



# Utilising Robotic Process Automation to Scale Up Process Quality, Efficiency, and Productivity

The need to streamline business processes and work at an increasing speed is accelerating the demand for automation. Expectations are set to reap the benefits of automation in reduced costs, faster turnaround, and greater use of data. Today, automation comes in many shapes, and many suppliers have begun to combine automation tools with their products, like ERP solutions. In this Midagon Point of View, we focus on automation with Robotic process automation (RPA), its advantages and disadvantages, alongside what to consider when planning to embark on your RPA journey.

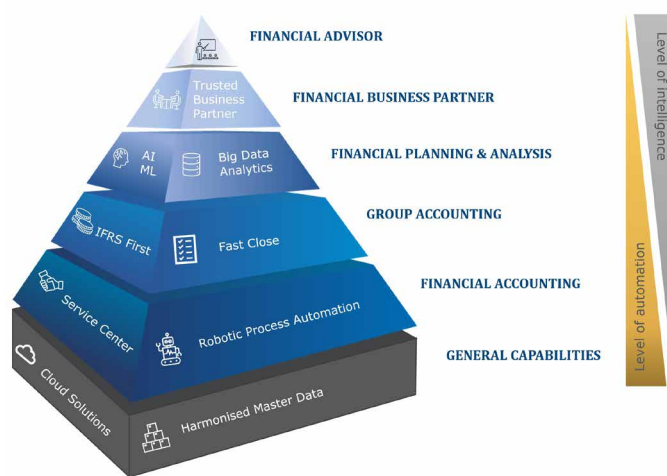
RPA refers to using virtual software robots (also known as bots) to automate high-volume repetitive back-office and front-office tasks such as copy-pasting information, data validation, sending notifications, and other similar tasks. RPA can carry out routine, rule-based operations across applications, mimicking how humans interact with software.

Automating simple, repetitive tasks with RPA can reduce costs, augment the workforce, and complete business activities faster. This frees people from monotonous tasks to more value-adding work. RPA is also found to support remote and hybrid work and close system integration gaps.

There are three types of RPA as per their internal operations:

- Attended RPA – a tool used by a person, not automatically triggered.
- Unattended RPA - typically event-based and operates at the backend of the IT infrastructure.
- Hybrid RPA - an end-to-end automated workflow that has both attended and unattended bots working together to perform a more significant function.

RPA can be connected to Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Optical Character Recognition (OCR), process mining and Chat GPT4 tools to enhance RPA functionalities and many RPA vendors already provide such additions.



[Read more about how RPA connects to other elements of the finance value pyramid](#)

## Robotics as a Service (RaaS)

Robotics as a Service is a new business model where vendors offer robots to customers as a service instead of selling the robots. In other words, it is leasing robotic devices and accessing cloud-based subscription services instead of purchasing and maintaining its robots. This model is similar to as-a-service models, such as Software as a Service (SaaS) and Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS).

With RaaS, it is possible to bring robots faster into use with less upfront investment. This model enables the use of robots when needed and cancels service when no longer needed. Ideal for when you want to test and experiment with RPA. With different models available, like subscription-based and pay-as-you-go, RaaS can be more appealing than one-time purchases.

Due to its flexibility, scalability, and lower entry costs, RaaS has become increasingly popular compared to traditional robotics programs. However, with RaaS, one must have a good understanding of what needs the robot is acquired for to receive the right type of robot from the vendor. Also, RaaS might not be the correct choice if you need to use RPA for critical applications.

## Alternatives for RPA

Before rushing into buying or leasing bots to realise the expected benefits, it is good to consider the alternatives for RPA, as it is not the right fit for every process.

RPA has four main alternatives when it comes to automating processes:

1. IT transformation
2. Business Process Management Systems (BPMS)
3. Business Process Outsourcing
4. Specialised Plug&Play Solutions

Compared to the listed alternatives, RPA has its advantages as it is flexible, easy to implement, easy to integrate and costs less than human work. Like any solution, there are potential pitfalls as well.

When your target is to improve well-functioning human processes or automate repetitive but needed tasks, RPA could be your choice. If your target is to manage or eliminate manual processes, you should consider other alternatives over RPA, especially if they have a better Return on Investment (ROI).

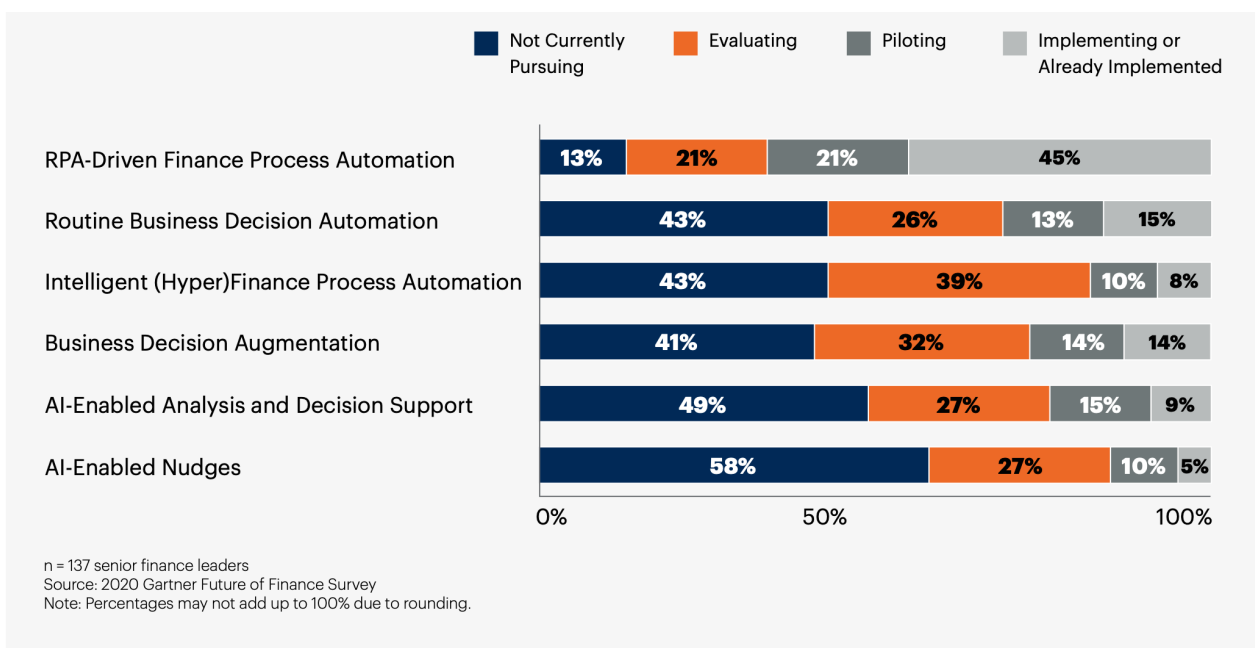
RPA and its alternatives are not exclusive approaches, so you might want to consider leveraging RPA while also investing in transformational system upgrades.

## RPA use cases

Finance, HR, Sales, Banking, Retail, and Manufacturing are some sectors where RPA is commonly used.

In **Finance**, RPA is typically used in Accounts Payable (AP) and Accounts Receivable (AR) processes as they include repetitive tasks which can be automated with RPA to reduce accounting costs. **HR** can utilise bots in employee onboarding and offboarding or in recruitment to automate parts of the hiring and onboarding processes. Within **Sales**, RPA can be used for monitoring market trends, customer behaviours and competitors or even to identify potential leads. The **Banking** sector utilises RPA in loan processing and validation in addition to other data and verification checks to speed up administration processes and improve service level agreements (SLAs). For **Retail**, RPA can bring cost savings and improve customer service through invoice and inventory management and keeping CRM data clean. In **manufacturing**, top cases for automation are found within supply chain optimisation, inventory management and reporting, data management and order fulfilment, reducing the time consumed in manual, repetitive tasks.

These are just a few examples of where RPA can be used. Reviewing RPA against as-is process flowcharts or using process mining solutions, the most impactful RPA areas for your company can be identified.



Gartner 2020: Digital Technology Use Cases in Finance: "Current Levels of Digital Implementation Within Finance"

## Successful RPA implementation

Once you have decided to embark on your RPA Journey, the next step would be to establish the roadmap to make it a successful one. When planning the journey, you will want to have experienced, independent partners who can help you during your journey. The selected partners should understand your business and processes and have the ability to help you get the commitment and buy-in needed for your undertaking, as well as help set up a scalable RPA architecture from the get-go.

Good partners help you overcome the potential organisational and technical challenges during your journey until you reach the business-as-usual state. Just like any solution, robots will need maintenance and

### Key insight

Although 53% of organisations have begun their RPA journey, only 3% have been able to scale it. Nearly half of the organisations who start their RPA journey do not reach the targets set.

Source: [deloitte-nl-consulting-robots-are-ready.pdf](#)

development. To do this, you might want to continue with your partners and set up a centre of excellence, which helps you to keep your RPA fleet in good condition and ready for potential future upscaling.

An independent partner can objectively analyse the RPA options available in the market and help set up the best scalable solution for your needs.

## How Midagon can support you in your RPA journey

Midagon is an independent consultancy specialising in challenging transformations. We combine extensive program and project management experience, business domain and technology expertise with 100 % objectivity to help our clients succeed even in their most complex transformations.

We excel in setting up the best journey roadmap for your business and leading your organisation during the RPA journey. Our independent position enables us to design and set up a scalable architecture and the maintenance model most suitable for your needs without forgetting important security measures.

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