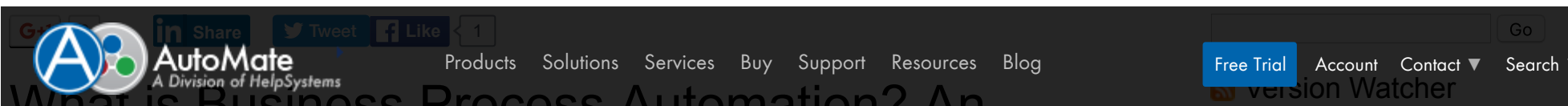




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What is Business Process Automation? An Introduction to Streamlining Business Processes.

by *Kaitlin McCloughan*, in *Automation Strategy*, posted 12/16/15



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Every enterprise is a system of interrelated processes. As the business expands, these processes grow in quantity and complexity--and sometimes it gets messy. Adding new employees or departments makes communication challenging and information isn't always shared with the people who need it. New applications are implemented while legacy systems are still in place. Meanwhile, executives are still looking for more ways to reduce overhead and continue growing the company. Business process automation exists to streamline your processes and reduce the complexity of managing them all simultaneously.

What is Business Process Automation?

Business process automation (BPA) software takes tedious, manual work out of your hands. All of the repeatable processes that are taking up time in your company--like transferring files, generating reports, or extracting data from unstructured sources--can be automated from one central location.

The "process" part of business process automation is key. Take data extraction, for example. Automating tasks like web scraping or screen scraping is a solid start to business automation, but the process never ends there. You want to do

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something with the data you've collected. When you implement business process automation software, each step in the process automatically triggers the next. Maybe extracting the data triggers writing the data into a report, which in turn triggers encrypting the report and transferring it to another department.

3/17/16
5:26pm

disappearing tasks

2/13/16
12:30am

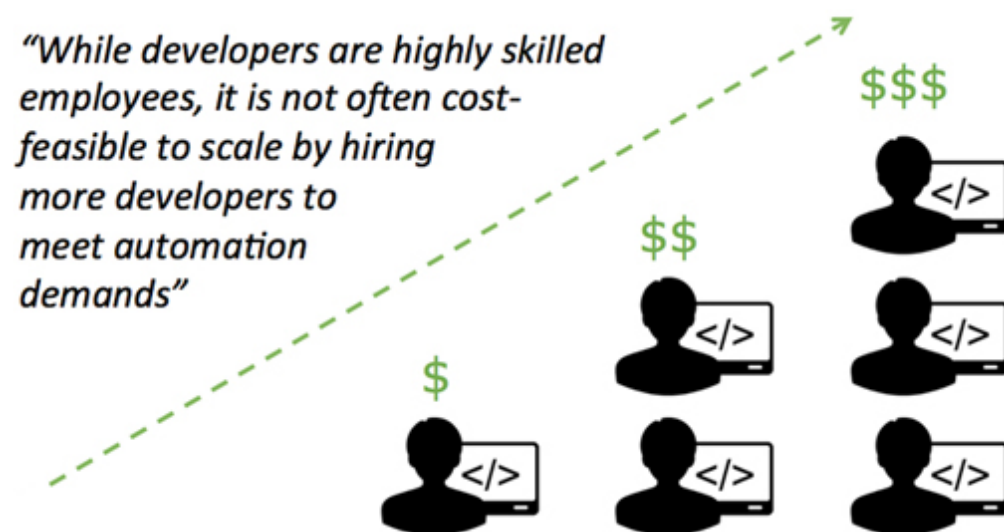
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9:53amCompare Data, and Return
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BPA benefits enterprises in many ways. Human error is virtually eliminated when tasks are automated. Automating even one process can save several hours each day, which also reduces cost significantly. And freeing employees from their manual work means they can focus on more important things like high-level strategy and innovation.

Business Process Automation Software: Not Just for IT

Non-technical types often find the idea of enterprise automation software intimidating. It doesn't have to be. The right business automation solution will have an easy-to-use interface that is as intuitive for your business analyst, HR manager, or accountants as it is for your systems administrator.



Business process automation software reaches every corner of your enterprise. The first advantage of this is that business users with no coding skills can benefit from process automation. Secondly, an overarching BPA solution eliminates technology silos. Often each department or team will implement the software solutions that work for its individual needs, ignoring the fact that processes across the company are interconnected. Even if tasks within your department are running smoothly, you might run into problems when you need to transfer data between different applications or share reports with

another team. Business process automation software ensures that all these tasks are orchestrated and monitored by a single tool.

The Benefits of Business Process Automation

Let's look at some specific examples of business process automation and the advantages it brings to your organization.

File transfers: This is a business process that almost every modern enterprise deals with, and it can eat up hours of time every day. Many basic file transfer tools are limited in scope. A managed file transfer tool can help your company deal with issues like error handling and secure transfers, but a centralized business process automation solution does much more. With business process automation you can incorporate file transfers into larger workflows that include tasks like encrypting and decrypting the files or entering the information they contain into an ERP system.

User provisioning: If you don't work in HR yourself, you might not be aware just how many processes go into onboarding a new employee. IT, Payroll, and the new employee's department all have to receive information. Forms need to be downloaded, completed, and verified. Various applications need to be provisioned, possibly with different permission settings for each new hire. Business process automation software can automate all these processes while also keeping all relevant parties notified at each step.

Report generation and distribution: Automated reporting on its own is valuable, but it's most efficient when it ties into other processes like scraping information from PDFs or writing the reported data into an accounting system. The right BPA tool will be able to deal with a variety of report formats.

Improved communication: For any important process in your enterprise, there are probably people who ought to be kept in the loop. But manually sending out emails is time consuming and not always reliable. Business process automation software will take care of sending notifications. BPA also makes sharing files easier by automating tasks like uploading documents to SharePoint or emailing reports to stakeholders.

For more examples of processes that BPA software can streamline, take a look at [AutoMate's solutions](#).



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