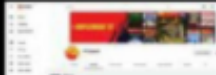


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Will Covid-19 Accelerate
Adoption Of Automation
In India?



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George Mundassery, Global Head, Automation and Artificial Intelligence, Tech Mahindra

COVID-19 has pushed businesses to accelerate their Digital transformation journey and enhance business agility. With

companies adjusting to new normal of hybrid working, we expect a rise in human-bot collaboration, AI powered operations, virtual contact centres and cloud migrations thus leading to an increased emphasis on the digital technologies and services around Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotic Process Automation (RPA), Virtual Reality (VR), Internet of Things (IoT) amongst others.



Anandh Venkatraman, Global Transformation & Consulting COE Lead, Dell Technologies

The current environment will certainly drive enhancement of technologies such as automation, digitization and

Artificial Intelligence (AI), to help preempt and improve resilience for similar situations in the future. In situations like these, automation and robotics could help reduce dependence on human labor and increase productivity, preventing the chances of shutting down plants in the future.



Sanghamitra Barman, Deputy General Manager-RPA, JK Technosoft

This global crisis has created a need to deploy cutting-edge technologies and accelerate the digital journey. The businesses that were slow to adopt digital technologies, have

already leveraged them to revamp their operations, and successfully transit to a new, post-pandemic normal.

The digital technologies such as RPA, IoT, and AI have left its significant remark in most of the industries like healthcare, manufacturing, retail, etc.

If we talk about healthcare, it is at the forefront in all aspects amid the ongoing Covid-19 crisis, leveraging digital technologies has helped a lot in medical advancements and automating the clinical testing of

data, as organizations race to create a vaccine, and more.

In addition, chatbots have come as an ultimate saviour for effectively managing the customers' queries. Thus, this Pandemic situation has made people adopt the digital transition.



Piyush Jha, Vice President, Engineering, GlobalLogic

In today's time, automation is not just about how we code but also how we work. There have been sectors which have stayed farther away from technology—like banking that has relied more on paper. These will get

more contactless, paperless, online, and automated. Carrying a check book and creating a paper draft will quickly reduce when there will be more of online and automated technology.

Then there are sectors like retail, which have embraced automation and online behaviours but have been puzzled whether to push the BnM channels more or the mobile ones. This experience will quickly get more omni-channel and behaviours will get more enmeshed, immersive, and automated.

This will drive a lot more automation in downstream and smaller functions since the mega systems at the top of the food chain will demand and drive more data oriented, faster and touch-less behaviour.



Milan Sheth, EVP-IMEA, Automation Anywhere

In these unprecedented times, global economies are experiencing an economic downturn. Their priorities are shifting towards building business resilience and maintaining employee

morale. Covid-19 has created the perfect storm for organizations to accelerate digital transformation and to embrace Intelligent Automation (IA), by combining Robotic Process Automation (RPA), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML) and Analytics.

Every organization is looking for new ways to transform their engagement with customers, suppliers, employees, and stakeholders. The advantage of Intelligent Automation is that organizations can deploy 'Software Bots' to handle many repetitive, mundane tasks, freeing up human workers to focus on innovation,

thereby maintaining business-as-usual operations without any continuity break.

Satya Nadella, Chief Executive Officer of Microsoft had said, "We have achieved 2 years' worth of digital transformation in 2 months."

So, whether research or industry experts, all are saying that automation is going to be the way ahead. Still, there are some challenges which need attention. Most of the small businesses are in huge economical struggle nowadays, thus will they be able to invest money to adopt technologies like AI, ML, RPA, etc.

We spoke to Pertish Mankotia, Chief Information Officer, Sheela Foam LTD (Sleepwell). He has quite different opinion in this regard. According to Pertish, "Automation comes at very expensive price, but I don't think this is the only challenge. It's all about convenience, labor is not very expensive in India, and that's also one area. When you compare cost of labor with other countries, the workmanship is not expensive, so, the ROI.

Another challenge, which I see, any of the automation project should be very structured and it should be on ground first. People can go for the automation process, actually implemented on the ground very well, but bringing the automation is very difficult. I think that standardization needs to be done, because if you see organization to organization, everyone has their unique process.

I think now automation has picked up, we are doing it in a hybrid manner. It is a critical process, yet we have to find economical way of doing it. We have to find out the inexpensive methods of the automation to get better ROI."

Business challenges are there, yet automation is the way ahead. When most of the industries have slowed down as a result of economic instability caused by the

"Firms will invest more in cognitive and other capabilities like Artificial Intelligence, robots and Robotic Process Automation (RPA) as businesses will have to recover and come out even stronger post Covid-19. The pandemic has made automation an imperative, as organizations will expand their business continuity plans and take larger and newer risks to ensure that they have their ground covered from all directions."

—Vikas Bhonsle, CEO, Crayon India



"Cognitive capabilities will gain traction and attract greater investment as firms look at optimizing business processes by reducing operating costs, better utilizing their skilled resources, and enhancing customer engagement."

—Tulika Saxena, Sector

Lead (Technology, Media & Telecom), Business Research and Advisory, Aranca



unprecedented situation, unsung heroes like Robotics Process Automation (RPA) can offer recession-proof operations to keep the businesses going.

RPA's successful implementation across various sectors during this period, has undeniably embarked on the upsurge in its future demands. It gained traction by taking software robots and pointing them towards existing applications to mimic human/keyboard interactions and automate repeatable and well-understood processes.

Many industries who have seen the impact are looking for ways to adopt to digital transformation either through ways of big data, AI or cloud technologies.

Companies have been functioning in a more hybrid approach—a mixture of both online and offline but as we start to evolve from this hybrid stage to a complete digitised one. There is going to be inroads for engaging with technologies like Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and Machine Learning (ML). Digitisation is the prologue to automation.

Organisations will also look for ways to reduce expenditures and streamline their Enterprise Operations and yes there will be adoption of RPA. AI has become a very significant driver, at least with the biggest technology companies in the world.

Adoption in automation equips businesses to deliver better outcomes in terms of higher customer satisfaction, lower churn, and increased revenues. This leverages the companies with the new opportunities to optimistically approach the challenges and further come up with strategies to discover new ways to boost the efficiency of their business practices with minimal errors.

Since organizations are moving away from a physical location and considering the new normal of working from home, firms will indeed look to automation as a solution to mitigate the risks that future crises pose to the supply and production of