

Three considerations for enterprise-wide implementation of intelligent technologies



The world has come a long way since the first large-scale automation effort in the 19th century, which saw [the industrialization of weaving, with the advent of the automated power loom](#). Automation has always been about more quickly and efficiently performing tasks that are otherwise time-consuming, prone to error, and not easy to accomplish manually. Hence, organizations have never shied away from any opportunity to automate, as proven by the ubiquity of computers and industrial automation by the latter half of the 20th century, followed by the increase in software robotics currently have made evident.

The ongoing digital revolution, and its accelerating convergence with the physical world, has spawned an array of interesting use cases that extend the potential of automation into cognitive tasks of reasoning and judgment – so far the dominion of human intellect. There's a lot of buzz around various intelligent technologies, some of which are seeing mainstream adoption such as Robotic Process Automation, algorithmic trading, Geographic Information System, and automated self-service solutions - to name a few. Other technologies such as Virtual/Augmented Reality, blockchain, Conversational AI, autonomous transport, AI-driven intelligent automation, and the Internet of Things are in various stages of adoption, across multiple industry segments

Challenges posed by automation

While automation is predicted to [increase global GDP by more than \\$1.1 trillion in the next 10-15 years](#), many organizations still face significant challenges in realizing its potential and benefits such as a cultural backlash against automation, losing momentum midway, teething issues during IT/OT integration, threats of data exposure and ownership, to name a few.

Here are three key considerations for successful enterprise-wide implementation of automation technologies:



Automation-centric strategy

It is common to see organizations having multiple automation initiatives, with many of them struggling to scale. While sponsored with the best of intentions, these initiatives lack clarity in how they affect organizational strategy, which leads to a hugely overstated/understated return on investment. Organizations should therefore clearly define the role of automation, determine how it fits into their long-term strategy, and clearly define ownership. Since [many governments](#) have started [considering policy responses](#) in the wake of massive automation, organizations should be duly cognizant of not only possible regulatory oversight, but also the broader societal implications of having an automation-centric strategy.



Bridging the generational gap

[Generational diversity in today's workforce](#) has reached levels never seen before. The real differentiator for organizations will be how they bring a multi-generational workforce on board during their automation journeys – they must recognize how each generation perceives automation technologies, and customize training practices for effective adoption. Moreover, they should implement innovative learning models, like mutual mentoring, which enables different generations to come together to learn from each other and help build positive relationships. This will, in turn, ensure complete worker commitment on the automation journey across generations, and help organizations focus on generating tangible benefits from their investments in automation.



Active cyber-risk mitigation

As seen by the audacity of recent cyber-attacks, organizations are being exposed to cyber threats at unprecedented levels. Still, organizations are held accountable for failing to prevent cyber-attacks and the exposure of personal information. For example, an investigation by the National Audit Office of the UK concluded that the [National Health Service \(NHS\) could have prevented the WannaCry ransomware attack](#). By far the greatest consequence is the damage to brand image. Since many automation technology initiatives are now often owned by the business side, it becomes imperative to get the IT side onboard as early as possible. When scaling up automation across the organization, IT brings valuable insights into challenges pre- and post-integration, and ensures adequate safeguards are enacted proactively to prevent cyber-attacks.

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Anticipating disruption before it happens

Organizations are facing the high tide of automation powered by the Cloud-Big Data-Artificial Intelligence trinity. The ever-evolving ecosystem of automation technologies brings in both feelings of excitement about its potential, and the anxiety that comes with any business transformation. While no one can avoid increasing automation, organizations can be better prepared to embrace it by clearly defining an automation-centric strategy, bridging generational divides, and actively mitigating cyber-risks.

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