

ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION

The robotic trip-up is in our unconscious minds.

“Empirical evidence suggests that unconscious phenomena include repressed feelings, automatic skills, subliminal perceptions, and automatic reactions...”

Robotic Process Automation’s (RPA) main objective is to automate human tasks – the things we do frequently and are repetitive in nature.

Consider this often-used riddle: “You are sleeping, you are hungry, and you have butter, cheese, and juice in the fridge. What is the first thing you will open?” Instinctively you will say butter, cheese, or juice; however, you cannot open these items without first opening the fridge. This is, in a nutshell, the challenge when automating human-based tasks.

A key activity in RPA is writing down each step that a human does in completing a task at the mouse click level of detail. Do you remember that occasional pop-up that sometimes happens when closing out that file? Sometimes you close your browser during a Salesforce report as it seems to work faster when you close and reopen – it also hangs less often? That pivot table pop-up when updating an Excel file, you remember that? Or when closing a Windows application, when it asks, do you want to save this file? And so, so many more.

We do those steps unconsciously; they became automatic skills and reactions.

Then there are elements in your workflow that a human ‘just knows’, “oh this Client always wants to have the file on Mondays” or “the invoice should always contain a copy of...”.

If we do not ask specific questions to trigger access to the unconscious mind, we miss some core elements of the human’s task activity that will greatly impact how resilient our automation will be, which will ultimately create more rework.

One technique we often use is to record the steps humans do while we question their activities – while time consuming and often requires all process tasks participants to be on the same call – it yields great results and lets us focus on the understanding of the tasks and asking the right questions. More and more I believe that this exercise should be repeated at least one additional time after the team has had time to document, distil, and write down additional questions and clarifications but mainly focus on the things that ‘can go wrong’ and hone in on the unconscious variations of task execution by the human mind.

Building a resilient, effective, and reliable automation solution is not just about automating human tasks accurately as intended (the happy path), but also that it acts predictably when there is a task anomaly. (Windows upgrades or your SaaS provider updates can really trip-up any automation task.)

I would venture out to say that building out the happy path, automation takes up about 40% of the automation work, while 60% is catching the task anomalies and ensuring your automation keeps running reliably and predictably.

To learn more about Trexin's RPA Practice Area and how we can help you throughout your RPA journey, please click [here](#).

References:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unconscious_mind



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