



Rethink intelligent automation for scale

A guide to getting the most out of your automation tool investments

Automation to accelerate digital transformation

After a lull, there's often a rush. For enterprise technology, 2020 was a year of pause, at best. Gartner indicates that **"Business confidence improved in 3Q20 according to Gartner surveys of corporate boards, CEO's and CIOs."**¹ Now the rush begins, companies are clamoring to accelerate digital transformation in a smarter, more nimble way. Business IT hopes are pinned on robotic process automation (RPA) and its AI-infused sibling intelligent automation (IA). But pre-pandemic, those technologies had only partially delivered on their panacea promises.

RPA has often meant robotic "partial" automation – that is, the use of RPA has been limited by the narrow scope of problems it can address, the result of too much platform uncertainty and too much effort for the requisite payoff. Intelligent automation – the blending of RPA with artificial intelligence capabilities – has filled some gaps, but its usage remains stymied by a too-frequent failure to scale from proof-of-concept projects to enterprise-wide solutions.

Post-pandemic recovery marks a new starting line in the race for competitive business advantage through intelligent automation. The new finish line is one of enterprise-grade, scalable IA. Both lines have been drawn by Microsoft with its constantly evolving Power Platform including Power Automate, and now is the time to ask: **"Are you getting maximum value out of your current automation tools and technology investments?"**

Why now?

What's changed that makes now the right time? Several factors:

- Positive post-pandemic momentum
- A new "easy button" approach to migrate prior, disparate automations to a cohesive, single platform
- The breakout evolution of a "complete solution" for intelligent automation that fills previous gaps

Looking to smooth your path to scaling intelligent automation or take advantage of that "easy button" just mentioned? The right conditions, technology and partner exist today to ensure intelligent automation success at scale.

1. Gartner, "Forecast Analysis: IT Spending, Worldwide", John-David Lovelock, Linglan Wang, 14 May 2021
Forecast Analysis: IT Spending, Worldwide (gartner.com)

Unfulfilled promises

Overcoming prior RPA/IA limitations starts with understanding them. The challenges fall into three main categories:



RPA limitations: Research suggests that organizations should only automate a process using RPA if it involves no more than five decisions, no more than five applications and no more than 500 clicks. These limitations stop some organizations from embracing automation fully.



Fear in the workforce: The fear of bots replacing humans in the workplace has slowed RPA adoption. Done right and at-scale, IA can be a workplace-enhancing experience for the existing employee base rather than a mechanism for culling the human workforce.



Force-fit prematurely: When organizations try to adopt IA too early – before the underpinnings of enterprise automation maturity are in place – they experience disappointing results and often end up with a relatively wide and thin automation ecosystem. [Avanade's recent artificial intelligence maturity research](#) showed that while many organizations are taking positive steps toward AI scale and widespread adoption, only a minority has reached peak IA maturity; most are missing out.

Because of these challenges, our clients typically don't have more than 30 robots in production before we get involved. Forrester confirmed our observations in [recent research showing that over 50% of organizations that tried RPA have fewer than 10 bots deployed](#).



Rethink your path to full IA potential

To realize the full potential of RPA/IA, it's smart to begin any future initiatives with three questions, which – if correctly, consistently addressed – can facilitate IA's enterprise scalability.

1. Are we able to reduce the effort?

What can be done to make this implementation easier so we realize value faster? As advancements in tools and platforms have matured, did we select the right enterprise automation platform to scale with?

2. Are we able to widen the lens?

How can we push beyond "rule of five" limitations to apply IA to more than simplistic problems? What parts of the business would we automate if we could do so without the need for structured data, without having perfectly lean processes and without having to work around or avoid legacy applications?

3. Are we able to loosen the constraints?

What would be possible if an automation solution blended artificial intelligence, digital process automation and robotic process automation in a way that let us do attended/unattended automation, accommodated simple low-code/no-code development and infused judgment across the automation effort?

Working through the answers to these inquiries can point your RPA/IA initiatives in a more productive direction.



The power of the right platform

Forrester proposed that scaling automation requires a new operating model with three elements necessary for achieving success at scale: the right technology ecosystem, the right domain experts and the right automation governance. These elements describe the complete solution that Avanade, Blueprint Software Systems and Microsoft can deliver.

The right technology ecosystem

The right IA technology ecosystem fuses artificial intelligence, robotic process automation and digital process automation (DPA) and includes not only the functional software but the infrastructure, integration, security and service ops to run it effectively at scale. If you want true enterprise-grade scalability for the broadest range of users, look to the brand best known for delivering scalable solutions: Microsoft. Intelligent automation from Microsoft is a fusion of artificial intelligence, workflow, integration, API automation and robotic process automation bundled together in the comprehensive Power Platform, which serves as the workflow designer and orchestrator, fueling intelligent

automation across diverse interfaces through a single, end-to-end platform. Running on Azure, Microsoft's Power Platform provides automation, intelligence and orchestration:

- **Power Automate** – Powerful yet simple-to-use RPA blending the best of workflow and UI automation.
- **Power Platform** – Enhance Power Automate with Power Platform's full suite of features including Power Virtual Agents, Power BI and Power Apps. The combination is a complete palette for automation creativity.
- **Azure Services** – Azure includes a Cognitive Services toolset for the development of applications that can process and generate essential insights from unstructured data with API calls. Microsoft's AI Builder is also a key automation component built on the strength of Azure AI capabilities. It lets you build no-code models, enhance the intelligence of your automation efforts and glean insights from your data in Power Apps and Power Automate.



Finding the automation migration “easy button”

Microsoft is also focused on ensuring that switching automation platforms to the right ecosystem – especially for companies already committed to Microsoft solutions – need not be a capital-intensive event and provides a path forward for automation at scale.

Avanade, together with Blueprint and Microsoft have collaborated on an automation migration kit that helps convert a company’s existing automations from other platforms over to Power Automate 30% faster for about 70% less cost of a manual migration. It also creates a digital blueprint of your automations to allow for higher-quality automations, with lower maintenance and break-fix costs.

Blueprint Systems Digital Blueprint & Automation migration tool capabilities coupled with our global enterprise automation deployment and migration services are an “easy button” to help a client move over to Microsoft and the right IA ecosystem.

The right domain experts

Among the biggest challenges to adopting intelligent automation is insufficient domain expertise: the lack of in-house skill and experience with automation and AI technologies.

We provide a comprehensive complement to a company’s existing IA domain knowledge. Our global team includes 4,200-plus automation experts, 1,000 data engineers, 400 AI practitioners, 300 cognitive services experts and more certified Azure professionals than any other Microsoft partner. We’ve completed 6,000-plus automations for over 350 clients. Our domain experts are not only technically savvy but also skilled at process ownership, design, testing, maintenance, compliance and change management.

As a joint venture of Microsoft and Accenture, Avanade often has early-access, first-hand insight into Microsoft’s innovations. We work with Microsoft’s updated intelligent automation platform and are intimately familiar with the inner workings of Power Automate Desktop (PAD) and Microsoft’s updated SDK for porting automations from other platforms into Power Automate.

No other Microsoft partner has a deeper understanding or experience. As part our global partnership with Blueprint Systems, we work closely with the Microsoft’s Power Automate product team to support early-adopter clients with converting existing automation estates to Microsoft Power Automate.

The right governance

Citizen development and the expanding field of automation apps require a carefully balanced governance approach incorporating strategy, planning, architecture and project support. Microsoft’s Power Platform Center of Excellence Starter Kit delivers a baseline set of automation and tooling to monitor, govern, coordinate and nurture the deployment of Power Platform. We have deep experience adapting the starter kit for specific business situations and surrounding it with strategy, structure, standards and success metrics.

The payoff

Engaging Avanade to deploy Microsoft's intelligent automation – the right technology ecosystem, right domain expertise and right governance – brings a myriad of potential benefits that come with enterprise-grade scale, including:

- Migrating and retiring your current automation estate in as little as weeks
- Delivering automations that augment and empower humans rather than demotivating or replacing them
- Reducing your average handling times by up to 45%
- Accelerating the deployment of enterprise automations by up to 35%
- Increasing customer satisfaction by up to 20% or more.
- Reducing errors by up to 30%
- Increasing automation business value by up to five times
- Accelerating your automation time to value by up to 25%



