RPA is an application of technology that allows employees in a company to configure computer software, or a ‘robot’, to capture and interpret existing applications for processing a transaction, manipulating data, triggering responses and communicating with other digital systems.

Over the last few decades, various types of high technology products that impact businesses have been introduced. The emergence of the term “Robotic Process Automation” could be dated back to early 2000, as a developing technology that builds on artificial intelligence and workflow automation which brings these technologies to a new level, advancing their capabilities in an improved way.

The implementation of RPA has not only opened opportunities for organizations to further save on expenses but also optimized the business processes by eliminating error-prone manual activities across their business functions. As markets evolve and technology changes, RPA allows companies to react quickly without necessarily encountering the need to reconfigure a major IT project or develop new interfaces.

There is a diverse range of RPA applications in different business settings. A classic candidate for RPA would be one where three key characteristics are fulfilled:

- The tasks or actions are consistent, with the same steps being performed repeatedly.
- The process is template driven, with data being entered into specific fields in a repetitive manner.
- The process is rules-based, to allow decision flows to alter dynamically.

What to consider in the RPA development?

RPA adoption is going to grow fast because of practical benefits. It allows efficiency in terms of accuracy and faster cycle time, thereby increasing productivity in transactions processing, while elevating the nature of work by disengaging people from repetitive and error-prone tasks. It therefore provides opportunity for process people to be re-tooled and used to perform other important business functions instead.
In principle, RPA technology can be classified into three levels of automation:

► Class I is **basic process automation**, which is focused on automating tasks that depend on structured data (data in spreadsheets, CSV and XML). Easier implementation and management of Class I automation is being increasingly adopted.

► Class II, or **enhanced process automation**, works largely with unstructured data as inputs (e.g., email and documents). This type of automation can learn from experience and apply the knowledge to process different requirements.

► Class III, namely **cognitive platforms**, can understand customers’ queries and execute tasks that have required human intervention in the past.

Effective adoption of RPA requires a good understanding of specific business functions that would potentially benefit from the RPA application. By staying relevant to the needs of the business, companies will allow RPA to unravel its potential to transform and positively impact the processes within the classes of the automation cycle.

### What business functions can benefit from RPA?

Contingent on what areas RPA will be used for, companies irrespective of sizes or industries may benefit from RPA considerably under circumstances as in the following illustrative functional examples:

► **Supply Chain**: Order management, Material requirements planning system, Energy consumption and procurement, Payment protection measure

► **Finance**: Account closure and opening, Account audit requests, Claims processing, Foreign exchange payments

► **Information Technology**: Password resetting, System maintenance, Data cleansing, Data analytics

► **Human Resources**: Job role updates, Amendment of personal details, On and off-boarding procedures

### What are the success factors when implementing RPA?

Drawing from EY experience, there are five key aspects vital to a successful RPA implementation.

**Process Prioritization.** Processes critical to the business and the flow towards recipient processes or interaction
among processes (process chain) must be clearly understood. The criteria for setting process prioritization (e.g., source of backlogs or bottle necks in the process chain) must be part of the developed framework for process assessment. Process owners must be involved in the process assessments to secure their early buy-in and help build the business case and its acceptance.

**Business and IT Accountability.** Business process owners must feel accountable for the involvement and commitment of their people to be deployed in both development and implementation stages of the RPA project. Recognizing that the project leads to an IT-driven solution, business led deployments must be respectful of IT governance protocols. In organizing for the project, there should be clear definition of business and IT roles across during process prioritization, deployment planning and execution.

**Design and Execution.** Move quickly to prove RPA concepts applicable to the automation project and crystallize the real expected benefits and value. Drive quick results in each phase of work by using agile delivery methods. As in any important project, resources allocated to the RPA project should be dedicated for focused involvement. People intimate to the process being automated should provide the critical participation not just in the functional design, but in the User Acceptance Testing and go-live support as well. Exception handling should be anticipated such that design and testing of such exceptions are comprehensive, providing no surprises.

**Stakeholder Engagement.** Strategic Business Unit process owners and day-to-day process operators are mainly the directly-impacted stakeholders of an RPA project. COOs, CFOs and CIOs are relevant stakeholders as well. It is important that the value and potentials of RPA at all levels are effectively communicated. RPA potentials should be articulated in the context of a broader agenda of benefits and not just confined to benefits where the process resides. Effective change management tools which facilitate adaptation, as well as deployment methods are also important for stakeholders to be aware of. Stakeholder engagement results to high sense of ownership which safeguards success.

**Benefits Realization.** As RPA implementation proceeds, clear regular updates on benefits being sought and progress against each should be provided. Continuous improvement mechanisms should be well-thought to be in place. These are the ways of gaining continued confidence of all stakeholders.
How can EY help?

As RPA is progressing towards new heights, EY can support companies in unlocking the value of RPA, no matter how far along the RPA journey. In handling RPA projects, EY’s team, comprising the right “innovative” people who possess deep industry and process knowledge, will help businesses to be “smart” enabled and the multidisciplinary approach of EY will create value. EY’s Business Process Improvement (BPI) approach is based on the recognition that one size does not fit all.

EY has found that taking a holistic view of operations processes is fundamental in determining which processes are best suited to RPA. The approach enables organizations to deliver the best ROI for each process, and overall for the enterprise. The integrated approach is supported by strong governance to enable outcomes to be delivered within the targeted timeframes.

EY is the only Firm among the Big Four with a proven track record of delivering Robotics globally. So far, it had delivered rapid RPA projects and tangible results from over 60 projects worldwide. EY had developed a large Software Robotics practice that covers the whole world and has specific Centers of Excellence across the globe. EY also has the knowledge of the key RPA suppliers and their capabilities to deliver value to clients. With an extensive vendor knowledge, EY could guarantee the quality of the RPA software systems utilized in project. Consequently, a differentiator for EY in the RPA market is the ability to offer broader RPA-enabled transformation services combining RPA with other service lines and functional/industry expertise.

EY has the capabilities not only to advise and design, but also to deliver on RPA as a full service. EY provides services that support organizations throughout the entire RPA journey, from defining the strategy to continuous improvement and innovation. EY can also provide Center of Excellence (CoE) and the actual RPA operations as a service. The core of service offerings to companies is focused around RPA strategy development, proof of concepts, implementation, managed services, CoE design-build-manage and innovation labs.

A significant advantage to working with EY is its willingness to partner with companies for their long-term benefit, while providing the skills and experience to help businesses build their own center of expertise for future independence. EY is also willing to work with any company’s existing partners, especially where it will help accelerate the success of the company’s holistic Business Process Improvement strategy.

At EY, we are able to provide companies with the following services:

1. RPA Strategy
2. RPA Proof of Value for Selected Opportunities
3. RPA Business Case Development
4. RPA Production Rollout (People, Process, Technology)
5. RPA Center of Excellence
6. RPA Managed Service