

Hyper Automation – Are You Ready to Adapt?

Dan Morris, CBPL, CPPP, CBA, ABPMP Fellow

Keith Leust, CBA, MBA, Six Sigma Black Belt

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The business world is about to enter another cycle of major change. This cycle will definitely change every part of business operations and the way companies interact with customers. The driving forces are not only automation and advance technology but most importantly, the pace at which both are changing.

The question is *“does your company have the ability to take advantage of the hyper automation revolution that has started?”*

You have all heard of hyper automation, hyper digitalization, and hyper technology revolution. By whatever name it is called in your organization it is here and it is fast becoming a force you will need to reckon with.

But let’s start by differentiating two terms that are used frequently in this article. Hyper Automation is the constant improvements in the business and digital capabilities offered by many application development software tools – such as BPMS, ROA, AI, Voice Recognition, cognitive computing and more. Hyper Technology refers to the new products such as Neuralink, Virtual Reality technology, actual robots, holographics, 3D printing, and much more.

Are you ready to adapt?

Why is it critical for you, your company, and your marketplace to adopt a policy of leveraging and adapting to hyper-automation? Why, because your competition will and put you in a position of constant catch up. Then you will need to spend money to expedite the creation of the innovations that are causing you to lose business. And catch up is not a good game to play. It is disruptive, invasive, and positions your company poorly in the constant battle for market share. It is far better to take your time in a planned evolution where the new technologies and concepts can be implemented at your chosen pace. This will also allow your best people to get used to the new automation and technology capabilities, the new concepts and the new approaches to innovation that need to be supported.

But why worry about this now?

The technology and automation components of our personal and business lives is about to change – and change quickly. Given the time it takes for most companies to react to even dramatic change, now is the time to begin to prepare.

For example, Elon Musk is doing it again. This time Elon will change everything in our businesses and society – and he will do it quickly. He is already transforming the internet by placing over 40,000 communications satellites in orbit and beaming internet service directly to

our communication devices. With over 1,000 satellites already in orbit with over a dozen launches planned for 2021 this constellation will grow quickly. No wires, no towers, no telecom companies in the middle. This provides much faster service anywhere in the world and he plans to do this inexpensively. Think about it. He has the launch capability in Space X to put the satellites up, the technical engine to make it all work and the commitment to realize this vision.

And according to reports, Tesla has also been pioneering AI to drive autonomous vehicles and has advanced optical sensors and Lithium-Ion battery technology. Each of these on their own are innovations, together they are disrupting and redefining the auto industry.

Is this a dream? We don't think so, but it could be – especially in the details. There are different opinions. It could also take several years. But these implementation questions are not the point. The real point is that this is part of the overall Hyper Automation that we have started to write about.

And these are only a few examples of what is happening with Hyper Automation and its marriage to rapidly advancing technologies. And innovation is thriving.

We are entering a new time in our history. The question you must answer is *“Is your company ready to take advantage of these and many other breakthroughs?”* In addition are your leaders able to both recognize and take advantage of change as a strategic advantage. Change is no longer something that can be ‘managed’. It has become a normal part of running any organization. Leaders that embrace this will have an advantage in leading their organizations to success.

We have left the first age of automation that took us to online computing, and we are entering into an age of technology wonder. Unfortunately, the old legacy technology anchor still holds to many companies back, but even this constraint is changing.

We believe we are entering a time of fundamental business and societal transformation that has little to do with politics and everything to do with technology. We also believe that industry wide shakeups are about to happen.

Winning takes commitment

To win will take investment, new skills, and organizational capabilities while setting some cost controls aside as companies innovate. That can happen over time based on what makes sense for each company. What is most important is flexibility and adaptability and building these and related traits into the company DNA. Moving forward to prepare to adopt the needed philosophies and commitment requires executive vision, will, commitment and an integrated business-digital transformation evolution design and plan. All of these can be started any time by putting the vision in place – no need to wait for Covid-19 to be declared over.

The foundation of any move will start with the retraining of your best Business, Process, and Technology Architects. This will create a “special collocative advisory team”. It will be their

role to design the new company and make certain your operations can change fast enough to help define your position in your market. In addition they will build in the organizational 'muscle' that will enable your organization to constantly adapt and evolve as conditions require. To be effective, these people must become experts in the company's strategy development process, the underlying business and operating models, the business operations, and technology capability and production – in short, the entire company's operations. This allows the group as a whole to leverage knowledge and build new insights.

The move into the future starts with creating an understanding of emerging automation and technologies and recognizing what it will mean to you, your industry, your customers, and your competition. This will be the main role of the special collaborative advisory group. This is where creativity comes in. Looking at the "art of the possible" and advising executives in creating a vision of the future. This team will help senior management look at how automation, technology and its use by the competition is positioned to change the market.

To help make this team effective, we recommend that a small group of proven innovators be formed to keep the executive team aware of changes the organization could make to radically change its business model, adopt different products, redefine the customer experience, or in some way significantly redefine and gain competitive advantage. This team may be considered to be a center of excellence as they recommend immediate and future action. Even with the speed advantages of modern and emerging technology it will be important to re-imagine and redesign the executive decision process to allow the company to respond to potential opportunities as fast as possible.

Implications

It is important to always start looking at any situation by asking "so what"? What are the implications of what I am looking at? What can I use the changes for; what can I do with I am learning? How is it useful? How can I use it to gain market share? Given that everything today is "important", this will help separate the "critical", which is what management will need to focus on.

Continuing to expand on our example above, it is clear that while the technology is impressive, and only Elon Musk could pull off re-defining the internet, the real interesting thing is the implications of this technology and the fact that it is only part of the whole hyper automation and technology explosion. The fact is, once implemented, this could change the way all electronic communication works. It will have implications on data movement, the way we can use both AI and Cognitive Computing to leverage data lakes in interactively asking AI applications questions and much more. That alone will drive other innovations and decision making. It will also allow companies to support questions on procedures and requests for information in a very different and more real-time manner – especially for inexpensive access to people across the planet.

Think of what mixing a couple of these technologies, such as Virtual Reality delivered over this type of future internet will become? Think of it in designing product and testing market acceptance. Think of how it will change the leisure and related industries. The ripple of combining these emerging technologies will open doors we never saw before. That is why it is so important that business and product designers understand the different technologies and what they each can do. Then, step back and let creativity and innovation change everything.

A key to hyper automation and technology is that this is not just about automating processes with new ERP platforms or deploying more robotics into the workplace. In these examples we constrain our thinking to how to reduce the cost basis of an organization. Hyper automation and technology is so much more. It forces and enables us to re-imagine every aspect of how we define, interact with, and deliver to the market. Why is this critical for you? If you don't accept and embrace these changes, some of your competition will and someone will leverage it to innovate – putting you in a catchup position.

So, what is the implication? First, it is not about what RPA or AI or any single automation platform or technology can do. That position is generally a technologist view and it is too restrictive. In truth, the possibilities are limited only by your imagination. Something this boundless will have a profound effect on every aspect of our lives and every aspect in our business operations. The real implication is that there will be two short term groups of companies - those that find a way to adopt, adapt and make hyper automation and technology an integrated part of their organization's vision, and those that will wait and fall behind to die a slow death as customers stop dealing with them and their antiquated operations.

The difference will be a result of executive vision and the will to succeed in the future.

But not all hyper automation changes will be this grandiose and impactful. There is a plethora of great innovations that will impact many around the world. An example is the new phone for those who are hard of hearing – it prints out the words being said on a display on the phone – in big characters.

For these types of technology and automation advances the question becomes *“how can you leverage them in products or at least some of the concepts to help people”*. While most may not be helpful to your company, some will, and they may change your competitive position in your market.

What does this allow?

So how will your company leverage the automation and technology that is already here to gain market share? If you could deliver it, what innovations would deliver this objective? That gives management a choice. Invest in preparing and learning now or simply wait and continue to try to cut more cost out of the operation until all that is needed is to take what has been built by others and leverage it. That is a deliberate and intentional strategic decision which will need to be made as soon as possible to adjust to the long learning curve and changes that will need to

be made in creating a type of entrepreneurial mindset across the company's management team.

The opportunity we all now face is related to the vision and ability of the company to transform thinking. If a company adopts the hyper automation and technology changes needed to support these decisions, the old approaches to most business and technology operations will become obsolete. For example, strategic planning is an annual activity today. Given the speed of technology change this cycle is no longer good enough and strategic planning is becoming continuous. The same holds true for business and digital transformation – which is how companies will implement anything new.

Call to Action

There are immediate steps that you should consider that really don't cost anything.

1. Create a collaborative advisory team of strategists, business managers, and automation researchers to track new and emerging technologies and report on the emerging capabilities – and recommend innovation to your organization.
2. With these insights, evaluate when and how your business and revenue model will be affected. This will allow you to make plans for the eventual shifts that are coming.
3. Begin to envision and define the capabilities that will be needed to be built to allow the company to change very quickly – from defined opportunity to business operations and systems innovations with training and rollout components every few weeks.
4. Define a new business vision and the strategy needed to deliver innovation and transformation.
5. Identify the business, automation and technology capabilities that will be needed, compare with what is available and define what needs to be built.
6. Determine how your operation model will be affected and identify how you can re-define it while building a more adaptive operating model and adjusting to continuous change.
7. Begin to redesign the IT infrastructure, vendor tool and application mix. Honestly evaluate and define the problems IT faces today and how they can be eliminated.
8. Evaluate legacy technology and applications and create a plan to begin replacing them with BPMS or RPA based modern application – invest in a BPMS platform from a vendor whose platform includes BPMS and RPA with advanced data management. We can show you how to use these tools to creatively form a new modern application service architecture.
9. Begin to build a Business/Digital Transformation Center of Excellence that will be responsible for reskilling and modernizing the business designer's and technology developer's and extending their training through small, high value projects. In this reskilling it will be important to consider companies and avoid approaches and techniques from the past that have contributed to the commonly reported 70% business and digital transformation failure rates.

10. Find and acquire a Business Transformation specific formal methodology – again the old methods have proven not to work well given their failure rate.

While all 10 steps are important, all rely on making certain the people who will be involved have the necessary understanding of needed approaches and the skills to succeed.

Look for our future articles that will address different aspects of hyper automation. Share your thoughts, experiences and concerns. Some will find their way into future articles as we continue to explore this emerging topic.

Dan Morris is a Managing Principal for MCT. He is the author of five books, over 75 articles, and over 30 webinars. He has spoken at 45 conferences and served on the boards of ABPMP, PEX, and the Business Architects Association. Dan has also been the US Practice Lead for Business Transformation at Infosys, Capco, TCS and ZS Associates.

630-290-4858 DanMorris@mycareertransformation.com

Keith Leust is a Managing Principal for MCT. He has been leading successful Business Transformation efforts for over 30 years and has been both a Practice Lead for Andersen, E&Y and Oracle as well as an executive within organizations like Prudential, Motorola, and American Express.

847-341-6415 KeithLeust@mycareertransformation.com