

## Intelligent Automation for Post Pandemic Business Growth

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Over the last year both businesses and individuals have realized that the world after the COVID-19 pandemic won't be as simple as "return to normal", it will come with its own challenges but having said that, it also presents an opportunity to create an entirely new version of normal. In this article, we are going to discuss the how Intelligent Automation (IA) can help businesses for post-pandemic business growth.

Going back a little into the past, the global pandemic brought to light many issues and, in this process, it also created a sense of urgency for both professionals and businesses to accelerate their hike towards the future of work. The main catalyst was the disruption to the "business as usual" situation and the gaps exposed. Especially, in the scenarios where human resources and existing processes could not scale to meet increasing demands, or work pressure due to the unavailability of the workforce presented by the pandemic. Businesses clearly understood that automation was the only solution that can perform urgent jobs at scale and maintain business continuity.

### **What experts say!**

Significant IA investments are on the table. According to an HFS and KPMG research more than 30% of enterprise surveyed are already investing more than \$50M in IA technologies. On similar lines various studies have highlighted the fact that automation will have a critical role to play in helping businesses recover from the Covid-19-led economic downturn. As a result, organizations are accelerating their digital transformation efforts, and are investing more in intelligent automation (IA).

Automation has become a vital asset and a key innovative solution for businesses that are looking to develop new ways of working. In this article, we will talk in detail about how businesses are building resilience and agility with automation technologies to overcome post-pandemic slowdown. Let's understand this in detail.

### **1. Intelligent Automation for meeting increased demand and urgent needs**

The recent pandemic presented an unprecedented need for speed and scale in addressing customer queries, beyond the capabilities of limited human staff. Businesses of all sizes and domains are finding that automating routine tasks can help employees meet demand quickly and better serve customers by catering to only critical cases that require human involvement.

One of the examples includes grocery and food delivery; it has witnessed an upsurge in demand since the breakout of COVID-19. IA comes to the rescue to support a huge rush at customer support. Similarly, in sectors like healthcare, insurance, and banking, we find a large chunk of paper trails. Automation can help sort through semi-structured or unstructured data and remove existing limitations on data extraction from documents. With employees now working from home and facing restricted movement, IA is helping streamline the entire process seamlessly and paperless.

Without automation, these businesses could not have achieved the speed and scale required to maintain their relationships with their customers. Post pandemic also this demand will continue because of the efficiency and savings it brings to the table. Businesses across domains are realizing that "digital first" is not a long-term goal anymore; rather, it's essential for survival in the post-pandemic world. And most importantly because of the value it delivers. IA tools can free up staff to focus on higher-level strategic tasks.

## **2. Intelligent Automation is both for short-term and long-term growth post-pandemic**

IA has the potential to add value to business processes and workflows, supplement employee capabilities, and harness the power of man and machine to improve customer experience and service.

IA's benefits extend both short term and long term. Many organizations opted for immediate and short-term benefits when COVID struck suddenly. It is suggested that organizations should go for bi-focal strategy for intelligent automation. Immediate, short term benefits can be reaped by going for the 'low-hanging fruit' of process automation, while at the same time thinking longer-term to deliver bigger and transformative change(s) that is truly different.

Basis our experience we would advise to start small because it is easier to quickly recognize the benefits, easier to get a project off the ground, and more affordable and then build big towards a long-term vision from there, having delivered quick wins along the way.

## **3. Help you get ready for a lean and flat organization structure**

Take a fresh look at your organizational structure in light of the recent technology investments made in your organization and the impact COVID-induced pandemic had on your organization.

Accordingly, make changes in the roles & responsibilities of the existing workforce and hiring plan for new evolved roles.

Also, consider implementing L&D programs for your existing workforce to make them empowered and comfortable with the new automation solutions implemented in your organization. View intelligent automation technology as an opportunity to improve workforce skill-sets and build innovative work teams for future-proof success. With a lean & flatter structure, employees react to changes rapidly and start focusing on other tasks that require strategic thinking, and spend less time on manual and repetitive tasks.

Understand that appropriate skill development opportunities, along with an advanced WFH program, can lead to a better employee experience and overall high growth.

#### **4. Drive innovation with newly developed roles and skill-sets**

Businesses are investing in IA to ensure business continuity, drive process resilience, eliminate the risk of human error, fill in for missing human labor, and create scale. As all of these changes happen, management must support new and emerging job roles, and new evolved subject matter experts (SMEs).

Future-fit managers will leverage automation to create effective cross-functional teams including members from IT, operations, data science, and others departments to drive growth and innovation holistically.

#### **5. Re-imagine business processes post-pandemic**

Amid the impact of a global outspread of COVID-19, businesses can use IA to reimagine their business processes and operational models altogether, thereby finding new ways to measure and deliver real-time value.

Start with reviewing your automation strategy and roadmap proactively. A prudent approach will be to prioritize automation in the areas that use repetitive processes, require operational cost reduction, bring in efficiency in work from home (WFH), offers supply chain resilience, etc.

Automation tools can create connections across organizations, enabling a holistic view of the processes and customer journey to enable delivering personalized value in real-time.

#### **6. Take automation anxiety among employees seriously.**

Businesses have to recognize that automation and the pandemic have certainly altered the way we work and thus there are chances that it may lead to new forms of digital anxiety. For

instance, employees are happy and satisfied at work if they are making progress in their work along with saving time & efforts. However, on the other hand, if the automation initiative does not deliver the results expected, it may lead to anxiety.

Data supporting how automation is helping individuals and organizations will help them trust automation processes more and will lead to lower levels of stress.

Unfortunately, there is no accurate method for measurement, reporting the stress level of workers. Performance metrics used in current times leave organizations uninformed of how advancing automation is impacting employees. Investigate identification and treatment options that deal with the machine and work stress issues.

Businesses will need to invest in right technologies to speed up recovery. Intelligent automation is featured high on that list and it will become a boardroom-driven strategy, requiring buy-in from business and IT teams together. Automation technologies, partnered with human counterparts, help businesses become more human and deliver greater value to customers.

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### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**



*Arindam Ray Chaudhuri, COO at [AgreeYa](#) Solutions, has over 30 years of rich industry experience in the technology domain. He has greatly contributed to AgreeYa's software, solutions and services portfolio, by integrating a global team, defining the technology and business vision of products and services, establishing large scale client engagement and leading time, cost and quality driven value via project governance and solution engineering.*

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