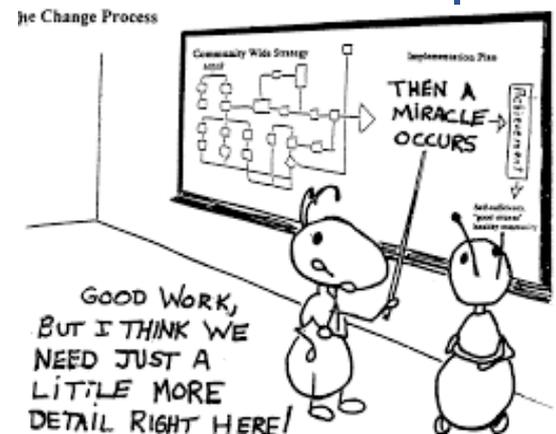


Process Assessment in the world of 'Automation First'

"I suppose it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail" – Abraham Maslow

As a Robotic Process Automation implementor we tend to view every process through the prism of what it would look like if it were to be automated. While there are significant benefits in an 'automation first' approach, it is important that processes are also assessed for 'non-automation' benefits that may exist. 'Non-automation' benefits may be accomplished by a process redesign or completely removing tasks within a process.



5 key benefits of a thorough process assessment prior to automation are as follows;

1. Do good

Additional benefit may be derived from a process assessment that may not include automation. A process may be redesigned so that accuracy, time and customer experience benefits may be achieved without automation. Additionally, through an assessment, methods within a process may be amended to make the automation possible, more stable or more robust.

2. Do no harm

Only through a thorough assessment can it be certain that there will be no negative impact from a process automation. This includes a potential affect to customers, employees or accuracy of data and processing.

3. Save your money

As a result of a process assessment it may be determined that a process redesign or a common-sense process change may be more cost effective than an automation project. At the very least, the real cost (and time) expectation of an automation project will be verified prior to commencing.

4. Think of the children

A process assessment not only focused on automation can identify the secondary (children) processes that may be affected. there are secondary 'children' processes that may be affected by an automation. The process assessment can also identify child processes that could be automated at a later stage.

5. Enjoy the ride

an added benefit of a thorough process assessment is that it brings all stake holders along for the ride from the earliest stage possible. This will greatly enhance the adoption of the proposed solution – whether it is automated or not.

Assessing processes with an ‘automation first approach’ requires a balance between the exciting world of robotic process automation and traditional data collection and document preparation.

Here are **5 practical tips** to assessing processes with an automation first approach;

1. Communicate, communicate, communicate

Communicate with the subject matter expert and explain what tasks are possible to automate and where improvement can be achieved through other methods.

Communicate with the robotic process automation developers to understand how the potential automation can be made more robust by changing the process.

Communicate with the all stake holders (yes even the customer!) to ascertain how a process change or an automation may affect them.

2. The proof is in the data

The data should be the primary driver for process change decisions, whether it be an automation of the process or a redesign of the process. Measure all aspects of the process, the time handling of each task, the volume, the effort required to complete a single process, the real cost of change to determine the estimated benefit of a change or automation of the process.

3. Think big (and small)

Think about the overall process and how it fits in to the big picture of the business strategy. This view will provide the perspective of how the priority of the process, the automation roadmap and all the stakeholders that the process may affect.

Think about every small detail within the process and how each one can be improved. This perspective will ensure that no detail no matter how small is overlooked.

4. Be curious

Ask about all aspects of each tasks and delve into as much detail as possible. There may be information that adds no value to the assessment but there may also be critical information (that stake holders do not think is that important) that will make a difference to the solution.

5. Be patient

The process stakeholders will have different perspectives of the process and its requirements. Patience is required to ensure that all the necessary points of view and related information have been gathered. Patience is also required in preparation of the solution documentation, benefit estimation and presentations so that a decision for process improvement can be made with all the required information.

Continuous process improvement does not always mean continuous process automation, but robotic process automation is certainly a good hammer to have in the toolbox.

Eli Chaiton is the Director at YML Innovation. [YML Innovation](#) specialises in process improvement with a focus on Robotic Process Automation.

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