PROCESS IMPROVEMENT AND AUTOMATION

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ABSTRACT

Process improvement refers to the systematic approach of identifying, analyzing, and enhancing existing processes within an organization to increase efficiency, productivity, quality, and customer satisfaction. Evaluation of current workflows, identification of inefficiencies or wastes, and optimizations for better results are part of the process. Process improvement simply refers to improving the well-identified and settled business processes to meet the forthcoming business challenges. It starts with identifying the problems today's business is tasked with, making required changes in the process connected with it and thus improving the overall business process. Achieving efficiency, reducing costs, and optimizing operations is a must in today's competitive environment (Clarkson & Eckert, 2010). Analysis of existing workflows, identification of bottlenecks, and implementation of streamlined solutions constitute process improvement. The automation of repetitive and time-consuming tasks plays a key role in this endeavor, allowing human resources to be dedicated to higher-value activities instead of repetitive tasks. Various advantages of process improvement and automation are examined in this abstract, including improved productivity, better quality, greater customer satisfaction, and fewer errors. In their respective industries, companies can gain an advantage by adopting these practices that can lead to operational excellence.

On the other hand, business automation is concerned with designing such processes which decrease human involvement in doing business.

KEYWORDS

Constraints and challenges, BPA (Business Process Automation), optimization, robotic processes, macros, initiation, innovation, and opportunities.

OVERVIEW OF ARTICLE

This article revolves around businesses' need to continuously improve with the changing business environment. It says, "The only constant thing in the world is change." The world today is very dynamic and so are the ways of doing business. The business environment involves several factors both at the micro and macro levels. Since so many factors are involved, a lot of caution is to be taken in doing business.

Our world has seen tremendous changes in the past decade. You can now purchase anything from a pin to a plane with just a click of a mouse. Due to the digitization in the business world, many businessmen have shifted their focus to e-marketing. Similarly, there have been a lot of such noticeable changes in the field of doing business (Lacity et al. 2015). From the production stage to marketing, many changes have been introduced in the field of business.

Innovation is the need of the hour. For example, in the year 2020, the world kind of went to a halt. There was a pause for everyone and everything. But this can't certainly stop the basic needs of humans. Similarly, automation is also the need of the hour. Countries like India do have an abundant supply of labor for every of its production activities varying from agricultural daily wagers, to construction workers to labor for factories. But some other countries such as Japan have a much skewed population yet they seem to be more developed than the countries having more population such as India. The reason for such development in such countries is basically due to their technological advancement (Aguirre & Rodriguez, 2017). They have invested more in automated machines and automatic processes so that they are no more dependent largely on the human population for their product supply.

COMPARISON

It can be seen that people often get confused between the terms improvement and automation. While these terms do sound similar they have a mountain of difference between them. Improvement deals with innovation in the business processes which may or may not vary human involvement. Innovation of any kind analyzes and fixes problems and challenges in business processes. They present new opportunities to organizations through a new way of doing things. It is an update of the older techniques. Similar to the updating we all have in the processor of our smartphones or similar to how the beta version of a product is fairly better than the previous one (Willcocks et al. 2015).

Whereas automation is more directly connected with human involvement in a process. As a process is more and more automated it starts involving fewer humans in the process. Automation is inversely proportional to human involvement. That is, AI, robots and bots are all examples of automation. While dialing customer care, you are first attended by a machine that diverts your requests to the required personnel rather than having a fully functional and dedicated office for customer care services. This is an example of automation which then decreases the supply of human personnel you ought to have in your business.

	BPM - Business Process Management	RPA - Robotic Process Automation
Technology	Holistic Technology: Encompasses a wide range of software technology components including business analytics, workflows engine, and more to optimize business for maximum value and efficiency	Software Technology: Software bots are configured to complete routine, monotonous tasks that an employee would have to do
Automation Focus	End-to-end process Automation: Re-engineering process flows to eliminate bottlenecks, connect systems and increase productivity enterprise-wide	Manual Tasks: Minimizing manual, repetitive and rule-based tasks that do not require complex decision making
Deployment Effort	High: A longer-term effort which could require dedicates technical resources, depending on process complexity and depth of integrations	Low: Non-disruptively works across an organization's existing process and applications without requiring coding or extensive training
Business Impact	Significant and transformational: Wide gain can be achieved in overall productivity, agility, cost reduction, efficiency and compliance	Quick and immediate: Returns can be realized quickly and cost effectively, but implementations may not always address underlying process inefficiencies

Figure 1

Source- Javed (2018)

CHALLENGES

It is a significant challenge to improve processes and automate them because employees are reluctant to change. The goals and strategies of business are not always aligned with process improvement and automation initiatives. Resources and efforts can be wasted as a result. Multiple departments and functions are often involved in complex and diverse processes in organizations. Due to their complexity, it is difficult to identify and improve such processes. Data accuracy and reliability are essential to process improvement and automation. The quality, completeness, and availability of data are often challenges organizations face. It may be necessary

for an organization to integrate various technologies and applications in order to implement automation solutions. Data sources, legacy systems, and incompatible software can complicate integration. Scalability and flexibility are important considerations for organizations looking to improve their processes. Adapting processes to changing business requirements may be necessary as business requirements change (Page, 2015). The costs of automating can be substantial at first, but in the long run they can lead to cost savings. In order to implement process improvement and automation initiatives successfully, organizations must evaluate costs and benefits carefully. Organizational cultures that value continuous improvement, innovation, and collaboration are important to the success of process improvement and automation initiatives. Certain organizations may lack the agility necessary to embrace new technologies because of a culture that resists change.

SOLUTION

It is rightly said that progress at the cost of progress must be discouraged. Owing to the capacity and production sizes we shall always pay heed to the needs of society and affect technological changes accordingly. Employee engagement, clear communication, and training are all crucial to overcoming this resistance. To achieve meaningful results, business objectives and needs must be at the center of process improvement initiatives. A thorough understanding of the end-to-end process flow may be required, as well as interdepartmental collaboration and extensive data analysis. Identifying process bottlenecks and improvement opportunities is difficult when data is inconsistent or inadequate. An efficient implementation depends on having a well-defined integration strategy and robust IT infrastructure (Gibson et al. 2014).

It is quite obvious that in today's world, we need to keep pace with the changes in society, or else we will get obsolete in no time. Just as Nokia 1100 phones which were always top of the market once upon a time are nowhere seen now.

But simultaneously it is important to pay attention to the requirements of the society and apply such changes which will not harm the society.

FUTURE WORK

Technology advancements and a growing need for efficiency will drive rapid progress in process improvement and automation in the future. As organizations become more efficient, waste will be reduced, and resources will be allocated more efficiently. With the rise of robotic process automation (RPA), repetitive tasks will be automated and human resources will be freed up for more creative and complex tasks. Identifying and improving process bottlenecks will be made easier through artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms

(Clarkson & Eckert, 2010). Furthermore, real-time monitoring of processes will be possible with the integration of Internet of Things (IoT) devices and sensors. Smart, agile, and adaptive processes will characterize the future of work in a way that maximizes productivity and produces better results. People reckon that it is impossible to know the depth of an ocean. Similarly, it is quite an impossible task to foresee the technological changes taking place in the market today. No one remembers to use an actual mechanical calculator for their calculations. Rather everyone now sought their phones. Similarly, a lot of functions that earlier needed phones can be now performed by an innovation known to the world as the "smartwatch". Similarly, a person may no longer require his phone anymore in the coming days. As much as all these innovative techniques are important one should remember its need and the quantum needed (Gibson et al. 2014).

CONCLUSION

Innovation is required for business as much as oxygen is required for survival. However, we know that oxygen only is the very reason for the human age. Similarly, a person shall be very prudent when it comes to the application of innovation.

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