Effective automation relies on good business process design, with multiple factors to consider, including systems use, business impact, data touch points, ROI of labor, and investment. And the ROI—from the front office and the back office—is significant. In fact, automation can lead to cost reduction of 30% or more with a typical implementation time of three months, according to NelsonHall.

**Defining Robotic Automation**

Robotic automation, a non-invasive technology, doesn’t require back-office integration through APIs and seamlessly works with end-user interfaces and enterprise applications. The technologically agnostic solutions work well with data-intensive processes, across multiple domains and industry verticals. It offers various functionalities including:

- Responding to external stimuli and deciding when to execute functions
- Acting autonomously to use and orchestrate any application
- Bringing inherent data protections, transactional integrity across systems
- Providing clear audit trails and other system management functions

Robotic automation, coupled with proper business process planning, produces great results.

**Robotic Automation’s Advanced Features**

Robotic automation benefits a wide array of business areas across industries. When applied to some of our clients, robotic automation provided the following advantages:

- Reduction in Average Handle Time (AHT)
- Better accuracy
- Better agent productivity
- Reduced training timeline
- Increased process compliance
- Enhanced efficiency and customer experience
- Higher CSAT scores with faster resolution
- More time to focus on decision making related activities

**Follow these 7 Steps to Implement a Robotic Automation Program:**

1. **Identify opportunities to automate.** It is essential to determine process adaptability to automation. Each unique process is more open/ viable to automation or not based on various factors such as process size, industry, current process, and SLAs.

2. **Validate the opportunity.** Check how adaptable the process is to being automated. If we look at most processes, we notice that they typically comprise both transaction and decisioning parts. Automation can be designed to achieve some quick wins on the transactional part which is the more time-consuming repetitive task.

3. **Select a design model.** Select the best model for your requirement. You may need to redesign the process to maximize the scope for automation. In some cases, this yields additional benefits. Design the automation plan that suits the business structure. Customize...
the automation model to suit the process needs. As one example of customizing a model, in one of the processes HGS recently automated for product build, we split the process into three distinct subprocesses: capturing the input, building the right codes, and then updating the systems. While building the right codes is where we need the product build experts, a lot of time was also spent on capturing the input and on updating the systems. In this case, we redesigned the process using automation to capture the inputs. Then our experts built codes, and automation was used to update the systems. This result was a 75 percent increase in efficiency for this particular process.

4. Develop the automation plan. Conduct a thorough study of the process and understand all the “exception” scenarios. Automate time-consuming repetitive tasks in processes that include these. Develop the automation implementation plan in phases, considering all of the level 3 scenarios. Instead of automating all scenarios, automate about 75% and have experts handling the rest of the scenarios. Evaluate plan performance at every phase and move to the next phase.

5. Deploy the pilot phase. When you develop an automation plan and are ready to implement it, run a pilot project first. This allows you to observe the effectiveness and overall performance of your automation plan with an actual process in real-time. Take the results of the pilot project and make improvements accordingly. Look at the results of the pilot and then include those scenarios that need to be automated and those that can remain an exception. It is good to involve the right stakeholders to understand the long-term plan and then plan the next steps. That has been a key takeaway: collaboration and involvement of client and relevant stakeholders. Sometimes there is a difference in testing and live environment, and there could be training for roll out.

6. Roll out the plan. Besides development of automation, build a plan needs for training and handling contingency depending on the criticality of the process. It is good to ensure that while people are trained on the revised process there is also documentation on the process before automation to handle any contingency due to a change in applications or systems.

7. Maintain your automation activity. Automation isn’t always a one-time activity, and it isn’t something you execute and then forget about. There will be changes in the process and systems, and there should be a good change management process to handle any changes. Estimate the impact of change in systems or process and have a plan ready for this. At this last phase, prepare a change management plan. It is critical to get all stakeholders to buy in. In some systems, even a field included in a drop-down menu may have an impact on the output, so there should be a plan to manage these.

Conclusion

Getting Started - Robotic automation requires careful study, planning, and implementation. Despite being automated, robotic automation requires manual intervention in:

- Studying the process and business structure
- Selecting the right automation model
- Determining the degree of automation
- Selecting the aspects that can be automated
- Writing codes
- Mapping the selected automation model
- Monitoring progress and results
- Optimizing automation for best results

About HGS

HGS is a leader in optimizing the customer experience and helping our clients to become more competitive. HGS provides a full suite of business process management services from marketing and digital enablement services, consumer interaction services to platform enabling back office business services. By applying analytics and interaction transformation design to deliver innovation and thought leadership, HGS increases revenue, improves operating efficiency and helps to retain valuable customers. HGS expertise spans the telecommunications and media, healthcare, insurance, banking, consumer electronics and technology, retail, consumer packaged goods industries, as well as the public sector. HGS operates on a global landscape with around 40,000 employees in 65 worldwide locations delivering localized solutions. HGS, part of the multi-billion dollar Hinduja Group, has over four decades of experience working with some of the world’s most recognized brands.

According to a Black Book Market Research survey of BPO vendors, accountable care will experience a 22 percent year-over-year increase in outsourcing services. Among the survey findings, 87 percent of health plan managers counted software-as-a-service and health information exchange as high priorities.