

What is business process automation?

Business process automation is a way to increase organizational efficiency by leveraging digital technologies to carry out business processes with minimal human intervention.

By shifting the responsibility of completing routine tasks from humans to machines, business process automation allows employees to spend more time focusing on value-added activities

What business processes can I automate?

Machines excel at following clearly defined steps. Therefore, you can automate any rule-based business process. Examples include:

Document routing

Invoice processing

Employee onboarding

Data entry

Screening against PEPs and sanctions lists

Data deletion

Transaction monitoring

What are the benefits of business process automation?

Business process automation eliminates the bottlenecks that lead to lost time and revenue. The improvements in efficiency and control spread to every facet of the organization — from increased productivity and compliance to better customer experience and performance.

Here are the 10 main benefits of business process automation.

1. Time savings

Business process automation saves your employees a great deal of time and allows them to work smarter, not harder.

By charging machines with completing recurrent, rule-based tasks, employees can free up time to focus on work that requires critical thinking, creativity, or the human touch.

2. Increased profits

While routine processes are necessary for the functioning of every company, they do not create value for your customers. Therefore, manually performing these processes often leads to lost profit.

With business process automation, organizations can increase their profitability by delegating mundane tasks to machines and spending more time on activities that add value to their customers.

3. Higher productivity

Organizations that rely on technology to automate processes also see an increase in productivity. The main reason is that machines can handle multiple tasks simultaneously, thus speeding up processes.

By relying on technologies to help with some of their tasks, employees will also get more work done in the same amount of time.

4. Greater efficiency

Business process automation helps companies fulfil tedious tasks with minimal resources. Companies get faster and more reliable results with lower costs, thus improving efficiency significantly.

5. Error minimization

Even the most capable and skilled employees make mistakes. Lack of attention, absent-mindedness, forgetfulness, and multitasking can all hinder the performance of your employees — especially when performing routine tasks.

Unlike humans, computers don't forget. Plus, they never get tired or distracted. Therefore, automating processes helps companies decrease the likelihood of human error dramatically.

6. Better standardization

Different employees often perform the same processes in different ways. But unfortunately, these ways are not always the most efficient.

On the other hand, automation solutions always follow the same steps to complete tasks and never stray from the rules you define. Hence, business process automation can help you standardize processes, achieve consistent results, and increase transparency across the organisation.

7. Auditable records

Automation solutions record each step of the process in an audit trail. That makes it possible to:

Track every step of the process

See who did what and when

Audit trails not only promote accountability and data security but also help companies demonstrate their compliance in the case of official controls.

8. Improved compliance

Automation solutions simplify regulatory compliance. By employing security controls such as encryption and role-based access control, automation solutions help companies meet the GDPR's data protection requirements.

Plus, features like automatic data deletion enable companies to fulfil their legal obligations regarding data retention.

9. Superior customer experience

Convenience and fast access to products and services matter most to today's customers.

Business process automation enables faster response times, data-driven personalization, and consistency across different channels. This improves the customer experience and helps companies differentiate themselves from the competition.

10. Improved scalability

Manual processes are not scalable enough and can easily hinder business growth. For example, manually invoicing a hundred clients requires much more resources than only invoicing ten, and companies can't always cope.

On the other hand, automated processes are scalable. Machines can perform multiple tasks at the same time much faster than any human can.

Therefore, they can easily handle significant increases in workload, demand, and customer base.

How does business process automation software work?

A business process is a sequence of steps performed in a specific order to achieve a goal.

Therefore, the first step is to define the goal and identify the steps needed to achieve it. Business process automation software will allow you to set up automation rules for each step and specific triggers that set them in motion.

Let's take the example of an annual report. In Denmark, annual reports must be signed by the company's board of directors and the CEO before the auditor can sign.

Job uncertainty

The first and the most prominent disadvantage of business process automation is job uncertainty. Simply put, due to the fact that some business processes can nowadays easily be automated, worker displacement becomes a serious question.