

The background of the slide is a photograph of a modern retail store. A man in a white t-shirt and a woman in a black and white striped shirt are standing behind a wooden counter. The woman is holding a tablet and looking at it. The man is looking at the tablet. On the counter, there are some items, including a black bag and a small black stand. In the background, there are racks of clothes and a window.

## Automation- Powered Process Acceleration in Retail Sector

**T**he retail sector has always been dependent on customer experience, cost and location. To position themselves differentially, companies are always on the lookout for potential efficiency drivers across the entire value chain.

In recent years, digitalization and automation have started bringing innovations in planning, buying, moving and selling processes in multiple ways.





Digital Process Automation can be applied to every step of the retail value chain, from planning to selling, through varying degrees of automation.

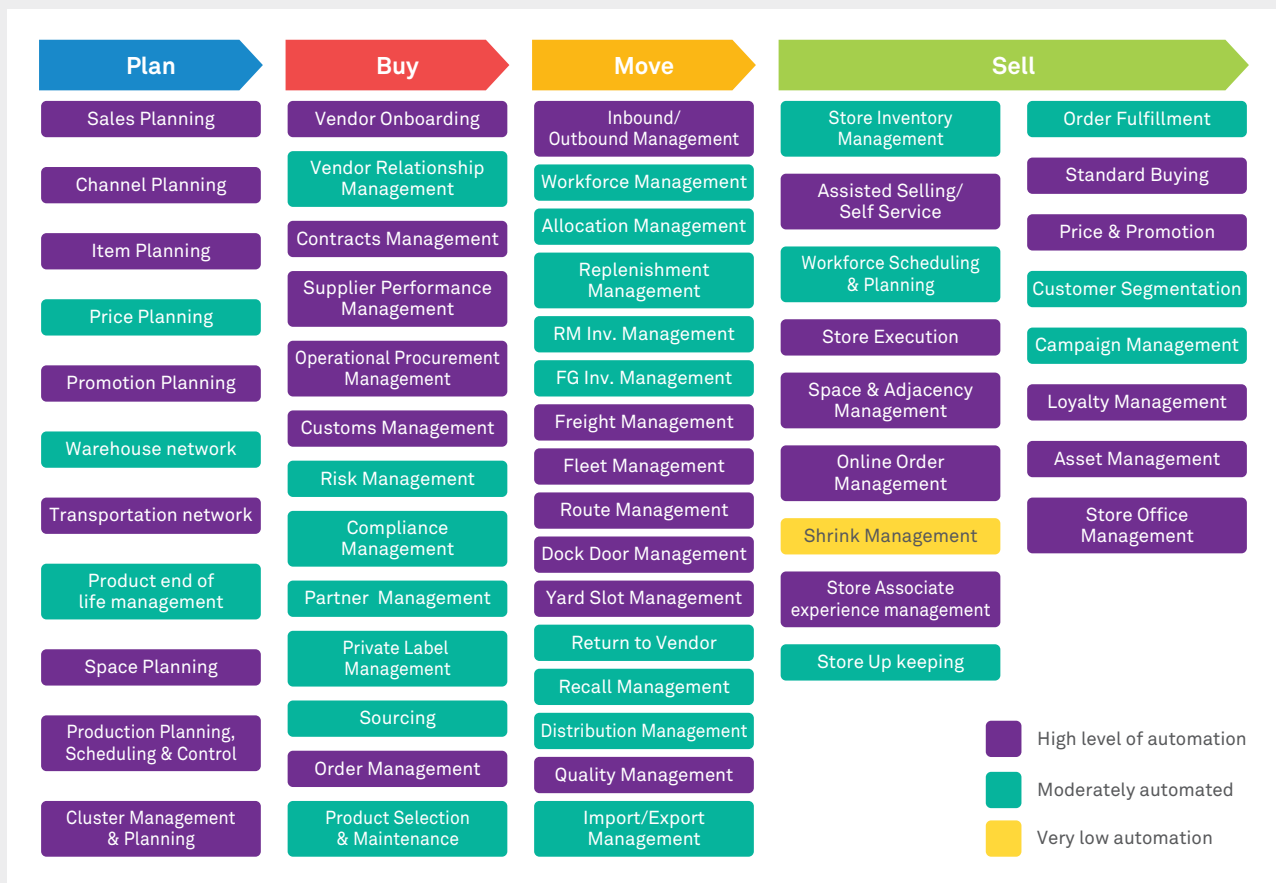


Fig 1: Automation Possibilities in Retail Value Chain

The above diagram provides a comparative view of how retail has evolved from traditional brick and mortar, to a transparent hyper-automated value chain. The key objective of any enterprise is to attain sustainable growth; which is delivered by:

1. Efficient tools

2. Continuous improvement and closed loop process

3. Human capital skills.

A lot of these automations can be achieved by Digital Process Automation. The below picture (Picture-2) outlines how automation is changing the retail sector.



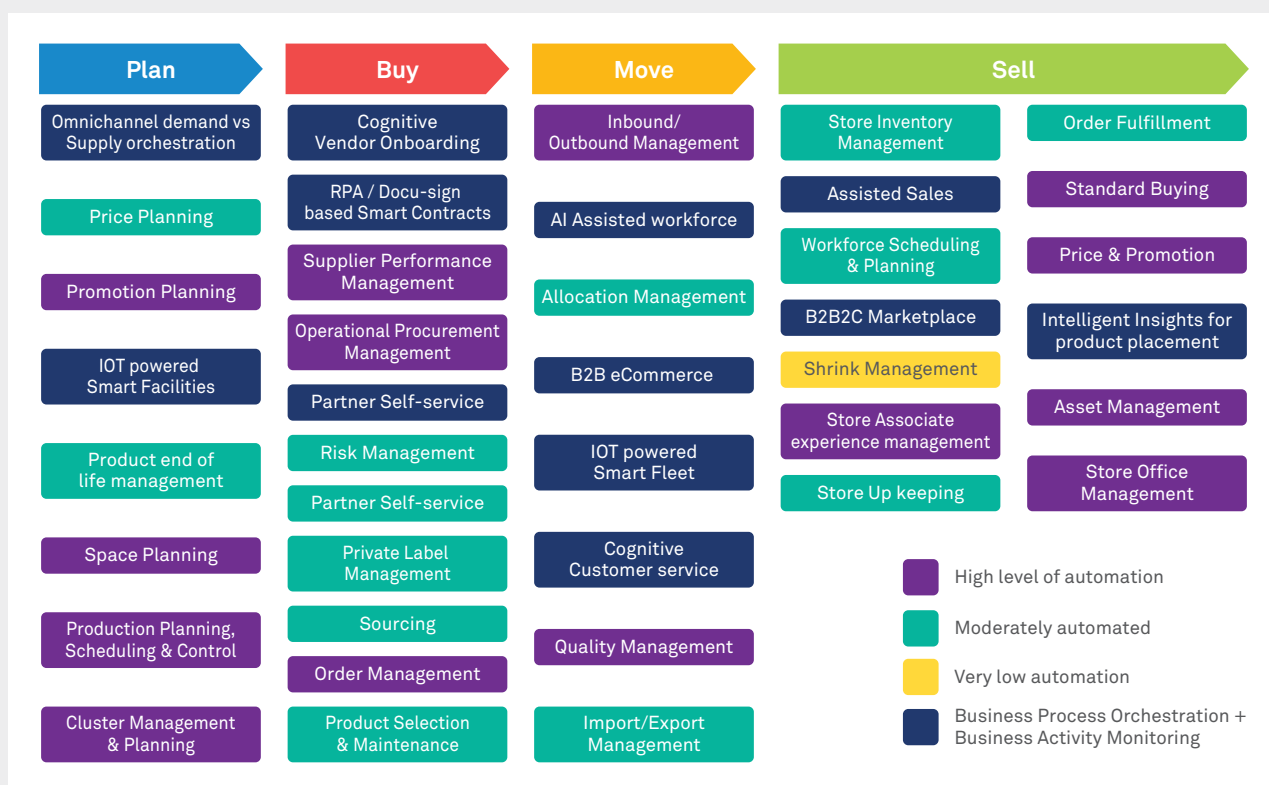


Fig 2: How can DPA help – Key Use Cases

## 1. Retail Planning

### a. Omnichannel Demand and Supply

**Orchestration** - Most of the retail chains have different vendors, suppliers and logistics providers who have their own ways of exchanging data (like email, pdf, xml, EDI, portals). Some of them are electronic while others are very unstructured information, which needs BPOs to be process and follow-ups. With the help of cognitive automation, DPA can reduce human intervention even for most of the unstructured information inputs and lead to straight automated processing. This leads to reduction in lead time, to plan and compete in the industry.

**b. IOT-powered Smart Facilities** – Retail storages owned or leased need a lot of visibility to ensure their optimal utilization. Many times, even the basic weather update can lead to huge disruption in storage management. IOT-powered smart facilities help conserve energy, optimize warehouse spaces and bring business visibility to maximize the ROI of the investments made. IOT also helps in ensuring that perishable products are well managed in the supply chain and considerably reduces business losses.

## 2. Retail Buy Process

**a. Cognitive Onboarding** – Vendor onboarding needs a lot of compliance, background checks and historical contracts analysis. Machine learning and OCR integrated into BPM have orchestrated several trackable and intelligent onboarding processes. These processes are well tested in the Financial domain, and now increasingly becoming more popular in the retail space.

**b. Self-Service Partner and Vendor Portal-** A B2B content and knowledge enabled self-service portal helps vendors to look into their personalized information, work-basket and place status updates on procurement logs very quickly. This helps in consolidating human effort and harmonizes the process to deal with multiple vendors seamlessly. It also brings the right searchable audit history on vendor needs, performance history and contract transparency for continued business growth.

**c. Smart Contracts** – ‘Trust’ in the supply chain has been a new concern for both buyer and seller in the retail space. This is useful to ensure end-user satisfaction in perishable, high-value

price SKUs sale and B2B procurements. However, to enable a trust-centric innovative technology like blockchain, integrated ledgers and integrated processes are needed. The new-age DPA solution from IBM, Microsoft and SAP provides a huge set of functions to enable such trustable audit-driven applications. This makes retail business stand out in a very cost-sensitive market landscape.

### 3. Goods Movement:

a. **Smart Logistics** – With the rise of automation and geocoding-based technologies, logistics is not only uberized but integrated across multiple vendors and borders. In California itself, the rise of self-driving and connected vehicles is immensely popular for handling workloads, proactive maintenance, prescriptive demand planning, cross-border transportation, compliance management, connected perishable food containers and supply planning. All of these events' information are now collected on the fly via IOT-connected logistics vehicles and can be orchestrated on DPA suites. Considering their strength in process orchestration and reporting, they do contribute a lot in normalizing SLAs and enable efficient jeopardy management.

b. **Cognitive Assistance** – With the rise in competition between online and organic retailers, there is a lot of expectation when it comes to immediate service registration and resolution. Voluntary service request is now expected to be proactive (system signal based); and resolution is expected to be prescriptive (step by step 'Do It Yourself', via natural language). This simple but useful method helps retailers of different sizes stay informed and compete to gather any concerns during the supply chain in a very organized way.

### 4. Retail Sales Process

a. **B2B and B2C Commerce** – With the rise of large online retailers, the common man is now trained to leverage commerce platforms. While he uses it in his own personal world in a B2C landscape, it has also raised his expectations to look out for self-service experience-oriented channels in the B2B world. So be it a B2B retail

sales website or a B2B2C marketplace, omni-channel customer experience and engagement is the new norm. Multiple channel, both online and offline, needs to be brought together to ensure a channel neutral demand and supply assurance. It needs scalable, flexible, compliant and digitalized ways.

b. **AI-Assisted Sales & Service** – Web3.0 is the new buzz in sales operations management. It includes AI-assisted sales, service, documentation, and knowledge management. Some of the key use-cases where AI is being leveraged include:

- i. **DIY Quote Generation** - AI assists in filling detailed CPQ forms and enables process automation. It is common in large financial institutions, but now also being picked in both B2C and B2B CPQ process
- ii. **Sales** – AI-powered replenishment; personalized promotions, personalized commerce experience, geocoding-based sales experience, cognitive rack replenishments, AI-powered Sales call, ML-powered leads mining, contracts intelligence, geocoding-based sales resource management, etc.
- iii. **Service** – AI-powered proactive service request registration, chatbot-based service request triage and registration; machine learning powered service request, AI-powered interactive IVR.

## About the author

### **Anand Sagar**

Digital Transformation Partner,  
Wipro Limited.

Anand Sagar is a Digital Transformation Partner with Wipro Ltd. He brings decades of experience in Customer Experience, Business Process Management and Commerce Consulting. He has

been a Transformation Leader in multiple Fortune 100 companies, in the US and Europe.

Contact: **[Anand.sagar@wipro.com](mailto:Anand.sagar@wipro.com)**

**Wipro Limited**

Doddakannelli, Sarjapur Road,  
Bangalore-560 035,  
India

Tel: +91 (80) 2844 0011

Fax: +91 (80) 2844 0256

**wipro.com**

Wipro Limited (NYSE: WIT, BSE: 507685, NSE: WIPRO) is a leading global information technology, consulting and business process services company. We harness the power of cognitive computing, hyper-automation, robotics, cloud, analytics and emerging technologies to help our clients adapt to the digital world and make them successful. A company recognized globally for its comprehensive portfolio of services, strong commitment to sustainability and good corporate citizenship, we have over 175,000 dedicated employees serving clients across six continents. Together, we discover ideas and connect the dots to build a better and a bold new future.

For more information,  
please write to us at  
**info@wipro.com**

