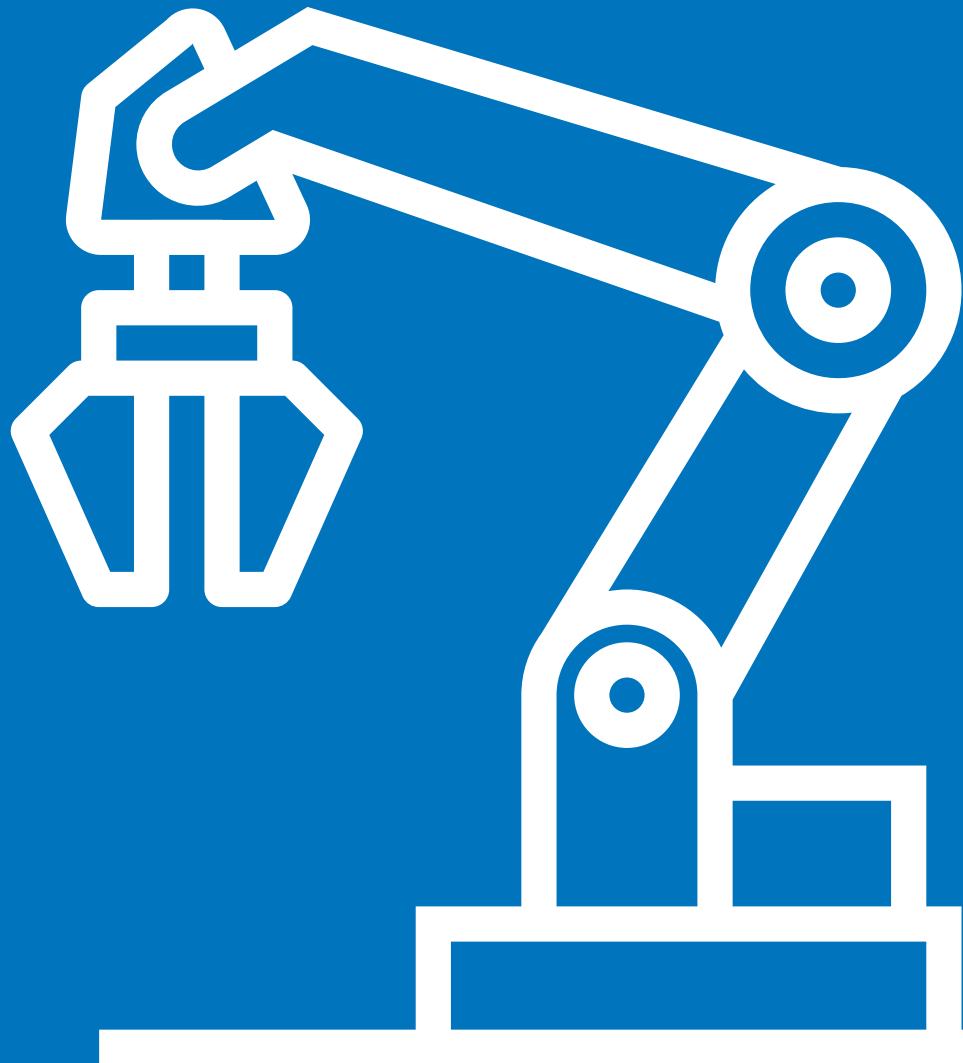


PeerPaper Report

WHY DO RPA PROJECTS FAIL? AND HOW TO AVOID IT

BASED ON REAL USER REVIEWS OF AUTOMATION ANYWHERE



ABSTRACT

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is demonstrating remarkable potential in enterprise deployments, saving thousands of hours each year and enabling people to focus on higher-value work. Getting RPA right, however, takes a well-crafted mix of people, process and technology. Avoiding RPA project failure involves selecting a platform that can deliver along several critical dimensions. These include ease of use, ease of administration and support. From a project perspective, a focus on Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) and Return on Investment (ROI) is also essential. This article explores what it takes to enjoy success with RPA, based on real user reviews of Automation Anywhere from IT Central Station.

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INTRODUCTION

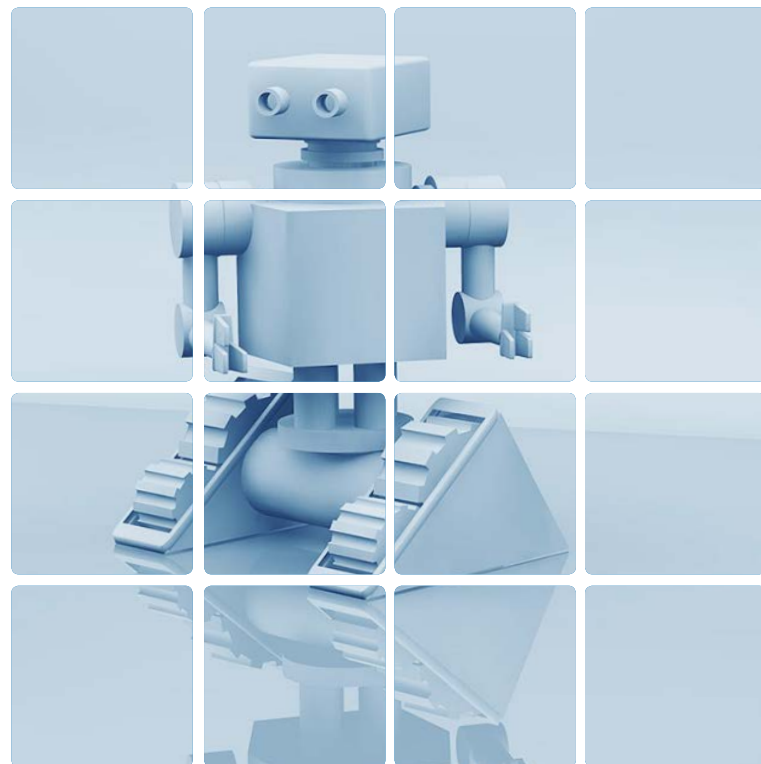
Robotic Process Automation (RPA) has already become a key component of digital transformation. The potential for handling huge digital workload while increasing productivity and reducing costs makes RPA a disruptive technology that can change companies' strategic landscapes. However, many RPA projects end up failing for lack of tooling, process and knowledge. It's

essential to select a well-supported platform that can deliver ease of use and ease of administration. In business terms, avoiding failure in RPA involves focusing on Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) and Return on Investment (ROI). This article explores what it takes to enjoy success with RPA, based on real user reviews of Automation Anywhere from IT Central Station.

A Brief Overview of RPA and Use Cases

RPA is a type of software that automates rules-based processes. RPA robots (or “software bots”) are able to perform repetitive tasks more quickly, accurately and tirelessly than humans. As a result, RPA lets people do what people do best. Freed from drudgery, employees can focus on tasks that require reasoning and judgement. They can engage with customers and other situations where face-to-face human interactions and emotional intelligence are good for the business.

With the combination of RPA, cognitive capabilities powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML) and embedded smart analytics, companies can automate a wider range of processes than ever before. These range from simple tasks, such as moving customer data from a CRM into a back-office ERP system, to bots capable of intelligent decision-making based on pre-set logic or end-to-end processes. Unattended, the bot may use AI to take in documents, parse, classify and understand



meaning and then pass on the required action to RPA—before composing an acknowledgement email to the client.

For instance, it is possible to program a robot to read an email, extract certain information and then use that information to initiate a new process like opening a customer support ticket. Figure 1 depicts this use case, comparing the manual process of opening a support ticket with an RPA-based workflow. In this RPA case, the robot automates the first three steps of the process.

MANUAL WORK FLOW



RPA WORK FLOW



Figure 1 - Comparing manual and RPA workflows for the creation of a customer support ticket.

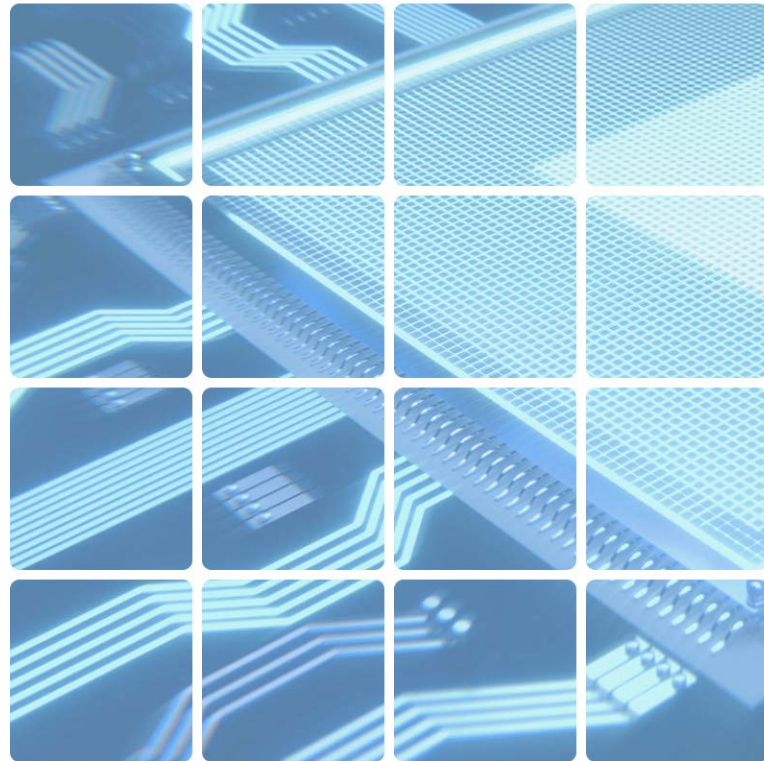
IT Central Station members are putting RPA to work in a variety of contexts. A Finance Head of BSO Senior Group Division at a large manufacturing company explained that his [primary use case is to automate all the back-end processes](#) involved in his company's accounts receivables, accounts payable and automatic settlement as well as many processes in the supply chain. They plan to move on to automating more front-end processes with RPA in the near future.

For an Automation COE Manager at a mining and

metals enterprise, RPA has meant being able to automate processes like creating purchase orders from attributes that are in a SharePoint form. He said they are also using RPA to "upload rates in our ERP system from data that is available in websites (central banks)," adding, "We look at automating processes that are manual, repetitive, and rules based." A Delivery Manager, Robotics Process Automation at a retailer with over 10,000 employees is on the same track, noting, "[We have automated our critical functions, like supply chain management and purchase orders.](#)"

Keys to Avoiding RPA Failure

RPA comes with its share of challenges. As sometimes happens with a relatively new, innovative technology, many factors in the design and execution of a solution can make a difference in the overall success of the effort. Unfortunately, RPA failure does occur. The good news is that it's largely avoidable if practitioners pay attention to a few crucial aspects of their solutions.



Ease of use

Getting non-specialists involved in the creation of bots helps mitigate the risk of RPA failure for two main reasons. At one level, it lightens the workload placed on specialized developers, helping budgets and recruiting efforts in the process. Bringing business stakeholders into bot creation also makes the bots more aligned with the way the business actually works. Who knows the processes better than the people who work with them every day? For these reasons, ease of use emerges as a critical element of RPA success.

As a Senior Manager IT Department / Corporate IT Planning at a small tech vendor put it, “In

our company, the people in each business unit would be creating robots rather than the IT programmers or specialists. With that in mind, Automation Anywhere can be user-friendly and simple since business unit staff can even create robots, and [that’s one of the big reasons that we chose it.](#)” User friendliness translates into more productive developers as well. For the Automation COE Manager at the mining and metals company, “[The user friendly interface enables a quick learning process by any developer, and the ability to interact with virtually any system.](#)”

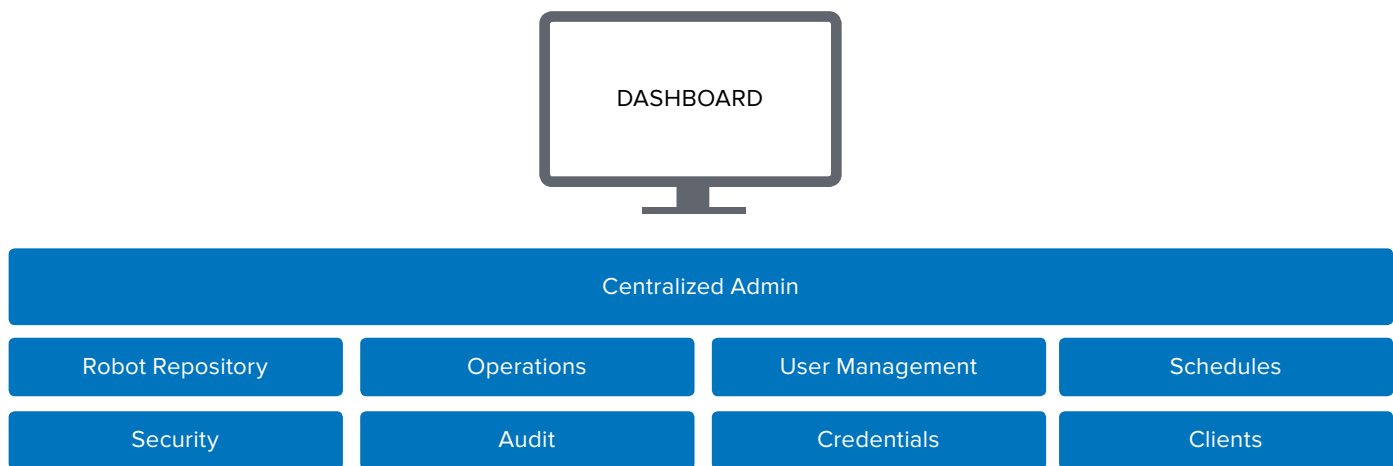


Figure 2 - An effective centralized administration function provides for ease of admin and streamlined management of complex RPA solution elements.

Ease of administration

Excessive admin burdens can be enough of a distraction to drag an RPA project into the failure zone. IT Central Station members thus look for ease of administration in their preferred solutions. A Program Manager at a manufacturing company with over 10,000 employees said, “One differentiation point that we assumed against other competitive products was the [ease of implementation](#). We have seen other tools, but we did not do any heavy investigation into what the reality was. So far, we are happy.”

A Manager, Administrator of Strategy Team at a small software R&D company commented on admin issues by saying, “We looked into three vendors originally, but we thought that a control room, or the control feature, would be the most important aspect. It is why [we chose this vendor](#).” Figure 2 provides an overview of a centralized RPA admin interface like Automation Anywhere’s Control Room. A Sr. RPA Developer at a large financial services firm added that [his solution has a “great dashboard](#),” noting, “It has Bot Insight,

it has meta bots, and IQ Bots. It has so many features where it can read a file and loop.”

The Sr. RPA Developer at the financial services firm said, “[Automation Anywhere has made it very easy for you to install](#). They’ve got the tools to make it very simple for you to create a quick, small application and to get it out there.” An Automation Manager - Nordic at a financial services firm with more than 1,000 employees found that “[meta bot reusable code makes development much quicker and role-based access gives us security control](#).”

He then noted, “In general, the security and role-based access control - credentials security - are also important. We have a high focus on security in the bank. It’s obviously a very highly regulated environment, so security is a top priority for us. To be allowed to automate different processes, we need to have a good set of controls around who is allowed to do what, and what credentials people can and can’t use. It allows us to manage access to make sure that we have full control.”

A versatile, single platform

The versatility of the platform is critical to avoiding an RPA failure. Transformation leaders should aim for a fully native automation solution that can address both attended and unattended scenarios, with cognitive capabilities and the ability to integrate with multiple systems. As a Global Intelligent Automation & Transformation Leader at a large tech company found about his RPA platform, “It goes through each customer portal. One example of a customer is IBM. It [the bot] goes to the IBM portal, it logs in with bot credentials to SAP Ariba, opens an invoice and matches the purchase order items with that invoice, line by line. It then posts that invoice for billing purposes in that customer billing portal.”

“It allows us to manage access to make sure that we have full control.”

The versatility to run both attended and unattended bots was a driver of preference for the Sr. RPA Developer at the financial services firm. He said, “Looking at a company like ours, with so many different departments and processes and policies, and so many manual tasks, [the use cases that we can have for both attended and unattended bots are pretty much countless.](#)”

Customer support

For RPA to work right, the platform needs outstanding customer support. In this context, the manufacturing company Finance Head of BSO Senior Group Division valued his platform vendor’s global and local support, customer service and technical support. The Program Manager at the manufacturing company explained, “We just started using their technical

support. Up until now, we were working only through our IT partner. [The technical support that we have received so far has been accurate and fast.](#)” The Automation COE Manager at the mining and metals company remarked that his RPA platform vendor’s [technical support was “very quick, efficient, and knowledgeable.”](#) He added, “They were able to address all our inquiries very satisfactorily.”

A scalable solution

Processes automated through RPA can expand quickly in an enterprise. The ability to scale bots and overall platform functionality is essential to avoid costly slowdowns or outright project failure. A highly scalable microservices architecture can be a big help in this regard. The Senior Manager IT Department / Corporate IT Planning at the small tech vendor discovered that his RPA platform is “very scalable,” noting, “[The structure is a client server, so we can expand the environment quickly, if needed.](#)” A Process Improvement Manager at a comms service provider with over 10,000 employees said, “[Scaling is a big job, but it \[the RPA platform\] is completely scalable.](#)”

“...it’s probably the most scalable RPA software out there.”

IT Central Station members praised Automation Anywhere’s RPA platform for its scalability. The Automation Manager at the financial services firm said, “[The scalability is good.](#) I think we haven’t really used the Bot Farm product yet, but that looks very exciting. We’re planning on moving the infrastructure into the cloud and it’s then a very interesting prospect to be able to scale up from 100 bots to 1,000 bots with just the click of a button. To my knowledge, it’s probably the most scalable RPA software out there. We haven’t

really met any major challenges when it comes to scaling up, other than our own computers. But that's an in-house problem, not an Automation Anywhere problem." He also mentioned, "I've talked to people using other RPA vendors and they have said they face some major issues once they pass 40 automated processes, but we haven't really faced those kinds of challenges. It has been running smoothly."

Focus on TCO and ROI

RPA is inherently business-oriented. Unlike some costly IT solutions, where the business payoff is indirect or abstract, RPA is able to drive direct, tangible financial results without overloading the IT department. The benefits can come from improved workforce productivity, better customer service and so forth. A failed RPA project is likely one that couldn't show ROI, perhaps as the result of an overly high TCO. Indeed, according to a Digital Expert at a consultancy with over 10,000 employees, "[If you implement it right way the ROI can start within one year. It delivers quick benefits in terms of ROI.](#)"

The Finance Head of BSO Senior Group Division at the manufacturing company commented on the financial aspects of RPA, saying, "[Yes, we have seen ROI.](#) Especially in this market, human capital is valued in an aging society. If you don't find skilled people, who's going to do the job? If you remove the neutrality of people and build it through the bots, that is the best way to do."

For the Automation COE Manager at the

mining and metals company, the payoff in RPA came from productivity. He said, "We started utilization of the tool with a target of generating productivity, specifically by saving 10,000 hours between August and December 2018, regardless of the number of bots deployed." The Sr. RPA Developer at the financial services firm related, "There was a large number of individuals who were doing the data collection and artifacts collection, and they were actually a third-party. [The solution improves our situation in terms of time, money, and resources.](#)"

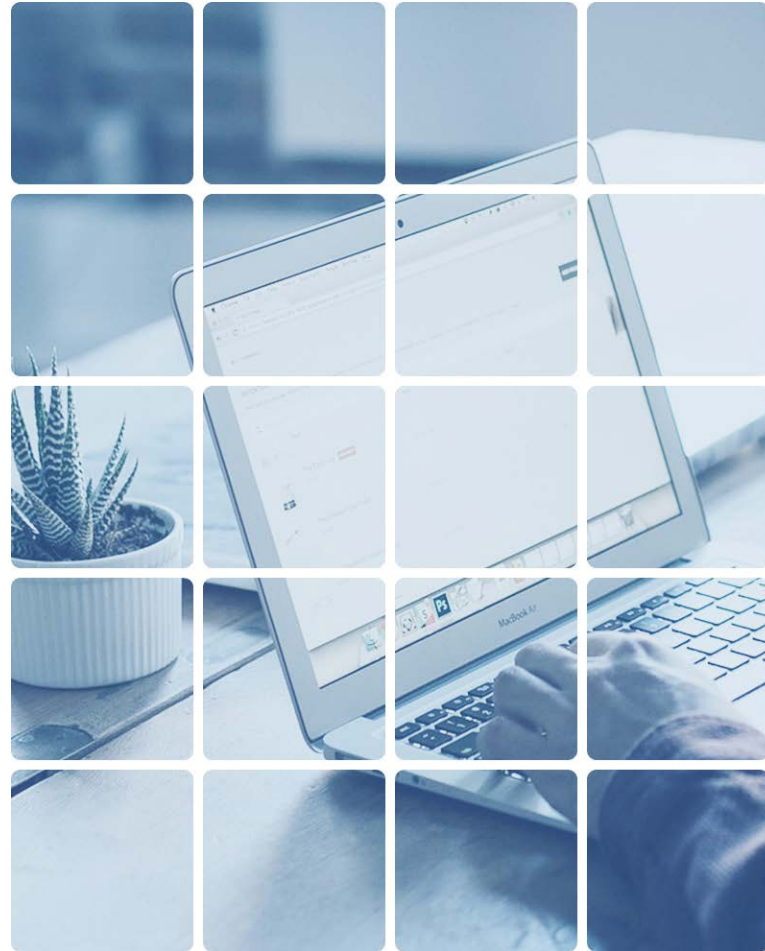
“ We have triple-digit returns, in percentage. I feel it's worth every dollar we paid for it.

The Automation Manager at the financial services firm spoke to the issue of ROI by sharing that his department had automated a process and achieved an ROI above 30,000 percent! He said, "The total cost of ownership is around \$1,000 and [the return is something like \\$400,000 in direct cost savings.](#) And that's still increasing. It's an ad-hoc cleaning job that we're doing, but for every contract we change, we save about half-a-dollar per month, per letter we're sending. It amounts to a lot."

This user further explained, "We spent one day creating that process and four days running it, so the cost of ownership is really low. We have triple-digit returns, in percentage. I feel it's worth every dollar we paid for it. We have seen a lot of the returns in operations and back office because we had so many manual tasks there."

Scaling RPA

Scaling an RPA solution is a multi-faceted challenge. The hardware and load processing capabilities are important, of course, but so are a variety of procedural and integration issues. The Sr. RPA Developer at the financial services firm noted that scaling RPA was helped by its integration with source control. He observed, “Not having to go outside the app, not having a separate set of procedures, allows you to check in and check out right from within the app. You can make edits and uploads and undo your checkouts. That integration is very nice.”



The Automation Manager at the financial services firm was pleased that his platform could scale because “it’s easy to have control.” He described this about being about having “a good audit log in the Control Room,” then adding, “[there is the ability to create your own roles and have strict,](#)

[role-based access control](#) where you say: This role is able to run this bot on this machine but it’s not able to run another bot on the same machine. That’s good from a security standpoint. But when it comes to the scalability, security, etc., I think Automation Anywhere is superior.”

CONCLUSION

IT Central Station members have found innovative use cases for RPA. From attended scenarios—where an employee triggers a bot that handles tasks in the user’s workstation—to unattended ones—where the bots are automatically triggered or scheduled to run 24/7 on servers or virtual machines to automate back office processes. Their efforts are already rewarding their businesses with cost savings and boosts to productivity. These RPA users have developed, in the process, a strong sense of what it takes to avoid running into trouble with the technology.

The use of the RPA platform as a real Digital Workforce where humans and bots work side by side to achieve maximum efficiency and productivity, is the key factor in achieving success and reach full scalability without getting derailed into trouble involving complexity and lack of scalability. They recommend selecting a platform that adapts to your needs and is easy to use and administer. Vendor support is crucial, as is keeping a hard focus on costs and ROI. By keeping these factors in mind, it is possible to avoid RPA failure.

ABOUT IT CENTRAL STATION

User reviews, candid discussions, and more for enterprise technology professionals.

The Internet has completely changed the way we make buying decisions. We now use ratings and review sites to see what other real users think before we buy electronics, book a hotel, visit a doctor or choose a restaurant. However, in the world of enterprise technology, most of the information online and in your inbox comes from vendors when what you really want is objective information from other users. IT Central Station provides technology professionals with a community platform to share information about enterprise solutions.

IT Central Station is committed to offering user-contributed information that is valuable, objective and relevant. We validate all reviewers with a triple authentication process, and protect your privacy by providing an environment where you can post anonymously and freely express your views. As a result, the community becomes a valuable resource, ensuring you get access to the right information and connect to the right people, whenever you need it.

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ABOUT AUTOMATION ANYWHERE

Automation Anywhere is the leader in Robotic Process Automation (RPA), the platform on which more organizations build world-class Intelligent Digital Workforces. Automation Anywhere's enterprise-grade platform uses software bots that work side by side with people to do much of the repetitive work in many industries. It combines sophisticated RPA, cognitive and embedded analytic technologies. More than 2,800 customer entities and 1,600 enterprise brands use this AI-enabled solution to manage and scale business processes faster, with near-zero error rates, while dramatically reducing operational costs. Automation Anywhere provides automation technology to leading financial services, insurance, healthcare, technology, manufacturing, telecom and logistics companies globally.

Automation Anywhere Enterprise is optimized for the business user and includes advanced capabilities for developers and administrators. It has the shortest learning curve and is consistently recognized as the easiest to use, most intuitive interface in the industry — for the bot developer, the automation administrator and the business user. The platform is designed and architected for ease of use to enable rapid adoption and scale.

For additional information, visit www.automationanywhere.com