

Automation is the Key to Agility



By:

One thing the last 18 months has taught the business community is the importance of being able to respond to change, fast. Any organization that was not on top of their business processes—or that had a manual approach to business administration—felt the pain when the pandemic hit, and their workforce’s landscape changed in an instant.

Suddenly, 90 percent of the workforce was operating remotely. Communications and collaboration tools were tested to the limit to ensure business continuity while also offering a positive employee experience.

Roll the clock forward to 2021, and what have we learned from this experience?

Business process automation

For many, the key is business process automation.

According to [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_process_automation), business process automation (BPA)—also known as business automation or business transformation—is the technology-enabled automation of complex business processes. The aim of a BPA strategy is to streamline your business for simplicity, and increase your service quality while improving service delivery, helping you to manage your costs. BPA integrates applications, restructures staff resources, and uses software applications to achieve these goals.

Essentially, if your business is underpinned by a successful BPA strategy, you will have found adapting to the new working practices of the pandemic a whole lot easier than other organizations. If it is not, then here are some pointers to get your started:

- Where are you on your business transformation journey?
- What is your end goal and how can automation help?
- Does your business see the IT department and collaboration solutions as an area of innovation

or a roadblock to agility?

- How can automation improve the agility of your collaboration strategy to drive business success?

The role of automation

As organizations seek to leverage technology and automation tools to realize a range of benefits, the theme of automation carries increasing importance. Introducing automation unlocks a range of benefits for businesses. Replacing manual processes with automation drives greater efficiency for staff and improves service by reducing the time it takes to complete a task. Reducing the load of manual administration on your IT team allows them to focus on things that drive business success and innovation rather than simply keeping the lights on. This typically drives far greater employee satisfaction within the IT team as well. Finally, automation streamlines processes across functional areas, avoiding delays from handoffs between groups. While we see a lot of automation being deployed in organizations, it often does not include UC and collaboration (UCC) workloads and processes, despite these applications being critical to the organization's business success.

UCC automation unlocks value

Given the benefit and strategic importance of BPA, let us look at how integrating UCC is critical to its success.

First, by incorporating collaboration automation, you can achieve a true single pane of glass for cross-functional business processes across your organization. With automation in place, end users can access services and changes faster while administrators can be more efficient by completing an activity once for multiple users or services.

Your business is also able to better respond to change. The ability to quickly implement changes provides your business the agility needed to respond to rapidly evolving business needs and opportunities. And, integrating UCC can create significant cost savings as well as enable your business to focus on capturing revenue opportunities and driving business success.

UCC and the sin of omission

If BPA is a strategic corporate initiative, why is UCC often left out of the strategy? Remote working shines a light on the complex nature of the emerging digital workplace, and the fundamental importance of a robust UCC strategy, because each employee and each functional area has diverse and complex UCC requirements that span multiple vendors and best of breed solutions.

Let us consider the maturity and adoption of UCC applications. If we compare UCC applications to desktop or email applications, which are far more mature and more widely adopted, we can see that UCC applications hail from a much more niche environment. This, however, is quickly changing. To support remote workers, UCC applications are now commonplace.

Moreover, we are seeing a plethora of options available, as multi-vendor, best-of-breed solutions become more prevalent (due to varied business requirements, investment cycles, or mergers and acquisitions). This means that organizations must support multiple applications across a mixture of technologies, and ultimately several points of integration.

As if this is not complex enough, the range and diversity of UCC applications leads to multiple configuration permutations; here, truly one size does not fit all. The scope of your role, your location, the project you are working on, and your department could all impact the collaboration tools you need to do your job effectively. The ability for the IT team to support and implement a wider range of settings to create these various outcomes leads to a huge amount of administration, complex integrations, and the need for automation logic.

You may find yourself with a multi-vendor UCC environment, juggling multiple settings, admin portals, and maintenance upgrade schedules. There is no doubt that it can be quite costly to create and maintain the many integrations that connect your UCC environment to other business processes, especially as you constantly evolve and respond to changing business requirements. As a result, organizations typically avoid putting the integrations in place in the first place. They are simply thought to be too complex, too time-consuming, and too risky! This means that there is a good chance that the UCC platform may never become a part of the overall BPA strategy.

So, what is the solution?

Things to look for in a UCC automation management solution

If you are on the path to integrating your UCC into your BPA, there are a few key things to consider.

First, choose a UCC automation management solution that offers out-of-the-box capabilities to automate collaboration tasks. This immediately delivers automation to your collaboration environment, which is a big step toward your automation strategy.

Integrate the automation management platform into your wider systems and processes to execute on your BPA strategy. This makes the delivery and maintenance of integration far easier and quicker. Look to leverage the expertise and tools of a proven UCC management vendor to benefit from third-party know-how and best practices. Finally, choose a solution that is highly agile, adaptable, and extensible, ensuring it can provide the automation your business needs today and into the future.

The ROI speaks for itself

According to [Metrigy](#), organizations that have UCC management tools in place see user adoption increase by 34 percent. The same research shows that organizations will save 60 percent on implementation costs over five years, and 43 percent on annual operating costs. This means that an investment in UCC automation management technology will quickly provide a return on investment to the organization.

Automation enables agility in action

As discussed, introducing automation into your UCC environment will help you integrate your UCC into your overall BPA strategy. What it will also do is add great value to your collaboration strategy. Let us look at some examples of how automation can be used to drive innovation and agility:

- Rapidly deploy service changes or mass-deploy services in a controlled and consistent way; support the shift to remote working and any future hybrid working practices.

- Meet varying business needs and requirements in a manageable and consistent way; introduce zero-touch workflows to automate business processes, removing up to 90 percent of day-to-day manual administrative tasks.
- Give control to the business stakeholders to make changes and evolve solutions; empower your staff to respond to evolving business trends quickly and nimbly.

The BPA and UCC combination

The year 2021 presents a wonderful opportunity to embrace agility through business process automation. Organizations have much to gain: the potential to improve the working practices of your staff and create a robust business strategy for the future. The first step is to map out your business transformation goals, as this will define how your business processes will evolve and clarify the requirements for automation. And, if BPA is a key strategic objective at your organization, ensure UCC is a part of it.