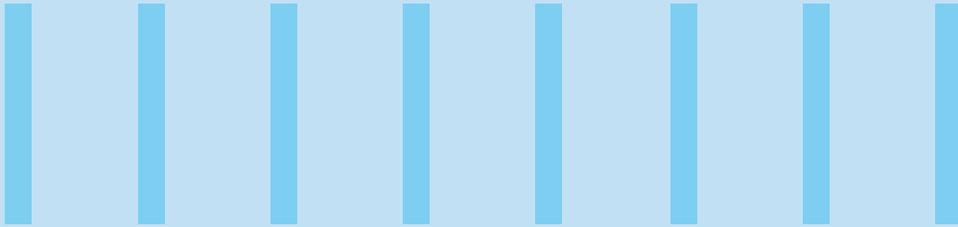




NAVIGATE YOUR NEXT IN AUTOMATION – FOCUS ON PEOPLE PRODUCTIVITY AND USER EXPERIENCE



Ongoing digital transformation has accelerated the adoption of cloud, software defined networks and other digital technologies. This transient state has led to hybrid IT environments with a mix of new and legacy technologies. In this context, automation has taken center stage in digital transformation.

Many AI and analytics tools and platforms from product vendors and IT service providers and automation maturity frameworks have helped enterprises adopt, monitor, and accelerate automation in IT operations. Automation is a top priority, and every IT team has looked for opportunities to automate.

A study of the current approach adopted by enterprises and the transient state of IT reveals mixed outcomes from automation.

The following four factors have played significant roles in influencing the automation outcomes -

1. **Transient state of IT**

Environments with higher adoption of digital technologies have achieved higher levels of automation maturity. On the other hand, their legacy counterparts have struggled to advance due to the limitations and high effort needed to automate.

2. **Organizational agility**

Large IT environments with departments acting in silos have probably reached maturity limits, while smaller IT environments have reached a higher level of integrated automation.

3. **Organizational strategy**

The strategy adopted in the initial phases of the automation journey played a significant role in defining the outcomes. Those that took a tactical route to address a particular technology

or service situation would have seen the outcomes specific to that problem only.

4. **Setting up the right performance indicators**

In the beginning, many organizations found defining the right indicators for automation outcomes a challenge. Combined with a tactical approach, KPIs should consider user productivity and experience related outcomes.

Post-COVID, enterprises need higher agility and faster system deployment methods to meet business demands, COVID related regulations and changes. However, environments will continue to be transient for some more time due to ongoing digital transformation journeys. Enterprises should elevate the automation approach to bring people, processes and technology together to meet the post COVID era challenges.



How can enterprises raise the bar on automation to achieve better outcomes?

Identify and focus on the critical business/services processes

Enterprises in the middle of their automation journey should consider increasing automation at a business or service process level. They should identify the processes that, if automated, will best support their business, strategy and experience. For example, instead of one click VM provision or DB provision approach, IT managers should shift their strategy to end-to-end service provision. Businesses should focus on automating high impact user touchpoints that will minimize human intervention. Enterprises can benefit from taking a systematic approach to automating these critical processes rather than focusing on solutions that address specific pain points.

Enable people in new ways of working

Automation has historically been looked at as a lever for saving effort and reducing the FTE count. As a next strategy, enterprises should use automation to increase people's productivity and user experience. For example, in a Service Desk, a BOT should assist the Service Desk analyst in bringing the required data about the user and service details. At the same time, the agent will focus on building the conversation with the user to establish the right experience.

Enterprises must spend adequate training for people to co-exist with BOTS and utilize them to deliver a better outcome. Continuous learning, reskilling and change management is key to bringing about change in the workforce. The strategy of reskilling and change management should be aligned to the persona of the workforce to maximize outputs.

Automation experts should possess domain and services knowledge. This will enable them to bring creativity, business and service orientation in their BOT development and deployment.

Break the silos

Automating a business or service process requires an end to end view of the process. The automation solution must consider customer experience, technology, analytics, and often organizational design too. These capabilities typically exist in different parts of the organization and are represented by many teams. Enterprises should adopt an operating model that brings together capabilities from across the organization—in collaboration with third-party service providers as needed—to automate critical processes.

Enterprises must invest in automation leadership roles. This role can bring cross-functional teams together to develop cross-functional automation labs and other practices that can support the operating model and help organizations reap the benefit of automation, such as productivity and experience.

Elevate the performance indicators

Elevating key performance indicators to measure outcomes based on productivity and experience is critical. Return of investments for automation calculation should include improved business outcomes and user experience. For example, when a Service Desk BOT is deployed, a direct impact of user experience from the BOT assisting the Service Desk agent should be measured instead of the effort saved during the interaction.

Overall, enterprises should shift the automation strategy to the next phase where productivity and experience related benefits are achieved.



About the Author



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Pandi has 25+ years of experience in Cloud Infrastructure and Security services consulting, advisory, solutions, delivery and practice development. At Infosys he manages cloud Infrastructure and security Services delivery for many customers across various segments and responsible for Network Transformation Practice. Pandi has played various leadership roles in creating successful teams and practices around data centre transformation, private cloud and other cutting-edge technologies like Open Source solutions in Infrastructure. Pandi is an automation evangelist and has created solutions, methodologies and frameworks around adoption of automation.

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