

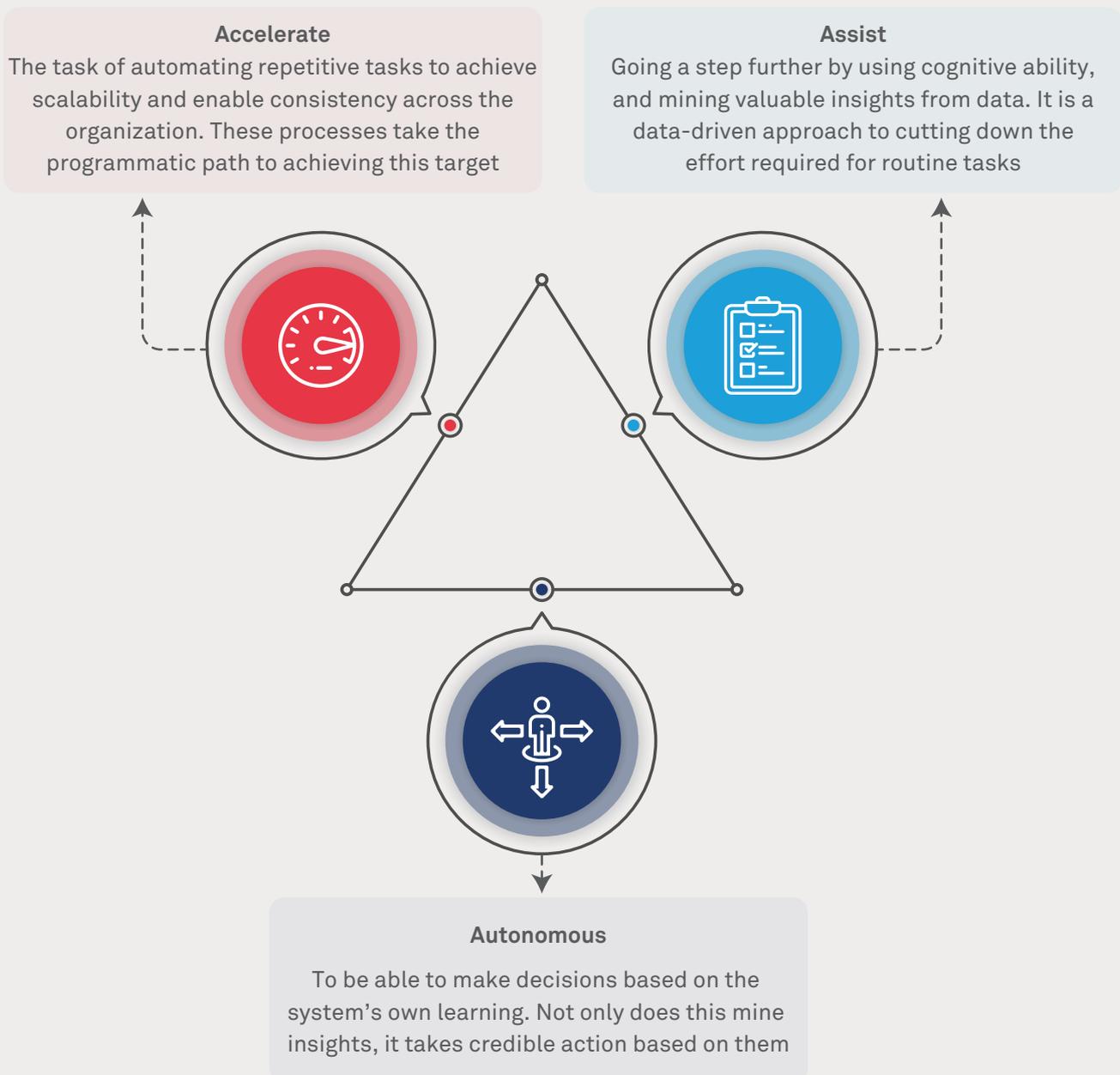
Top five automation areas for modern HR



In an annual HR survey that involved over a thousand HR leaders from more than forty countries, 63 per cent of HR leaders in the APAC region are expecting Automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to impact their organisations in the next five years whilst 26 per cent report these technologies are already having an impact¹. What's more, over half of the global respondents believe that tech-enabled HR is crucial for business development, while 86% of the respondents stated that HR plays a major role in this developmental aspect. In this paper, we seek the top five automation areas that can enable greater competitiveness for HR as a function.

What HR automation is, and what it isn't

Before we jump to the examples, it is worth taking some time to understand what constitutes automation, and more importantly, what doesn't, in order to grasp the role state of automation in HR. Mere digitization of compliance functions does not translate into automation. HR Automation goes beyond performing the functions of a system of records, and addresses the HR organization's ability to take better decisions, more efficiently and cost-effectively. Here are the three A's of understanding HR Automation, that reflect the levels of automation maturity when it comes to HR.



The following section elaborates how the A's of automation maturity manifest themselves in the top five automation areas. Each of them enables greater competitiveness for HR as a function.



The cognitive recruiter

With resume screening being one of the most time-consuming and tedious processes in the recruitment process, companies are looking at ways to speed up the process and reduce errors. Intelligent screening software automates the process by learning job requirements and then learning what qualified candidates look like based on previous hiring decisions. The system learns how to gather insights about prospective candidates and determine both their potential and likelihood of accepting an offer. It creates a more holistic picture of an individual, one that allows hiring managers to spend more quality time in actual engagement and evaluation rather than in elimination. Automation is also moving towards mining public social media profiles of potential hires and filling in the gaps left by traditional CVs adding to the knowledge that personal interactions have already provided. Automation includes chatbots that take care of the routine questions that candidates may have, and the answers that the organization needs. This allows for skill sets to be matched and profiles aligned to job requirements, to ensure that prospective employees are the right fit for a any particular position. Automation is enabling companies to harness the power of social media to help in sourcing, organizing, reviewing and recruiting.



Hyper-efficient employee self-service

Modern HR will see the end of repetitive, routine tasks that lead to effort overheads – these tasks are prime candidates for automation. A month-end scenario usually looks like this at many companies:

Leaves have to be finalized, benefits have to be calculated, last minute changes have to be accommodated, missed out values from previous months have to be included, projected tax has to

be calculated, payslips have to be sent out, money has to be transferred to bank accounts, statutory reports have to be filed, amongst many others. The overheads of responding to employee requests on all situation mentioned puts a major strain on the human resources within HR, slowing down processes and closures. This is where chatbots are revolutionizing Employee Self-Service (ESS), letting employees ask an AI system for answers to basic questions. Employees can ask a chatbot about their benefits eligibility, revised compensation structure for relocation, or even apply for leave through a system that is mobile-friendly. Imagine the level of stress this takes off the plate of the HR team, that would have until now, been pressed for time in responding manually to each request.



Learn while playing

Automation in the field of learning and development can introduce a layer of gamification that makes training modules more engaging. It can also be used to identify the training needs of an employee based on the current role, interests, aspirations and skill gaps that exist. While classroom training is still a very popular method for learning, today's classrooms are changing – not only is learning moving outside the classroom, but many tools are coming into the classroom, so that instructors achieve better learning results. Gamification helps an online training scenario by introducing engagement tools in the form of competitions, badges and social sharing which give an added dimension to training. The important consideration for automation is that automation in training could render it impersonal, unless it is handled with a sensitive awareness of the employee's needs. When done right, it is a way to open up course material to a larger audience, achieving better results across the organization.



Rethink performance evaluation

Across organizations, the process of evaluating performance remains a time-consuming and tedious task. Appraisals tend to tie up line managers and HR staff alike in a mountain of

paperwork and bureaucracy. However an automated process takes appraisals from being a painful chore to being a genuinely useful tool for tracking KPIs and performance across the company. AI applied to appraisals can include social integration and big data analytics for continuous evaluation of the employee. It can go from being a two-way process between an employee and supervisor to a more holistic evaluation by peers, interests, and non-standard contributions towards personal and organizational KPIs.



Redefine employee engagement and satisfaction

The conventional employee satisfaction measurement techniques use surveys which don't often capture the real mood of the workforce on the ground. Most current mood measurement

methods are still based on employees having to answer questions. But with the increased prevalence of mobile, as a medium of content consumption and expression, new methods are emerging. With current technology it is possible to analyse texts and social media posts on emotion and sentiment. Messages on internal social media tools can be used as input and analysed to provide the leadership real-time view on employee sentiment. Of course, with technology that is still emerging, there are issues on ethics and privacy that need to be addressed, keeping in mind the benefits for employees: they can provide quick feedback without the need for active involvement. When it comes to engagement, social media can be harnessed to map employee interests, that helps the organization set up special interest groups to keep members of the workforce engaged.



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