



BPTrends ARTICLE

Winning at Hyperautomation

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Digital transformation is no longer a luxury for most organizations – it's a necessity. Enter hyperautomation! Gartner coined the term "hyperautomation" just over a year ago to represent the concurrent application of multiple digital tools in automating tasks and processes. This concept encompasses the integrated deployment of digital tools such as robotic process automation (RPA), intelligent business process management (IBPM), machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI).

[Hyperautomation was recognized by Gartner](#) as **the** top trend for 2020 and continued to be considered as one of the top trends for 2021. It's high time that the integrated deployment of digital tools received such attention. For far too long, many department heads have chosen to deploy individual digital technologies such as RPA for the sole benefit of automating small tasks within their own department – failing to examine the end to end value creating processes. This practice of viewing the business from the inside-out has led to the creation of data silos and significant roadblocks in scaling the use of digital technologies.

An integrated, big picture approach is an essential foundation for blending digital strategy with organizational strategy. This is dramatically different than what many organizations have done in the past by taking a cautious approach with digital and exploring individual tools via pilots and small proof of concept projects – often solely within departmental boundaries. In fact, most organizations have not had a strategy at all for digital technologies. One of the truly exciting aspects of hyperautomation is that it offers the [promise of being transformational](#) due to the size of the digital opportunity and the scope of its disruptive threat.

The effective deployment of hyperautomation has [significant potential benefits](#) including the simplification of data analysis and process discovery as it emphasizes data sharing across multiple business areas. It also empowers organizations to make more informed decisions by gathering large amounts of data for better data-driven decisions. Perhaps one of the most significant benefits of

hyperautomation is that it creates the right environment to truly redesign enterprise business processes instead of just automating small tasks and activities. For example, RPA – on its own – simply automates what people do. This can lead to automating parts of a broken process. However, hyperautomation enables a fundamental redesign of how work is done by targeting the significant improvement of end to end value creating processes through the integration of process automation with RPA and AI. Just consider the potential benefits of integrating process mining with RPA for example. Process mining software helps organizations capture information from enterprise systems such as SAP and provides detailed, data-driven information about process performance by examining event logs. It extracts data from logs and makes it possible to understand and measure the flow of actual processes. It identifies opportunities to apply RPA in a big picture context in automating the right tasks and also addresses one of the major challenges of RPA – how to scale.

As customer experience has become the ultimate battleground for many companies, it is increasingly recognized that successful digital transformations should [start with the customer](#). While this is a simple concept in theory, in practice it is challenging as the teams responsible for process improvement and customer experience often sit in different parts of the organization. Further, the mindset and the method or approach used by customer experience teams is different and sometimes difficult to bridge with that of process improvement teams – thereby standing in the way of cross team collaboration. Departmental and data silos have been known to be problematic for some time now, and the addition of digital technology silos and the so called “communities of practice” silos intensifies this challenge. In order to win at hyperautomation, it’s important for leadership to face to face up to this challenge. This calls for a greater emphasis on integrating front-office technologies with back-office operations to deliver an unparalleled service experience.

Employee experience has also become a major focus for many organizations as they discover that employees can either inhibit or enable transformation success. In other words, happy employees make for happier customers. Accordingly, some companies have begun to focus on employee experience as attentively as they have on customer experience. Employees are often skeptical of automation and fear job losses. The big picture view of hyperautomation makes it easier for the leadership team to communicate that the digital transformation effort targets increases in productivity while creating the opportunity to enrich job roles – and in so doing ease employee concerns around job losses.

While each digital technology or tool can deliver value on its own, hyperautomation can help organizations to view the business and its business processes more holistically. However, that requires a level of cross technology and cross platform collaboration that has not been the norm historically. In order for this to change, it's important that senior IT managers, customer experience executives and process improvement executives present a unified front to technology vendors and insist on unprecedented levels of collaboration. To compound these challenges, some of the digital technologies in the hyperautomation umbrella have a lot of maturing to do. Take AI for example – there are a couple of reports which found that fewer than [40% of organizations surveyed](#) in the past three years were able to report business gains from AI and in spite of the hype around AI, many projects continue to face a critical ROI issue.

Process professionals are well positioned to make a major contribution to the success of hyperautomation. Although they don't always do it, they understand the need to view the business from the outside—in. They have the methods and skills to model end to end business processes and along with an outside in focus this can form the foundation for reimagining the business and connecting with customers in new ways. By conducting many process improvement projects, they have learned the importance of cross group and cross functional collaboration. Similarly, they have had to deal with employees' fears around job losses. They can now apply these insights to form much needed collaboration with customer experience teams, the IT group and technology vendors.

Winning at hyperautomation calls for an integrated, big picture approach. The digital strategy must be an integral part of organizational strategy. Both the customer experience as well as the employee experience needs to drive strategy. This sets the stage for building in the focus on change management that is needed for sustainable success.

Author

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