Business Process Outsourcing
Powered by Intelligent Automation
Cutting costs and finding cheaper geographies will only work for so long. Pushed too far, this activity can have an adverse effect on process quality, operational efficiency, customer experience and your bottom line.

So the next big leap will come from technology. But not just any technology. Robotic process automation (RPA) is becoming a growing force that will reshape how work gets done – perhaps even triggering a new industrial revolution.

It’s not just about deploying more of the same software to fix the problem. That won’t work, because today’s complex outsourced processes are beyond the capacity of conventional software and are still handled by people.

But automating and accelerating those processes won’t happen easily, or come from quick-fix solutions, which have serious limitations:

- The solutions are not enterprise-class, and can’t be integrated into an enterprise strategy.
- They could potentially interfere with other systems.
- They don’t allow for data transfer throughout the organization.
- Siloed solutions are narrowly applied and miss the bigger picture about the business at large.

Instead, change is coming from an exciting new front: intelligent automation (IA) – the technology that turbo-charges BPO and delivers exponential gains.
Intelligent automation, defined

Intelligent automation is a “virtual workforce”—software that performs tasks in an efficient, repeatable way. It mimics human actions, doing work based on pre-set rules, covering both simple routines and complex processes.

This kind of automation is “intelligent” because it continually learns and improves, making sure that each interaction is better than the last one. Intelligent automation harnesses the power of robotic process automation, advanced analytics and machine learning, improving and streamlining performance with every cycle.

The benefits of intelligent automation are significant. It’s fast, accurate and highly cost effective. It’s available around the clock, doesn’t get sick or goes on holiday.

Intelligent automation allows complete traceability, and reduces risk by limiting human access to sensitive data, either from customers or the organization at large. Software bots won’t go rogue and compromise social security numbers or credit card details.

Intelligent automation carries out reliable, repeatable, efficient processes and delivers higher productivity and lower costs than offshore workers. It ensures greater regulatory compliance, and enables improved business outcomes.

Intelligent automation gives organizations a competitive advantage, with greater operational agility, faster time to market and improved quality. IA systems scale fast and cost-effectively while consuming the same or fewer system resources. This leads to improved customer experience and offers higher levels of service at lower cost.
Intelligent automation can be used for many tasks, starting with those that are repetitive and rules-based. Software robots automate tasks, and management software organizes the workflow. Increasingly, intelligent automation is also being used for individual, non-repeatable tasks.

It can be applied to processes in horizontal disciplines such as finance and accounting, customer care or HR, or to vertical industry processes such as mortgage applications, claims processing or updating patient records.

Intelligent automation turns transactions into repeatable, computer-centric processes. It automates and streamlines concurrent or duplicate data entry, and can carry out in-system upgrades.
Workflow management: a bot to manage the bots

As you automate more, you have dozens or even hundreds of bots. Some are doing the same job, but more likely they’re doing smaller pieces of an overall workflow. They don’t understand what the other bots are doing, or how their piece fits into the bigger picture.

The true potential is achieved when you group all those individual processes into workflows. That’s when you really begin to see the advantages and start to orchestrate process gains across the organization.

This is achieved by having these “bot farms” controlled centrally by a “farm manager” that sees all of the bots in the workflow – even though they may be on different machines.

Here’s how it works:

- A workflow inspector monitors work as it moves from one bot to another, and can deploy more bots as needed if there’s increased demand or bottlenecks.
- Linking all these individual bots together into a workflow provides scalability, flexibility and efficiency.
- It delivers instant business agility, letting you scale up or down on demand – without extra cost, disruption or learning curve (which slows down human counterparts).

Workflow management capabilities are available with all four intelligent automation options outlined earlier. But the power of workflow management is harnessed most fully with intelligent automation designed from the ground up by a BPO service provider.
At the moment, they have to interact with many different systems. Systems are displayed across multiple windows (and even multiple monitors) and the knowledge worker has to make sense of everything. They’re challenged with lots of manual processes, and often find themselves performing low value, repetitive, routine tasks. They can’t improve their performance, as they’re constrained by the limits of the system.

Intelligent automation brings all of these systems together in one aggregated solution. It simplifies and streamlines processes, with all the heavy lifting done by the bots.

Knowledge workers no longer have to learn multiple systems on different platforms. Intelligent automation helps them be more effective and increase the range and level of what they do. They can be redeployed to higher-value (and revenue-generating) tasks.

Intelligent automation helps knowledge workers take a quantum leap. Combine a human with a bot and you get superhuman performance.

**End-to-end automation**

Intelligent automation isn’t just for back-office automation. It can be applied throughout your organization, from front to back office. In customer care, for example, there are significant gains to be made from deploying intelligent automation, to deliver better customer service.
**Process automation: the biggest opportunity of all**

As a recent research findings from McKinsey\(^1\) show, the potential for intelligent automation of business processes is enormous, with cost savings to be made right across the board. But this isn’t about simply lowering labor costs.

Automating tasks allows knowledge workers to be redeployed to high-value, more meaningful work. Intelligent process automation lifts the burden on workers of the ongoing demands to do more with less by producing better and more efficient workflows.

The opportunities for organizations are vast and offer a stark set of benefits, including increased output, higher quality, improved reliability, labor cost savings, and competitive advantage. McKinsey believes that these benefits are **three to 10 times the cost of implementation**.

If you still think automation is all about offshoring, consider this: **only 5% of jobs** could be automated using current technology. But **60% of occupations** could have **30% or more of their activities** automated.

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\(^1\) Four fundamentals of workplace automation, November 2015.
Companies can improve process cycle time and scale to meet demand or growth. They can service customers better, in a standardized way, across the globe.

They can improve security, reducing human interaction with data, which is handled instead by software in secure data center, built on best-of-breed technology.

Focusing on higher-level strategic agenda, organizations can increase revenue and margin.

BPO powered by intelligent automation helps organizations improve business-critical processes. They can digitize manual or labor-intensive processes, and move away from a people-heavy structure.
Intelligent automation is a solution that delivers for all stakeholders within an organization:

- **Process owners** can simplify, streamline and automate processes, gain better visibility, optimize resources and scale to meet demand and growth.
- **C-level/finance** can operate more effectively, adapting to dynamic market changes by with less costly and more productive processes.
- **IT/compliance** can increase security, improve data governance and simplify complexity.

The message is clear: for repetitive, cross-application processing, intelligent automation is the way to go.

But not all intelligent automation solutions are created equal. There are four possible choices:

1. **Buy an off-the-shelf intelligent automation solution and do it yourself.**
2. **Hire a systems integrator that deploys intelligent automation for you, then leaves you to manage it.**
3. **Use an intelligent automation solution that your BPO service provider has bought and customized.**
4. **Use an intelligent automation solution that your BPO service provider has developed from the ground up.**

Let’s look at each in turn.

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25-50% in cost savings can be achieved by companies.


1. Do-it-yourself intelligent automation solution
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Inevitably, this is a one-size-fits-all solution, so you don’t achieve the true potential of process automation. Because different parts of your organization will need different solutions and different types of process selection. Also, because you’re doing it yourself, there’s a steep learning curve – if not initially, then down the line. Though installation and configuration may be straightforward, it’s enterprise integration that’s the difficult part. They key is to have a mindset for and partner committed to continuous improvements and ongoing process re-engineering, anywhere and everywhere it is needed.

There’s also an opportunity cost in doing it yourself. This approach ties up internal resources and budget, disrupts business, achieves lower levels of process automation and delivers less ROI. The lack of integration means you’re sub-optimizing your processes. Often, do-it-yourself solutions are narrowly applied, deployed by small teams looking to solve one or more localized problems. Success with intelligent automation cries out for a broad perspective across your organization. It’s worth bearing in mind that getting it wrong could also have damaging long-term consequences. So upstream savings could result in downstream costs.
2. Intelligent automation deployed by a systems integrator, managed by you
2. Intelligent automation deployed by a systems integrator, managed by you

This is very similar to DIY, except that a specialist does the installation, configuration and customization. But they’re using the same software as you could buy off the shelf yourself, so there’s a limit to how effective it can be.

And once the project is done, the integrator moves on, leaving you to struggle with real-life impact of implementing the recommendation. There are better ways for implementing IA.

Once you’re up and running, you’re your own, so you’re still looking at a learning curve and hidden costs down the line, which can drive down your return on investment.
3. Intelligent automation brought in and customized by your BPO service provider
But there are natural limits to the automation levels that can be achieved through this approach, as the solution is developed by a third party.

Development cycles may be longer, and less tailored to the needs of the organization as the BPO partner is essentially using off-the-shelf software. But it can still prove to be a solid solution that delivers significant ROI though an imperfect solution.

With this option, you’re getting your BPO service provider’s experience and know how in process automation a big ongoing benefit. Your process automation is constantly refined and improved by experts, freeing you up to focus on your core business.
4. Intelligent automation developed by your BPO service provider
4. Intelligent automation developed by your BPO service provider

This is a **best-of-all-worlds** approach that unlocks the knowledge and expertise of your BPO service provider in the most beneficial way.

You get an intelligent automation solution informed and improved on through hundreds of existing implementations. Your partner will apply learnings from across its business to build in continuous improvements. Even more importantly, in this context, you’re getting a solution designed especially for BPO – built from the ground up in a BPO environment.

It builds on decades of research, process expertise, investment and development experience, which means it delivers more value and better results.

This option takes intelligent automation to the next level, as it’s designed and built around your specific needs. It’s tightly integrated with your existing BPO solution so it’s slipstreamed seamlessly into your operation, minimizing risk and disruption.
BPO and intelligent automation: a killer combination

Intelligently deployed, BPO powered by intelligent automation is the ultimate solution.

It can be integrated with your existing systems and technology. You don’t have to upgrade your entire platform, but can instead optimize specific processes. It can be overlaid on, and interact with, legacy or new systems.

BPO powered by intelligent automation brings all of your platforms together from the front office to the back: mainframe, website, web tools, office tools, email and spreadsheet. It works seamlessly with structured data – and will also work with unstructured data.

BPO powered intelligent automation offers a cost-effective approach to business transformation. It can be used as a bridge to the future organization, making it easier to integrate and adopt new technology (robotic process automation, advanced analytics, machine learning and natural language processing) as it’s proven, so it’s constantly state-of-the-art. You should take a long view – understand that by making an upfront investment, you are setting yourself on the path to a very healthy ROI.

BPO and intelligent automation brings an extra layer of value that simply can’t be achieved with automation alone. Together they bring exponential gains, and are scalable to meet demand and growth.
Start small, think big

Intelligent automation is a transformative technology. But that doesn’t mean you have to start with a strategic, enterprise-wide approach. You can also start with a single process, demonstrate a quick win and then expand from there.

The automation process can be top-down (1), bottom-up (4) or anywhere in between:

1. Enterprise
2. Business unit
3. Function
4. Workflow processes

Ideally, you should start with the top-down enterprise approach. It takes longer but the returns are bigger, and you have a solution that’s built around transformation, not transactions.

In this fashion, you can build a system from scratch that produces maximum orchestration of processes throughout your organization. The question to ask is, “how do we manage bots across multiple workflows?” Even then, be prepared to shift gears as you learn of opportunities to re-deploy resources.

But there are no hard-and-fast rules. Sometimes, quick fixes and quick returns are the best approach to take initially. Automation can focus on specific transactions as an interim measure for immediate ROI.

Though impact isn’t as great, this approach is faster to implement. Transformation can always come later.

But for that transformation, an integrated approach (BPO powered by intelligent automation) is a must. Otherwise, the whole is less than the sum of the parts, as you’re optimizing processes in isolation.
Intelligent automation in action

**Auto manufacturer**
- Struggled with repetitive manual processes, and was failing to meet accuracy targets and SLA goals.
- After intelligent automation implementation, the organization saw accuracy increased from 90 to 100%, with one system achieving the same goal as was previously handled by 22 systems.

**Large state healthcare provider**
- Wanted to reduce agents’ call time, training time and expense. Also to improve daily calls per agent.
- Intelligent automation delivered 22% more efficient operation, a 25% reduction in call times, 80%+ reduction in training time and 27% more daily calls per agent, with no call-wrap time.

**Shipping company**
- Lacked proactive issue detection and was unable to isolate source issues, leading to delayed troubleshooting. Had staff on call manually monitoring systems, and was failing to meet SLAs.
- Application and process-monitoring tools allowed them to move from reactive to proactive issue identification and resolution before the client was impacted.
- Automation reduced issues by 50% in one year, allowed offshore resources to be trained faster, improved customer service and helped them meet SLAs.
BPO powered by intelligent automation is the next big thing, and is set to revolutionize business processes.

It allows you to outsource the processes that make sense to outsource, but doesn’t lock in current performance. As process automation is constantly refined and improved, and as new technology comes on-stream, you get dramatic improvements in speed, quality and cost. So the gains are exponential and ongoing.

To fully benefit from this transformation, you need a BPO partner with deep expertise in intelligent automation, combined with years of experience on the ground, and an acute awareness of how best to balance processes and technology.

Whether you’re already thinking about BPO and intelligent automation or not, one thing is certain: your competitors are. So the time to take action is now.

Talk to us: www.xerox.com/automation or automation@xerox.com
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