



Robotic Process Automation: A no-hype Buyer's Guide

Boost ROI with Full-featured AI-driven Robotic Process Automation



One technology that continues to receive a lot of attention is robotic process automation (RPA). RPA is often a gateway — a way to introduce automation and gain business benefits at low cost with near-zero risk. The concept is simple and well-known: a software "robot" replicates routine human-computer interaction to automate, repetitive tasks. RPA bridges the gap between manual interaction and full automation.

RPA is particularly appealing where IT resources and budgets are limited, or for working with back-end applications that lack good APIs and would be difficult to automate without significant change to your systems. But to deploy RPA wisely, it helps to understand the technology's benefits and limitations, how to expand its evolving capabilities, and the value it brings.

Where does RPA fit into the automation landscape?

Deploying RPA software isn't the same as building fully automated processes and platforms from the ground up. With basic RPA, a software robot literally does what a human would do. This includes routine tasks such as data retrieval and entry, button clicks, file uploads and downloads, or invoice processing.

When integrated with other automation software to enhance its base capability, RPA can be used in more situations and become a valuable component of an automation strategy that includes technologies such as process mining, artificial intelligence (AI), data capture, business rules and workflow.

For example, when RPA is integrated with AI, AI insights can be acted on by sending instructions directly to bots that complete tasks via other systems, such as an automation platform:

- With no lag time or human intervention.
- For improved efficiency as well as improved customer and employee experiences.

Today, many AI insights are directed to human employees to take action. As an example, many Procure to Pay workflows still involve invoice processors at some point, usually at the point where you need to approve an invoice for payment. When RPA is

combined with AI, it's possible to easily identify the manual steps, quickly build an aligned RPA robot, and then add it to the pool of invoice processors. A workflow engine would gradually determine that the best way to handle certain types of invoices is to route them to the bot, sending recommendations directly to it. This automatic routing reduces response time, saves time for the invoice processor to focus on other work, and enables end-to-end automation of the process.

Pros of RPA

- Basic RPA can automate repetitive back-office tasks, such as invoice or claims processing, that don't require human judgment.
- It is easy to implement in the right use cases and carries low risk, because it replicates manual tasks that already exist.
- There is no need to retrain employees or alter existing processes.
- It liberates humans from routine, repetitive tasks which can lead to improved job satisfaction, morale and productivity.

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