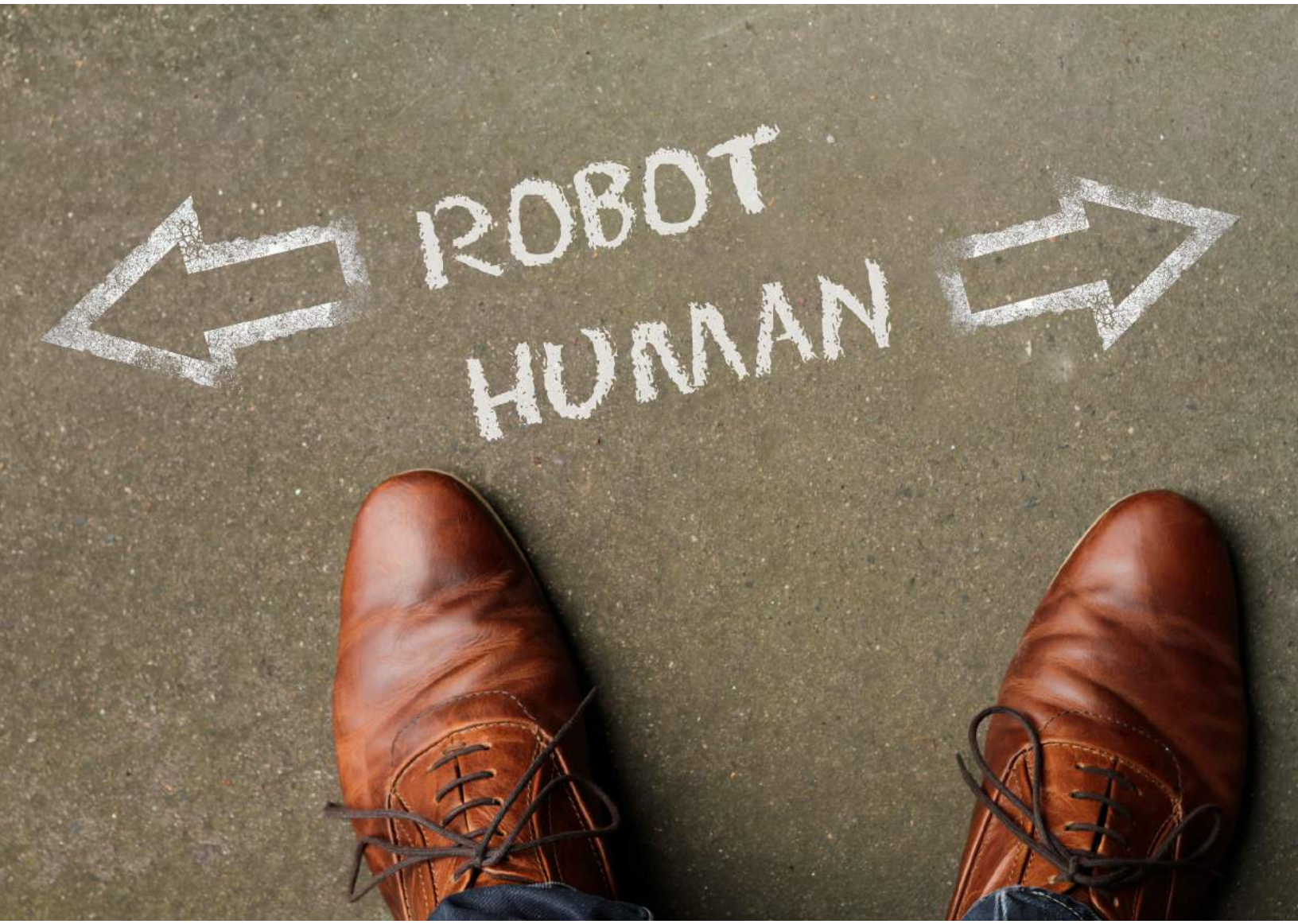
THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO

Automating Business Processes



How to successfully take your business from RPA hype to reality — and unleash the dramatic value that comes from liberating humans from manual repetitive tasks.

Avoid common pitfalls and get your digital workforce up and running quickly.

Vigilant TECHNOLOGIES

Take the robot out of the human.

Automate the automation.

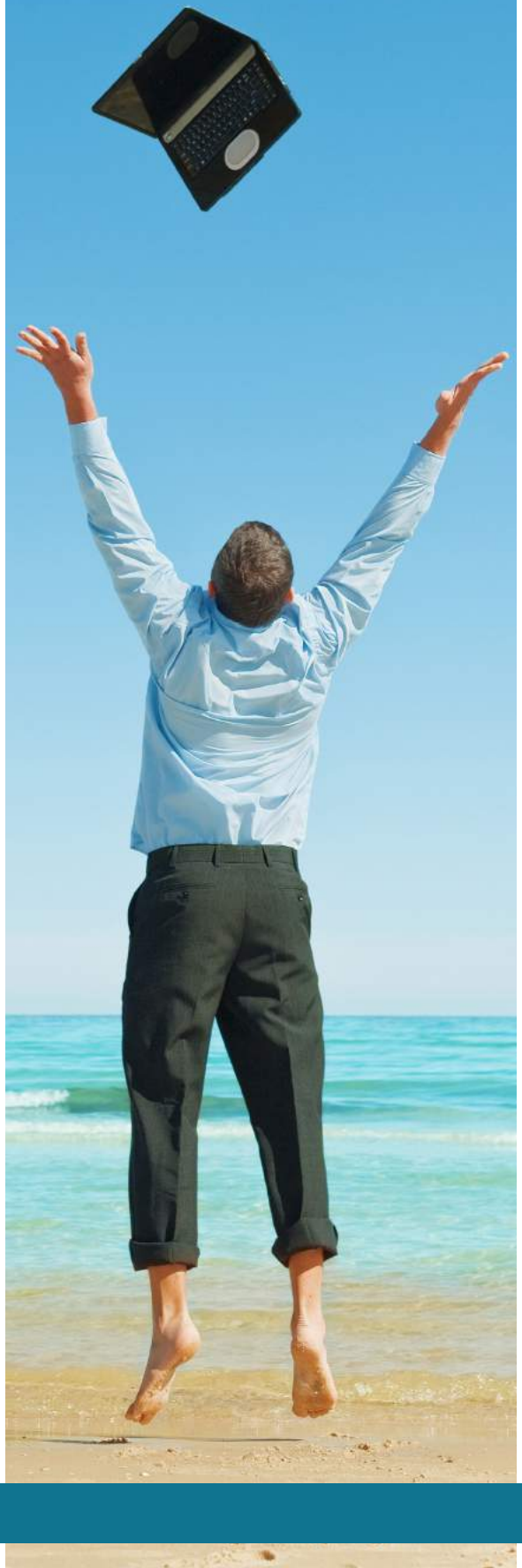
Dramatically improve results.

Scale it up for a big bang.

Crush the competition.

This is the #FutureofWork.

Welcome to the Digital Shore



Over the past half-century, businesses have pushed jobs to far-off locales and countries where labor and the cost of doing business is less expensive — a disruptive global race to keep operational costs as low, or lower, than competitors.

There have been movements to off-shore, outsource, near-shore and re-shore, with many blended-model cocktails in between.

When it comes to knowledge service jobs, though, this chess game of labor arbitrage may have finally found its resting place: The digital shore.

Enabled by fast-evolving Robotic Process Automation (RPA) technology, a new digital workforce of software bots is here. This workforce is just beginning to reshape business processes in ways that deliver dramatic savings and are likely to be long lasting.

What does this latest technology pivot mean for you and your business? How difficult (or easy) is it to implement a digital workforce? Does it require new talent? How can you extract the most value quickly?

This white paper was developed as a practical guide for businesses who want to capitalize on the new opportunity that RPA technology has unleashed. Enterprises, such as one of the world's largest mining companies, that have been early adopters of RPA find that they can quickly gain a competitive edge in operational speed and performance.

How big an advantage? One bot can easily and quickly take on work done by 3-5 workers.

That means dramatic and fast benefits, with systems paying for themselves and delivering positive returns in the first year — streamlining business processes in a viral wave across the enterprise, from Finance and IT to the Human Resources department and more.

The Evolution of Business Automation

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) has its roots in many pieces of software and tools that have routinely automated business applications over the years. That includes early macros, screen-scraping tools that duplicated keystrokes and software development kits (SDKs). Not to mention all the custom automation built into individual business applications.

A new and simple approach to take automation to the next level — Automation 2.0, if you will — true RPA technology is revolutionary and delivers unique capabilities and advantages within and across business applications.

What is RPA?

RPA technology is a platform that resides on top of a company's traditional information technology infrastructure, living in a cloud or server.

The RPA platform serves as a control center for software bots that — through programming, learning and artificial intelligence — process data in business applications like human workers do, but better.

These RPA bots, or digital workers, specialize in processing high-volume, repeatable tasks that range from simple to complex with extreme efficiency and accuracy.

For example, a bot can be taught a complex workflow requiring multiple steps, logic-based decisions and use of numerous applications. It can swivel its virtual chair through different programs and data sets to complete functions rapidly and accurately.

Dramatic Improvements

Take the simple but time-consuming task of onboarding a new employee. An administrator must collect and input personnel data into multiple payroll, health care, IT and legal systems. A bot can be taught to handle all those tasks, check them for accuracy and send an email documenting their completion.

RPA can cut a task like this from about two hours into 15 minutes.

A bot can essentially learn to do any processing task that a knowledgeable service worker does at a computer, such as data entry, calculations, inventory ordering, cross-checking data, maintaining a log of transactions and more. They can also do it faster and more accurately — 24 hours a day without deterioration in work quality or weekends, vacations and holidays.

When a bot encounters an anomaly, it can automatically send an email to a human manager for assistance, too.
In this way, digital workers liberate human

workers from their most boring and repetitive tasks, so they can engage in more creative, analytical and strategic value-added activities. Wouldn't those office workers in HR, for example, be better served with face-to-face activities that improve morale and reduce turnover?

Given the efficiencies RPA creates, it's no surprise that global consultancies frequently report a powerful first-year ROI of 200% or more during the first year of implementation. And that's typically with the implementation of just one bot application.

The more an enterprise automates, of course, the bigger the bang of benefits.

Liberating Process Improvements

RPA's comprehensive approach to business automation can bring profound changes to organizations and departments of all sizes, not to mention instilling a new culture where rote functions are relegated to the bots.

In practice, a department of ten accounting office workers might be reduced to just one or two, who supervise and manage bots that process invoices, reconcile ledgers, generate reports and close the books.

Even more dramatically, a BPO company overseas might be eliminated and the work relocated to a digital shore in the United States, delivering dramatic savings.

What is a Bot?

A bot is software that is taught or learns to do tasks based on logic and, oftentimes, some artificial intelligence. Bots are digital workers that perform tasks quickly and accurately 24 hours a day without weekends or vacations. One bot replaces, on average, 3-5 human workers.

What's more, as business demand grows or shrinks for certain processes, bots can easily scale up or down, without HR having to hire and train new workers or downsize underused resources.

As bots go about their work, they also can continuously generate data about their activities — documentation that can be a useful tool not just for compliance and traceability but also for analysis and continuous refinement of business processes.

Bots Can Reduce Risk

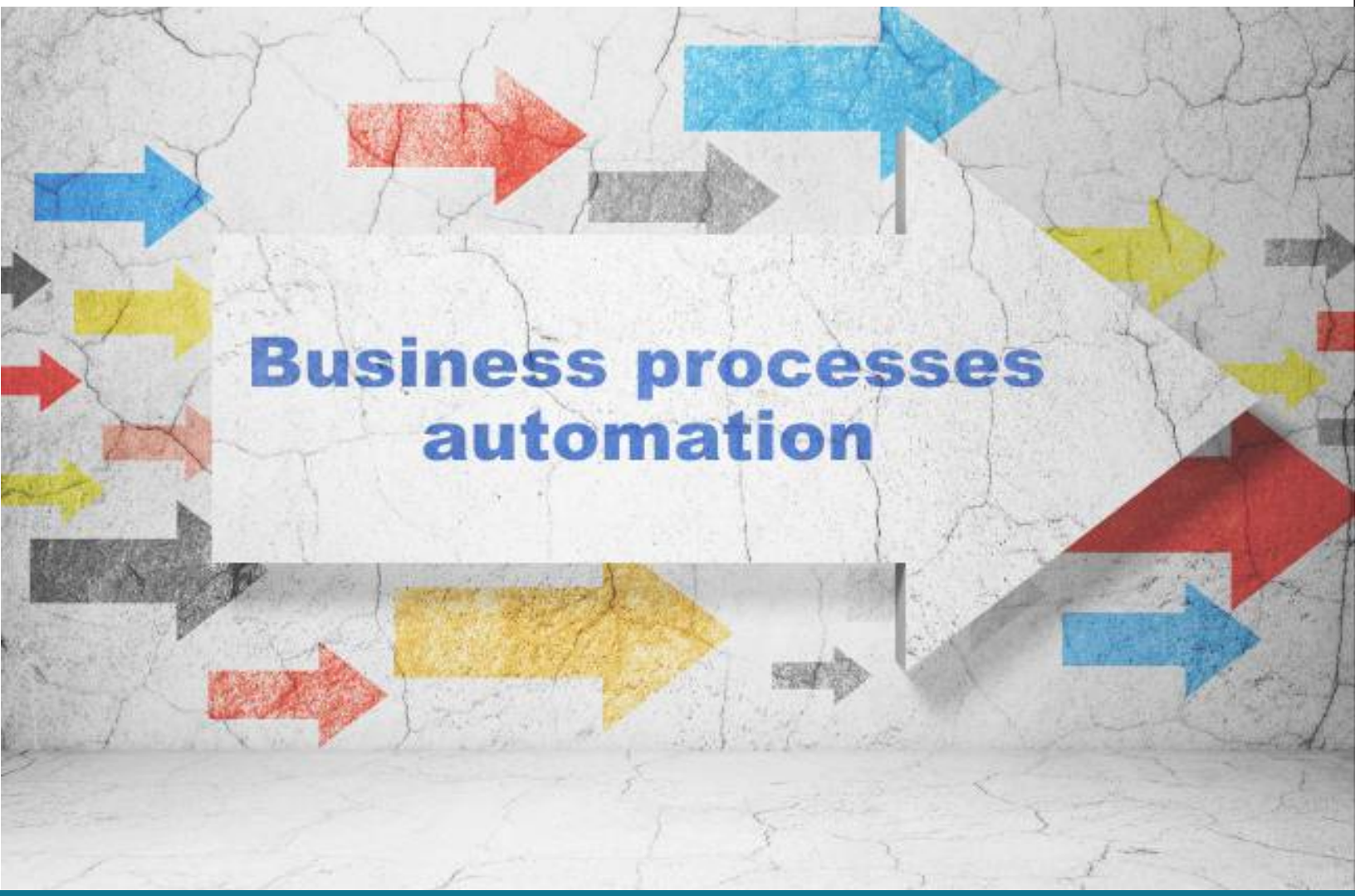
Letting bots handle data processing also removes some of the exposure inherent in humans.

Aside from human error, bots can also reduce the serious risk associated with data theft and fraud with less human touch points.

A Tool to Make Continuous Improvement Viral

Once a company implements an RPA system with simple bots for HR onboarding, patient check-in or invoice processing, then RPA can be used to improve other business process as well.

In this manner, an enterprise can, and should, use RPA as a continuous improvement tool — extracting savings and additional value out of as many departments as possible.



IMPROVING BUSINESS RESULTS

HARNESS THE WIDE-RANGING BENEFITS

An RPA system can usually be up and running with its first application in three to six months. The Return on Investment period is usually even faster, but a successful RPA implementation can have a positive viral effect on an organization that delivers exceptional returns.

EFFICIENCY

- Dramatically improves processing speeds
- Improves accuracy of processing
- Identifies anomalies quickly for human intervention

LABOR

- Greatly reduces need for FTEs in business processing
- Allows human workers to do more creative, engaging value-added activities
- Reduces turnover in departments where employees perform a high volume of repetitive functions
- Bots can work 24 hours a day without vacation or quality deterioration
- Decreases need for recruitment and training

TECHNOLOGY

- Less IT support needed to oversee bots than custom automation programs
- A robust RPA system can deliver greater security, with less human interference

OPERATIONS

- Easily scales up or down to meet demand
- System constantly collects data for analysis and improved decision making
- Reduces or eliminates the typical challenges of outsourced business processes, such as language and time zone barriers
- Sweat legacy systems by letting the bots work in the slower, outdated platforms
- Take advantage of build-in or add-on artificial intelligence features for even more analytical benefits

LEGAL

- Robust RPA systems document every action for traceability and auditing
- Reduces risk of fraud and data security exposure by minimizing human contact with data
- Reduces risk of non-compliance by hardwiring processes in place

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Ensuring a Successful RPA Launch

While RPA offers the promise of great efficiencies and business results, it can also be a big disappointment and distracting headache if not well executed.

Companies that do not choose the right system or execute with the proper planning may find themselves wondering if they fell victim to hype and false promises when their RPA mission runs into more complexity than expected. This can cause an organization to resist expanding bots to new applications — or even identifying new opportunities.

In planning for an implementation, with the goal of extracting as much value from the digital workers as possible, it's important to start by understanding the limitations of bots.

Bots Have Their Own Limits

While this paper may make bots sound all-knowing and all-doing, it's important to understand that bots, just like humans, have their own unique fallibilities — even when the bots are well equipped with the latest artificial intelligence.

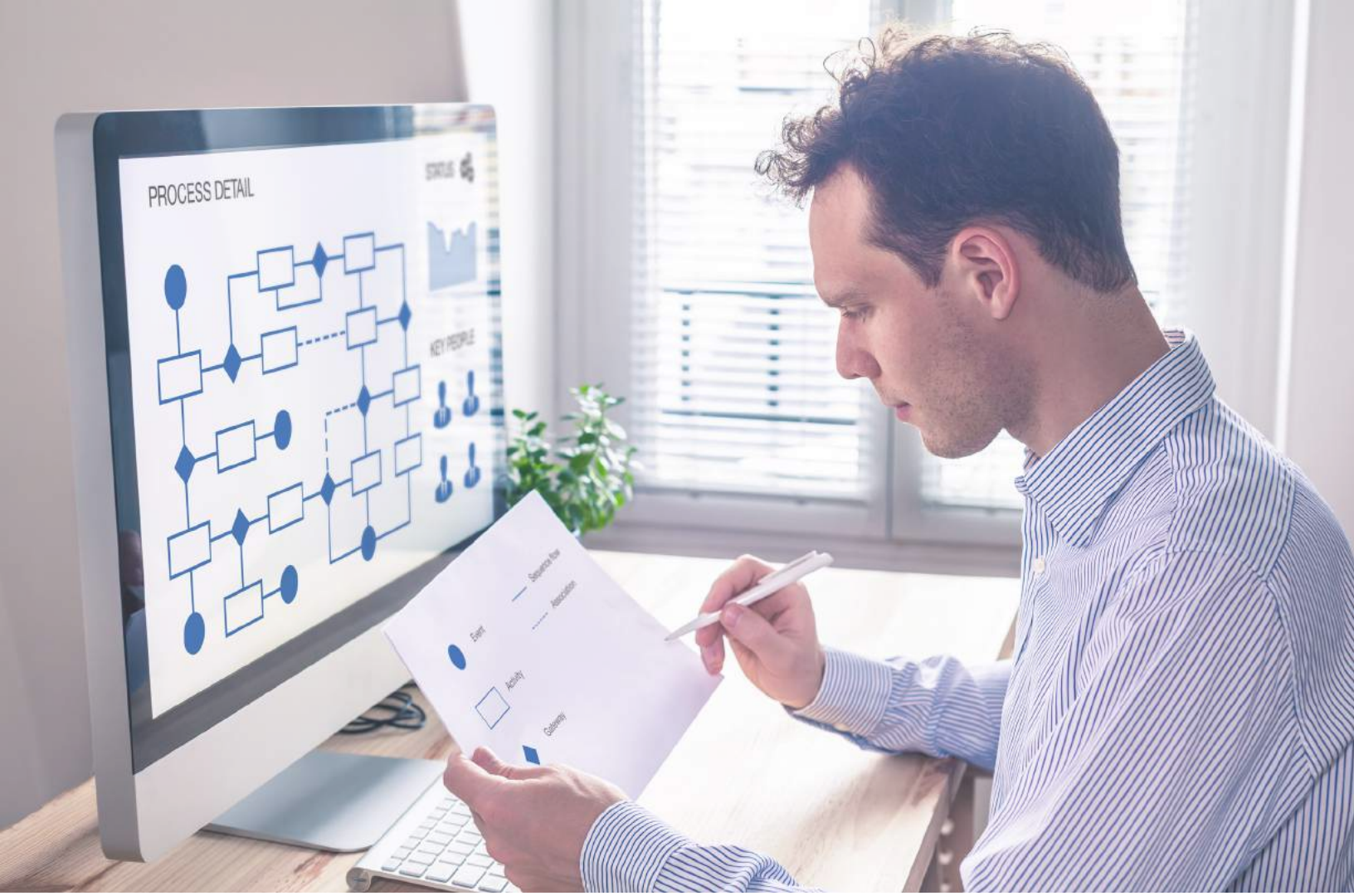
The number one limitation faced by bots is time, which truly is finite for all things.

If a bot can reduce a 30-minute task to 5 minutes, that's a tremendous 80+% efficiency gain. But, there are only 1,440 minutes in a day. That means the bot can perform the task 288 times in 24 hours, or 12 times per hour.

If the enterprise needs a bot to perform more tasks than that, more bots will be needed. Or, the process will need to be further streamlined to extract more efficiency and tasks out of the bot. Shaving another minute off the task, for example, can deliver 360 of these tasks. Or, 15 per hour.

A team of bots can also have their tasks scheduled, to ensure their capacity is being used efficiently. They are also departmentally agnostic, so a bot could perform IT functions in the morning, HR functions in the afternoon and Finance functions overnight.

So, it's important to go into an RPA project with the goal of making the most of a bot's time, just as one would with a human worker.



PLANNING IS CRITICAL

For a successful RPA implementation that extracts the most value from the digital workforce, an enterprise must:

Choose the right RPA tool for the specific business needs

Every business is different, and the number of "RPA" options in the marketplace continues to grow. That makes choosing the right system vital to success.

The lure of more affordable RPA systems, or tools that look easy and programmer- or code-free, may not always guarantee success. These systems may, in fact, leave an enterprise feeling burned about the very essence of what RPA promises.

A keystroke-recorder RPA program may be easy and ideal to automate a single task, but how scalable and secure is it? Will it unlock the full value of RPA?

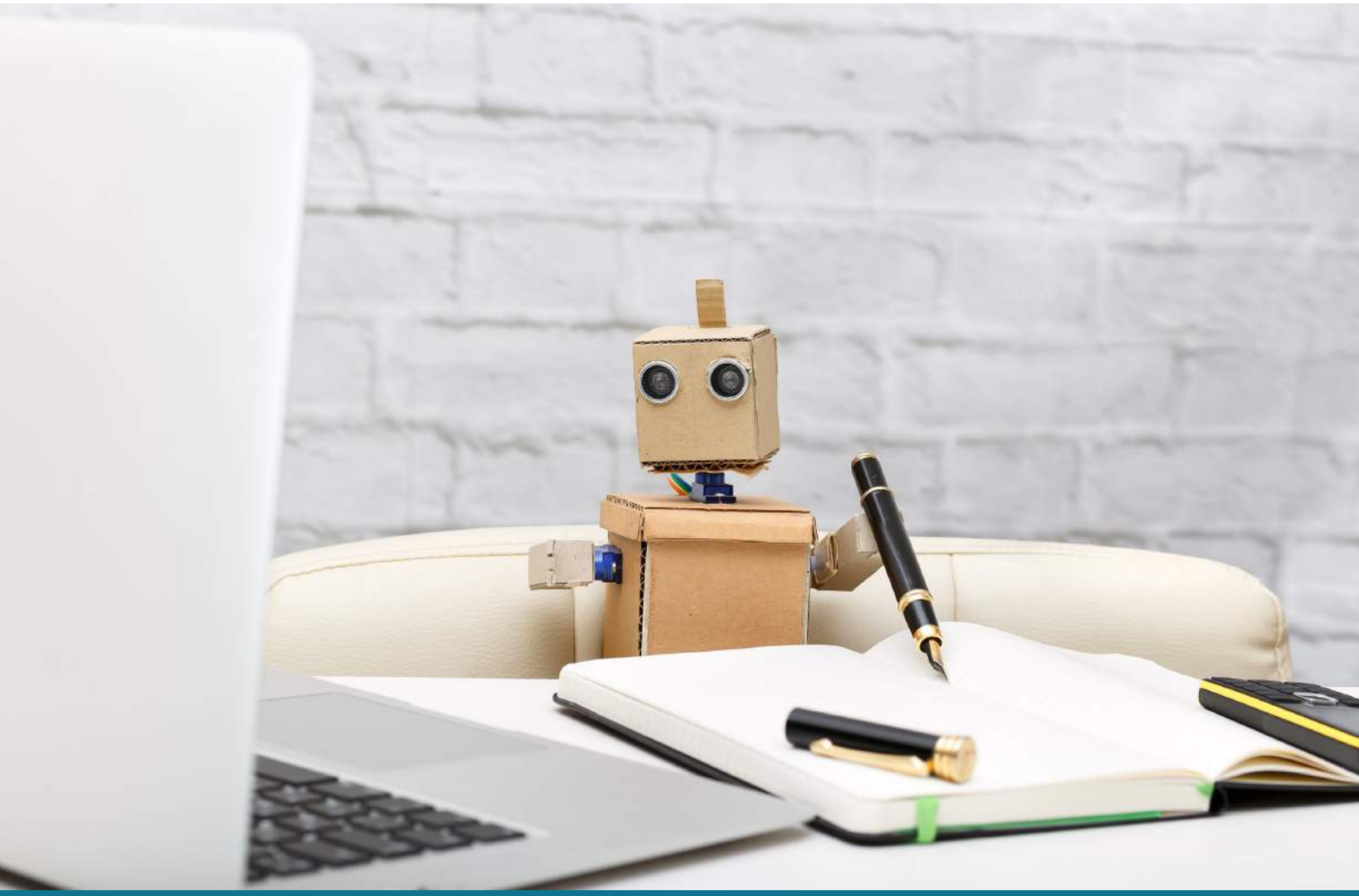
Even more essential: Is the tool being sold really RPA in the first place? Companies that sell less capable automation have rebranded them to benefit from the RPA buzz.

To properly compare RPA systems, it takes time and knowledge about the back end of such systems. An experienced advisor can provide valuable assistance.

Map and model all business process workflows for kick-off application

This is a critical early step when preparing for an RPA implementation, and it may even be wise to perform this process mapping for the initial application — or applications — before deciding on an RPA system.

This way, your company can appreciate just how beneficial a robust enterprise-style RPA system might be prior to making an investment. An experienced IT partner can assist with this exercise.



Translating tasks that are easy for humans to navigate into an actual workflow documents can shed light on just how much complexity there really is in a system. Most processes have more pathways than initially assumed.

While bots can easily shuttle process exceptions to humans to handle, if all possibilities aren't well mapped, truly capturing all possible process flows is important to extracting the most value from an RPA system and each bot.

Consider improving workflows prior to implementation

One of the many benefits of RPA technology is that it can help an organization sweat its existing legacy systems.

Bots can handle the frustration of dealing with old systems and some of their outdated and annoying idiosyncrasies better than humans who want all the upgrades.

However, there may be some instances where it makes sense to upgrade a system or tweak some data prior to an RPA bot using it. This can greatly improve the efficiency of the bots, ensuring bots can do as much work as possible, especially if departments are sharing bot time.

Companies trying to do RPA on the quick and cheap may skip this step, only to find themselves regretting it later and backtracking or abandoning RPA altogether.

Not all bots are created equal

Some RPA systems boast that their bots can simply watch and learn processes. This may work well for some basic workflows. But it also means the bot is also using existing business application software *exactly* like a human would.

One of the benefits of an enterprise-style RPA system is that its bots can use the data in the back end of a business application — extracting it, moving it and processing it — even faster than a robot simply copying human behavior through a human interface. That's because RPA systems that are truly enterprise-grade, such as Blue Prism, move quickly by using software integrations that enable super speeds. Compare that to recording-style RPA.

"If you can't describe what you're doing as a process, you don't know what you're doing." — W. Edward Deming

For example, Vigilant Technologies, an Oracle Platinum Partner since 1999, has created specialized pre-built bots for a variety of Oracle business applications. One such pre-built bot works with Oracle Payables to create exceptional efficiencies in automating the entire workflow for invoice processing. Another bot can handle Oracle user management and setup.

Then, there's artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities. Some systems boast that AI is built into their system, while other systems may offer them a-la-carte and others still may not include AI features at all.

It's important to ask and consider: What ROI benefits will AI enhancements really provide for my application? Can I add them later? What AI matters to my business processes?

Having a robust RPA system that allows for more advanced programming, behavior and management is important in ensuring that an enterprise-level RPA implementation is a success — and that it has the legs to run the distance.

Likewise, having a skilled IT team, or the right RPA partner, that has experience in programming bots may be the difference between bots that do smart work well, or bots that don't.

This is also vital because if an RPA implementation stalls at one enterprise, but succeeds at a competitor's, a company could find itself with a serious disadvantage. It's important to do RPA right the first time.

Deciding governance issues

RPA was designed to make business easier, but an enterprise must still decide who is going to own it and supervise the bots.

Even with dramatic benefits to be won, there may be conflict over whether IT or an individual business unit will be taking responsibility for this new layer of technology.

A successful RPA implementation must be a partnership between the business units benefiting from the application bot and IT.

Once implemented, IT usually takes responsibility for the platform and its governance and security, while the business unit takes responsibility for supervising the bots and their processing.

It's also important when considering governance to look closely at the access and control systems of different RPA tools. Some RPA systems sit right on the accessible desktop while other systems have more secure gateways with strict IT controls.

Clarity about responsibility and oversight can not only ensure success in the early days of an RPA implementation, but also enable RPA to be scaled quickly to a full enterprise-wide competitive advantage.


Simple Steps for a Successful Launch
HARNESS THE POWER OF RPA
01
IDENTIFY APPLICATIONS
Prioritize the business processes best suited for automation with RPA
02
MAP WORKFLOWS
Document the process workflows, expected improvements and ROI
03
CHOOSE THE RIGHT TOOL
Investing in the right RPA system could determine success or failure
04
SELECT THE RIGHT PARTNER
An experienced partner can help ensure your RPA implementation is a success
05
IMPLEMENT, SAVE AND SCALE
After your first automation project is a success, scale RPA for dramatic benefits
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Visions of an RPA Revolution

The true value of Robotic Process Automation isn't unlocked in a single application — although a single application can certainly pay for the investment.

Rather, it's in a continuous process of revamping and automating that can dramatically reshape the culture and cost structure of an organization. Make sure your enterprise can unlock that full value by choosing the right tool and partner, and planning for a successful journey into the digital future.

RPA Automation Ideas for Most Every Business

- Invoice Processing
- Bank Reconcilations
- On- or Off-Boarding Employees
- Digitizing Data from Mail/PDFs
- Vendor Maintenance
- Financial Reporting
- Payroll Processing
- Inventory Management

HEALTH CARE

- Patient Intake

INSURANCE

- Claims Management

BANKING

- Loan Processing

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About Vigilant

Vigilant delivers premium advisory, implementation and managed IT services to businesses looking for value and excellent service.

Founded in 1999, Vigilant is a global company with deep experience in both traditional and disruptive technologies. We are a trusted Oracle Platinum Partner — supporting virtually all products and modules. Vigilant also partners with Microsoft, Amazon Web Services and Blue Prism on cloud, business applications, analytics, process automation and artificial intelligence technologies.

Our team is highly skilled at developing custom solutions for unique challenges. What's more, our significant staffing practice provides the world's largest companies with IT professionals. Headquartered in Troy, Michigan, Vigilant also has offices in Toronto, Canada, and Hyderabad, India.