

# The Art of Automation in Modern Engineering

## Designing Systems That Think Without Forgetting to Feel

Nigel Dsouza

We used to automate because we were lazy.

Now we automate because we must.

In a world of hyperscale systems, incident fatigue, and the unrelenting pressure of uptime, automation is no longer a luxury — it's the nervous system of modern engineering.

But here's the catch: most automation isn't beautiful. It's brittle. It's soulless. It gets the job done, but no one knows how. Or why. Or what to do when it breaks.

Which begs the question: What if automation could be art?

### Beyond Scripts and Cron Jobs

Real automation is not about writing bash scripts or wiring up webhooks. It's about designing **intent**.

It's about embedding wisdom into pipelines. About anticipating failure and choreographing recovery. About orchestrating workflows that are so smooth, they feel alive.

At Fidelity, I've built automation frameworks that touch everything from CI/CD to disaster recovery — and I've learned this:

Bad automation saves time. Good automation saves teams.

### When Systems Become Symphony

Think of your infrastructure like an orchestra:

- Jenkins is your conductor.
- Terraform is your string section — precise, declarative.
- Lambda functions? Percussion — fast, ephemeral, rhythmic.
- Your alerts and monitors? That's the brass — loud, essential, sometimes alarming.

You don't just want them to play. You want them to *play well together*.

That's the art.

## The Cost of Frictionless Systems

The danger with perfect automation is that it can remove too much friction.

No one reads the logs. No one asks questions. No one remembers how things work — until they don't.

Which is why the best automation doesn't just remove humans. It supports them. It teaches. It leaves trails. It respects context.

## Designing for Delight, Not Just Delivery

Your pipeline can be a joy to use. Your self-healing scripts can come with ASCII art. Your alerts can be tuned like instruments, not alarms.

Because automation isn't just execution — it's experience.

And if we want engineers to trust the system, to enjoy using it, to build upon it, then we have to make it more than functional.

We have to make it **feelable**.

## Conclusion: Automate Like an Artist

The next wave of engineering leaders won't be those who can write the fastest script — but those who can build systems that run themselves *without losing their soul*.

So the next time you write a pipeline, ask:

- Does this automate a task, or teach a mindset?
- Will the next person understand it, or fear it?
- Did I just save time — or create trust?

Because automation isn't just a tool. It's a medium.

And some of us were born to make it art.

## About the Author

**Nigel Dsouza** is a Principal Software Engineer and Technical Lead at Fidelity Investments, where he designs automated cloud systems that are as resilient as they are human. He believes every Jenkinsfile is a brushstroke — and every pipeline, a performance.