getting started with business automation

7 tips

for every company.

define which processes can be automated and which can't (yet).

How do you know which processes could benefit from automation? Typically, it's those processes that:

still have to be executed manually

are time and error sensitive

have a low exception rate

are repetitive

require a lot of manpower

make use of standard electronically readable input

are rule-based (not creative)

impact other processes and systems

are stable
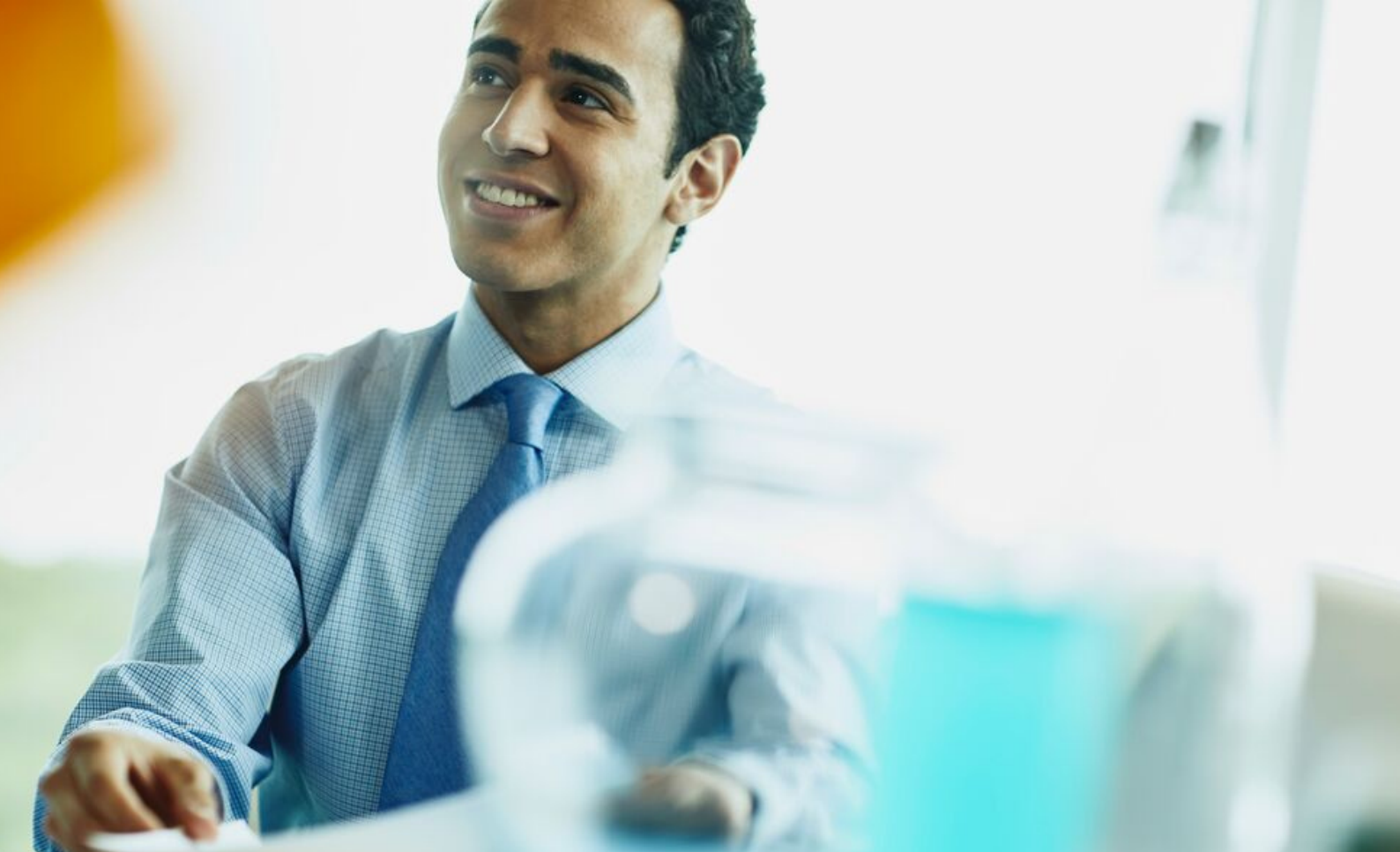
This is not to say that other processes can't be automated. But to get started, these processes are the easiest (cheapest) to automate (the so-called "low-hanging fruit). They will generally also have the highest ROI.

You should define how these processes work in broad terms (later on you will focus on specific workflows). This way, you will already get some insights on how automation can render your workflow more efficient.

Remember to start simple. Don't start with processes that aren't working smoothly today. You don't want to take over any errors.

Some workflows should never be automated (even though it is possible to do so). Think for example of automating (parts of) the onboarding process. You'll want to preserve the human touch in this workflow.

don't be greedy,
be realistic.

You've finished your first analysis! So... Let's get started? It's great that you're enthusiastic, but you will have to make some decisions first. Check for every process how limiting the workflow currently is. It's possible that some tasks are frustrating for your employees. Or that errors will cost you money. You'll have to focus on these processes first.

You don't have to take into account all the critical business processes right from the start. A lot depends on the place digital transformation takes in your company.

Because, as you will discover later on in this overview, it is essential to have the support from all parties involved.

So if your company hasn't gotten very far when it comes to digitalization yet, it is definitely okay to choose the path of the least resistance.

Not because you're not ambitious, but because you want to be 100% sure that you can make a quick start. You'll gain trust within your company, and you'll learn step by step. What's more, you'll demonstrate the added value of RPA and its ease of implementation. The support of your organization, combined with the extra knowledge you'll gain, will help you to automate more complex processes later on.

make sure you understand the processes you want to automate.

It's important to fully understand the process you want to automate: to avoid setting up faulty workflows, among other things. Make sure you consult with the people that execute these tasks on a daily basis. They won't just help you gain insights in the entire workflow, they may also uncover some pain points that you weren't aware of. All of the process documentation that you assemble along the way can be used as a starting point.

Which actions does a certain process require? How do you assemble your data today? Which colleagues are involved at what time? Not until you completely understand the process, can you determine what you want to achieve - and estimate whether your goals are feasible. Make sure to document the activities the bot will have to execute. It will help you avoid confusion in the future.

You can also start your analysis from the available data. A lot of systems keep track of when and by whom certain actions were executed. (Re)discovering or supplementing the process through these data is called 'process mining'. You may need help from a data-analysis specialist to do this.

how will it
benefit you?

At this point you'll know precisely which processes are suitable for automation. Make sure you also know how automation will benefit your company. The advantages can range from higher employee and customer satisfaction to saving time and money.

Weigh these advantages against the effort the development and implementation of the solution will require.

Will you be able to recover the investment relatively quickly? you're on the right track. The processes with the highest ROI are the best candidates for automation.

Sidenote: don't forget to factor in the hidden costs such as the maintenance and license costs of the automation software.

make sure you have everyone's support from the very beginning.

Change is never easy. Your collaborators may have their doubts about automation, even if it frees them of boring, repetitive and time-consuming tasks. They might even think that they will lose their spot in the company to automation.

We don't have to tell you that your solution will only work if you have the full support of all those involved. Make sure you create a culture in which everyone can share their concerns.You could inform your employees through info sessions, workshops, trainings … Listen actively and reassure them whenever necessary.

To guarantee that everyone is on the same page, you have to involve all parties (business as well as IT) early on. Always be transparent in your communication and keep repeating that your collaborators will benefit from automation since they will be able to focus on more valuable tasks.

You will also gain more support by allowing those involved to test the solution. You won't just receive useful feedback, but you will also show them that you value their opinion. Once the solution has been implemented, you can keep following it up closely by scheduling periodical evaluation meetings.

think about
the future.

A successful company never stops growing. Keep in mind that the automation solutions you set up have to be flexible. In this way, you will always be in control of the solution, not the other way around.

There's another reason why flexibility is important, aside from the fact that your company grows and changes. We've already talked about the start small approach: you start simple and go from there.

But even then, you should already be thinking about the future. Your solution has to be flexible enough to be implemented in other processes and other domains. Pick a governance model that's in line with your long term expectations.

pick
the right partner.

Everything you've read here will help you start the automation of certain business processes. But who will make sure everything runs smoothly?

You probably don't have the right people for this task in-house. It's not a great idea to just add an automation project to someone's daily tasks. There's too many pitfalls: workload, knowledge, independence in the organization …

If you call in the help of an external organization, you can be sure that you're working with an independent party. Talented people that don't just know how to execute all the steps we've just discussed, but can also implement the entire project from a technical point of view. You can rest easy from preparation and implementation to training and optimization!

our ambition.

Put simply: we want to inspire you with our passion for technology. We want to bring out the best in our clients as well as our talents. We use the power of technology to reinvent companies. And we offer our experts the opportunity to work on the technological solutions of the future.

www.ausy.be