



3 ways automation will spark the next generation of shared services

For shared services leaders, process automation is not a new concept. It's been a critical part of the conversation for years as organizations have continued to consolidate services and move their service centers up the maturity ladder.

But with new technologies emerging, like IoT and robotic process automation, what does that mean for automation as we've known it? How will process automation's own evolution affect your shared services team's existing or planned automation initiatives?

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Here are the top three things to keep an eye out for regarding automation and the evolution of shared services talent:

1 A NEW TALENT PROFILE

Automation technologies continue to provide shared services professionals with ever-increasing volumes of data. Data about internal process and system performance, customer behavior, employee preferences, facilities usage and more.

But not all service centers are equipped to make any sense of this information. Tech savviness is no longer a differentiator in hiring decisions – it's a given. What service centers need now are people who can analyze the data produced by automation technologies and provide actionable insights back to the business.

Whether the goal is finding ways to improve current processes or identifying unseen opportunities, shared services recruiters should look for candidates with the analytical skills to put all of the pieces together and make informed decisions based on data.

2 SHARED SERVICES AS EXPERT CONSULTANTS

Establishing shared systems and collaborative tools for the business has long been the charter for shared services organizations, but automation technologies are changing the way in which departments and business units share and act on information.

Automation eliminates the manual filing, sorting and processing of information for functions like accounts payable or human resources, leaving more time for service centers to participate in and add value to the business, not just serve it.

But this requires the business and service center alike to rethink how they interact with one another. Shared services professionals need to think beyond their functional knowledge and expertise, and instead be more consultative to the business on a broader scale. They need to learn how to ask the right questions about goals and operating procedures in order to craft better solutions for their business partners.

3 A NEW FOCUS FOR THE SERVICE CENTER

As service centers expand automation technologies to optimize more and more processes, many say their workforce is shifting from operations tasks to more service-oriented tasks. But what does that mean?

To some, it means redeploying services to develop completely new capabilities for the business. This could be anything from custom reporting to predictive analytics, to proactively identifying and consulting on improvement opportunities in areas outside the service center itself.

The human element will always be necessary – so service centers should reserve the easy tasks for automation and reserve the brainpower of their staff for creatively solving business challenges.

In the end, it's all about empowering a talented workforce with the information it needs to deliver superior service – internally and externally.

To learn more about process automation technologies that can support the next generation of your shared services team, visit OnBase.com »