UiPath
Robotic Process Automation

One Size Fits All? Think again. This is your guide to finding the right provider for your RPA journey.

INTRODUCTION

As many prospects will probably aver, different RPA providers appear to have varying standards for what an RPA product should be. Assuming they even share a standard definition of RPA. Which they mostly don't. So you are better off not expecting RPA opportunities to come in universal sizes. The reality is all robotic process automation providers specialize their offers differently.

What you need to do though is to search for a solution that most closely matches you and is tailored without flaw. Of course, this is no easy quest either, but there are clues lurking at the seams, and it's where all the pieces (RPA is not a single 'thing') come together in a final design.

After years of experience working with clients and service providers implementing RPA across a variety of business scenarios, we were able to record the efforts behind an organization's selection process, and map against them if not exhaustively - impossible, really - at least as comprehensively as possible a set of fundamental guidelines to help you go through the process more effectively.

What we've learned and will now share with you is essentially the good old knowledge that as long as you ask the right questions, you have a very good shot at success.

PRODUCT ARCHITECTURE & FUNCTIONALITY

When evaluating a certain RPA provider, the first thing you will be looking at is how their product is designed and structured. This will reflect upon the entirety of your automation project. How efficiently and effectively does the product's architectural and functional capability adapt to your requirements? Ask yourself these questions:

IS THE TOOL BUILT FOR THE ENTERPRISE?

Not all RPA tools are able to perform at the enterprise level and deliver enterprise-wide automation benefits. This is an important concept.

Enterprise ready means the solution should be supported by a platform covering most if not all key functions like release management, reporting, auditing and analytics in full compliance with enterprise security and governance best practices, remote control, centralized scheduling, workload management and assets management. And whether you need an RPA solution for attended automation (RDA - Robotic Desktop Automation running on the employee's desktop) or unattended (autonomous robots deployed on numerous machines that run without the need for constant supervision), or both - there's only a handful of providers who can do this - obviously represents a big part of your decision-making.

DOES IT ENSURE SCALABILITY?

An absolute must! The ease and speed of scalability represent some of the major strengths of an RPA platform. Focus on vendors that can offer both on-premises and cloud deployment.

Infrastructure scalability is key, but so is operational scalability. In selecting a tool, consider that your automation volumes will inherently fluctuate, at times during a single day. You will want to be able to rely on a solution that enables you to adjust the robotic work effort on the spot, whenever necessary.

DOES IT HAVE THE EXTENSIBILITY I NEED FOR COMPLEX AUTOMATION NEEDS?

As I was saying, RPA is not a marble block that you fix in one place and never move. RPA products need to have the flexibility and extensibility to integrate effortlessly with third party technologies such as BPMs and cognitive tools for processing unstructured data, which is the Achilles heel of RPA. Look for vendors with a logical roadmap that involves digitization and the development of cognitive intelligence with machine learning capabilities.

DOES IT MEET SECURITY REQUIREMENTS?

There is no compromise to be made with regards to security measures. In order to ensure that all controls are in place, make sure the tool checks for real time, centrally managed command and control capabilities to monitor and measure robot performance and extensive access management controls. Auditability is a mandatory feature, together with advanced analytical reporting & personalized dashboards.

USABILITY & IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation time will represent 30% to 75% of your RPA operations costs and it usually amounts to 2-3 times higher than the licensing costs. How fast and how effective you will go through this process depends greatly on what tool set you will be choosing.

IS THE TOOL INTUITIVE AND EASY TO (RE)USE?

Needless to say, the implications for the product's usability are great. Whether the tool is easily configurable and manageable by business users, has a quick learning curve and ensures reusability features will determine the ease and speed of the implementation. Verify that the tool has smart recording capabilities and offers high precision automation with advanced image recognition features.

DOES THE SOLUTION ENSURE DEPLOYMENT FLEXIBILITY?

This is an important criterion for your vendor selection process. Your business will have its unique deployment scenarios. A flexible deployment model is required to accommodate your needs at a specific stage, from piloting the solution to scale-up and industrialization.

Look for complete solutions that offer both the possibility to deploy on physical machines, on premises, as well as on a strong and scalable cloud platform that ensures autonomy, privacy, and security.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE VENDOR

Your partnership with the vendor and the quality of professional services will determine your capacity for self-sufficiency and resilience. On top of that, how you make use of this strategically will have a definitive impact on your project.

WILL THE PROVIDER ACTIVELY SUPPORT ME THROUGHOUT MY RPA JOURNEY?

You should build an automation strategy and implement RPA enterprise-wide if you want to capture the full ROI. For this you will need to make sure the vendor is equipped with the right set of instruments and the support to accompany you on your RPA journey from proof of concept to implementation.

WILL HE EMPOWER ME TO BECOME SELF-SUSTAINABLE AND FUTURE-PROOF?

The best way to implement RPA strategically is to institute an RPA Center-Of-Excellence. This will establish a predictable and durable foundation for RPA inside your organization, with the skills and expertise deeply rooted and the resources ready to be redistributed across future deployments.

Strong vendor support, extensive documentation, and customized training programs will create the environment for swift deployment and will ensure a robust maintenance process.

When assessing and evaluating all these key factors in the technology and service level aspects of the RPA provider, it is not a bad idea to also have clear from the beginning what your desired outcome is, what your business requirements and expectations are. So ask yourself one last question: do you know what it is you want to accomplish? This way you will better anchor yourself when evaluating the providers' capability to deliver it to you.