

## Unleashing Time And Cost Savings With Microsoft Power Automate RPA

Robotic process automation (RPA) enables businesses to use software-based robots to mimic human actions and automate repetitive tasks, freeing up employees to focus on higher-value activities. Microsoft Power Automate RPA integrates with other Microsoft and third-party tools, empowering organizations to automate workflows across different platforms without needing additional software. This leads to cost savings and productivity gains for organizations using Power Automate RPA.

Microsoft commissioned Forrester Consulting to conduct a Total Economic Impact™ (TEI) study to better understand the benefits, costs, and risks associated with [Microsoft Power Automate](#).<sup>1</sup> In the full study, Forrester found that a composite organization with 30,000 employees would see a return on investment (ROI) of 248% over three years from using the full Power Automate solution. While the core study is focused on Power Automate as a whole, this abstract will specifically focus on Power Automate's RPA offering. As part of the broader TEI study, Forrester interviewed six representatives from seven organizations that are currently using Power Automate RPA:

- A product owner and an IT leader at a North American energy organization with approximately 30,000 employees.
- A director at a global professional services firm with more than 100,000 employees.
- An automation leader at a North American financial services organization with approximately 25,000 employees.
- A vice president at a North American entertainment company with 10,000 employees.
- The head of automation at a European pharmaceutical organization with 7,000 employees.

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- The head of new product at a global manufacturing firm with over 100,000 employees.

Prior to implementing Power Automate RPA, most of these organizations had existing RPA tools in place, while others lacked any RPA capabilities. The interviewees from organizations with legacy RPA tools reported that the products were expensive and difficult to use. Additionally, the incumbent products lacked integration with other applications and systems within their organizations' infrastructures, which led to employees creating manual workarounds. These limitations prevented the widespread adoption of the tools, leading to reduced efficiency and higher expenses.

- The director at the professional services firm described the issues with their prior RPA deployment before moving to Power Automate: "We were a large consumer of RPA technology before deciding to lead with Power Automate....Power Automate seamlessly integrates with many tools across the Microsoft stack, avoiding the need to develop bespoke connectivity solutions."
- Other interviewees reported that their primary issue with their incumbent RPA tool was the cost. The automation leader at the financial services firm reported: "When you look at the licensing costs for [our previous tool], it didn't really make sense. ... [We were] continuing to look at that total cost of ownership for those RPA capabilities and we wanted those numbers to go down."
- Some interviewees shared that prior to adopting Power Automate RPA, they had a large volume of repetitive, manual work, which was limiting employee productivity and draining morale. The vice president at an entertainment organization stated: "The entry-level roles were doing a lot of manual work before we had any automations. They would be processing refunds. They would be depositing checks. They would be downloading reports. That would be a lot of their job. ... I had 50% turnover on my team at that point."

After adopting Power Automate RPA, the interviewees' organizations were able to automate repetitive desktop tasks that they were not able to streamline with

their legacy tech stack. Additionally, using Power Automate RPA enabled them to retire some of their legacy automation tools, leading to significant cost savings.

## INVESTMENT DRIVERS

The interviewees' organizations adopted Power Automate RPA to boost employee productivity and reduce their technology costs. These organizations struggled with several challenges in their legacy environments, including:

- **Low employee productivity and satisfaction.** Interviewees shared that they needed an easy-to-use RPA solution that enabled their organizations to automate more processes than before. By increasing the number of mundane processes that they were able to automate, the interviewees' organizations also hoped to allow employees to focus on more engaging work, thereby improving employee experience.
- **High amount of errors and inaccurate data.** The interviewees noted that they aimed to create standardized automations to replace error-prone manual tasks, reducing the risk of breaches, regulatory scrutiny, or data inconsistencies.
- **High costs.** In addition to labor cost savings, the interviewees aimed to retire their comparatively expensive incumbent automation tools.



**10%**

Time savings for employees involved in high-impact RPA use cases

## KEY RESULTS

The results of the investment for the interviewees' organizations include:

**Employee time savings on manual tasks.** After adopting Microsoft Power Automate RPA, the interviewees noted their organizations automated tasks that

were difficult to streamline with their legacy tools, allowing them to realize time savings across a wide range of use cases.

- The head of automation at a pharmaceutical company described how Power Automate RPA helped their organization migrate to a new communication software, reducing thousands of hours of manual work: “With RPA, we have 72 automations that we are running in total right now. ... We have one that was set up to decommission a legacy [enterprise communication] application. The bot was downloading all the documents from the legacy application and converting it into a PDF and loading it back into a new application. [With that automation], we gained 11,000 hours back to business.
- The vice president at an entertainment organization described how one of their first Power Automate RPA use cases was around refunding tickets: “If you buy a ticket online and you bought it for the wrong showtime or location, you’d have to actually call into guest services, wait on hold for 30 minutes, and the service agent would have to process it on their end. Prior to [our deployment], we were doing it manually. We used Power Automate to automate that entire process, which freed up all that time. We had one team doing it, and I would say 50% of their time was doing refunds.” The interviewee went on to say that in total, their organization automated 30,000 hours of employee labor annually across a range of use cases.
- The automation leader at a financial services firm reported that their organization had around 85 RPA automations, most of which were running on Power Automate. The interviewee went on to say: “For RPA overall last year, we saved a million manual hours. This year, we would like to automate \$30 million worth of work with just [Power Automate RPA]. ... There are some areas of the company that are experiencing quite a bit of growth, but the automations are actually offsetting the need to hire more associates.”
- The automation leader at the financial services firm went on to say that building RPA automations was easier with Power Automate compared to their legacy tool. The interviewee noted that Microsoft’s AI Builder feature, which allows users to integrate prebuilt or custom AI models into their

workflows, drove the time savings in creating the automations: “We are using AI Builder and I think that is the advantage of Power Automate. You can use the connector-based functions that are super easy to code and then marry in the Power Automate desktop interface to do some of the other functions. ... Compared to when we started doing RPA [with our previous solution], the time it takes the team to automate a process is around a fifth.”

- For the broader TEI study, Forrester created a composite organization based on the characteristics and data points provided by the interviewees. Forrester found that a composite organization with 30,000 employees sees \$13.2 million in end-user time savings from Power Automate RPA over the three-year analysis.

End-user time savings vary significant by role. Power Automate RPA enables substantial time savings for roles that involve repetitive, high-volume tasks, such as data entry, invoicing, customer service and support, and documentation gathering. Other roles experience sporadic efficiency gains over time. A small subset of the composite’s employees are involved in high-impact RPA use cases, and these employees see time savings of approximately 10% per year. Employees involved in medium-impact RPA use cases see annual time savings of 20 hours per employee.



“For RPA overall last year, we saved a million manual hours. This year, we would like to automate \$30 million worth of work with just [Power Automate RPA].”

AUTOMATION LEADER, FINANCIAL SERVICES

**Cost savings from retiring legacy automation tools.** The interviewees shared that although their legacy automation products were not widely adopted, they were more expensive than Power Automate RPA.

- The automation leader at a financial services organization noted that when their legacy RPA contract came up for renewal, they began investigating other RPA tools. They ultimately selected Power Automate RPA because of its price point: “[Power Automate] was so much cheaper; the price point was unbelievable. ... Power Automate Desktop was a million dollars cheaper than [our legacy RPA tool].”
- The head of automation at a pharmaceutical company noted that, because of their broader Microsoft footprint, moving to Power Automate RPA made financial sense: “We are in the process of migrating to Power Automate RPA. By the end of next month, we will completely migrate to Power Automate, so we will no longer have our legacy automation tool. ... We had a really good business case for moving to Microsoft, as we are a Microsoft house in a lot of ways.”

For the composite organization presented in the broader TEI study, Forrester found that Power Automate was 15% cheaper than the composite’s legacy automation tools. As it gradually migrates to Power Automate, the composite organization eliminates \$9.5 million in legacy automation stack costs.



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AUTOMATION LEADER, FINANCIAL SERVICES

**Improved employee experience.** Interviewees shared that Power Automate RPA automated redundant work, allowing their workforce to focus more time on more strategic, engaging work. The vice president at an entertainment organization described the improvement in employee satisfaction:

“Nondevelopers are automating these processes, and they’re freeing up their time from having to do these repetitive, mundane tasks. They do more value-added work; more analysis, more forecasting, and more strategic things as opposed to doing data entry.”

**Compliance and security benefits.** Interviewees reported that Power Automate RPA strengthened their security and compliance processes by reducing the chances of human error, thereby minimizing the risk of security breaches or compliance violations. Interviewees also reported that by having a sanctioned automation solution, Power Automate RPA encouraged collaboration between business users and IT teams, ensuring that users could build automations without resorting to unauthorized or uncontrolled IT tools.



“Our intent is not to reduce workforce with these tools; it’s to make all of our people more efficient or able to focus on more strategic activities.”

DIRECTOR, PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

## TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

For more information, read the full study: "[The Total Economic Impact™ Of Microsoft Power Automate](#)," a commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Microsoft, July 2024.

### STUDY FINDINGS

While the value story above is based on Power Automate Robotic Process Automation, the full TEI study focuses on Power Automate as a whole. Forrester interviewed seven representatives from six organizations with experience using Microsoft Power Automate and combined the results into a three-year financial analysis for a composite organization. Risk-adjusted present value (PV) quantified benefits for the composite organization include:

End-user time savings from RPA, amounting to \$13.2 million over three years.

End-user time savings from extended automation with Power Apps and Power Automate, worth \$31.3 million over three years.

Reduction in the amount of time required for developers to build automations, leading to \$2.0 million in time savings.

Reduced legacy system costs, resulting in \$9.5 million in savings.



Return on investment (ROI)

**248%**



Net present value (NPV)

**\$39.85M**



# Appendix A: Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Total Economic Impact is a methodology developed by Forrester Research that enhances a company's technology decision-making processes and assists vendors in communicating the value proposition of their products and services to clients. The TEI methodology helps companies demonstrate, justify, and realize the tangible value of IT initiatives to both senior management and other key business stakeholders.

## DISCLOSURES

The reader should be aware of the following:

The study is commissioned by Microsoft and delivered by Forrester Consulting. It is not meant to be a competitive analysis.

Forrester makes no assumptions as to the potential ROI that other organizations will receive. Forrester strongly advises that readers use their own estimates within the framework provided in the report to determine the appropriateness of an investment in Microsoft Power Automate.

Microsoft reviewed and provided feedback to Forrester. Forrester maintains editorial control over the study and its findings and does not accept changes to the study that contradict Forrester's findings or obscure the meaning.

Microsoft provided the customer names for the interviews but did not participate in the interviews.

## ABOUT FORRESTER CONSULTING

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