

Creating a Culture of Automation:

Best Practices for Organisations



As digital transformation accelerates across industries, automation has emerged as a critical enabler for businesses looking to streamline operations, reduce costs, and maintain competitiveness. But implementing automation is not just about deploying technology; it is about fostering a mindset and culture that embraces automation at every level of the organisation.

Why Culture Matters in Automation Projects

A strong organisational culture is critical to the success of any technology transformation projects, including the adoption of automation. Here are some reasons why culture plays a pivotal role:

Aligning technology with business goals

Automation initiatives often fail when they are viewed solely as technical implementations without clear alignment to business objectives. A culture that values collaboration and strategic alignment ensures that all stakeholders understand the “why” behind automation, leading to better integration into core business processes. Here is a hypothetical example: *A leading African logistics company successfully implemented robotic process automation (RPA) in its supply chain management by tying it to its goal of reducing delivery times by 30%. The company held workshops to ensure all departments understood how automation aligned with their collective mission, fostering unity in the project’s implementation.*

Building trust and buy-in

Resistance to change is a common barrier in transformation projects. A culture of transparency, inclusiveness, and communication fosters trust among employees, making them more receptive to automation initiatives. When employees feel they are part of the journey, they are more likely to embrace change and contribute positively. Here is a hypothetical example: *A bank launched a chatbot to automate customer service queries. To address initial employee fears about job security, the bank’s leadership hosted town halls and emphasized that automation would free staff to focus on higher-value tasks. This reassurance built trust and improved adoption rates.*

Fostering continuous learning and innovation

Automation requires upskilling and reskilling. A culture that prioritizes learning and innovation empowers employees to adapt to new technologies confidently. Encouraging experimentation and accepting failures as learning opportunities can drive creativity and continuous improvement in automation strategies. Here is a hypothetical example: *An energy company invested in reskilling programs to prepare its workforce for AI-powered machinery. By creating a dedicated “Innovation Lab,” employees were*

encouraged to experiment with technology, driving both efficiency and job satisfaction.

Overcoming silos

Automation thrives in an environment where cross-functional teams work together. A collaborative culture breaks down departmental silos, enabling smooth data flow and unified efforts in deploying automation solutions effectively across the organisation. Here is a hypothetical example: *A telecommunications firm struggled to streamline its billing system until it fostered a culture of collaboration. The IT, finance, and customer service teams co-developed an automated billing system, reducing disputes by 40% and boosting customer satisfaction.*

Sustaining long-term adoption

Technological transformations are not one-time events but ongoing journeys. A strong culture of adaptability ensures that automation is not just implemented but sustained and optimised over time, making the organisation future ready. Here is a hypothetical example: *An agribusiness start-up introduced IoT-based sensors to monitor crop health. The leadership reinforced a culture of continuous improvement by holding quarterly reviews where employees analyzed sensor data to improve farming methods. This culture of iterative learning ensured the technology delivered long-term value.*



Best Practices for Organisations

In our experience managing Robotic Process Automation (RPA) projects within the financial services industry, we have seen firsthand how crucial it is to create a strong automation culture. However, the principles we have learnt apply to other industries as well, such as manufacturing, healthcare, retail, and telecommunications. It's not enough to install bots or AI systems; the real success comes from aligning people, processes, and technology with a shared vision of efficiency and innovation. Here are the best practices that we believe are essential for building a culture of automation in any organisation.

1. Start with Leadership Commitment

The first step in creating a culture of automation is securing commitment from leadership. When leaders visibly support and champion automation initiatives, it sets the tone for the entire organisation. Leadership's role is to communicate the strategic importance of automation, provide resources, and align automation efforts with business goals.

Best Practice: Leaders should actively promote automation as a key driver of growth and efficiency. For example, in our financial services automation project, team leads consistently emphasized the critical role of process automation in meeting deadlines, ensuring bot output was accurate, and following up with third parties for timely posting of transactions. Their engagement demonstrated that automation wasn't just a technical upgrade, but a business-critical transformation. In manufacturing, leadership can emphasize how automation is improving quality control by reducing human error and increasing production consistency. Similarly, in healthcare, leadership's commitment to automating patient record updates and billing processes helps reduce wait times and improve patient outcomes.

2. Foster Employee Engagement and Ownership

Automation often raises concerns among employees about job security or changing roles. To build a sustainable automation culture, it's important to engage employees early, address their concerns, and empower them to take ownership of automation projects. Automation should be viewed as a tool to enhance productivity, not as a threat to jobs.

Best Practice: Encourage employees to be active participants in identifying automation opportunities. In our RPA initiatives, we created job cards for process owners, giving them responsibility for monitoring and improving automated processes. This not only fosters accountability but also helps employees feel empowered and engaged in the automation journey. In retail, store managers can take ownership of automated inventory systems, ensuring optimal stock levels. Similarly, in telecommunications, customer service teams can manage automated chatbots to make sure they are delivering accurate and up-to-date information.

3. Encourage Cross-Functional Collaboration

Automation isn't the responsibility of just the IT or operations team; it requires collaboration across departments. A culture of automation thrives when teams work together to identify pain points, streamline processes, and implement technology solutions. This cross-functional approach ensures that automation efforts are aligned with business needs and are scalable across the organisation.

Best Practice: Create cross-functional teams that include representatives from IT, operations, finance, and business units to collaborate on automation projects. In our role supporting complex settlement processes automation in financial services, cross-team collaboration was vital. By bringing together diverse perspectives, we were able to design a solution that met both technical and business goals. Similarly, in healthcare, automating patient scheduling can involve collaboration between IT, clinical staff, and administrative teams to ensure that the solution integrates seamlessly into workflows. In manufacturing, automation projects might require input from engineers, logistics teams, and floor managers to ensure smooth integration into production lines.

4. Drive User Adoption through Communication and Training

Effective user adoption is essential for the success of automation initiatives. Without proper adoption, even the most advanced technology will fail to deliver its full potential. Employees need to understand the benefits of automation, be equipped with the necessary skills, and feel supported throughout the transition.

Best Practice: Establish a comprehensive communication and training program that educates employees on the value of automation and provides hands-on training for relevant tools. In our financial services RPA initiative, we used a mix of hypercare- a phase of heightened support- and job cards to ensure process owners were comfortable with the new tools, which drove better adoption. In retail, training employees on how to use automated point-of-sale systems can drastically reduce checkout times, improving customer satisfaction. In telecommunications, training customer service

representatives on AI-powered chatbots allows them to focus on more complex customer issues.

5. Use a Stakeholder Management Strategy

Managing stakeholders effectively is crucial in creating a culture of automation. Not everyone in the organisation will have the same level of influence or interest in automation. Understanding where stakeholders stand and how to engage them is critical to achieving automation goals.

Best Practice: Use a stakeholder grid to map out key stakeholders based on their level of influence and interest. This allows you to tailor communication and engagement strategies for each group. For example, in our RPA project, we identified senior managers who were key to securing resources and process owners who needed assurance that automation would streamline their tasks without compromising control. In manufacturing, senior management may focus on how automation impacts productivity metrics, while frontline workers may be more concerned about how it affects daily operations. In healthcare, ensuring that both administrative and clinical staff are on board with automation tools is key to smooth adoption.

6. Celebrate Wins and Learn from Challenges

Creating a culture of automation is a long-term process, so it's important to celebrate early wins to build momentum and recognize the efforts of those involved. At the same time, it's crucial to learn from challenges or failures, adjusting strategies as necessary to improve future implementations.

Best Practice: Highlight success stories and share them across the organisation to build excitement and showcase the tangible benefits of automation. In financial services, we achieved '90minutes' time savings from automating settlement processes that used to take two hours, and we celebrated this 75% processing improvement milestone in internal newsletters and team meetings. This not only motivated our team but sparked interest from other departments looking to automate their own processes. In telecommunications, successfully automating routine customer queries with chatbots can be celebrated to highlight improvements in customer satisfaction. In retail, reducing stock shortages through automated inventory management can be shared in team meetings to encourage further automation initiatives.

7. Continuous Improvement and Feedback Loop

Automation is not a one-time effort; it requires continuous improvement. Regularly reviewing automated processes, gathering feedback from

users, and optimizing systems are key to maintaining a dynamic and evolving automation culture.

Best Practice: Create a feedback loop that allows users to report issues and suggest improvements. In our financial services projects, periodic reviews of automated processes helped us ensure that they were delivering expected results and enabled us to identify areas for optimization. In manufacturing, workers on the shop floor could provide feedback on how automated quality control systems can be adjusted for improved accuracy. In retail, store managers could report insights on how AI-driven inventory systems are functioning, ensuring they adapt to real-time demand fluctuations.

Conclusion

Building a culture of automation requires more than just deploying the latest technology. It's about creating an environment where automation is embraced as a tool for growth and innovation. With leadership support, employee engagement, cross-functional collaboration, and a focus on user adoption, organisations across industries- from financial services to healthcare, retail, and manufacturing- can successfully create a culture that not only welcomes automation but thrives on it.

Looking to the future, agentic AI- autonomous systems that can adapt, make decisions, and continuously improve- represents the next frontier in automation. Organisations that build a strong foundation for automation today will be well-positioned to leverage these advanced technologies to drive even greater efficiency, innovation, and competitive advantage.

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About Verraki

Verraki is a proudly African company partnering with enterprises and governments to accelerate the development and transformation of Africa by providing business solutions designed for Africa. We build and implement technology solutions for seemingly intractable challenges, provide advisory services to drive the capacity and motivation for change, and curate innovative ventures to unlock new sources of growth across our continent.

A fusion of two words: 'Versorium' (Latin for Turn Around) and 'Meraki' (Greek word used to describe the action of doing something with soul, creativity, pouring oneself into a task), Verraki aptly captures the essence of our company; to turn around African enterprises and governments via smart, future-focused solutions and business insights, new growth opportunities, helping to unleash their potential, turnaround their performance and achieve the seemingly impossible, with the sole goal of creating a better future for Africa.

We are committed to enabling the African (start-up) story by supporting high-impact socially-conscious entrepreneurs and catalysing self-sustaining enterprises and governments within the continent to deliver affordable services across critical sectors.

Our Technology Advisory Solutions

In recent years, the role of technology innovation on societal and organisational transformation has become more pronounced, leading to a rising demand for digital-led transformative services. To compete in the digital age, organisations must embrace new technologies to realize untapped digital opportunities.

Verraki Technology brings on-board the best-in-class advisors in the industry to help clients resolve their most critical information and technology challenges, ensuring agility and effectiveness while delivering a broad range of innovative, next-generation IT solutions and professional services. Verraki's Technology practice advises CIOs and other CXOs in developing and executing technology solutions that drive productivity, business growth, and optimization while establishing effective controls around risk and sensitive data. We provide extensive technology services across application, advisory and solution layers, collaborating with our partners to realise game-changing performance levels for clients and improve the value that IT brings to the business.

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