opteamix

Unlocking **Potential**

A Starter Handbook to **Robotic Process Automation (RPA)**

Contents

Executive Summary

Across industries, Robotic Process Automation (RPA) has revolutionized the way we think about and execute business, IT support and back-office processes. The emergence of RPA is promising new developments in business process automation and has helped reimagine the way an organization functions. It has enabled businesses to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations at reduced cost.

Although automation has been growing slowly in the business world for the last decade, it has only been in the last few years that businesses have started turning to Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to improve productivity and reduce costs. The reason for this has been the maturing of technology from rudimentary machine automation into software 'robots' that mimic the actions of a human user while performing the same activity on a larger scale.

According to Gartner, adopting RPA is not a matter of 'if' but 'when'. It is critical for companies to start implementing it as soon as possible.

Given that RPA has the ability to produce an ROI in the range of 30% to 200%, embracing a more holistic approach would allow businesses to realize its full potential. At Opteamix, we have developed our own implementation methodology, approach and accelerators that considers, not only the challenges faced while executing RPA, but also the best practices that would assist in building an RPA Center of Excellence with a special emphasis on achieving the highest Return on Investment (ROI).

In this white paper, we look at how businesses that are under pressure to control costs and increase productivity and results, can employ bots to transform their business by automating their functions and processes. We aim to bring clarity with respect to -

- Benefits of embracing RPA
- Identifying areas of high potential for RPA
- Challenges faced during implementation
- Critical success factors for a successful RPA implementation

This paper will also outline the customized approach and strategy that Opteamix will adapt to ensure a successful implementation.

What is RPA?

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) can be defined as the automation of high-volume and repetitive and mundane manual processes, by engaging advanced software robots a.k.a. 'bots'. RPA lets organizations automate these tasks as if a real person was executing them across applications. RPA uses software robots to 'mimic' the actions of a trained user to perform a task, including the decision points involved in accomplishing it.

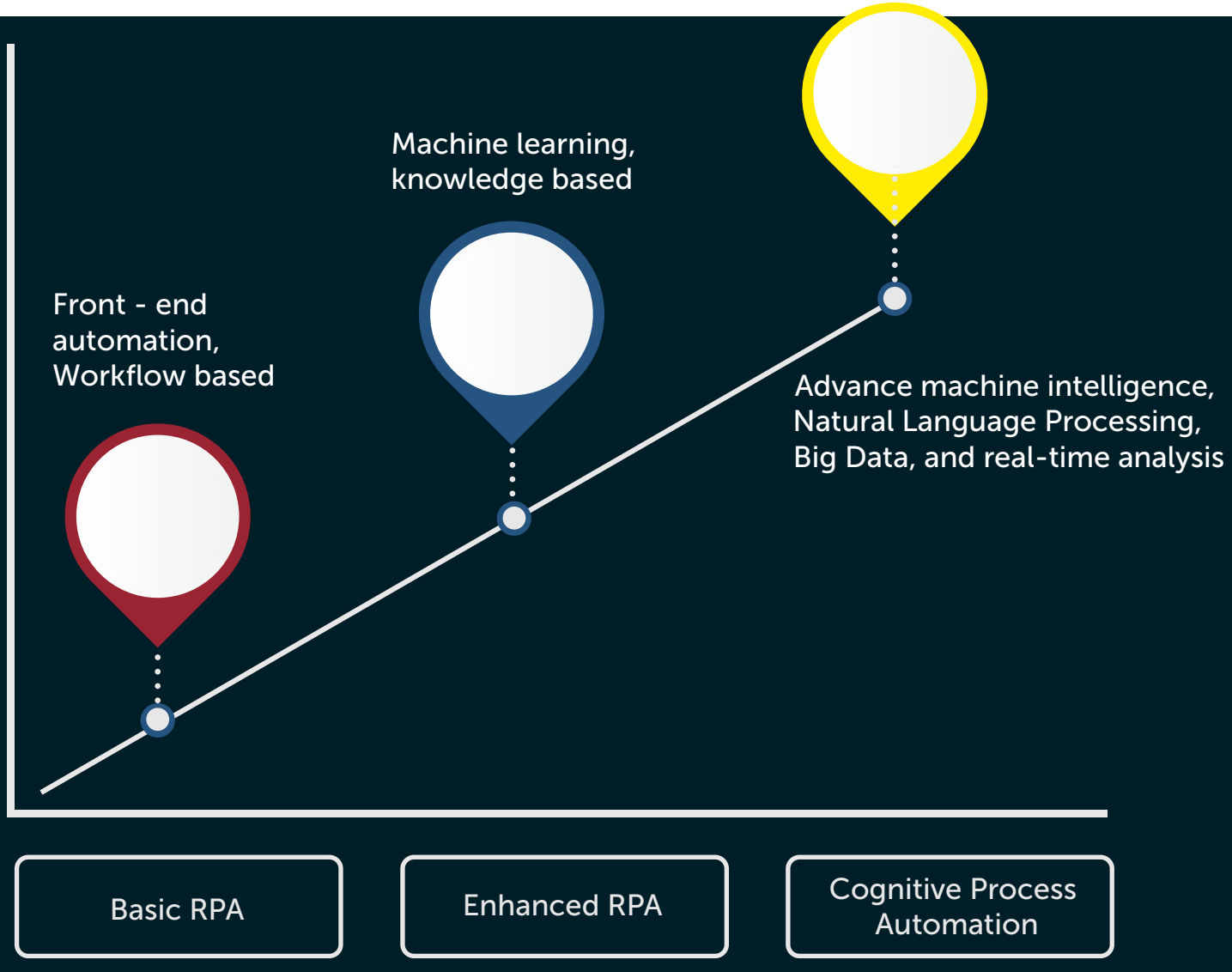
Slated as the next advancement, RPA is poised to make a significant input in automating business processes. Nestled within systems, traversing through various applications inputting, checking, updating and processing faster and with more accuracy than a person can. RPA is suited to any organization that deals with repetitive high-volume tasks. RPA enables productivity optimization to the maximum by redefining the way work is executed and reassigning employees to perform customer-centric and higher-value activities. RPA at a higher level can be configured to work on command interfaces as well as, offline with SQL databases.

RPA adoption is increasing, it is predicted to be one of the most impactful technology adoptions across industries delivering a considerable Return on Investment (ROI). According to a report by McKinsey & Company, up to "45% of the activities individuals are paid to perform can be automated using current RPA tools". Additionally, McKinsey & Company also predicted that the additional labor productivity of RPA is expected to be equivalent to the output of between 110 million to 140 million workers. These figures bring out the importance of RPA as a tool of choice for business leaders, looking to transform dated functions and achieve business goals.

Moving along the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Continuum

Although RPA is an emerging technology, the benefits reaped have shown that it has the potential to take businesses to the next level of digital transformation. As companies embrace automation and increase its application within the system, the next logical step is to move towards Intelligent Process Automation (IPA) or Cognitive Process Automation (CPA) to leverage the power of AI-based technologies such as Machine Learning, Natural Language Processing and Cognitive Computing. When combined with these next-generation digital technologies, RPA will evolve into Intelligent Process Automation/ Cognitive Process Automation, delivering additional value by learning and adapting to optimize its processes.

While conventional RPA automates repetitive and menial tasks, cognitive automation can be leveraged to automate complex tasks that require the simulation of human decision processes. At its core, IPA/ CPA is the continuum of technologies that will help organizations automate both business processes and operations by combining standard robotic process automation with machine learning. The convergence of process automation backed by Artificial Intelligence has resulted in capabilities which were unimaginable just 10 years ago and are driving the next generation of digital transformation.



At Opteamix we recommend adopting a **3-stage approach** to ensure a successful implementation of a stable Cognitive Automation solution for an enterprise.

1

Basic RPA
This involves automating swivel chair processes based on predefined rules. It involves automating tasks where data is manually entered from one system into another system based on a set of rules.

2

Enhanced RPA
Intelligent tools and basic machine learning are applied to build a knowledge base that helps in automating complex tasks involving basic decision making. This phase is a crucial enabler in moving up the AI-RPA continuum.

3

Cognitive Process Automation
A combination of solutions such as Advanced Machine Intelligence, NLP, big data, and real-time analytics is used to develop RPA solutions that have automated reasoning and decision-making capabilities including the ability to recognize and respond to human speech.

Industries Benefiting From RPA

When is RPA Relevant?

RPA is a technology service made possible by orchestrating a digital workforce of software robots that accelerates growth in business capabilities.

Given that RPA is a software-based solution and is technology-agnostic, it can be implemented to work on top of a multitude of existing IT platforms, including mainframe terminals, web applications, desktop applications and legacy ERPs. An RPA 'robot' can be trained to capture and interpret data to process a transaction, manipulate data, or to trigger a response within an application and communicate with other systems.

The RPA implementation is non-disruptive as it involves front-end integration without any changes to the existing IT infrastructure or underlying applications. Since it is not technically integrated, there is no requirement of complex integration. This results in reduced application time and low cost of implementation. Given the quantum of reduced time, unlike typical IT projects, RPA implementations deliver results in weeks, rather than in months.

RPA can be applied across industries for a wide range of business functions including automation of office tasks such as Accounting, Customer support, Order management and any rule-based business process.

Although RPA can automate most business processes, not all processes are ideal candidates for implementation of RPA. Opteamix's RPA experts will help you analyze the process from a feasibility and value proposition point of view and help decide on the ideal process for RPA implementation as part of our **RPA Assessment Services.**

Based on our dexterity in implementing RPA for various clients, we have developed an Assessment Methodology to identify ideal processes that would deliver optimal ROI.

A list of criteria that we use to evaluate the suitability of a process for RPA implementation is as follows:

- The task is highly manual and tedious
- There is a high likelihood of human error
- The task is rule-based with low exceptions
- High volume and time consuming
- Human judgment is not involved
- Repetitive in nature
- Involves two or more document formats

Benefits of RPA

The economics of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) implementation is a compelling value proposition for any business. Over the last few years, an enormous number of companies have invested in RPA and have reaped benefits from it.
Here are some of the advantages of robotic automation implementation:

Business Efficiency

- Give back hours to the business
- Reduction in average handling time
- Digital Workforce that works around the clock

Employee Satisfaction

- RPA frees employees from mundane tasks
- Empowers business users and frees up IT resources

Cost Savings

- Between 20% to 50% reduction in processing cost
- Return on investment within 6-12 months

Higher Quality

- Elimination of human errors
- Improvement in process output quality
- Improved auditing and reporting for compliance

Challenges faced by RPA

RPA has revolutionized the way tasks are performed and has the potential to deliver a host of benefits, including reduced costs, enhanced efficiency, and increased productivity. However, as with all emerging technologies, there are inherent challenges and risks that one needs to be familiar with before implementing an RPA solution. Based on our experience in working with RPA projects of various sizes, types and complexity, we have listed a few possible roadblocks that could be encountered along the way:

State of RPA Technology

- The current RPA tools have technological limitations that hinder automation of tasks involving complex human judgment and the technology that is required to implement intelligent automation, is still in its infancy.

Choosing the Right Candidate

- RPA can be leveraged to automate tasks that that are repetitive, rules-based, high volume, and do not require human judgment. Choosing a task that does not satisfy these conditions will result in implementation hurdles. There is a need to do an assessment before selecting a task for implementation.

Setting Realistic Expectations

- One of the biggest challenges faced when it comes to implementing RPA is viewing it as a silver-bullet panacea for operational problems and broken processes. Businesses need to recognize the limits of what RPA can and cannot do and have realistic expectations of the RPA's functionality, implementation timeline, and operational results.

Exception Scenarios

- Although it is expected to automate tasks that are straightforward, there is a need to be cognizant of the exceptions within a task.

Existing IT Infrastructure

- If the underlying systems that the RPA solution will be interacting with, are unstable or do not allow integration using RPA, the solution may not work.

Inconsistent Outcomes

- There is a need to build control and tracking mechanisms into the newly automated environment to measure and address unintended consequences. This way, outcomes can be predictable and measurable.

Silo Implementation

- When businesses configure RPA without involving IT, they risk crossing wires when it comes to IT architecture, infrastructure and security. If the IT department is not made aware of the presence of RPA for one of its processes, then that application along with its stored information can be compromised in case of a data wipeout. As a practice, IT must be involved in every step of the way.

Guiding You on Your RPA Journey

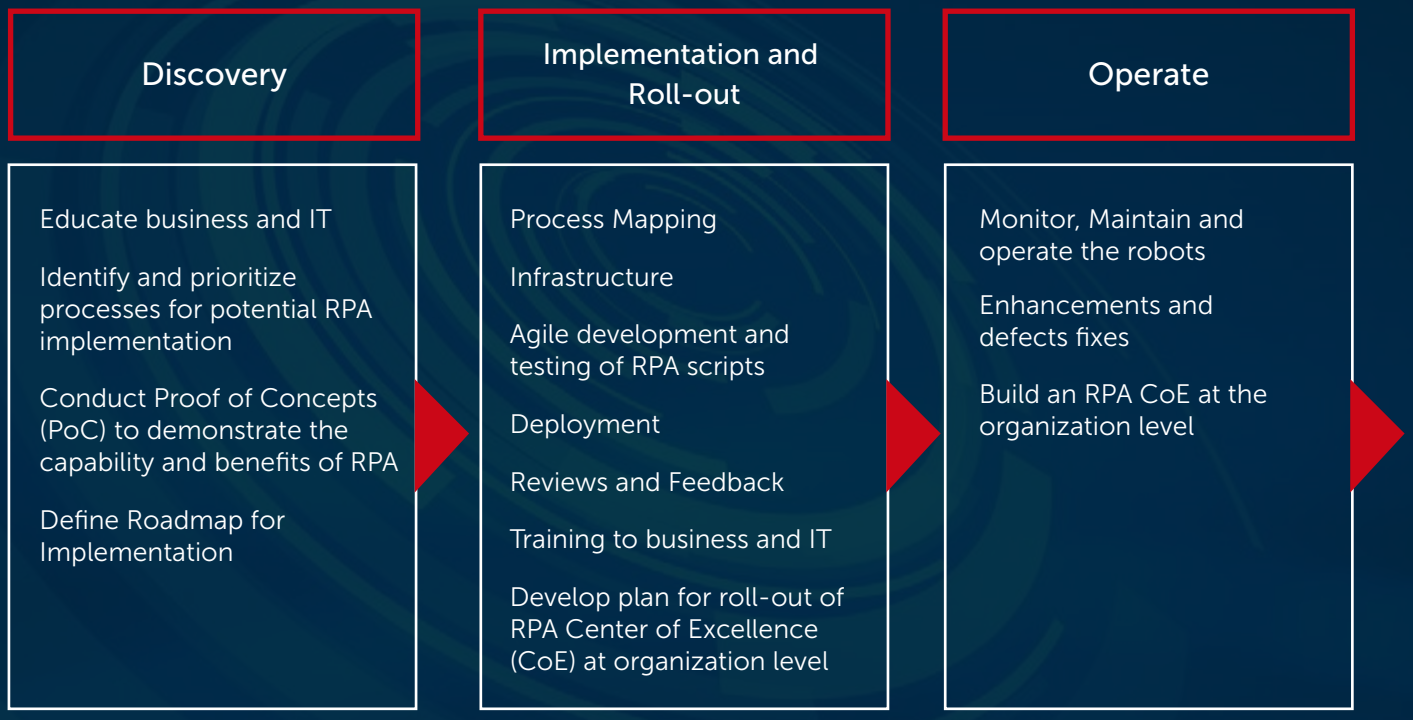
RPA is poised to become a widespread enterprise technology, making automation part of the core business process rather than a one-off solution to fix problems on a limited scale. Businesses who have started with simple RPA solutions have realized remarkable ROI from their RPA investments. In other words, successful businesses of tomorrow will be the ones who have embraced software robots today.

To implement RPA successfully it is extremely important to have an integrated and holistic strategy along with an agile implementation framework.

With the knowledge that RPA can be a great tool for immediate cost reductionand for creating process efficiencies, businesses still require a partner, who not only has the required technical expertise, but also a robust and proven methodology for RPA implementation.

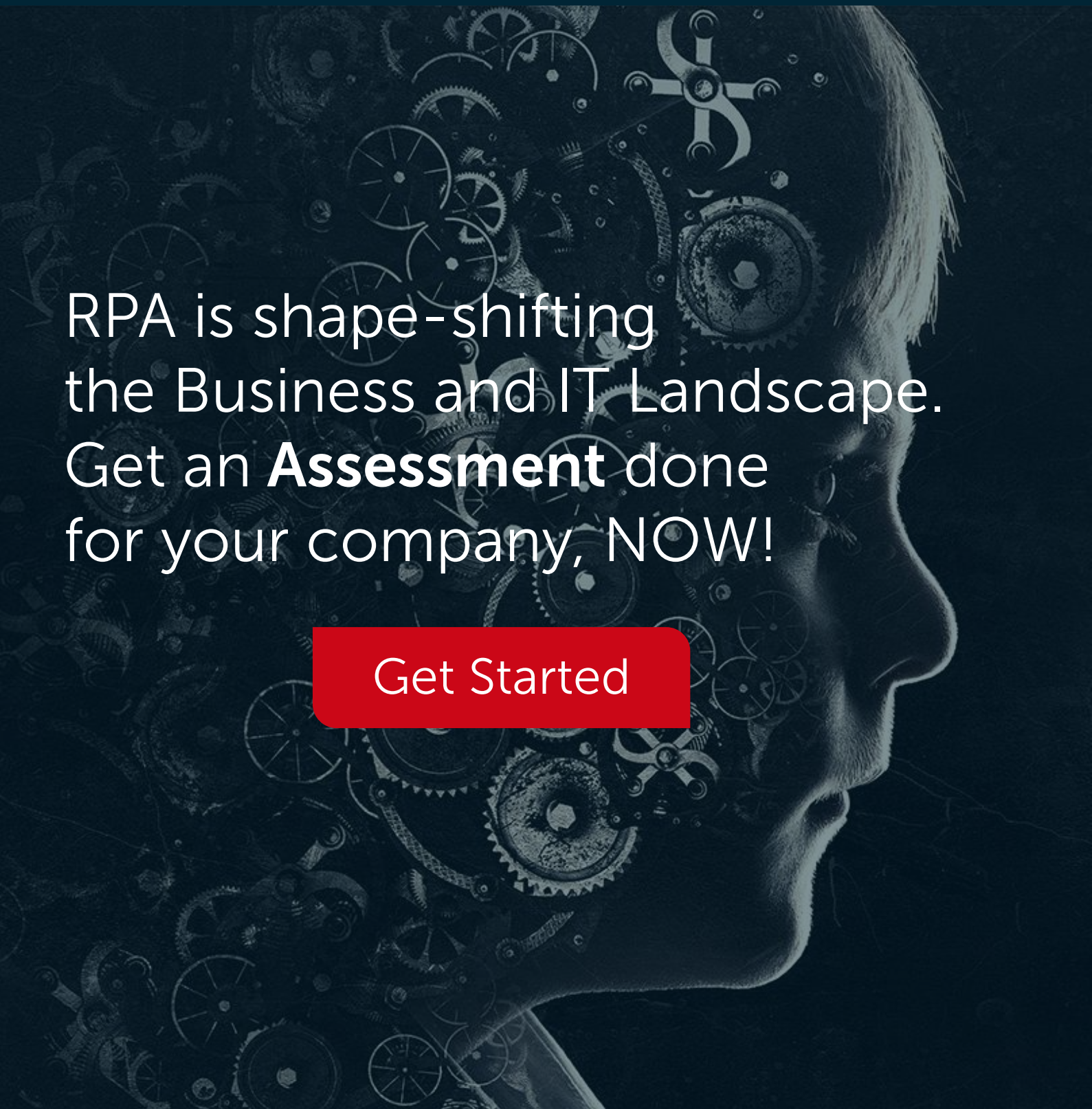
At Opteamix, we believe that organizations of tomorrow will be built on the foundation of a strong Digital Workforce. Our methodology helps businesses derive optimal value from an RPA implementation, defining and ensuring a kickstart in reaping benefits from this emerging technology.

Opteamix works with businesses across the RPA journey that can be broken down into three phases :



At Opteamix, we have developed an in-house **RPA Assessment approach** to identify and evaluate the RPA-potential of business processes that will result in optimal ROI. This assessment will be conducted by **Opteamix's RPA experts** using a detailed questionnaire that is based on the best practices carried out by specific industries, as well as our experience in implementing RPA solutions for our clients.

The assessment process is designed to help our clients gather information about the unique characteristics of each process, to help drive the decision to automate. Our approach aims to identify the processes and sub-process activity steps that can be automated.



Best Practices for RPA Implementation

Although RPA offers tremendous opportunities to bring about efficiency and significantly reduce cost, businesses need to be careful with the approach that is taken while implementing it. A combination of deep process knowledge, technology expertise, and domain knowledge is vital to ensuring the success of the implementation. Additionally, the implementation should incorporate Industry-tested practices as listed below:

- Build an Enterprise Automation Roadmap instead of working in silos
- Start small and be realistic
- Openly communicate what RPA means to your organization
- Build the Business Case for RPA
- List and prioritize the best suited RPA cases based on a proven approach/ methodology
- Determine and agree on realistic ROI expectations
- Establish a well-defined governance structure
- Enable strong collaboration between the Business and IT functions
- Communicate success and lessons learned to create awareness across the organization
- Monitor bot performance and ensure adequate supervision
- Address loopholes in business strategy rather than technology

Concluding Thoughts

The business model of the 21st century will continue to evolve digitally leveraging and emerging technologies. Businesses are automating non-value added, repetitive and routine tasks and re-imaging transactional processes using RPA. Robotic Process Automation is not a silver bullet for all problems, but it can significantly impact the way organizations execute their business functions in the future and should be seen as one of the multiple avenues that a business can use to transform their organization digitally.

At Opteamix we understand the importance of digital technologies in business. We, therefore, work at the intersection of business and technology to transform business outcomes leveraging Robotic Process Automation. Take the first step into the world of robotics, with Opteamix as your RPA partner.

Authors

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Sr. Vice President

Walt Carper, Senior Vice President of Delivery, owns the leadership of Opteamix's delivery organization in North America and drives Opteamix's global practices and capabilities, providing local accountability and seamless integration of services to ensure a successful outcome for our client. Walt brings with him leadership experience gained from his 25 plus years of IT management experience with Fortune 500 firms across North America. Walt holds a Masters degree in Systems Engineering from John Hopkins University and is an experienced software delivery leader with proven track record of turning business challenges into success stories.

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Enterprise Architect

Rafi works with Opteamix as an architect and is responsible for designing and developing next-gen products using Cloud, PAAS, Mobility and Microservice architecture. Additionally, he provides technical leadership in emerging technologies such as RPA, Mobility and Chatbot. Rafi has over 14 years of IT industry experience and he has worked with companies like Wipro and Accenture in the past. Rafi is known for spearheading projects on a large scale and holds an MS degree from BITS, Pilani (India).

Contact

Opteamix is a US-based digital technology firm delivering crafted technology solutions and services. Since the founding of the company in 2012, we have focused on solving our client's business problems using leading-edge digital technologies. As trusted technology partners and digital technology enablers, Opteamix recognizes the need and complexity involved in leveraging technology to create digital disruption We believe that the time to leverage "**Digital is Now**".

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