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Intelligent Automation in Contact Centres

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PARADIGM SHIFT IN CONTACT CENTRE BUSINESS

BACKGROUND

The contact centre has experienced numerous focus changes over the years. In the early days of customer service, the call centre—later contact centre—was viewed as a cost centre rather than the customer engagement hub that it has developed into today.
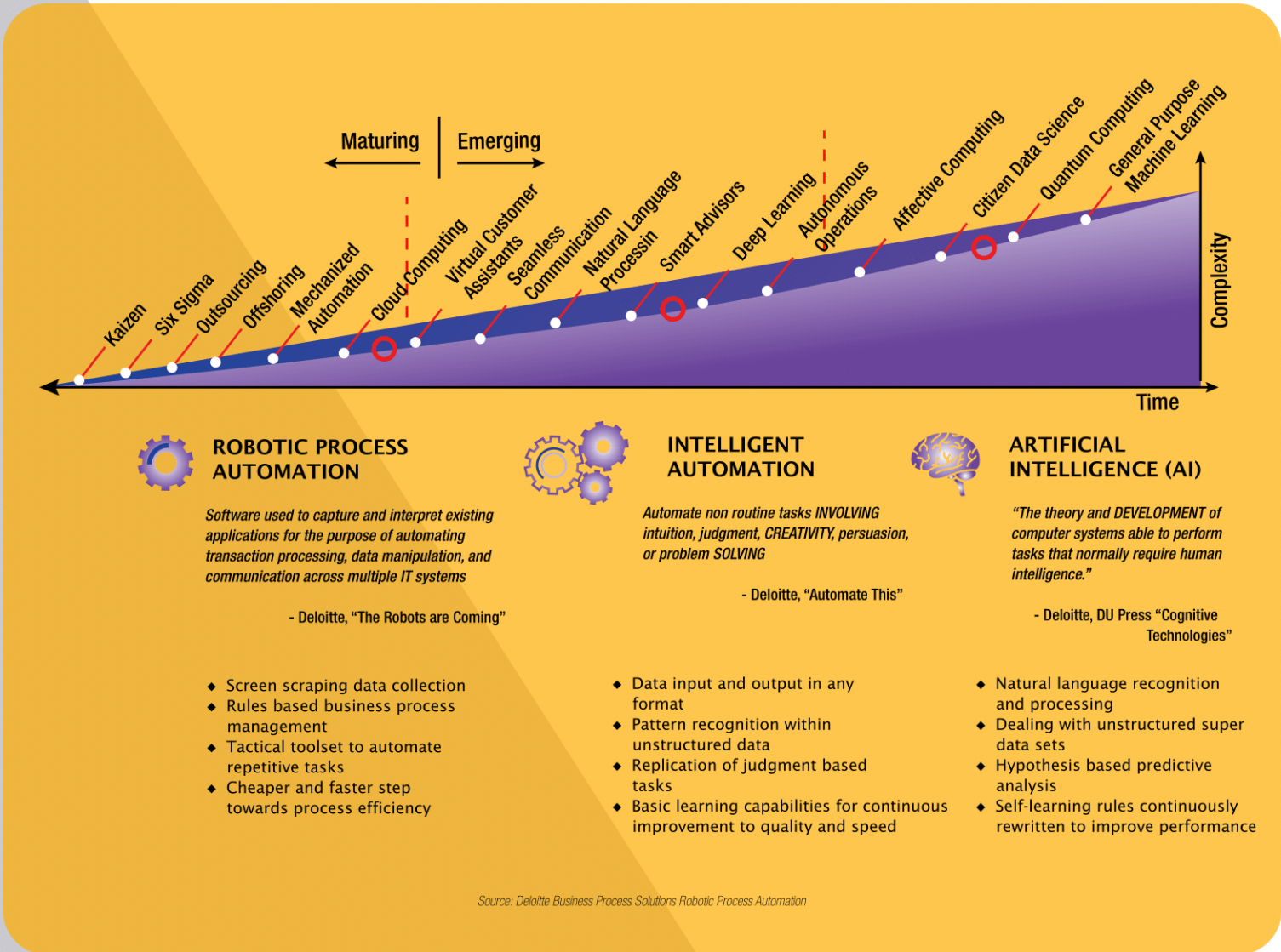
Now the focus is on automating business processes by developing tools that can be used to analyse and improve customer engagement, customer experience, and business productivity.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is playing a pivotal role in delivering cost efficiency, process efficiency, and increased manpower productivity. At the same time it helps to enhance employee experience, minimise manual touchpoints and improve governance and compliance. The culmination is an enriched customer experience.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and Intelligent Automation (AI) are the real game-changers in today's digital world for boosting efficiencies and providing an exceptional customer experience.

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FUTURE IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

As the demand for automation increases, the interplay between various emerging and upcoming technologies will lead to fundamental changes in how businesses offer services to customers.

Maturing ← | → Emerging

Kaizen · Six Sigma · Outsourcing · Offshoring · Mechanized Automation · Cloud Computing · Virtual Customer Assistants · Seamless Communication · Natural Language Processin · Smart Advisors · Deep Learning · Autonomous Operations · Affective Computing · Citizen Data Science · Quantum Computing · General Purpose Machine Learning

Complexity

Time

ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION

Software used to capture and interpret existing applications for the purpose of automating transaction processing, data manipulation, and communication across multiple IT systems

- Deloitte, "The Robots are Coming"

- ◆ Screen scraping data collection
- ◆ Rules based business process management
- ◆ Tactical toolset to automate repetitive tasks
- ◆ Cheaper and faster step towards process efficiency

INTELLIGENT AUTOMATION

Automate non routine tasks INVOLVING intuition, judgment, CREATIVITY, persuasion, or problem SOLVING

- Deloitte, "Automate This"

- ◆ Data input and output in any format
- ◆ Pattern recognition within unstructured data
- ◆ Replication of judgment based tasks
- ◆ Basic learning capabilities for continuous improvement to quality and speed

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

"The theory and DEVELOPMENT of computer systems able to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence."

- Deloitte, DU Press "Cognitive Technologies"

- ◆ Natural language recognition and processing
- ◆ Dealing with unstructured super data sets
- ◆ Hypothesis based predictive analysis
- ◆ Self-learning rules continuously rewritten to improve performance

Source: Deloitte Business Process Solutions Robotic Process Automation

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MARKET DYNAMICS AND ROADBLOCKS

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CUSTOMER INSIGHTS

81% — 81% of satisfied customers are more likely to do business with you if they are happy

57% — 57% of customers are willing to pay 10% or more for better customer service

76% — 76% of customers expect their providers to understand their needs

20% + — 20% higher Net Promoter Score (NPS) for companies that have happy customers due to excellent customer experience

95% — 95% of all customer interactions will be AI supported by 2025

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

◆ Poor Customer Experience

◆ Inefficient systems and processes for handling growing transaction volumes

◆ High average call handling time (AHT) and Hold time

◆ High agent training and onboarding time

◆ Long cycle time due to manual analysis by agent

◆ Agent quality score and error rates

◆ Increase in operational costs

3 KEY ADVANTAGES

Automation has become a critical differentiator in the contact centre industry. It has a direct impact on both internal business and external customers

1. BUSINESS VALUE

- **Reduction in manpower cost:** The cost of a back-office worker, in three similar markets (US/UK/Aus.), reveals that an onshore agent would cost approximately 90% more than an RPA bot.

Cost Comparison of back - Office worker to RPA in USD$

	US	UK	Aus	Philippines	India	RPA
Cost	$49,000,00	$37,700,00	$44,950,00	$10,150,00	$7,250,00	$5,400,00
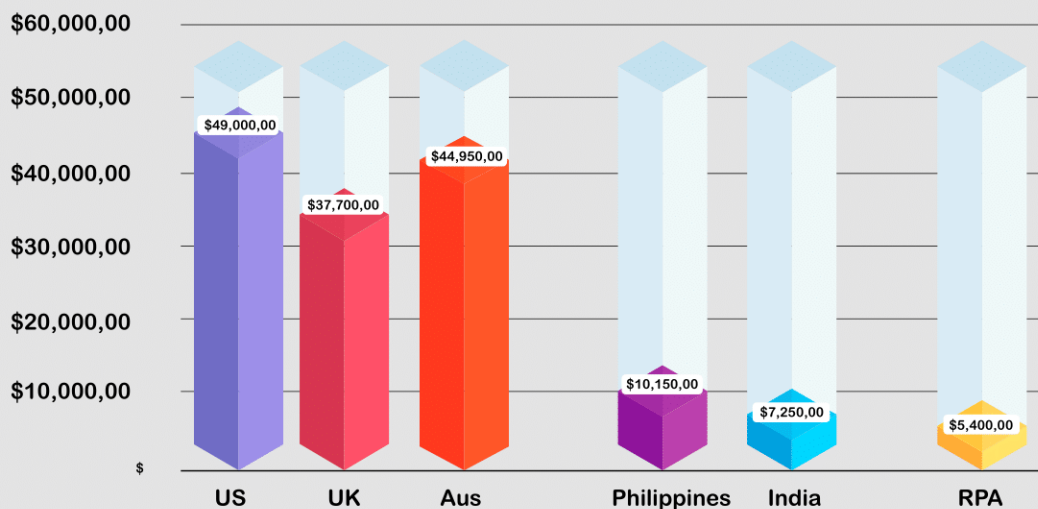
Source: Kinetic Consulting Services - The Case for Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

- **Improved data quality:** RPA eliminates the possibility of human error by logging every step with consistency and accuracy. Higher data quality leads to accurate insights about the business.

- **Innovation:** Companies will be able to shift focus from grappling with operational costs and invest in innovation for new products and services that weren't economically feasible with manual labour.

- **Personalisation:** RPA Bots can provide real-time guidance and provide targeted, personalised information that will help live agents increase productivity.

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2. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

• **Reduction of manual errors:** Reduced errors due to the elimination of multiple manual interventions.

• **Faster service:** Working with bots speeds up completion of operational processes without a break resulting in faster delivery of services to customers.

3. HUMAN CAPITAL GAIN

• **Boosting Morale:** Manual, tedious, and repetitive tasks demotivate employees. Removing these mundane processes from employee workflows gives employees more time for high-value tasks. It also allows agents time for reskilling and upskilling and time for management to focus on strategic planning and corporate governance.

• **Absorbing natural attrition rates:** An annual attrition rate of 12-15% is considered healthy, which means a company can reduce headcount by that much during a year without disturbing the current organisational structure.

• **Managing peak time demand:** Peak time (provisioned during business planning) can be easily handled by leveraging technology. Thus eliminates, the need for additional manpower planning to handle seasonal peaks or particularly busy periods.

1. Chatbot transition to live agent

Chatbots are the future of self-service. Chatbots enhance automated chat conversations by providing information in a speedy, efficient, and cost-effective manner. Businesses can enable this functionality at any point in the customer journey.

Chatbots help optimise the use of resources, as they do not need any human intervention. However, if the chatbot is unable to answer a customer inquiry, the chat session can be immediately transferred to a live agent for assistance. This transition is done seamlessly without breaking the flow of conversation. At the same time, the live agent gets all the insights gathered during the automated chat so that the context of the conversation is not lost.

2. Visual self-service through mobile navigation

Interacting with an interactive voice response system (IVR) with a long list of options does not provide a great customer experience.

Now with the latest cutting-edge technology, IVR options can visually appear on any mobile device with a screen. Customers are more connected to the brand and feel empowered. It also, reduces costs as no live agents are involved.

3. Personalisation through Intelligent Call Routing (ICR)

Automation is not just restricted to self-service interactions. ICR can be integrated with IVR and other CRM applications to give agents context for each call. This helps customers and agents have more productive, meaningful, and fruitful conversations.

Logic can be built into ICR to direct incoming calls to the right agent based on customer segmentation and profiling. Companies can also build express queues, or create specialised help desks to handle high profile customers and so on.

4. Customer engagement through SMS/text channel

Some customers prefer text to voice as they find it more convenient. Through automation you can establish two-way communication using the SMS/text channel. The contact centre sends out a text notification, and customers can respond to it. This service can be enabled on toll-free numbers as well.

5. Identify customers using voice biometrics

Voiceprint identification allows businesses to use the customer's voice as an authentication mechanism. This helps contact centres to provide personalised service and expedite interactions.

This functionality can be used in IVR and live agent interactions, both inbound and outbound, throughout the customer journey. Furthermore, this can result in a lower cost of service and reduced business liability.

6. Virtualisation offers complete flexibility

Hardware-dependent automation is a thing of the past. Virtualisation provides scalability to growing companies.

In today's fast-moving environments companies might need to scale up and down the entire solution as per the situation or demand. This can now be done quickly as applications can be installed in an open virtual appliance (OVA) environment.

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STEP 1:

Review all processes to identify and shortlist the processes that will benefit from automation. The typical processes that work well for RPA automation generally include one or more of the following characteristics.

- ◆ Highly manual and repetitive

- ◆ High-volume of transaction

- ◆ High variability in volumes

- ◆ Can be easily broken down into unambiguous rules

- ◆ Involves significant transfer of data between screens or different applications

- ◆ Deploys stable decision-making rules

- ◆ Execution does not require considerable analysis, judgment or interpretation

- ◆ There are very few exceptions at each step of the process

STEP 2:

The opportunity list generated based on the criteria in Step 1 should then be prioritised based on an RPA segmentation framework, such as the one shown below, to target the most significant ROI.
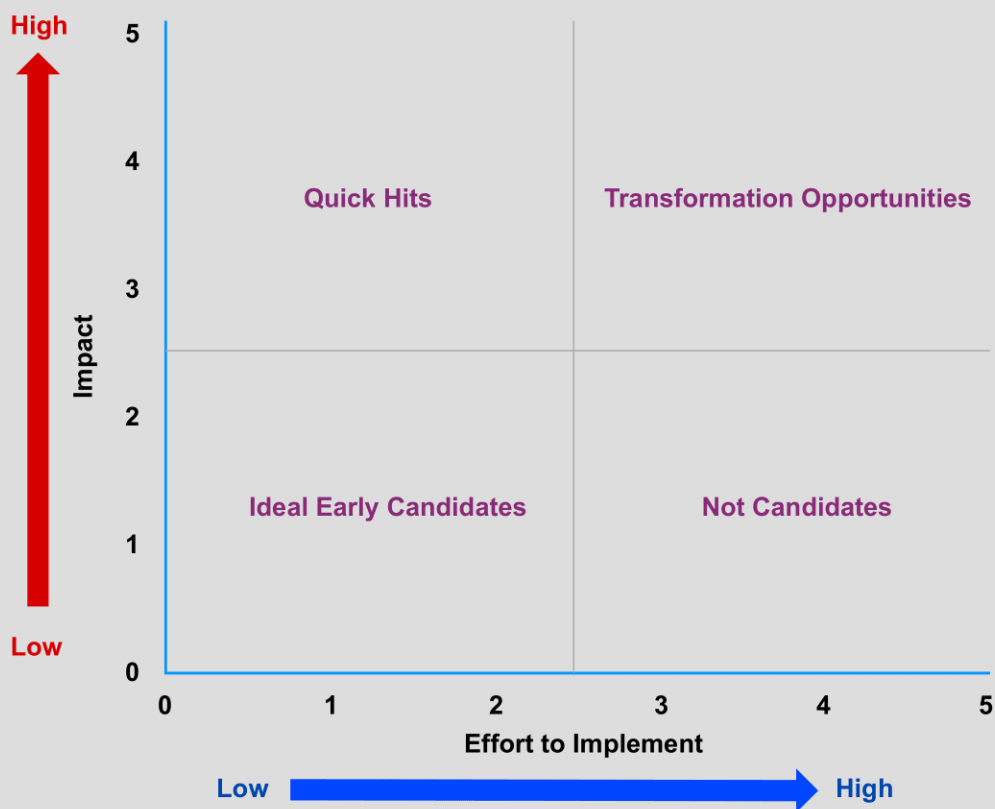
Impact factors

- Business performance
- Number of resources that can be redeployed once the automation is in place
- The impact of improvement in quality or cycle time

Effort to implement factors

- Development and implementation cost
- Investment in technology platform and other infrastructure

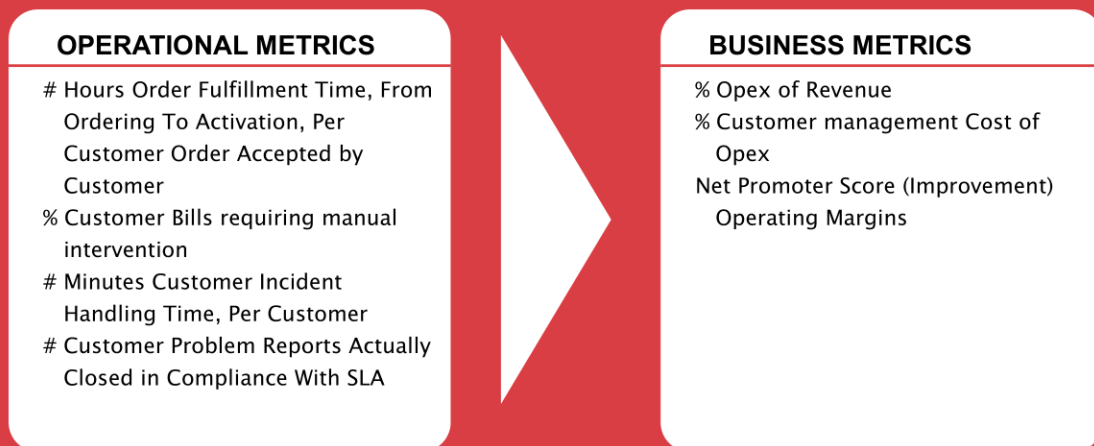Source: KPMG - Delivering value in procurement with robotic process automation

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STEP 3:

For the highest priority opportunities, as well as for quick wins, the organisation should develop a business case, estimating the economic and performance impact and developing a more granular implementation cost estimate. A close look at the operation and business metrics follows:

OPERATIONAL METRICS

- \# Hours Order Fulfillment Time, From Ordering To Activation, Per Customer Order Accepted by Customer
- % Customer Bills requiring manual intervention
- \# Minutes Customer Incident Handling Time, Per Customer
- \# Customer Problem Reports Actually Closed in Compliance With SLA

BUSINESS METRICS

- % Opex of Revenue
- % Customer management Cost of Opex
- Net Promoter Score (Improvement) Operating Margins

Source: Tech Mahindra - Unlocking Business Value with RPA

STEP 4:

Organise the portfolio of prioritised opportunities into a time-phased roadmap that delivers quick-win improvements as well as more profound process efficiency enhancements over time, through a "phased" deployment.

REFERENCES

- Frost & Sullivan - Robotic Process Automation: A New Era of Agent Engagement

- KPMG - Delivering value in procurement with robotic process automation

- Deloitte Business Process Solutions Robotic Process Automation

- Kinetic Consulting Services - The Case for Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

- Avaya - Executive Guide: 7 Things You Didn't Know Were Possible with Self Service & Automation

- Tech Mahindra - Unlocking Business Value with RPA

- Business Case Planning for Robotic Process Automation by Infosys Consulting

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If you are considering automation in your contact centre and would like to learn what steps to take next or how to implement them, we would be happy to assist.

ABOUT VIS

At VIS, we are committed to delivering outcomes for our clients in the areas of Collaboration, Customer Experience, and Automation through our offerings in Consulting, Project Delivery, and Managed Services. With a footprint spanning 7 countries and investments in Innovation Labs & Software Development Centres, we are just the right size that allows us to be agile and yet have a matured process on the back end.

Focused on helping our customers in navigating the Digital Transformation journey in the Contact Centre & BPO industry, VIS Global promises to transform the customer experience, empower employees, enhance business process efficiency and accelerate revenue generation.