



(<https://blog.appliedai.com/robotic-process-automation-rpa-vendors-comparison/>)

RPA TOOLS & VENDORS IN 2018: COMPREHENSIVE AUTOMATION GUIDE

By Cem Dilmegani (<https://Blog.Appliedai.Com/Author/User/>) | April 16, 2018
(<https://Blog.Appliedai.Com/Robotic-Process-Automation-Rpa-Vendors-Comparison/>)

Almost every business has manual processes. They are inefficient, prone to errors and lead to employee satisfactions. RPA is one of the leading automation solutions of today.

Depending on your experience with RPA, you may have different questions, we have all the answers. The most common request we get is the list of all RPA tools & vendors.

Other common questions are about:

Understanding RPA:

- What is Robotic Process Automation (RPA)? (<https://blog.appliedai.com/what-is-robotic-process-automation/>) [Separate article]
- Why is RPA so relevant today?
- What are the benefits of RPA? (<https://blog.appliedai.com/top-robotic-process-automation-rpa-benefits/>) [Separate article]
- Understand and compare RPA tools to identify the tool you need

Preparing an RPA vendor shortlist:

- Understand RPA vendor landscape

- Choose the process to be automated so you can prepare your requirements
- Use our checklist for objective RPA vendor assessment
- Use our vendor list to prepare a short list within minutes

Implementing RPA:

- Follow these tips to turn your next automation project into a success story
- Avoid these RPA pitfalls (<https://blog.appliedai.com/rpa-pitfalls/>) [Separate article]
- Discover RPA conferences where you can learn more (<https://blog.appliedai.com/rpa-conferences/>) [Separate article]

Why is RPA so relevant today?

No one wants manual processes. In the 90s and 2000s, almost every Fortune 500 invested in low cost countries or worked with Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) firms to outsource their manual processes. However, while this virtual labor source was much cheaper than the local talent, it was still costly and prone to errors.

Most companies today eliminate manual processes thanks to advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning. So whenever your company has a manual process, it is a good opportunity to ask yourself: How can we automate this process? As you can see in our comprehensive guide on Robotic Process Automation (RPA) (<https://blog.appliedai.com/rpa>), robotic process automation software, also called robotic automation, can help automate most manual processes. However, though RPAs benefits are numerous, you still need to choose the right RPA platform to maximize how your business' benefits from RPA.

First, you can read our guide, it's great, it's comprehensive but there's a shortcut: **We can choose the right vendors for you based on the industry, size, location and needs of your business:**

Let us find the right vendor for your business

(<https://appliedai.com/vendor-selection>)

If you want to know more about vendor selection, please read on.

Understand and compare RPA tools to identify the tool you need

Essentially RPA bots are software robots that complete specific automatable activities. There are 4 types of robotic process automation tools on the market.

- Even before RPA software, enterprises were using automation tools. Employees were automating simple processes with excel automation, macros and simple hacks. These solutions were not scalable or sustainable but they increased productivity of individual employees.
- First generation RPA tools were **programmable bots** that required specific inputs.
- Then, **self-learning tools** were developed. They watch employees in action, understand processes, take over processes when they reach confidence and ask for human input if they get completely new input.
- Finally, **cognitive or intelligent automation bots** augment self-learning bots with advanced functionality like Natural Language Processing.

Check out our article on RPA tools (<https://blog.appliedai.com/operations/rpa-tools/>) for more information on RPA tools.

Understand RPA vendor landscape in 2 minutes

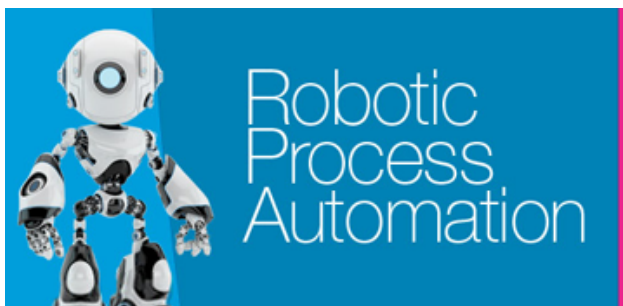
To choose an RPA software vendor, you must understand the RPA vendor landscape and compare vendors to choose the most suitable vendor for your business. Evaluating vendors and making the right vendor assessment can be a time-consuming effort.

As appliedAI.com we provide the most comprehensive public list of robotic process automation vendors (<https://appliedai.com/operations/robotic-process-automation/vendors/>). You have full access to top RPA vendors from India to Silicon Valley along with their references and explanation of their products (<https://appliedai.com/operations/robotic-process-automation/>). There are mainly 3 types of RPA vendors:

Established technology providers

Companies like Pegasystems or Kofax were launched in 1980s and 1990s to help with various digitization needs of companies.

For example, Kofax initially established itself as a digital transformation vendor offering services like document digitization, e-signatures. Using their relationships with companies, process knowledge and understanding of change management in companies, they launched RPA products.



Courtesy of NICE Actimize

1st wave RPA focused vendors

Founded in 2000s, these vendors are focused on providing RPA solutions and already reached significant scale. Initially they provided and later perfected programmable bot solutions. Currently, they are focused on improving advanced capabilities of their bots, offering cognitive automation capabilities. Some examples in this group are:

- Blue Prism already went public and work with numerous Fortune 500 customers
- UiPath, founded in 2005, claims to work for 6 of Fortune 10, 8 of world's top 20 financial services organizations

2nd wave RPA focused vendors

Founded in 2010s, these vendors are focused on providing latest generation RPA solutions like cognitive or intelligent automation. They are scaling up as enterprises realize the value of cognitive automation.

They were founded at a time when rule based, programmable RPA solutions were gaining popularity. Their focus has been on solving more complex problems. Such problems would require an immense programming effort for rule-based bots to solve. So their solutions incorporate cognitive or learning bots that learn from employees' actions.

Some vendors are adding new capabilities to their offering beyond RPA. For example WorkFusion is offering chatbots integrated to its RPA bots. These companies are willing to take risks for market disruption. For example, WorkFusion's offering of free-as-in-beer RPA solution was one of the free first free offers on markets and will definitely attract attention.

These companies also tend to have a strong background in science: For example, Max Yankelevich, CEO of WorkFusion, worked as a researcher in MIT and used some his research in building cognitive bots that learn by watching employees.



(<http://blog.appliedai.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/bpo.gif>)

Source: gdmanagement.com

Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) providers

Companies like Infosys from India already run numerous processes for large companies. It is only logical that these companies are striving to automate the processes they took over from other companies. As a result, they have accumulated significant expertise in RPA.

Most of these companies do not have their own RPA solutions however, they formed partnerships with RPA solution providers and offer turn-key solutions to companies. This model allows companies to focus on business while BPO provider automates the process so it is an interesting alternative for companies that have issues managing day-to-day business with their current headcount.

BPOs can also use RPA solutions in-house to offer cheap process outsourcing solutions for automatable processes. They understand the process and automate it while outsourcing it. In this model, their personnel also handles edge cases that can interrupt bot operations. This is a rather hassle-free and effective model for business process outsourcing for companies that don't want to deal with the complexities of automation.

Now that you know the industry landscape, it is time to prepare your short list of vendors.

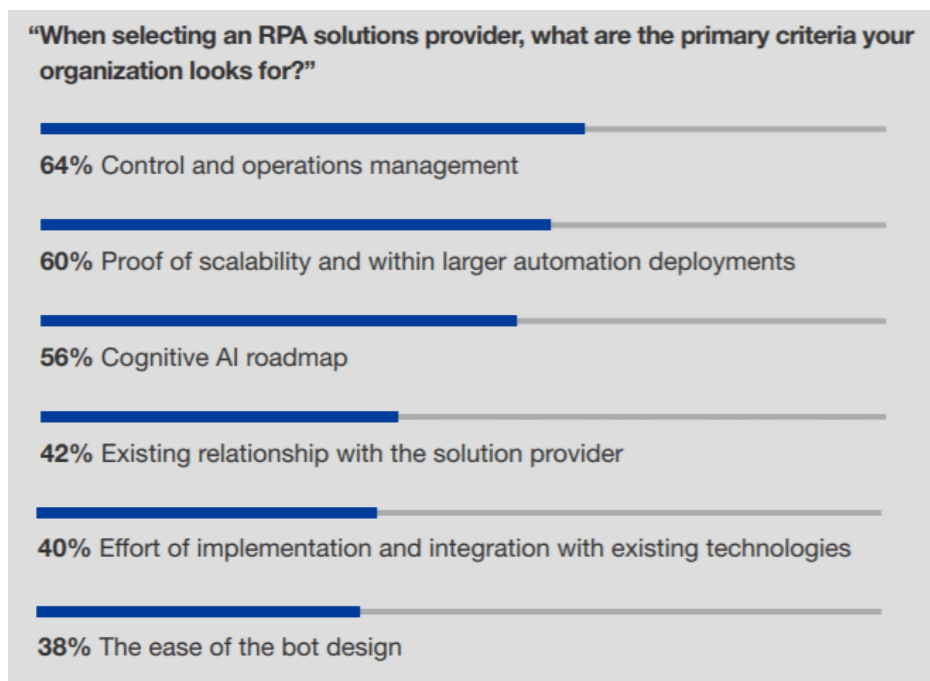
Choose the process to be automated so you can be specific in your requirements

To identify the important RPA selection criteria for your business, it would be good to understand what are good candidate processes for RPA automation at your company. We have a comprehensive guide on popular processes for RPA automation (<https://blog.appliedai.com/operations/rpa/robotic-process-automation-application-areas/>) and an RPA guide that includes steps to determine which processes in your company are good candidates (<https://blog.appliedai.com/rpa-implementation/>) for RPA automation.

If you do not have the bandwidth to pick the right processes, there are numerous companies including system integrators and Big 4 offering RPA consulting services. You can read more about this in our RPA consulting guide (<https://blog.appliedai.com/rpa-consulting/>).

Now that you know the processes to be automated, you can understand which attributes of RPA vendors are more relevant for your business. For example, you should consider automating part of your candidate processes with RPA to see how easy-to-use the RPA tool is.

Use this checklist to prepare your criteria for objective RPA vendor assessment



(<http://blog.appliedai.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Screenshot-12.png>)

There is plenty of sources on criteria for choosing RPA providers. For example, the list above from Forrester which is based on 105 answers by managers listing their primary criteria for selecting an RPA solutions provider. We created the full list of criteria and categorized them to make the list more manageable.

- **Total cost of ownership** which includes initial setup cost of RPA system, ongoing vendor license fees and maintenance cost.
 - **Initial setup cost:** Initial setup costs can also be negligible if in-house process experts can train bots. However, if in-house resources are better utilized elsewhere, business consulting companies like Accenture and Infosys can augment your workforce and speed up implementation.

- **Ongoing vendor license fees:** Workfusion recently rolled out a limited selection of free-to-use bots (<https://blog.workfusion.com/the-next-stop-for-robotic-process-automation-free-as-in-beer-c2bfa7ef62e2>) to disrupt the market. UiPath also offers a free community edition. However, these vendors only offer their rule-based bots for free. Cognitive bots that learn by watching employees are a premium product and can be priced per bot or per process. Since different vendors use different pricing models, you need to estimate the total vendor license fee you will pay.
- **Maintenance cost:** As inputs and systems change, your bots will require maintenance. When you roll-out bots, your teams will need to set up the alerts needed to identify bot issues. As those alerts arise, your teams will be fixing bot configurations to maintain bots. This is not a directly measurable financial cost however it will distract your employees. An easy-to-maintain solution will make your employees happier and more productive.
- **Ease of use and control:**
 - **Ease of automation:** A user friendly solution easy enough to be used by your team can help them implement RPA in new areas and increase both efficiency and employee satisfaction. Easier to use solutions will also require less training and allow your new hires get up to speed faster. Ease of use depends on bot development options, such as availability of Graphical User Interface (GUI) for drag&drop bot building and macro recording. Finally, **you can't know ease of use without using the product.** Once you reduce your shortlist to 2 or 3 vendors, pick the simplest use case that you really need to automate, sit down with vendor personnel for an hour and automate that process on a demo environment. Automating a process will help you understand how easy to use each RPA solution is.
 - **In-person or virtual training options:** Quality of available training is also an important factor here. Great text or video tutorials and availability of hands-on training can help employees become quickly proficient in RPA solutions. Some leading RPA solutions providers offer community versions of their products. To support RPA development by their community, they offer free courses, training material and community forums helps users support one another.
 - **Ease of control:** Once your process is automated, you will need to make adjustments to how it is running. For example, you may need to stop bots during systems maintenance and add bots when process volume increases. Different providers offer different levels of automation and granularity of control. That's why it is good to use the bot orchestrator before the purchase.
- **Technical criteria including current features and product roadmap:**
 - **Security:** RPA bots will be making changes on your customer data and security is absolutely critical. That's why vendors like WorkFusion are investing in security certifications (<https://www.workfusion.com/news-workfusion-takes-the-lead-as-most-secure-rpa-provider-in-automation-space-announcing-iso-27001-compliance-certificate-and-cyberark-partnership>).
 - **Integrations:** Scope of integrations with different systems is critical as they will define the scope of your automation. Integrations with productivity tools and central enterprise tools like ERP and CRM are a must. For more information on features, see our guide on RPA tools (<https://blog.appliedai.com/operations/rpa/tools/>).
 - **Screen scraping capabilities:** For example, if your company is using Citrix virtualization solutions, you need to program your bot for Citrix automations. Strong screen scraping capabilities are required for the bot to understand menus and other fields on the screen and complete relevant tasks.
 - **Cognitive or intelligent automation capabilities:** Future of RPA is not programmed bots. It is self-learning bots. By working with a vendor that offers advanced cognitive or intelligent automation capabilities, you can minimize the work required to deploy bots. Bots can self-learn simple activities by analyzing thousands of hours of process data. Strong current cognitive automation capabilities of a vendor can save your team weeks of work.
 - **Product roadmap:** While cognitive automation is already here, it is still not strong enough to automate many complex processes. Additionally, image recognition and natural language processing capabilities of bots are also set to improve significantly in the future. A vendor that is aggressively investing in these future capabilities can offer your team a future-proof solution that they can use for a long time without switching vendors.

- **Vendor experience:** Ideally, it is best to work with a vendor that served a company similar to yours both in terms of size and industry. This may not be easy to find but it would be easier to work with a vendor that understands the needs and processes of your business. Such experience can drastically improve speed of implementation by reducing the work required to implement RPA software. For example, Redwood Software (<https://www.redwood.com/robotics/>) highlights how their pre-built plug&play robots can be deployed quickly with little or no customization.
 - **Vendor support:** While some companies will require quite some hand-holding, others have technically competent, eager-to-learn staff who can program RPA bots themselves. Based on the needs of your company you need to consider the level of support you will require from your RPA vendor. For a company that requires a lot of support, working with a BPO provider may be a good solution.
- **Existing vendor relationship:** It is faster to get started with a provider that is already familiar with your company

Get the prefilled checklist with all RPA tools & add your criteria to prepare a short list within minutes

We can't fill all criteria unfortunately. For example pricing is kept intentionally complex with some vendors using process based and others using bot based pricing. However, we have completed most important general criteria.

If you take this and add criteria specific to your automation project, you will have all the criteria you need to prepare your shortlist. Some criteria to consider are:

First, I would prioritize vendors that your company is buying from. If you are working for a Fortune 500, your company is probably already purchasing from established technology providers or BPO providers that provide RPA services. Established procurement relations can help you quickly make purchases. Additionally, by buying multiple services from a vendor, you provide more leverage to the procurement team which can help them negotiate good prices.

If you are feeling lazy, just query the full list of RPA companies listed on our platform (<https://appliedai.com/operations/robotic-process-automation/vendors>) against your procurement database. You could also use the list of vendors below but that list is not may not be as up-to-date as the one on our platform. Now you have the beginning of a short list of vendors.

You can finalize your shortlist after adding leading vendors with whom your company has no relationship yet. Our list above and database allows you to make those additions. Instead of trying to compare vendors by looking at a marketing employee's fancy adjectives, we offer you the real and up-to-date data.

You can compare established companies and startups on objective metrics using this list. By ranking the most suitable vendors based on your own insights, you will never be fooled with subjective (or even paid) rankings and choose what is best for your company.

Search:

| Vendor | Free version available? | Pricing | Usability - Drag & drop programming | Usability - Macro recording | Selected partners | Geo coverage |
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|---|-------------|-----------|-----------|---|----------------------|
| Another Monday (https://appliedai.com/vendor/another-monday) | | | | KPMG PwC | Europe |
| Arago (https://appliedai.com/vendor/arago) | | | | | |
| Automation Anywhere (https://appliedai.com/vendor/automation-anywhere) | per process | Available | Available | Accenture Capgemini Cognizant Deloitte EY IBM KPMG PwC | Global |
| Blueprism (https://appliedai.com/vendor/blueprism-group) | per bot | Available | N/A | Accenture Capgemini Cognizant Deloitte EY IBM KPMG PwC | Global |
| Cicero (https://appliedai.com/vendor/cicero) | | | | | |
| Contextor (https://appliedai.com/vendor/contextor) | | | | Accenture Capgemini EY IBM | EMEA & North America |
| Jacada (https://appliedai.com/vendor/jacada) | | | | Accenture Cognizant | |
| Kofax (https://appliedai.com/vendor/kofax) | | | N/A | Accenture IBM | Global |
| Kryon (https://appliedai.com/vendor/kryon) | | | | | |
| NICE Systems (https://appliedai.com/vendor/nice-systems) | | | | Accenture Cognizant IBM | Global |

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| Onvisource (http://appliedai.com/vendor/onvisource) | | | | | | |
| Open Connect (https://appliedai.com/vendor/openconnect) | | | | | | |
| Pega (https://appliedai.com/vendor/pegasystems) | | | | | Accenture Capgemini Cognizant EY | Global |
| Redwood Software (https://appliedai.com/vendor/redwood-software) | | | | | Accenture Capgemini Deloitte IBM KPMG | Global |
| Softomotive (https://appliedai.com/vendor/softomotive) | | | | | | |
| Symphony Ventures (https://appliedai.com/vendor/symphony-ventures) | | | | | | |
| Thoughtonomy (https://appliedai.com/vendor/thoughtonomy) | | | | | | |
| UiPath (https://appliedai.com/vendor/uipath) | UiPath Community Edition | per bot | Available | Available | Accenture Capgemini Cognizant Deloitte EY IBM PwC | Global |
| WorkFusion (https://appliedai.com/vendor/workfusion) | WorkFusion RPA Express | per process | Available | Available | Capgemini Cognizant Deloitte PwC | Global |
| AntWorks | | | | | | |
| AutomationEdge | | | | | | |
| Enable Soft | | | | | Available | |

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| Epiance Epigenie RPA | | | |
| Exilant Fusion | | | |
| Ikarus | | | |
| Infosys EdgeVerve Systems | | | |
| Jidoka | | | Based in Spain & Colombia |
| Perpetuuti | | | Cognizant IBM |
| Syntel | | | |
| Verint | | | Accenture Capgemini IBM |
| Visual Cron | 45 day free trial | per server | Available |

We get the question “What’s the best rpa software?” from companies after they go through the list. It is unfortunately impossible to say that without understanding your company’s automation need in detail and this guide helps you do that. However, if you insist, you can check out our attempt to rank different RPA software with objective and transparent metrics (<https://blog.appliedai.com/best-rpa-software/>).

Unlike other analysts’ rankings using unexplainable methodology, our ranking is quite straightforward.

Reduce the number of vendors in your shortlist

Now that you have your short list of vendors and your partially filled list of criteria, it is time to start communicating with vendors. Before talking to vendors, we recommend going to their profile on our website to understand a bit more about who they work with and how they describe their services. For an example, take a look at Workfusion’s profile page (<https://appliedai.com/vendor/workfusion>).

After meeting with vendors and evaluating them across these criteria, you will be ready to choose your vendor. After choosing your vendor, you can use our guide on RPA application areas (<https://blog.appliedai.com/robotic-process-automation-use-cases/>) to explore processes ripe for automation.

To begin the process of selecting an RPA vendor, you can use our free service and get a shortlist quickly:

Let us find the right vendor for your business
(<https://appliedai.com/vendor-selection>)

Tips to turn your next automation project into a success story

Always bear in mind that there are alternatives to RPA such as system upgrades (<https://blog.appliedai.com/rpa-alternatives/>). If RPA costs are approaching system upgrade costs, you could upgrade your underlying systems and automate the tasks rather than using RPA bots. With either an upgrade of your legacy systems or a flexible RPA solution you will end up with an optimized, automatized operation that can carry your business forward.

If you embark on an automation project, focus on the end-to-end process. Automation provides a change to rethink the whole process from the customer to the service delivery. Unnecessary steps can be eliminated, non-compliant or legacy activities can be improved. For example, removing fields from forms filled out by customers can improve the user experience and reduce the work to be automated. And definitely check out RPA implementation guide before starting any RPA program (<https://blog.appliedai.com/rpa-implementation/>).

RPA is just one of the areas where AI can add value to your business. On our website you can discover how you can use AI to improve key metrics like sales or customer satisfaction (<https://appliedai.com/>).

And we are aware that though we are constantly improving our content, you probably still have unanswered questions. Please take the time to ask those questions as comments. We regularly talk to leaders of RPA companies. If you can be specific, we can get even your hardest questions answered and email you the answers after adding them here.

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