

RPA to improve the employee experience

'Lean employee' before 'augmented employee'

RPA (Robot Process Automation) is a flagship technology of current digital programs, thanks its diversity of use cases, simplicity of design, limited implementation costs, etc. While its return on investment is already largely ensured by productivity gains, task automation also has benefits from the point of view of working conditions and employee satisfaction.

RPA is a way of relieving employees of boring tasks or managing a peak in activity. It also offers the possibility, alongside broader digital programmes, of faster turnaround times and of gaining the trust and support of employees.

Using RPA to develop the 'leaner and relaxed employee', before the 'augmented employee' is a goal that many managers have already successfully achieved, with the conviction that improving the employee experience fosters innovation and enhances performance of their organisation.

RPA, an automation tool for all businesses

RPA (Robotic Process Automation) tools make it possible to automate employees' manual and repetitive tasks. The solution mimics the actions performed by a human on the interface of one or more IT tools by following a mapped process.

A large number of use cases are subject to automation for RPA, as many types of tasks can be impacted: data re-entry, handling of several applications and sequencing of operations (click, selection, copy, paste, etc.). Many business lines can therefore benefit from RPA: customer relationship management, administrative and financial management, operations management, as well as information systems with data migration operations, software acceptance testing, etc.

For example, one of our customers recently chose to automate the entry of its new members' company registration information and bank details. This enabled more qualitative monitoring and collection management activities.

These applications can be further expand further through combination with AI tools. For example, RPA combined with Optical Character Recognition (OCR) or natural language analysis (NLP) makes it possible to automate the management of complex documents and provide decision support.

With several customers we have been able to completely automate the reading and re-entry of supplier invoices, as well as their differentiated processing based on their origin. In just a few weeks, 10 or so people were able to improve the quality and interest of their work.

RPA thus offers a very wide range of possibilities and high automation capacity. UiPath, a leading publisher in

the RPA market, estimates that more than 30% of the workload can be automated with RPA.¹

RPA, a lever for improving working conditions

RPA is often seen from the point of view of economic profitability. The volume of automatable loads, as well as its simplicity and speed of implementation, are indeed major economic arguments for managers.

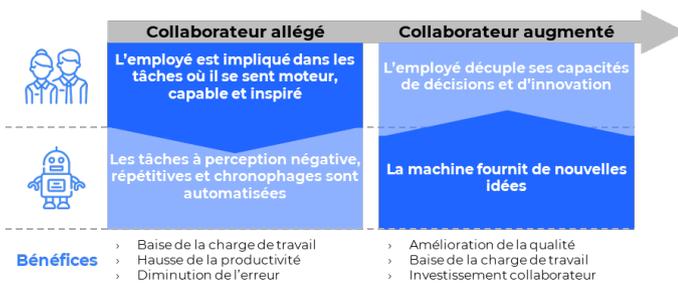
RPA has other benefits, however, particularly in terms of improving working conditions and employee engagement:

- › Reduction of demotivating factors, thanks to the lightening of the mental load, enabled by the automation of repetitive tasks with low added value,
- › reduction of fatigue and stress factors, caused by peaks in activity, or by the attention required for handling and checking large volumes of data. Task automation makes it possible to absorb large volumes of operations in a shorter amount of time and thus smoothen out activity levels. Reducing the risk of error also makes it possible to limit the associated stress for employees,
- › greater employee involvement and cooperation. The simplicity of the design and deployment of RPA makes it possible to directly involve end users, who actively participate in the 'co-construction' of robots and who become advocates of the technology, 'converting' other employees.

¹ RPA and the ROI Conundrum, UiPath, October 2018

For example, a recent RPA project that we carried out with a major private bank consisted in deploying robotic solutions for compliance checks and due diligence. These robots make it possible to carry out risk checks on many different applications (web platforms provided by agencies or financial institutions). Apart from the time saved in the execution of requests, the aggregation provided by the robot has made it possible to reduce the cognitive efforts of operators, who no longer have to handle multiple interfaces, each with different navigation logics and ergonomics.

Employees are relieved of repetitive tasks and are free to focus on tasks with higher added value and engage in high-quality human interaction. In fact, this is the consequence most frequently cited by managers surveyed (66%)². Complementary AI solutions confer on RPA a level of freedom and richness of information positioning it at the level of ‘augmented employee’.



Conditions for successful RPA projects

To make the most of RPA, its implementation must be prepared and structured with the business lines concerned. These teams must be closely involved in the choice of use cases to be automated. The design and construction approach is based on three key factors.

A) Get the business lines on board

- › Cultural adaptation

The scoping phase must make it possible to explore and identify the areas of application of robotization:

- › identify the operational irritants faced by the business lines,
- › bring the business lines on board via acculturation and communication to demystify robotization in advance, based on a transparent management discourse regarding the targeted objectives. Many

fears exist: reduction of FTE, automation, dehumanisation, etc.

Identify the priority scope on which to implement the RPA.

- › Identification of processes

Map processes eligible for RPA through workshops with the business lines: actions to be carried out, volumes of operations and average time per action.

This phase also involves assessing the financial profitability of robotization and measuring gains in terms of quality, reliability and improvement of employee engagement.

This assessment will make it possible to select the use cases to be developed and explain these choices to employees.

B) Involve the IT Department

- › Control of the IT ecosystem

Due to their simplicity of design and speed of implementation, RPA projects are in some cases carried out at the initiative of the business lines, without direct involvement by the IT Department.

Thanks to its knowledge of the existing IT environment, ability to support business lines in expressing their needs and ability to detect changes in third-party tools (which can make RPA solutions unstable), it is advisable make sure the IT Department is involved in any RPA program.

- › Skills development

IT Departments also play a key role within business lines in promoting and accelerating technological innovation projects and in proposing alternative or additional tools to ‘core systems’.

The simplicity of the deployment of RPA solutions is a major advantage for overcoming certain delays in the implementation of IT programs. The technical difficulties of interfacing between applications that are often encountered in digital projects can be circumvented in part by the implementation of temporary robots; users are thus not discouraged from getting to grips with and adopting the application.

The IT Department may also itself be a user of RPA, through management monitoring solutions and tests: automatic management of user tickets, analysis of reported incidents to identify similarities, allocation of resources in the cloud, centralisation of data, etc. While benefiting from RPA, the ISD can also develop expertise to better meet the needs of the business lines.

³The impact of RPA on Employee Experience, Forrester, March 2019

C) Develop in short cycles

› Development

Development of short-cycle use cases based on both technical and business expertise:

- › development in one-week sprints to ensure good visibility of the progress of the work,
- › standardised stages that can be carried out directly by the business lines: scoping, acceptance testing, communication (videos, photos, newsletters, etc.) and training.

› Management and measurement

The entire approach must be accompanied by management and measurement tools

- › Performance assessment
- › Level of business line involvement
- › Level of productivity
- › Level of use of robots,
- › Stability of application tools on which the RPA is based (monitoring of functional changes)

THE TALAN OFFER

For RPA projects, Talan relies on an AI/RPA centre of expertise combined with People & Culture practice, dedicated to developing human potential in organisations.

The dual expertise in AI/RPA and People & Culture enables us to support business lines in using this new technology: analysing the AI/RPA maturity of companies and their employees and their adherence to the associated new uses.

This dual technical and human approach makes it possible to quickly implement AI and RPA projects for the well-being of your employees: training and cultural adaptation, support for new working methods with AI, co-construction of AI use cases and development of an AI culture within your company.

Talan's RPA expertise is supported by its partnership with UiPath and its experience in implementing RPA service centres for its customers.