Implementing Successful Automation Solution: Here’s your Step-by-Step Guide
It’s a well-known fact that automated solutions have replaced the mundane, manual, and repeatable tasks today, thereby increasing productivity and reducing human error. As more and more organizations are embracing this change, it is becoming increasingly clear that adopting automation is becoming a major factor for enabling success.

For any organization, setting up of automation capabilities into the operations, along with an effective, viable and a successful outcome, calls for an effective and strong strategy that is built from the ground up. A good strategy always allows to systematically apply the right tools and technologies to realize the benefits of automation, thereby minimizing errors, improve productivity and customer satisfaction.

The key factors which need to be addressed are:

- Acceptance/willingness of the organization for adopting the culture change
- Identification of the right automation opportunities
- Establishing the governance mechanism
- Harnessing internal capabilities

**Adopting Automation**

Adoption of automation requires adoption into a new way of working and it is most definitely an organization-wide cultural alignment. It is necessary to address the concerns raised by the workforce before implementing an automated solution across the organization, otherwise it may result in reluctance on their part to embrace the change. Hence, the benefit of automation must be clearly communicated to both internal and external stakeholders to ensure long-term success of the planned automation endeavours.

Keeping this in mind, workforce has to be effectively trained to deal with automation technologies and acquire relevant skills to use automation technologies to their advantage. It is imperative for organizations to promote a culture of continuous learning.
Automation Opportunities

**Identify opportunities**

Before starting an automation implementation, it’s of utmost important to select the right processes, or identify the right opportunity as the right candidate for automation. While identifying opportunities, an incremental approach helps maximise the productivity as we move further ahead into larger scope. Alternatively, in case of any compelling need, we can focus on the most critical business processes that when automated will address the issues at hand currently and help the organization benefit from it.

The most feasible processes for automation could be any resource-intensive processes, which are repetitive in nature or any process which can be programmed with a defined set of rules.

**Setting Up Of Right Governance**

Establishment of the right governance model is of utmost importance for any successful automation implementation. However, an absence of the right governance model can hinder the automation program. Even though, building a centralized model for transformation helps with centralized coordination, selection of right technologies and aligned implementation efforts, the degree of centralization and control varies depending on the resource pool available.

In contrast, adoption of a hybrid model is very much beneficial as it follows a decentralized approach where the resource pools are segregated into different tech-enabled units and this cross-functional taskforce works collaboratively in the implementation supported by the business units, which are getting transformed.

**Definition of ownership**

It is often observed with most of the automation implementation projects, there is a tendency to push back automation to the back of the queue, thereby assigning it as a low priority activity.
Since an automation strategy requires constant communication to key stakeholders within the unit, the ownership of the automation must lie with the respective unit, which is being transformed. At the same time, it is also the responsibility of the IT team to push the units for a faster transformation delivery. This helps in providing transparency around the program, proper communication around the vision across the unit; how the processes will be improved; and the implications going forward. Also, typically in such implementations, contribution of the SMEs and process experts is important as it helps the IT Implementation team understand the underlying process better in order to define the right workflows.

It is very important to understand that automation is not an isolated effort to be performed by a single business unit or the IT team, the involvement of all key stakeholders is critical.

**Communicate and collaborate**

A well-defined communication strategy also needs to be in place to drive the implementation collaboratively between the implementation teams and the business units. This ensures that both the customer-facing units and the back-end units know the importance of the automation transformation and support each other as and when needed, which results in generating greater value for the customer and in turn avoid unexpected blockers.

**True definition of the timelines**

A proper definition of timeline helps to determine the right milestones with deadlines, which will help guide throughout the automation implementation. Since, a hybrid model most likely involves cross-functional resources from technology-enabled units, which are otherwise involved in multiple assignments at the same time, a clear deadline definition and strict adherence to the same is necessary to retain focus. Correct definition of the achievable milestones and timelines helps to maintain the momentum during an implementation.
Process documentation

Documentation every step of the way is a must before we automate the workflow. This will help to identify and mitigate risks early in the lifecycle of the automation solution implementation.

Continuous improvement

Once the solution has been deployed, it is imperative to ensure maintenance and continuous improvement. Data and processes will be ever changing and to keep up with it, it is very important to keep updating the automation solutions along with it, so that it can continue to ensure smooth running processes in the long run.

Setting-Up Internal Capabilities

In order to retain the value of an entire automation transformation, it is imperative for organizations to develop and preserve the automation capability internally. A culture of continuous learning and a well-communicated transition program will help in re-skilling resources on new technologies, reduce dependency on external service providers and help the organization meet the automation goals faster and more effectively.

Once the resources are better equipped with the necessary tools, automation related skills and knowledge, they respond better in case any post deployment/implementation issues arise and maintain an understanding of what, where and when to automate within the organization.
Conclusion

The above imperatives for successful automation implementation should not be viewed separately, but as one single automation directive that must be followed throughout the implementation.

Even though any automation solution could benefit the organization, implementing the same often involves much more than just the idea of it before it could deliver benefits. Adopting any automation implementation solution is a journey that requires thorough commitment from all key stakeholders across the organization. We learn as we progress, and the journey continues.

Author profile

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