



Today's intelligent automation requires human innovation

Q&A featuring Forrester

Prepared for: Cognizant



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Cognizant was joined by guest speaker J.P. Gownder, Forrester, in a webinar that explored how to ready organizations for intelligent automation and empower people to become effective members — and innovators — of human/machine teams. We're pleased to share more of J.P.'s insights through this Q&A.

Watch the webinar, [Tomorrow's Workforce, Today: Humans, Intelligent Automation, and Innovation](#)

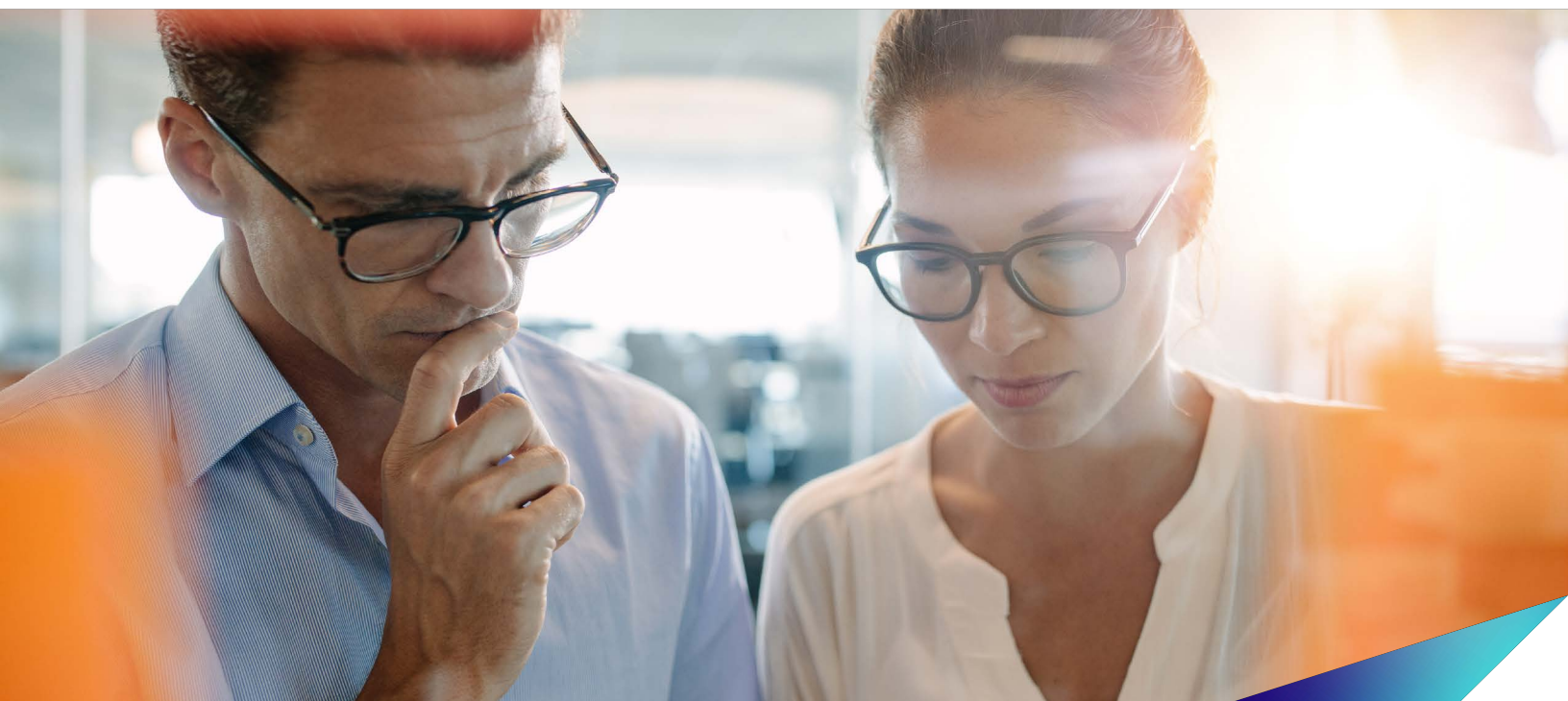
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Question 1

What are the challenges that organizations face in succeeding with automation?

Automation drives significant value for employees and organizations, but various challenges stand in the way of realizing that value. These include:

- **People challenges.** Skills gaps — both among technology and non-technology employees — can inhibit the successful uptake of automation technologies. Technology staff with automation skills can be hired. Often overlooked are the non-technology staff whose jobs will be augmented and evolved as automation plays a role in new business processes. And change management and cultural challenges arise as a result.
- **Organizational challenges.** Organizations must put into place supporting structures for automation efforts. These include establishing organizational entities like centers of excellence or automation strike teams. Organizations must also be sure to budget for the entirety of the automation investments, including learning and development, change management, and other “soft” support structures. Finally, technology and business leaders must align around goals.
- **Leadership challenges.** Leaders must bring a strategic vision for automation to the organization, one that goes beyond mere tactics to describe how automation will contribute to the future of work. Leaders are also responsible for aligning with and securing the support of executive- and even board-level stakeholders for automation initiatives. And leaders must show transparency, empathy, and employee centricity in their decision-making and communication around automation.
- **Technology challenges.** The automation landscape has grown in complexity, with a variety of different technology solutions that overlap or compete with one another. Once automation technologies are chosen, integrating them into existing infrastructure requires thoughtful execution. Being thoughtful in the execution of technology also includes considering how people will interact with them and driving better user experiences.



Question 2

How do you measure employee, leader, and organizational readiness to determine the type and level of help needed for success?

Automation requires organizations to ensure that their people, leaders, and organizational structures all support success.

- **People (employees) must develop the right skills, inclinations, and beliefs.** Employees need to develop a variety of traits that will help them as automation grows: They must be adaptable; they must communicate well; they need to understand when to question the results of automation; and they need to learn how to collaborate with software to solve problems. All of these characteristics can be cultivated in most employees.
- **Leaders (managers) must earn confidence through their skills and actions.** Leaders must learn how to apply automation learnings from one area of the business to other areas.

They need to be open, honest, and effective in their communications about automation and how it will change jobs, and they need to be adept at organizational alignment.

- **Organizations must develop structures and capabilities.** Organizations must hire the right technology and non-technology personnel. They must empower centers of excellence. They must set out new career paths for employees whose jobs grow and change with automation, and they must put into place measurement systems to iterate along the journey.

Question 3

What investments can organizations make today and tomorrow to embrace intelligent automation?

Aside from the direct costs of technology licenses, numerous other investments are crucial:

- **New roles.** A variety of new technology and non-technology roles make automation happen. Hiring or upskilling technology talent, such as robot architects and automation strike team leaders, will be key. But non-technology roles matter, too. For example, a botmaster might have previously conducted a job manually but now manages the bots that do the work, handle exceptions, act as subject matter experts to train algorithms, and the like.
- **Organizational structures.** Establishing an automation center of excellence or automation strike team is a key step, if an obvious one. Less obvious? Revamping your learning and development function to help with automation-related change management and organizational psychology.

- **Cultural investments.** Building a culture of transparency and trust is key for automation. In a world where people equate automation with job losses — which is far rarer than people imagine — building a culture of continuous learning, open communication, and internal adaptability can be a superpower.



Question 4

With all the room to further scale automaton, what are the key changes or areas of focus that leaders need to make today to be ready for tomorrow?

Both business and technology leaders can play a role in developing some key opportunities that automation presents for their organizations:

- **Free up human personnel.** Taking rote, repetitive, and/or data-intensive tasks off the plates of human employees can free them up to spend time on other tasks — those that require human ingenuity, creativity, judgment, and white-glove service. It can also drive higher levels of employee experience, as these workers are no longer mired in minutiae.
- **Focus on customer experience.** Automation can free up human workers to better serve customers, but it can also serve customers directly: 24/7 automation on the web, via chatbot or using high-quality interactive voice response, expands the service hours available to a customer, for example. Automation can also speed up transactions, increase quality and accuracy, and drive self-help usage.
- **Drive higher levels of quality.** Automation can take away some of the quality assurance errors associated with human labor while also leaving a robust audit trail.
- **Don't focus on cost savings to the exclusion of other factors.** While cost savings were the top goal of automation projects circa 2018, in 2022, cost is not as big a driver as the other goals listed above. It's more of a win-win: Constructing automation projects such that they save money in the long run is a potential additional benefit but not the key goal in itself. Companies that focus on non-cost goals will often reap cost savings anyway, in a way that drives positive benefits for the business.

Question 5

What are levers that can be pulled to better enable employees to be empowered with automation?

Organizations have some additional tools in their toolboxes of employee enablement:

- **Mining workflows and processes.** Process mining can help you uncover areas of your operations that would benefit from automation. Deconstructing workflows to find out where the bottlenecks are can also help. Ultimately, the goal is not simply to replicate the existing process but to digitize and then reimagine processes that can continuously improve with new data.
- **Mapping employee journeys.** Deeply understanding every moment in an employee's daily work journey can not only identify moments that benefit from automation but can also help understand the big picture of employee experience. Wedding automation and employee experience can yield direct benefits, like higher productivity, but also indirect benefits, like lower attrition.
- **Porting best practices.** Automation projects usually start in one discrete area of an organization, gain learnings, and then expand to other areas. These need to be tailored; automating a process in HR might not directly translate to the IT department. But staffing a team of experts who can analyze the business automation, then determine how to port relevant best practices to another team, will drive huge returns for your organization's operations.



The future of work is here, with intelligent automation already a key part of how we do work today. Cognizant takes a holistic approach to Intelligent Process Automation (IPA), combining human and digital intelligence to realize organizational flexibility and value creation both today and in the future.

Our specialists help reimagine your operations and identify the automated processes you need to successfully modernize operations. Putting humans at the center, our change management focus ensures that the introduction and implementation of IPA is supported throughout your organization, and we closely work with you to develop an integrated approach to automation that scales.



Our end-to-end IPA expertise and commitment to identifying and implementing business transformation that prepares businesses for the future is why business leaders look to Cognizant for automation success.



Learn more about [Cognizant's IPA practice](#).

