

Several steps to powerful efficiency wins with hyper-automation

By [Collin Govender](#)

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Many business leaders are looking to consolidate the gains of newly digitised business and operational processes now that companies are settling into various forms of remote and hybrid working. The health crisis has accelerated digital transformation at almost every level - and savvy leaders should now be looking to take the next step by introducing hyper-automation as a way to achieve important cost savings, while also unlocking new efficiencies.



Collin Govender, MD: Altron Karabina | image supplied

Indeed, a large majority of businesses are still inhibited by overly complex administrative and operational layers - and automation presents countless opportunities to simplify and streamline various aspects of business. Arguably, those who can take this next step into technology-driven efficiency will be best placed to succeed in what is clearly a highly competitive - and volatile - global business environment.

This will require taking a thoughtful and pragmatic approach to existing challenges, as well as finding the right technology partners to leverage the potential gains of automation. But first, let's take a step back and define what it really means.

Put simply, 'hyper automation' is the continuous integration of automation into business operations. This equates to more machines doing more things, and it usually starts with the most labour-intensive, repetitive and onerous tasks.



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For example, many accounts receivable and invoicing processes are already automated, and traditional bookkeeping tasks are being replaced by tech.

To get slightly more technical, Gartner defines hyper-automation as “an effective combination of complementary sets of tools that can integrate functional and process silos to automate and augment business processes.”

Among the tools in this combination: robotic process automation or RPA, process discovery, process mining, intelligent business process management systems or iBPMS, low-code and business rules engines.

The world has moved online

Today, the primary drivers of hyper-automation within businesses are threefold: the shift to distributed or remote workforces; the push to lower costs by replacing manual labour where possible; and the fact that more people are now interacting and transacting online, so the digital customer experience has to be vastly improved if businesses are to remain relevant and competitive.

Within retail, remaining relevant and competitive has become almost existential – because customers who experience challenges with a payment gateway, for instance, or a delivery issue, will immediately turn to a competitor instead.

For instance, can you find a way for customers to simply scan a QR code on their invoice, instead of going through multiple layers and numbers in order to pay?



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The key here is to be proactive, and instead of waiting for a customer or employee to complain about a process, get ahead by identifying where there is friction, and using automated processes and technology to eliminate it.

While the benefits of automation are alluring, it is, however, perhaps natural that many leaders and teams find the idea daunting – and are often unsure as to where to start.

Also, there is a common misperception that it requires huge capital investments into shiny new technology, which is not true.

On the contrary, there are plentiful quick automation wins lurking within businesses that do not require major investments – but they do require business/operational insight, coupled with some creative thinking.

We believe that there are several steps to this process, which can be viewed as follows:

Identify pain points in the value chain

More often than not, unlocking value and efficiencies through automation is not about being technologically savvy, but about having detailed insight into the existing blockages or pain points.

Create a friction-free experience at every level

While closely related to the above point, automation is a powerful way to remove the friction from customer interactions and customer experiences more broadly.

We can already see this when we are greeted by chatbots when visiting websites, as companies look to ensure they keep you interested and engaged at the outset.

Build a point solution for each process while you learn

Although many leaders are focused on building platforms and larger infrastructure to solve the challenge of complexity, you can achieve quick wins – and more importantly, major learning – through building a point solution first, while you develop the larger automation strategy in the background.

This gives you more time and more opportunities to learn and iterate, without devoting too much time and resources whilst both are scarce. It is always key to remember that there is no one-size-fits-all approach for automation, and each aspect of business will demand its own 'best of breed' solution and approach.



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By taking a more flexible and iterative approach, you also open up opportunities for negotiation with suppliers. For instance, take out a one-year licence on new software, and later, try to negotiate a potential three-year term at the same price.

Additionally, don't be worried about making the wrong choice: rather solve the problem you need to solve with a short-term approach to the engagement. Your mindset should be characterised by agility and responsiveness to achieve the best result!

Looking ahead, the most important thing is to get started...and by taking an incremental and highly pragmatic approach, you can quickly unlock the benefits of hyper-automation to propel your business forward.

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