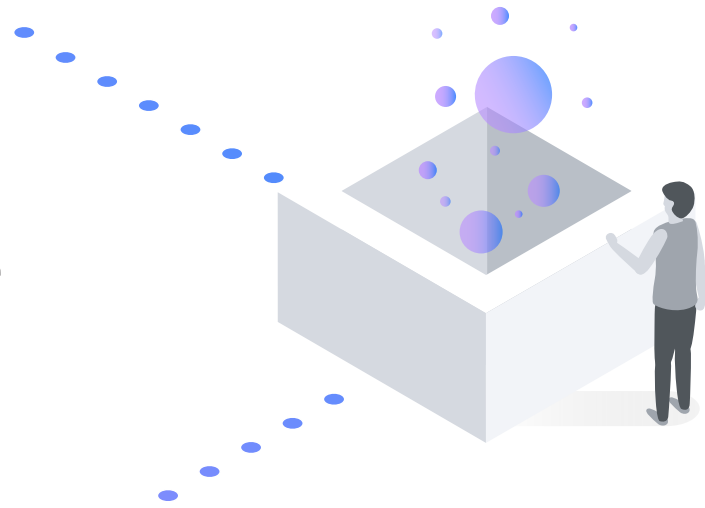


# A platform with a purpose

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IBM Services Essentials for Automation is now live with over 100 clients, supporting enterprises in every geo and across every industry. We also recently expanded the platform's cloud RPA capabilities to include UiPath. This means the 'big three' RPA vendors (Automation Anywhere, Blue Prism and UiPath) are now supported by Essentials for Automation.

As our global team of developers and architects celebrate hitting these major milestones, it seems an opportune moment to take a step back and consider our purpose. It's great to be able to serve so many clients, and I'm glad we can support a growing set of capabilities - but what is it all for?

*"This is not just about providing tools for developers, but about aiding clients at every stage of their automation journey: Discovery, Design, Build, Manage, Monitor and Measure."*

When we first launched what was then known as our 'Intelligent Automation Platform', the intent was to support integration in order to make RPA work smarter, and AI work harder. One of our earliest capabilities was an integration solution that helped user assist chatbots instruct RPA to resolve common issues, for example.

Several releases later, our purpose is broader. We now look beyond the provision of key solutions - with the grander aim of providing truly comprehensive capabilities for scaling and optimizing automation. This is not just about providing tools for developers, but about aiding clients at every stage of their automation journey: Discovery, Design, Build, Manage, Monitor and Measure.

Recent research tells us the need for this is greater than ever. IBM Automation commissioned the Institute of Business Value to survey over 1400 automation executives on the topic of Intelligent Automation - that is, automation with AI - and the future of work. We are still digesting the findings, which will be published in a report later this quarter. But some initial highlights leapt out at me, as our global Platform lead.

Leaders continue to state that securing sponsorship and alignment with business goals are the leading challenges affecting the success of their automation programs, making it hard to prioritize cross-functional deployment of automation. That was closely followed by concerns around the complexity of the technology landscape and challenges executing automation quickly and effectively. And finally, issues around trust and resistance to adoption were the third largest category of challenge.



*“Deploying intelligent automation across the enterprise builds a more adaptable business, one that is able to rapidly respond, pivot, scale up or down, and adopt new operating models.”*

Clearly, technology can directly address some of those challenges: assets like Digital Workers and Intelligent Workflows, a robust CI/CD toolset and a secure, hosted environment make life easier for developers, architects, and CTOs. Our Automation Control Tower simplifies the performance management of bots for ongoing optimization. The provision of dedicated RPA as a service, native AI capabilities, and orchestration tools reduces the investment clients need to make to develop new automation solutions.

**People-related Challenges**

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Perhaps less obviously, a technology platform can also address the people-related challenges. For example, Process Discovery Accelerator makes the most complex process rapidly discoverable, ready to reengineer for automation. (For more on the importance of process discovery, check out Cathy Tornbohm from Gartner in conversation with IBM Automation’s Global GM, Tom Ivory, in Think session #6910). Component Business Models with Automation ‘heat map’ overlays aid stakeholder discussions about where automation can have the biggest impact. And while Automation Control Tower helps improve the day-to-day performance of bots and licenses, it also provides powerful visualization of that performance to track business benefits for skeptical stakeholders.

Automation is now understood to have a much larger impact than purely cost-out. Deploying intelligent automation across the enterprise builds a more adaptable business, one that is able to rapidly respond, pivot, scale up or down, and adopt new operating models. It is not necessarily the fittest, fastest or strongest that survive – but the most adaptable. The need for intelligent automation is greater than ever before.

So, I hate to break up the milestone party - but we have more work to do. As enterprises accelerate their automation journeys, in a fast-changing technology landscape, we’ll continue to develop IBM Services Essentials for Automation to proactively address client needs.