BUSINESS OPERATIONS
USE CASE
INTRODUCTION

Business Operations Use Case

Most digital transformation conversations focus on marketing-hype-ready solutions, like smart factories or the digitization of supply chains. They entice the market with tremendous potential top- and bottom-line impact. While this potential is undeniable, front and back office operations offer less glamorous, but significant and tangible digital opportunities.

Historically, executives have realized savings in the front and back offices by outsourcing labor or “optimizing” through undersized and overworked teams. Recently, automation has become a more attainable cost-saving method. This form of digitization, called robotic process automation (RPA), is succinctly defined by the IRPAA as “the application of technology that allows employees in a company to configure computer software or a ‘robot’ to capture and interpret existing applications for processing a transaction, manipulating data, triggering responses, and communicating with other digital systems.”

In practice, RPA offloads front and back office busy-work to software “robots.” RPA is distinct from (and more or less a prerequisite for) cognitive-automation, which refers to solutions driven by AI or machine-learning to automate more complex processes. Think manual journal entries, provisioning and deprovisioning access, data entry, and asset management, all done automatically. These areas are loaded with task-based work, making them ripe for automation.

According to McKinsey Global Institute’s automation research:\(^1\)

- 89% of general accounting operations are highly to fully automatable
- 43% of the finance function is highly to fully automatable
- 19% of additional finance activities with opportunity for partial automation

The promise of short implementation periods, quick ROI, and increased employee utility make RPA initiatives attractive options for businesses. Now is the time for companies large and small to start automating predominantly clerical lines of work. Fear of technology or an unwillingness to adapt to the changing landscape will be catastrophic for companies looking to compete with digital leaders. \(^2\)
The Challenge

Software automation is often viewed as purely an IT function, one in which the business and operations teams do not engage. This results in patchwork tools that are driven by IT’s interests and availability, leaving business units wanting more from their technology. These solutions do not capture the full potential of RPA’s impact on day-to-day operations and company margins. Effective RPA solutions are driven by both business and IT functions in congruence with each other.

RPA is the first step for companies making the leap to digitize their business processes; tackling several clearly defined and repetitive processes prior to kicking off large-scale intelligent process automation efforts. However, with all of the noise—AI, machine learning, blockchain, AR/VR—it is nearly impossible to tame the chaos and make sense of the technological crosshairs. While robotic process automation is quickly being added to the conversation, those likely to be impacted the most—accountants, HR personnel, and other non-technical employees—may know the least about this phenomenon.

Time will tell, but those who get lost building automation solutions without a cohesive strategy, or those who disregard digital transformation altogether, run the risk of falling behind while competitors capitalize on cost savings, optimization, and increased accuracy on the road to digitally transforming their organizations.
The Promised Land

Accounting, financial reporting, record maintenance, and identity access management (IAM) are easy targets for early RPA adopters. These business functions are riddled with tedious, scheduled, and repeatable tasks, presenting tremendous opportunity for organizations to create more predictable, consistent, and accurate processes.

**ACCOUNTING**
- Transaction management
- Journal entry creation
- Revenue recognition
- Depreciation/Amortization scheduling

**FINANCIAL REPORTING**
- Financial planning and analysis
- Period-close activity
- P&L monitoring
- Variance analysis

**CRM MAINTENANCE**
- Record maintenance
- Lead activity logging
- Customer interaction
- Payment processing integration

**CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT**
- After hours response
- Activity-based notification
- Automated messaging

**IDENTITY ACC. MGMT.**
- Active account monitoring
- Activity flagging
- Automated threat response
- Single-action account removal

**OTHER**
- Purchase order creation
- Data harmonization
- Credit rating issuance
- Operational dashboards

For a mid-table Fortune 1,000 organisation with around $20 billion revenue and 50,000 employees, automating 20% of estimated addressable activity through RPA could result in over $30m of bottom-line impact each year.\(^5\)

- deloitte
The nio Platform and Robotic Process Automation

Twenty-five percent of executives believe there are “high” barriers to digital disruption in their industries, with oil and gas (37 percent) and financial services (36 percent) at the top of the list. These barriers include capital costs, regulatory roadblocks, and complexity of business processes.

FORCE MULTIPLICATION
Serving as the digital nervous system for all sensing, logic, control, and automation, nio simplifies transforming manual business functions to automated functions. The nio System Designer allows builders to graphically organize, create, and configure nio systems to suit those specific needs. Low-code tools open the door for business users to work in conjunction with IT to build high-value integrations, while simultaneously paving a path for IT to become a more productive unit within their own initiatives.

EXTENSIBILITY
nio Platform users are able to tailor their solution to any industry, application, or RPA initiative. Due to nio’s block-based architecture, nio and nio systems are intrinsically modular. Blocks are user-friendly, reusable, and configurable packages of code. Blocks can be created to do anything from connecting to any data source to applying advanced programmatic logic. The nio Block Library is constantly growing, opening up endless application possibilities. The nio Block Development Framework allows any developer to create custom blocks to fit their business specifications from scratch or by leveraging existing development libraries, SDKs, and APIs.

PROGRESSIVE ADOPTION
The nio Platform serves as the engine for progressive adoption of enterprise-wide initiatives. nio does not have technical bias. It allows seamless integration with legacy and future technology, increased ROI, and reduced downtime. All of this can be done incrementally with significantly less training and opportunity cost than traditionally high-touch, complex software implementations.
Proven Value Proposition

At niolabs, we have utilized nio to streamline several internal task-based processes. We use Stripe and Xero for payment processing and accounting, respectively. The two companies provide an integration between their software, but the integration does not include automatic synchronization or journal entry creation resulting from a SaaS transaction.

The niolabs team built several blocks and a couple of services that accomplish exactly that. As a result, we have eliminated the manual journal entry process for our SaaS sales. Additional features and functionality are quick to add; if we were to switch to Quickbooks next week, the only required change would be removal of the Xero block and configuration of a Quickbooks block.

Conclusion

Robotic process automation will continue to gain momentum as the technology enabling it becomes more widespread and accessible to varying skillsets. The nio Platform is built for users to build real-world, innovative, and impactful solutions. Organizations are rich with information that can be captured and used to improve operations, widen margins, and improve the overall effectiveness of businesses. They just need to have the right tools to make it happen.

**nio is built to deliver your digital transformation.**

Contact us at sales@n.io to set up a demo and explore your digital business solution.
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