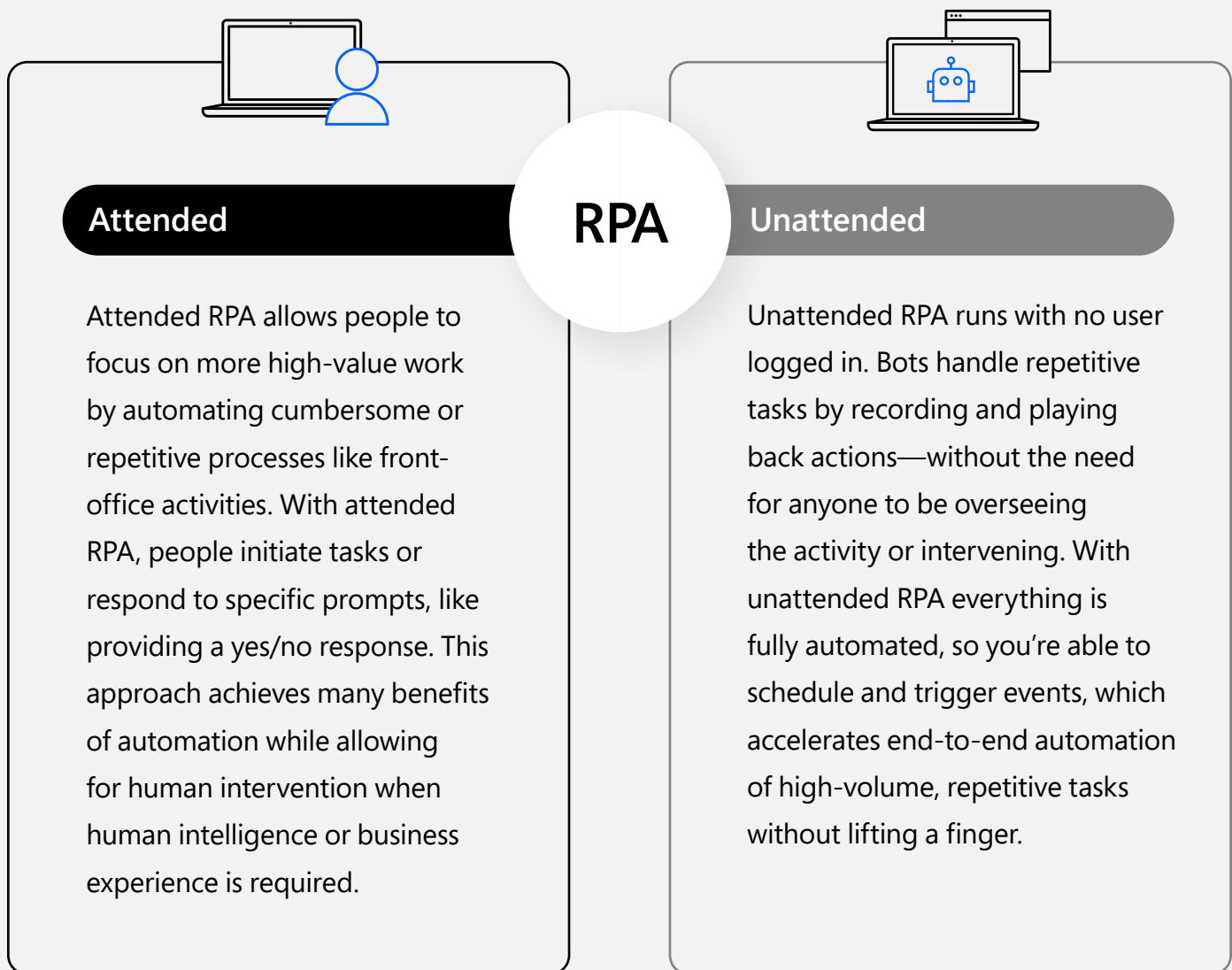
AI helps organizations detect patterns in large volumes of data and interpret their meaning, and is often used in predicting customer behavior, fraud detection, and financial forecasting.



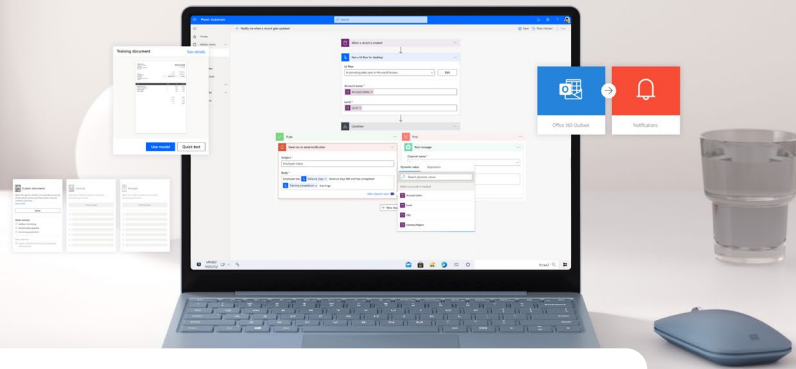
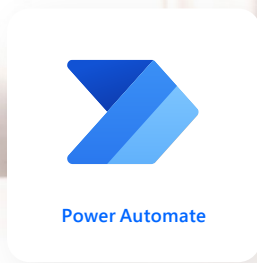
[View a demo >](#)

A closer look at RPA

Of the three types of intelligent automation, RPA tends to be popular with enterprises, due to the ease of implementation and high ROI. When an organization decides on RPA, they can choose “attended,” which requires human interaction, “unattended,” which runs in the background on its own, or a hybrid approach.



Learn how RPA can help your organization automate mundane work with this webinar: [Automate Time-Consuming Tasks with Robotic Process Automation](#)



Introducing Power Automate

Power Automate, Microsoft's unified, comprehensive cloud-based automation platform, bridges DPA, RPA, and AI in a single, low-code SaaS offering that supports both attended and unattended scenarios. Power Automate democratizes intelligent automation by empowering everyone—from citizen developers and business users to professional developers alike—to seamlessly build secure, automated solutions. From simple tasks to complex enterprise-wide processes, you can automate almost any undertaking across your organization with business process management (BPM), RPA, and AI, all accessible in one user-friendly platform.

With Power Automate, you can automate both modern applications with APIs, or legacy applications with incomplete or missing APIs. You can even combine legacy apps, modern apps, and manual processes in a single automation through a browser or the user interface of your Windows applications. And with Power Automate Desktop, you can automate everything from simple data transfers to complex business workflows directly from your desktop using RPA desktop flows, described on the following page.

“Flows” refer to automated workflows, and there are three types:

1



Cloud flows

Automate workflows between modern cloud-based services. They use DPA technology to connect hundreds of services together using a logic-based flow designer. Microsoft offers hundreds of connectors for cloud flows that connect to services such as SharePoint and Outlook, as well as many third-party cloud-based services.

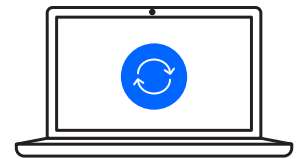
2



Business process flows

Automate a multistep business process using Power Apps, Microsoft’s service for building and using custom business apps, to create an automated visual, guided experience. Business process flows reduce the need for training because new users don’t have to focus on which entity they should be using. They can let the process guide them.

3



Desktop flows

Automate workflows between modern and legacy systems. They use RPA technology to automate the user interface of the desktop using a drag-and-drop, visual flow designer and recorders that automate your mouse and keyboard actions. You can use desktop flows to automate actions such as retrieving files in folders, extracting text from PDFs, writing to Excel worksheets, and many others.

AI can be integrated with any of these flows.



What Power Automate can do for you

Power Automate gives your teams the tools they need to do their jobs effectively, regardless of whether they are remote or on-site, while improving productivity, increasing quality of work, and freeing up resources for more strategic initiatives that will help your business grow.

Built with both technical and non-technical professionals in mind, Power Automate offers thousands of prebuilt templates so you can start automating common business processes immediately. A Microsoft 365 license gives you Power Automate cloud flow capabilities, and you don't need any third party software to get started.

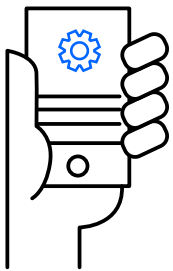
This comprehensive set of capabilities represents the next generation of automation and is accessible to everyone in an organization, including coders and non-coders alike, through a low-code development environment and uniquely affordable licensing to support any business scenario.

With Power Automate, you can put automation into the hands of your teams so that everyone can automate repetitive tasks across legacy and modern applications, and simplify how they work in a scalable, more secure way—while retaining the governance and controls that the business requires.



Use cases

The following are examples of common, department-specific scenarios where you can use Power Automate for your business.



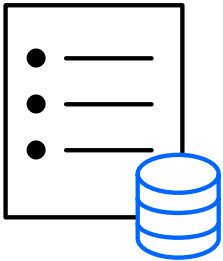
Customer management

Using RPA desktop flows, automate tasks such as responding to inquiries, reducing both time and resources required and improving the customer experience.

How it works:

1. Customer complaints are logged against a present set of issues.
2. Any newer issues that get raised can be categorized into these issue categories by RPA-based software robots.
3. Based on these categories, possible solutions are suggested to the customers right away, enabling customer issues to be addressed 24/7.



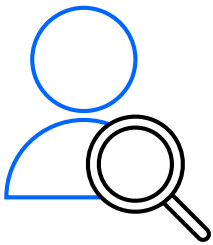


Finance

Streamline the process for managing invoices attached to email messages by using unattended RPA to capture data from the invoices and transfer it to the legacy system, all without human intervention.

How it works:

1. Vendor sends an invoice as an email attachment.
2. Once the email is received, an Outlook connector—a proxy or a wrapper around an API that allows the underlying service to talk to Power Automate—automatically kicks off the automated process.
3. A forms processing model built with AI Builder, a turnkey solution that integrates AI with Power Automate, is invoked and it extracts all the relevant information from the invoice.
4. Business rules are applied automatically and routed accordingly.
5. Using the desktop flows connector, the invoice details are then automatically entered into a legacy system that does not have APIs—dramatically reducing time spent and potential for human error.



HR

Reduce the manual workload for finding candidates and processing resumes or CVs using RPA desktop flows and text analytics.

How it works:

1. RPA bots sift through resumes and applications for open positions.
2. They compare information with the job description based on a predefined set of rules.
3. The bots create a list of candidates that are the best possible matches, allowing the recruiter to follow up.
4. Candidates that don't match are notified automatically.





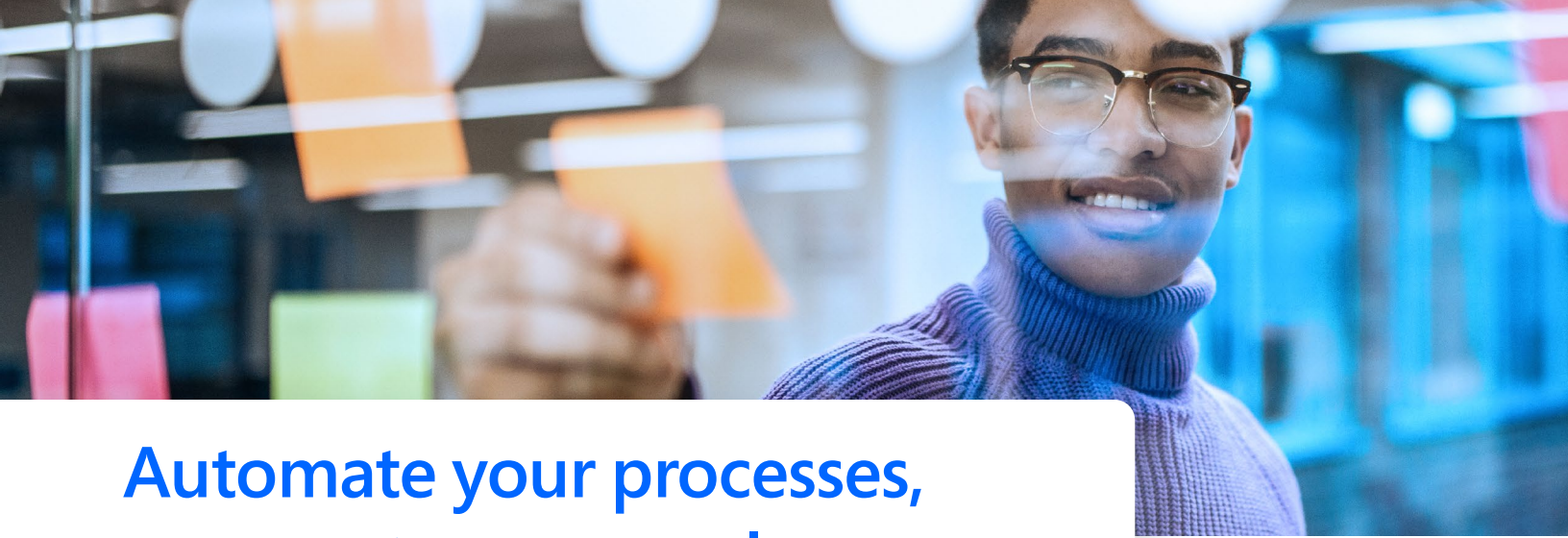
IT

Automate the tedious and time-consuming task of migrating data. With RPA desktop flows, consolidate data across systems and upload it for back-up—saving time and reducing the potential for human error.

How it works:

1. Information living on an outside system needs to be copied into a different system.
2. Multiple bots share the load of pulling information from the first system by reading input fields, copying the information, and then pasting them into the second system.
3. Using this method and applying error-process handling ensures the accuracy and success of the data migration for both customers and operations.





Automate your processes, augment your people

Many business leaders view the decision to adopt automation solutions as a binary choice between people and technology.

However, the reality is that intelligent automation offers a better way to support and even empower your teams, augment their skills and talents, and deliver tangible value for the business. Here are some of the main benefits of using Power Automate.



Boost productivity

Minimize repetitive, manual, inefficient tasks and create more time for your teams to focus on strategic work with a single platform for automation.



Securely integrate automation

Empower a more secure and compliant organization confident that Power Automate is helping keep your data safe and secure with enterprise-grade governance tools.



Automate at scale

Reduce time-wasting tasks across modern and legacy systems with easy-to-use low/no-code automation.



Leverage the power of AI

Streamline how you work by combining the power of AI with automated workflows and business processes.





Customer stories

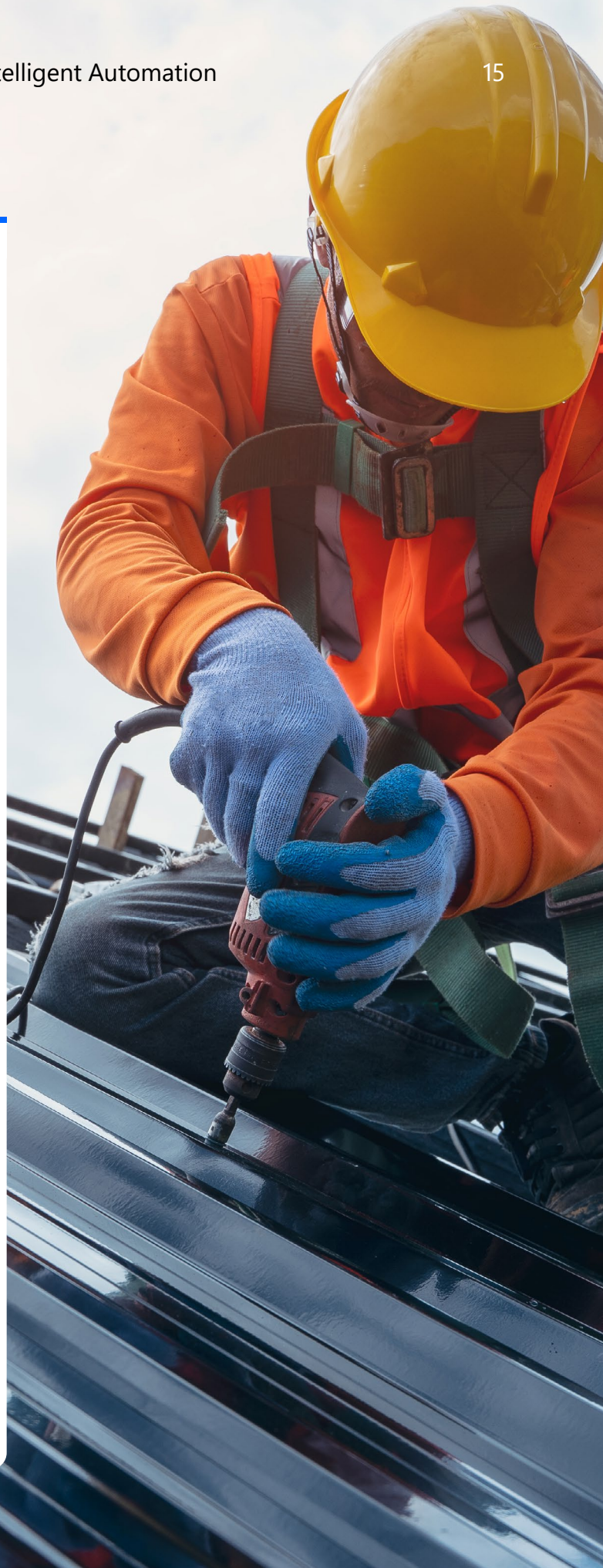
Louisiana-Pacific

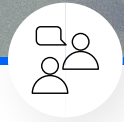
By deploying Power Automate and Power Apps, Louisiana-Pacific has reduced costs, increased productivity, and generated more than \$1 million in net-new pipeline opportunities.



People in our mills—most with little IT experience—are using Microsoft Power Automate and Power Apps to digitize their paper processes, create alerts, and improve productivity.”

Daniel LeMay
DevOps Engineer
Louisiana-Pacific Corporation





Aioi Nissay Dowa Insurance

Aioi Nissay Dowa Insurance in Japan joined the desktop flows private preview to reduce the number of hours spent manually creating, entering values, and processing from Excel and multiple legacy systems.

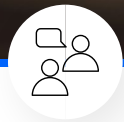


We believe that the new RPA capabilities with Power Automate will empower all of our employees to automate their work and to focus more on highly valued tasks. We are betting on Power Automate as it does not require deep training and support to automate our business—like other RPAs do—everyone is empowered to automate intuitively themselves.”

Takashi Yano

General Manager

Aioi Nissay Dowa Insurance



illimity Bank

illimity is a new-generation bank in Italy that relies on the best information technology and guarantees new levels of quality, service, and efficiency.



At illimity, we are planning to leverage Power Automate RPA capabilities for document processing, which is a key function in the banking industry. We are manually processing hundreds of documents weekly between parties so see this as a great opportunity to use RPA in helping us save time and resources.”

Francesco Zitelli
Collaboration Solutions Team Leader
illimity



Questions to consider when choosing an automation solution

When evaluating automation technology, consider the following questions to determine which solution is right for your business.

✓ What's the business case?

The first step when considering automation solutions is determining where your organization is spending the most time and energy, as well as which processes are repeated over and over. Automation can help with this, too. Look for solutions that offer a holistic view of your organization's processes and opportunities for optimization.

✓ Does it integrate with my organization's existing systems?

Many legacy enterprise applications don't provide APIs, so it's important to look for solutions that allow users to automate their work in these applications by recording manual tasks such as mouse clicks, keyboard inputs, and data entry, and then automate the replay of these steps to integrate with more complex process automations.

✓ How long will it take to get started?

Organizational silos and lack of infrastructure to support automation often make implementation of automation solutions complex and time-consuming. A unified platform with prebuilt templates for common automation scenarios can speed up the process so that you can start realizing the benefits of automation right away.

✓ Is it accessible to non-technical professionals?

The most useful low- or no-code approaches will minimize the need for deep training and support, and make automation accessible and reusable to everyone in an organization, while still offering the deeper functionality that programmers need.



Get started with Power Automate

Power Automate, combined with Microsoft's cloud-based applications, offers a fully integrated automation platform across:

- Azure
- Dynamics 365
- Microsoft 365
- Microsoft Power Platform

Power Automate natively integrates your Microsoft apps and services, giving your

organization the needed controls to guarantee data security and compliance while ensuring your company is well-equipped to become digitally transformed across all areas of business.

Whether you're looking to boost productivity, empower others in your organization to build secure workflows, or automate time-consuming manual tasks, let Power Automate amplify the impact of your team, so you can focus on what matters most.

Learn more about automation options that meet your unique needs.

Contact a sales expert



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