

Process Automation  
*for An Unpredictable Tomorrow*

DIGITAL SOLUTIONS • EXPERT GUIDANCE • INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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# Process Automation for An Unpredictable Tomorrow

As organizations cope with rapidly changing work environments and buying behaviors, Process Automation is beginning to get the attention it deserves. Companies the world over are starting to grasp how technology can meet the needs of staff to improve job satisfaction and productivity.

Understanding how Process Automation works, and its myriad benefits, should drive any digital transformation project. Once the advantages of automation and the associated risk factors are known, it's important to define the business objectives and goals so Process Automation can frame the path to success.

## This paper will:

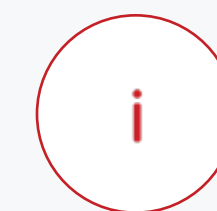
- ▶ Provide an actionable definition of Process Automation
- ▶ Define optimal applications
- ▶ Outline how to set goals and structure a plan for meeting your objectives

### By 2022:

**45%** of repetitive tasks in large enterprises will be automated and/or augmented by using "digital coworkers."<sup>1</sup>

### By 2025:

**2 of 5** of the G2000 will augment human staff with "digital coworkers" (powered by AI, robotics and IPA).<sup>2</sup>



The majority of **companies without a digital transformation strategy** believe they will begin **losing market share within a year.**

## Process Automation employs technology to automate repetitive workflows that require little to no human interaction.

Before beginning the Process Automation journey, we need to understand the key drivers impacting your investment and resource decisions. What are you solving for, and how will this affect the people in your organization? It is of paramount importance that you address the most critical issues as there is likely to be disruption, budget impact and mission creep in the absence of clear direction.

There are five main Process Automation drivers applicable to all businesses:

- 1 Expense reduction
- 2 Increased efficiency
- 3 Improved accuracy, safety and/or quality
- 4 Improved customer experience and retention
- 5 Increased or new revenue streams



In most cases at least two of these three will apply or overlap. Picking the goal most applicable to your needs begins the goal setting process which will help formulate a plan for and ultimately confirm future success.

# GOALS



## Expense Reduction

Expense reduction usually results in the elimination of information intensive and repetitive tasks. Computers and machines can sort information, complete forms, and compile finished documents without assistance if assigned for these purposes. Removing paper is often the first step; digitizing information creates opportunities for reducing human error.

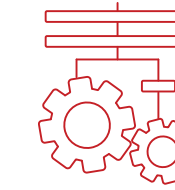


## Increased Efficiency

Cost isn't always the principal driver. Occasionally, it's time. Process Automation helps staff reclaim time lost to repetitive tasks, which can be better applied elsewhere.

In the right circumstances, machines outperform humans at every turn. Eliminating backlogs and meeting strict deadlines are critical points for Process Automation. While this often requires investment upfront, savings persist and amortize well into the future. Routine and repetitive tasks, once automated, can be run in batches, in off hours, and in remote locations achieving levels of efficiency heretofore unattainable.

What used to take hours or days by humans takes a machine minutes. The investment cost is easily recouped in staffing hours saved and applied elsewhere to improve processes where human hours are better invested. Think critically about how Process Automation can improve efficiency and you'll start to recognize the cost benefits, too.



## Accuracy/Safety

Humans are smart enough to make mistakes - machines aren't! When quality control or safety is at stake, automation is often an ideal solution. Taking humans out of the equation shifts workers from managing everything to only managing exceptions. Instead of having to handle every project, one only needs to focus on the outliers resulting in substantial productivity gains.

Lastly, consider how increased safety and accuracy not only improves efficiency, but saves your company money. Hidden costs like workers' compensation can be greatly reduced with Process Automation.

## BENEFITS

- ▶ Visibility into **core business processes**
- ▶ Visibility to **meet business demands**
- ▶ Visibility to **handle your complex processes**

## GOALS (CONT.)



### Improved customer experience and retention

Customers look to your company for answers. Process Automation allows your staff to return actionable, accurate results to customers quickly.

Smart, self-guided service portals are another key benefit Process Automation and a data transformation strategy can deliver. Whenever possible, allowing customers to find answers themselves alleviates your staff from performing routine tasks customers formerly requested. The ability to quickly access documents and get answers any time is a huge advantage for everyone.



### Increased or new revenue streams

Process Automation frees up time in everyone's day, which can be used to pursue or support new lines of business that drive revenue. Support staff will have more bandwidth for new ventures.


Because Process Automation helps return better, faster service to customers, proving value is simpler. As your company is able to scale-up what it offers, it may be smart to evaluate your cost structure for customers.

The speed and efficiency of Process Automation mean staff can work smart, not hard. Identifying where your company can adjust roles and responsibilities may increase overall efficiency without adding to the company headcount or payroll. Increasing the company headcount to meet customer demands also increase spending; working smart reduces the chance of increased staffing cost while helping drive revenue elsewhere.

Companies who engage in digital-first, **data-driven task management** are **23 times more likely to acquire customers**, and **six times more likely to retain them.**<sup>3</sup> More customers and better retention is a recipe for success.

## With these goals in mind, where are your greatest opportunities for Process Automation?

- ▶ **Routine and Repetitive Tasks**
- ▶ RPA or Robotic Process Automation
- ▶ Complex Tasks
- ▶ Put the Customer First
- ▶ Self Service or Guided Decision Making
- ▶ Reporting
- ▶ Document Management

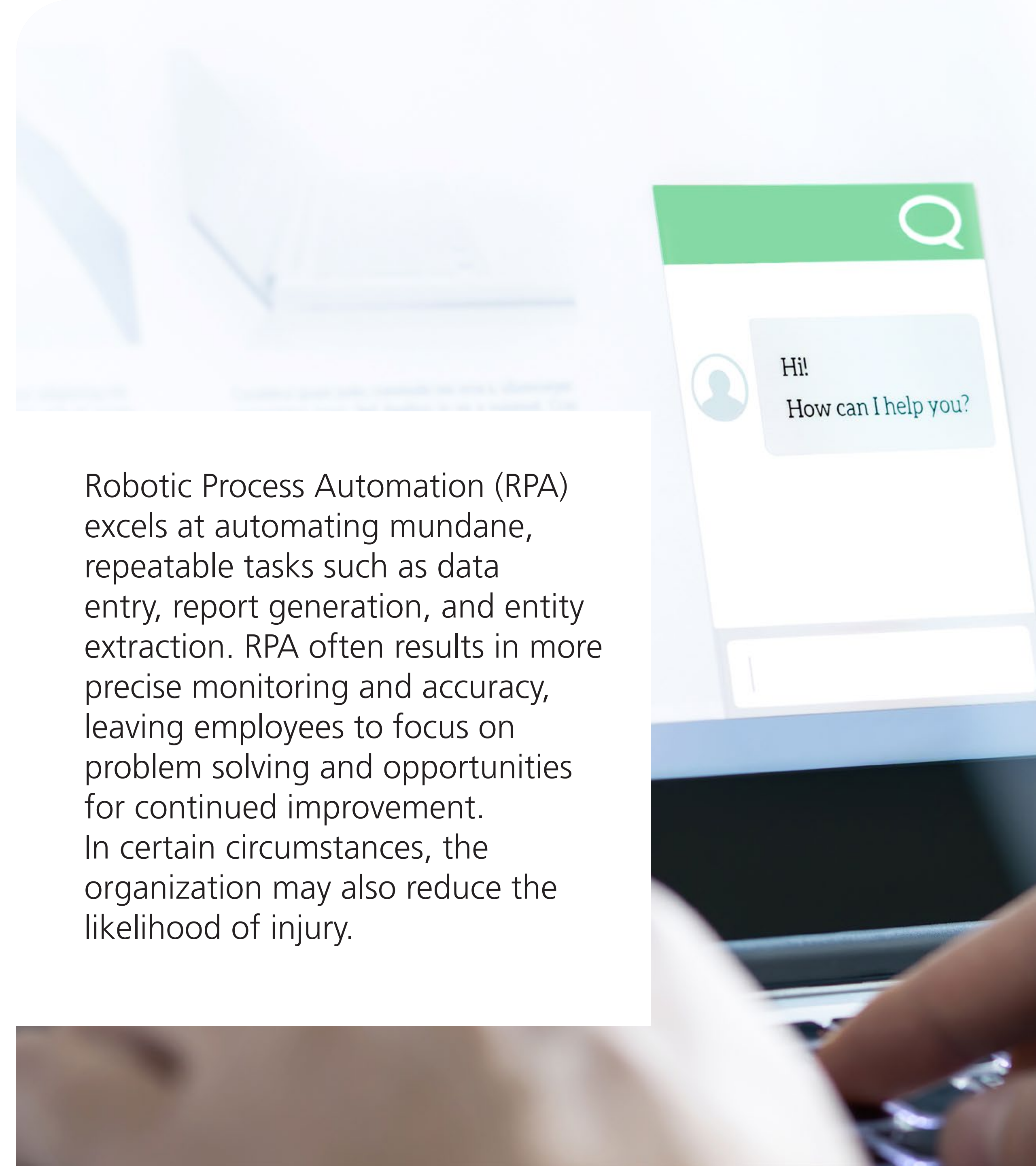


Tasks that are recurring and repetitive should be table stakes for your digital transformation to Process Automation. With digitization and automation, we can achieve the equivalent in cost and time savings for all sorts of data-intensive processes and projects. This can result in labor reduction and enhanced utilization of existing staff. Freed from the mundane and routine, workers draw on critical thinking and more complex problem solving.

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Robotic Process Automation (RPA) excels at automating mundane, repeatable tasks such as data entry, report generation, and entity extraction. RPA often results in more precise monitoring and accuracy, leaving employees to focus on problem solving and opportunities for continued improvement. In certain circumstances, the organization may also reduce the likelihood of injury.




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At times, complexity is more problematic than simple, mundane tasks because it's actually a series of simple tasks. Business decisions often require many variables, inputs, and calculations which follow prescribed methodologies. Accuracy and speed are critical components that often creates risks for humans. Letting the machines do the work via programmed, automated decision making is a reliable way to ensure accuracy and drive productivity gains.





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Data-driven organizations are:

**23x more likely** to acquire customers

**6x more likely** to retain customers

**19x more likely** to be profitable<sup>4</sup>

Arguments for automating the “back office” are relatively simple and uncomplicated. But front office opportunities can be a lot trickier as resulting benefits may be perceived differently among unique customers or between customers and the organization. Data shows that older customers still prefer face-to-face interaction while younger customers continually raise expectations regarding digital transaction capabilities. Companies, intrigued by potential cost savings and enhanced time to delivery, often overlook the resulting impact on established relationships. Automation without purpose is not a good thing. The puzzle pieces must fit.

4. <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights>

## With these goals in mind, where are your greatest opportunities for Process Automation?

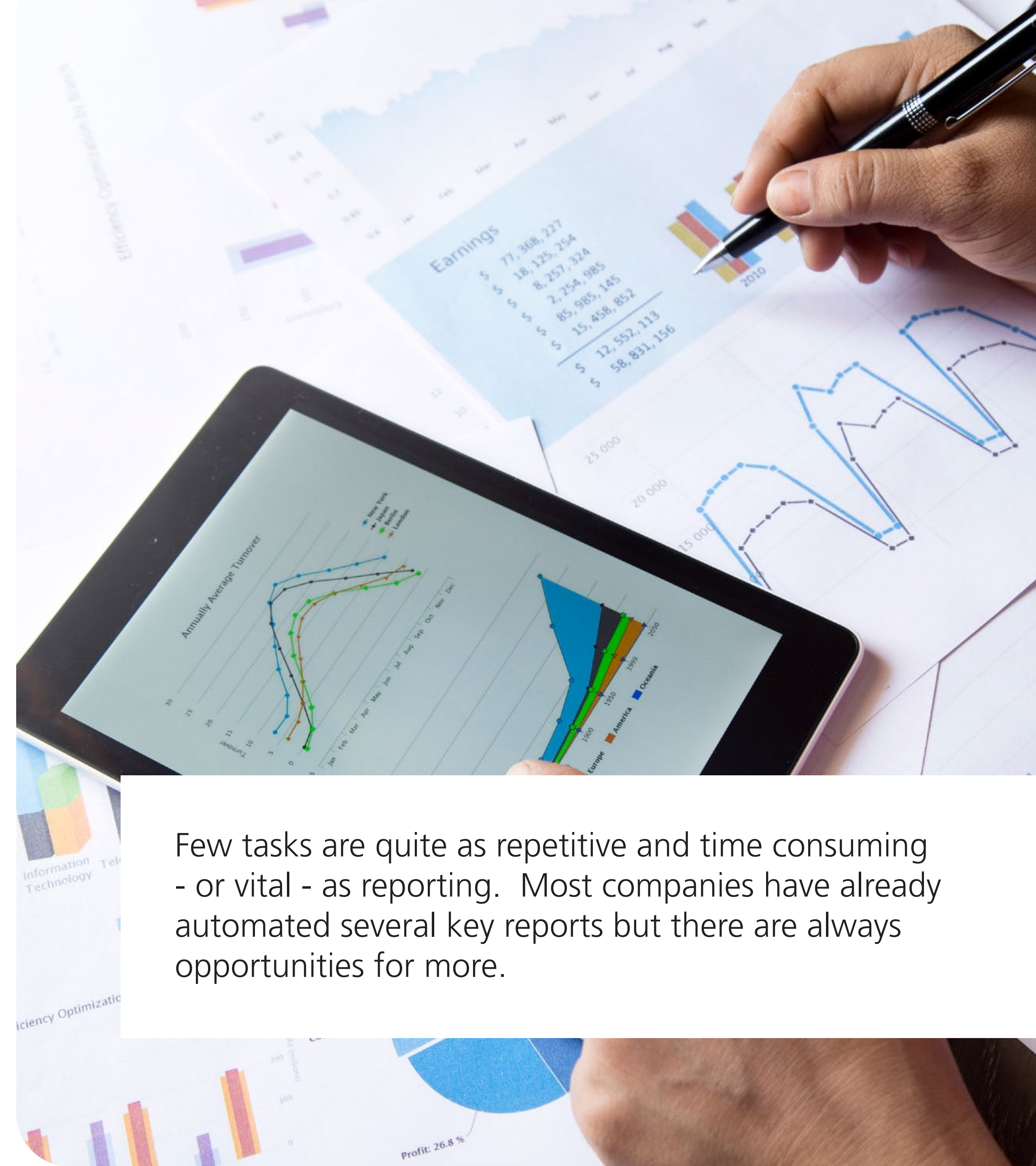
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- ▶ Put the Customer First
- ▶ **Self Service or Guided Decision Making**
- ▶ Reporting
- ▶ Document Management

Relieve employees and customers of their dependence on “specialists” for many tasks. By providing all requisite information on a timely basis via technology, users or customers can make data-driven decisions on their own. When it comes to both customer and employee engagement these systems should have “out clauses” at key inflection points, connecting the user back to a specialist in a timely manner if they get stuck.



# With these goals in mind, where are your greatest opportunities for Process Automation?

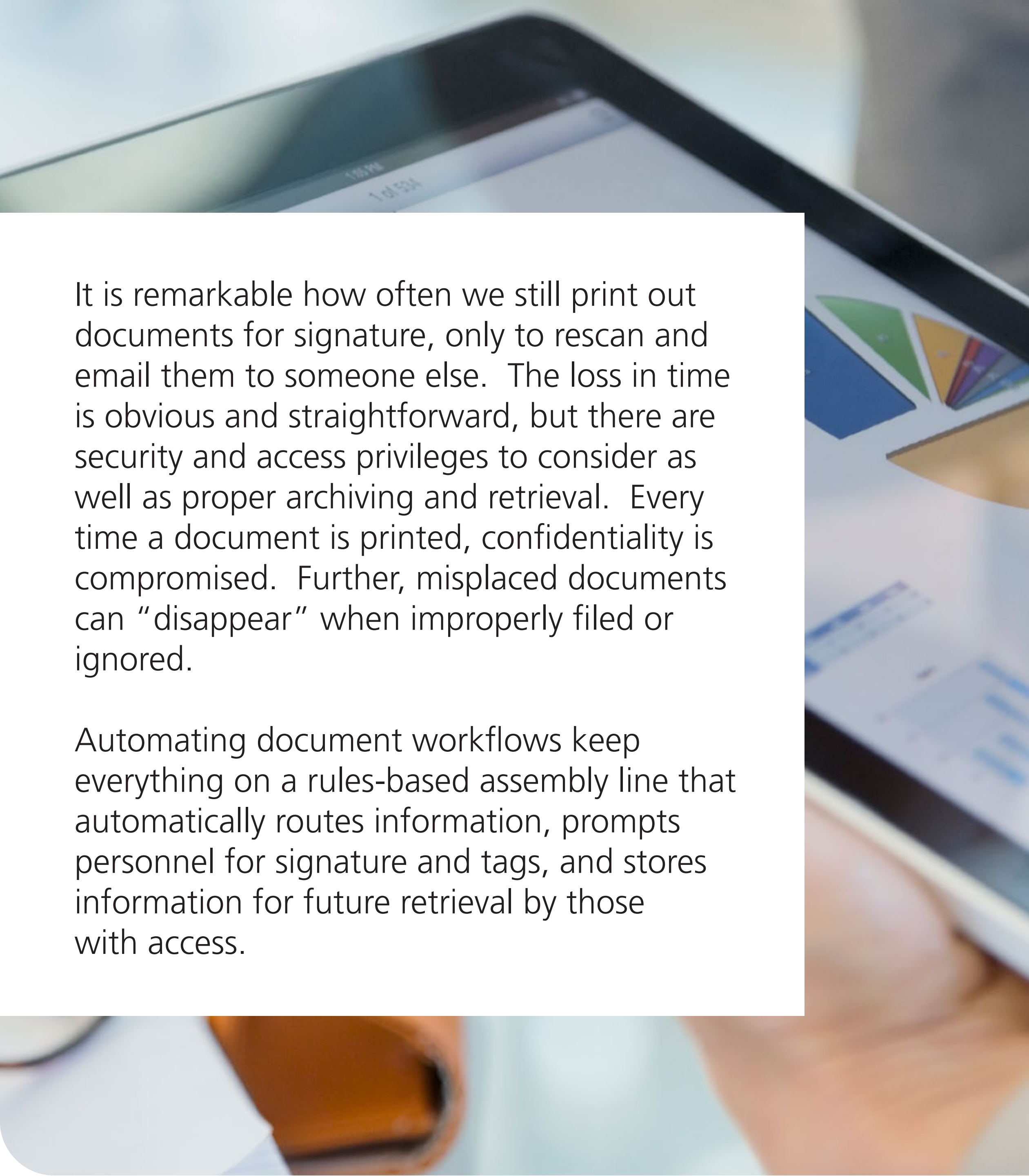
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Few tasks are quite as repetitive and time consuming - or vital - as reporting. Most companies have already automated several key reports but there are always opportunities for more.

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- ▶ **Document Management**



It is remarkable how often we still print out documents for signature, only to rescan and email them to someone else. The loss in time is obvious and straightforward, but there are security and access privileges to consider as well as proper archiving and retrieval. Every time a document is printed, confidentiality is compromised. Further, misplaced documents can “disappear” when improperly filed or ignored.

Automating document workflows keep everything on a rules-based assembly line that automatically routes information, prompts personnel for signature and tags, and stores information for future retrieval by those with access.

## TIME TO PLAN

Now that you know which tasks are best suited to automation and how to go about setting goals, we can get specific. Putting people first is your best first step in the process. Planning your automation initiative in phases so that those affected will be able to adjust in “bite-sized” increments helps reduce anxiety and improves adoption of newly implemented processes.

Consider the need to:

**Interview key stakeholders** to compile specific automation goals in measurable terms relating to expected cost reductions, increased efficiencies and/or improved accuracy/safety.

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**Define development phases**, including go/no go options.

- ▶ Build change management strategies into the process
  - ▶ What is the human backup plan in case of failure during rollout/implementation?
- 

**Define adoption goals:**

- ▶ How will teams receive training and education?
- ▶ Should changes be piloted to a smaller group initially?
- ▶ What does successful adoption look like?

## 6 steps to a solid Process Automation plan

1

Identify the process(es) to be automated.

2

Define KPIs, benchmarks, and related goals to be measured.

3

Data analysis: How are systems and processes currently performing? What is the expected performance improvement with automation?

4

Process or Workflow Mapping: Articulate who the key participants are, their role in the Process Automation transformation, and the actions they will take.

5

Define expected improvements and the methodologies for ongoing monitoring and measurement.

6

Implementation Plan  
a. Pilot or general rollout?  
b. Training and testing  
c. Achieving steady state

## GETTING STARTED

The perceived costs of Process Automation can be intimidating, but doing nothing gets you nowhere. Consider the increasing cost of staffing-up to perform custom duties versus the future savings associated with automation. This analysis is a critical first step and results in the identification of expense reduction and/or increased productivity opportunity.

Moreover, customer expectations regarding competitive pricing, immediate service, and speed are only increasing. To that point, Process Automation is arguably a competitive necessity.

With that said, Business Process Analysis is a skillset that should not be left to novices. Organizations looking to achieve significant improvements should consider third party expertise with proven methodologies who bring experience and a fresh outlook that is unencumbered by “the way we always have done it”.



A group of business professionals in a modern office setting. A woman with curly hair and glasses stands at the head of a long table, smiling and holding a tablet. She is addressing a group of seven people seated around the table. The room has large windows, modern pendant lights, and a decorative wall with a geometric pattern. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

# CASE STUDIES



# Case Study 1



Ricoh helped a large law firm engage over 70 stakeholders during a 7-week process. In this phase, Ricoh discovered pain points, assessed the firm's culture, and identified potential future issues that could affect the transformation process.

## Results

The client gained **\$1.5M in savings** on tax realignment, operational efficiencies, and further recommendations made by Ricoh for maximizing investments in critical application infrastructure. The process helped eliminate 'tribal knowledge' held by nearly 40% of a decentralized workforce set to retire in the next five years, which would have had dire consequences for continuity after the transformation was officially completed. Finally, Ricoh helped the firm craft an executable plan to improve company culture, enhance their technology ecosystem, empower and support self-sufficient employees, and utilize a data-driven decision making process moving forward.

# Case Study 2



A client in the energy industry had an unsound approach to utilizing existing platforms and technologies. Due to a divestiture and subsequent acquisition, systems didn't work in harmony and the company inherited outdated processes with heavy technical debt which made ongoing improvement and support difficult. A lack of expertise created further barriers to entry for migrating to a new platform.

## Results

Ricoh eliminated custom .NET coding and created AR invoicing process for a **20% reduction in decision-making time** for faster processing of invoices. The client realized a **50% reduction in legacy macro processes** for faster chemical interactions analysis, and Ricoh was able to help them move material safety data sheets from SAP to Sharepoint with workflow tools that helped reduce code by 200,000 lines, resulting in a simplified operating environment. A new program of control and transparency for stakeholders over new processes was installed to support proactive management and process improvement moving forward.



# RICOH

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At Ricoh, we bring over 80 years' experience streamlining and simplifying business processes, keeping your workers connected with the data they need. In addition to keeping you connected and ensuring business continuity, we draw on the latest technologies and best practices to automate your workflows and streamline operations releasing resources to fuel your organization's continued growth.

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