

5 reasons your business needs IPA

 By [Ryan Falkenberg](#)

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Intelligent process automation (IPA) is beginning to take its rightful place in businesses as a subset of and precursor to full-blown Artificial Intelligence.



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It consists of a number of digital workers that together allow a company to automate processes with precision and speed. They include process specialists, often collectively categorised as Robotic Process Automation (RPA), that perform both front-office and back-office processes. This includes automating logic that sits outside and inside operational systems.

These process specialists require input data to automate these processes, and that is where a number of intelligent digital co-workers are stepping in to help. Natural Language digital specialists, for example, chatbots, engage directly with the customer to gather required input data for the process specialists. Optical Character Reading (OCR) digital workers help read image files such as PDF forms to get the required input fields into required data formats. And AI algorithms can help collect additional missing data found within vast unstructured data sources.

As these digital workers get better at doing their specialist functions and working together to automate end-to-end processes, companies with legacy systems are being empowered to automate within dynamic changing realities.

Some businesses are still reluctant to take the automation plunge though, because of concerns about job losses. While those are valid, automation is increasingly playing a role in making humans more productive, and freeing them up to focus on being creative, reasoning, innovating, and, well being human.

Here are 5 ways your business could benefit from IPA this year:

- **Allowing staff to do more with less training**

Imagine starting a new job, or a new role, and having someone there to hold your hand and guide you through every step of onboarding, induction and training. Once you're up to speed, they will sit beside you - all day, every day - to guide your decision-making, and help you to focus on delivering value. They will free you from repetitively following processes and procedures, and then hook up everything you do to a back-office worker to close the loop. Sound good? That's what IPA can do for you and your teams. Today.

- **The happiness dividend**

The 2018 Deloitte Global Robotics Survey shows that 80% of organisations that have implemented and/or are scaling RPA have a happier workforce as a result (didn't see that one coming, did you?).

It's not that hard to work out why, though. If you previously spent half your day copying and pasting data from one place to another, and it's now automated for you, you're going to be a lot happier on a day to day basis.

- **ROI**

A McKinsey statistic from 2016 indicates that just RPA alone can deliver returns of 30% to 200% in the first year alone.

McKinsey is quick to note, however, that the financial returns shouldn't be seen as the be-all and end-all. For companies in heavily regulated sectors, building an IPA workforce lets them step their compliance efforts up a notch - effortlessly.

For customer-service heavy sectors, IPA frees workers up to focus on the customer and not the process. Returns like these deliver much more than the immediately obvious ROI figures.

- **Speed and accuracy**

IPA digital workers can work flawlessly, and tirelessly, never needing a break. This can have a big impact on the accuracy of the data residing in a company's systems (especially important in the era of POPIA). IPA digital workers can ensure the right data is gathered and the right processes executed without breaks or errors, smoothing out and speeding up processing times.

- **Customer service is king**

Flawless data capture has another benefit - reducing customer irritation with data errors. How many of us spend our lives trying to get our addresses corrected on bills, or being addressed as Mr, not Mrs because whoever onboarded the customer initially wasn't paying attention when transferring data from one system to another? IPA digital workers

can ease errors like this out of the system, or flag them for a human to make a decision on and correct.

No matter what industry you are in or what legacy system environment you operate in, IPA can deliver benefits. The best returns are still in industries that are highly-process driven and highly-regulated.

From ensuring clear audit trails to helping technical specialists diagnose problems on oil rigs - IPA digital workers can go anywhere, and do anything. And with the technology available today, you don't even need to be a coder to create your own digital workers, meaning it frees up your IT function too.

ABOUT RYAN FALKENBERG

Ryan Falkenberg is co-founder and CEO of software company Qlevva.

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