

5 WAYS AUTOMATION CAN SAVE COSTS TODAY

Creating growth through stability

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The most successful individuals and businesses have a 'growth mindset'. A growth mindset is a method for continuously developing your skills and re-training your brains to achieve anything you want. However, when we have targets to hit, an increasing number of customers to serve and smaller budgets to do our jobs with, it can be hard to think about improvement. In addition to our challenging (albeit increasingly more hopeful) environment, we are facing demands for our operations to be more 'green', customer-focussed, and easy-to-access.

The societal changes due to the pandemic will have a lasting impact on every single business. Drastic changes to the way we work, live and interact with others require powerful responses from the businesses who want to remain successful. The good news is, that you can take small, deliberate steps towards a new operating model. Incremental improvement makes it easier to engage employees during the change management journey and allows you to reduce costs and realise value fast.

Automation plays a major part in making that change happen, and its importance in business will only continue to grow in the coming months and years [1, 2]. To respond to the increasing demand for automation AFJ Solutions has partnered with FlowForma who is the leading provider of Process Automation tools for Microsoft Office® 365.

To help you get started with automation, I've produced a list of 5 ways of reducing costs whilst adopting new automated processes and tools. They all align with prevalent, complementary initiatives such as the citizen developer, green, and employee engagement. The items are presented in the order of time-to-value for a typical organisation adopting new automation solutions.





1. Digitising paper-based processes saves substantial printing costs, and are green, i.e. environmentally friendly.

Changing paper-based processes into their digital twin can save thousands of pounds in printing costs [3, 4]. Adding to that, an automated process significantly reduces waiting times between process steps and reduces errors to a minimum. An additional benefit of digitising paper-heavy processes is that it supports your ever-increasing home-working staff [5]. It is predicted that this year, 21% of knowledge workers will work from home most of the time, if not entirely [6].



2. The value of true agility comes from fast rollouts and the power of the citizen developer.

When was the last time you had a great idea about improving a service, but it would have taken too long to make it happen? The frustration of slow and heavy IT machinery can have an impact not only on current business but on employees' morale. No-code and low-code technologies such as FlowForma and Cherwell Service Management enable this paradigm shift, empowering business users to rollout new services quickly. As an example, FlowForma and Forrester [4] agree that Digital Process Automation (DPA) tools should provide new applications in days, not weeks or months; and Forbes reports that most enterprise software will be built using low-code platforms in 2021 [7].



3. Integrating your HR and IT processes makes your new employees love you (and you'll be grateful for it).

Both IT and HR have traditionally had supporting roles in the organisation; the 'back office' that employees go to when they need help. However, (involuntary) remote working has brought the efficiency of the two departments into spotlight. Namely, the leading HR+IT disrupters have quickly adopted seamless joiner, leaver and mover processes [8, 9].

By using well-integrated solutions as advised by Forrester [2], companies can realise value from their new employees on day 1. Rather than waiting weeks for all the access rights and essential IT gear, a new employee can start working and bonding with their new teams as soon as they join. Modern, accessible platforms allow all users to interact with the process in their chosen way, paving the way for an equal workplace.

Your security team will also welcome the automated security checks throughout the HR processes, with IT still staying in control [10]. Further, automated HR processes improve inclusivity, without human unconscious bias influencing decisions that can be data-driven [9].



4. Automation of routine IT tasks gives you an opportunity to reduce staff.

Whilst it's never an easy option, reducing staff numbers will carry a huge saving. Some of the most popular manual tasks to be automated include adding users to groups, assigning users to licenses and restarting a virtual machine [10].

The roles of the staff that remain in the IT organisation will change. They will effectively become managers of the systems with a strong T-shape skillset [11].



5. Supporting the exponential growth of customers helps the business scale its operations seamlessly.

Customer focussed industries are no longer limited to business-to-consumer (B2C) markets. With digitally native decisionmakers, customers expect to be heard, and their requests responded to quickly. For IT, these expectations can feel like unsurmountable demands unless the infrastructure can support agility.

Fortunately, tools such as FlowForma and Cherwell Service Management provide customers the ability to keep up to date with service availability, perform routine activities and engage with the right people on requests where human interaction is needed [5, 12].

For traditional businesses, growth in revenue and number of customers can mean an exponential increase of IT staff and resources. However, when done right, automation can be the driving force behind scaling the business. An automated process can facilitate a step-change in the number of customers without a reduction in customer experience, wait-times, or negative impact on staff.

Finally, by its very nature, automation will adhere to the current risk and compliance policies. The potential costs avoided due to proper risk and compliance management can add to a considerable amount.

If you would like to have an initial conversation about your automation goals for 2021, we'd love to [hear from you](#).

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