

ARE YOU APPROACHING
PROCESS AUTOMATION
THE WRONG WAY?





Is Your Efficiency Sluggish?

Think about your organisation and its employees. How many tedious functions and tasks still require you to be physically involved or present? Submitting invoices. Shuffling through folders. Perpetually bugging your manager to finally approve an expense? These types of time wasters are a real problem that often go unaddressed.

WHY?

Because
"it's how
we've always
done it."

Because
"it's all we
truly have to
work with"

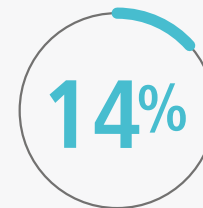
Because
"we're unaware
or uneducated
on the solutions
available to us"



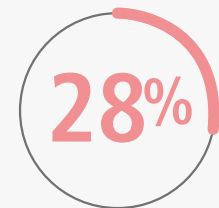
You're Wasting Too Much Time



Searching and
gathering
information



Communication
and
collaborating
internally



Reading and
answering email

It doesn't have to be this way. And it shouldn't. Not for your business. Not for any business.



Overcoming the Fear

But yet, intimidation, fear of the unknown, and a lack of time often keep organisations at bay when it comes to implementing a technology solution that automates their menial tasks. And worse yet, the idea of implementing an actual workflow automation system creates fear of costs, compatibility with existing infrastructure, and actual employee adoption rates. But data is pointing to a seemingly inevitable need for automated workflows:

- **More than 70%** of today's businesses would fail within three weeks if they suffered a catastrophic loss of paper records due to fire or flood.¹
- The digital universe is **doubling in size every two years**, and by 2020 the data we create and copy annually will grow by 10x – reaching 44 zettabytes, or 44 trillion gigabytes.² This compounds the stress for organisations when deciding what they need to do.

¹ Facts About Paper: The Impact of Consumption. (2013). Retrieved January 14, 2014

² Source: IDC iView " The Digital Universe of Opportunities: Rich Data and the Increasing Value of the Internet of Things," April 2014, sponsored by EMC.



What's in a Name?

Whether it's data overload, continual technology advancements, or an antiquated, inefficient system, most organisations will find the need to turn to some form of automated workflows in the not so distant future. And whether that form - or name - is process automation, workflow optimisation, document-driven workflows, or personal workflow management, one thing is clear: the solution inherently means different things to different people.


This of course creates counter-productive discussions to get everyone on the same page as well as general confusion as to the correct approach of actually implementing a system. And confusion drives up ink, which as you know isn't free.



Understanding Process Automation


SO, WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOUR ORGANISATION?

It means ripping you away from the manual data entry you once adored




Ensuring information makes it into your systems, allowing you to optimise your investment in those systems

It means no more waiting on others to give you the information you need



Giving you greater visibility into your processes, while removing bottlenecks

It means no more coffee-stained and misplaced files while working remotely



Allowing you to access and share critical business information anywhere, anytime, from any device

Process automation means streamlining the flow of your information – capturing, managing, and transforming it along the way where and how you need. **This gives you time back to focus on the strategic elements and functions of your organisation.** Take the menial tasks off your plate and spend the newfound time improving ROI and increasing revenue. It's what really matters after all.



The Biggest Mistake

But when it comes to figuring out how and where your organisation can benefit by automating processes, there is often one common mistake that many make: the belief they **need to change their processes** – particularly the back end of a process.

Organisations have a tendency to make a large technology investment and process overhaul. Swapping out the ERPs and accounting software. Upgrading the tech and storage hardware. Reassigning responsibilities among staff. This all can lead to poor adoption rates and added, unnecessary costs to name a few.

Even worse, the solution you put in place might actually **require extra steps** be added to the process because you're attempting to shoehorn technology with the false promises of better reporting, management, oversight and/or meeting some sort of tax, regulatory and compliance use case. This is a trap you can't afford.



Doing it the Right Way

So, the lesson becomes: If it isn't broken, don't fix it. Keeping your existing technology and processes largely in place. Businesses should instead focus on the front end or beginning of workflow processes, specifically regarding digitisation. That's because paper documents are slow, complex and expensive. They also put your information and your business at risk. A swift gust of wind or curious eyes can easily "misplace" your files. Digitising information gives you:

- The ability to leverage your information throughout the entire process without the need for manual intervention along the way.
- Better visibility and alerts to potential problems and outstanding activity ahead of time – flipping the management of the process from reactive to proactive.
- A documented, formal structure and procedure that workers previously didn't have keeps processes smooth, accurate, and up-to-date.
- Provides/helps in meeting security and governance rules and regulations.



A Digitally Fuelled Workflow

Think about your organisation for a second. The files. The people. The decisions. Do you see the connection?

All things documents, turn into all things data, which turn into ALL things for your organisation.

Meaning, in the end, the success of your organisation is rooted not just in the value of your information, but the format!

Let's break it down:

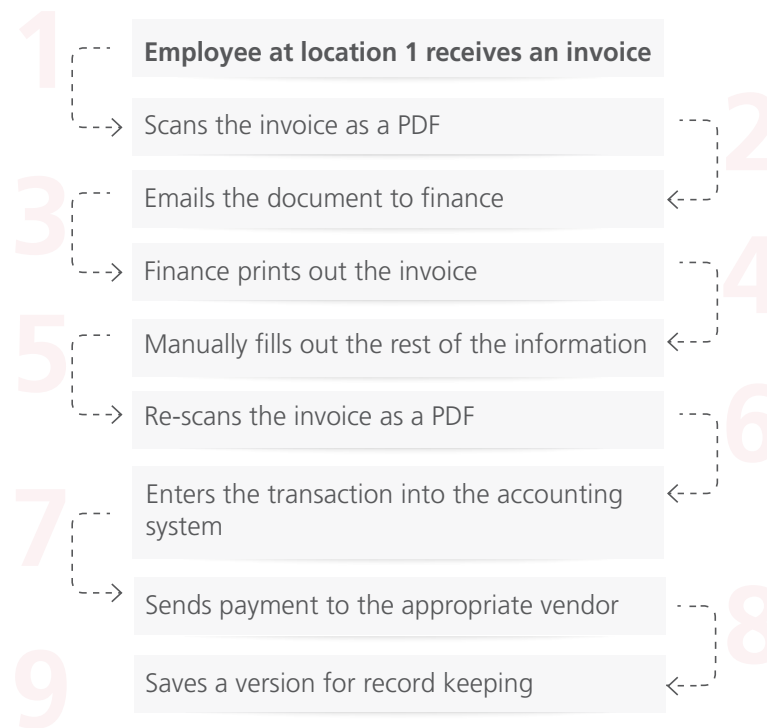
- Paper documents are valuable and actionable pieces of information for your organisation
- Automated processes drive that valuable information along the way, improving your organisation's performance
- Digitising documents before they enter a workflow accelerates processes by reducing steps, manual labour, and print spend, thus further enhancing workflow ROI

Sounds good, right?

Here's what that looks like.

Look Familiar?

This is your hypothetical accounts payable process that you'd find in most offices but the same principles could be applied to any computer based business process.



TAKEAWAYS

- 9 steps
- Printing and rescanning required
- Manual entry to systems

Optimised Process

And here's what your process looks like when you optimise the front end with digitisation. The positive ripple effect it has includes cutting steps, removing manual intervention and increasing accuracy.



1

Customer sends invoice to centralised email address



Invoice is automatically scanned, key data extracted and matched to purchase orders and goods receipts

2

3

Automatic approval on correct matching, otherwise automatically routed to correct person for approval.



THE RESULTS

- 60%+ 'touchless' processing
- Automated data keying, approval and distribution
- Save up to two thirds of your current invoicing process costs

STARTING FROM THE TOP

Digitising forms and other documents accelerates your existing workflows and the flow of information, bringing content to approvers in a few minutes as opposed to a few days.

Expedite the movement of critical information by pre-populating forms, integrating digital forms with your document management system (DMS) and eliminating the need to scan and index.

Once data is stored and sorted, use the added structure and organisation to identify opportunities for cost savings, and financial and operational improvements of your organisation.



Getting Started

No more hypotheticals. Chances are your organisation can optimise or automate its processes. The question is where and how.

Use this simple checklist to review your current state:

- ☒ I'm concerned about the security of my information and potential loss of data associated with paper documents (fire, flood, theft, natural disaster, etc).
- ☒ My office is in the habit of printing documents too frequently.
- ☒ Data overload is becoming a problem for my workers.
- ☒ Too many employee hours are spent [re]scanning, printing, and filing documents to complete a task.
- ☒ Approving and sending documents to the next person requires too much waiting and nagging.
- ☒ My company or specific department doesn't have a documented process for tasks.
- ☒ We invested in workflow automation, but workers aren't adopting it fully.
- ☒ We invested in workflow automation, but the ROI isn't apparent.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, it might be time to get – or enhance – your processes. **No one wants to do the paperwork, they want to do the smart work. Get started.**

Discover how easy it is to automate your organisation with Ricoh Process Automation

Ricoh's Process Automation offers solutions to help you automate virtually any business process within your organisation. We examine your existing systems and processes to create the best possible fit between business applications, innovative technologies and the processes they are designed to enable. Our services cover every aspect from start to finish: consulting, customisation, implementation, support and maintenance.

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