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# The Impact of a Digital Workforce on Business Agility & Survival

Global Study Highlights: UK



# The Critical Role of Automation in the Future of Work

## Automation as a Solution to the Global Productivity Problem, and a Driver of Digital Transformation and Business Agility

The role of automation in our lives is changing rapidly to adjust to the demands of the world around us. In our new economic reality, digital transformation has become a top business priority, and organisations are increasingly looking for ways to stay resilient, responsive and competitive. Automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are forever changing how businesses think and how employees work. This change is aided by the power of Robotic Process Automation (RPA), which is pivotal to how organisations will survive and thrive in the global economy.

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Building upon last year's report analyzing the impact of intelligent automation on the future of work, we continued to investigate the key roles that RPA and intelligent automation play in our changing global workplace. This year, our research focused on:

- 1) The role of automation in tackling the global productivity problem
- 2) The challenges facing the adoption of automation in the workplace, and
- 3) How organisations are addressing employee and customer concerns about this adoption

We found that business decision makers around the world strongly believe automation is key to driving digital transformation, further highlighting the impact that these technologies will continue to have on overall global productivity and business agility. The overwhelming majority of business decision makers also agree that RPA and/or intelligent automation is essential for their businesses to remain competitive. These leaders view these technologies as core to their digital transformation efforts and understand that they must adopt them in order to thrive in this tumultuous business environment – and workers are ready and willing to embrace it.

Businesses have to make sure that their employees are properly prepared to face this change in the way they work. If they are not, they risk missing out on making real progress. In a welcome change, a majority of knowledge workers report that they too believe automation improves their job and has a positive impact on the workplace. Our findings indicate that business decision makers and employees are unified on the fact that there are clear benefits to automation, despite the challenges faced by implementing it. The burden is now on organisations to ensure this evolution proceeds smoothly and efficiently so they can stay at the forefront of their industries.



# What the Numbers Tell Us



**92 percent**

of decision makers believe that RPA is important for driving digital transformation



**86 percent**

of business decision makers see RPA as a solution to the global productivity problem



**64 percent**

of knowledge workers agree that automation will make their organisation more innovative



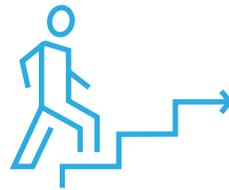
**85 percent**

of business decision makers believe that RPA and/or automation offers more to the business than just time and cost savings



**83 percent**

of business decision makers believe that their employees would trust working alongside a digital workforce



**94 percent**

of business decision makers plan to extend the use of automation across their organisations



**76 percent**

of knowledge workers feel comfortable in reskilling for a change in work role



**71 percent**

of knowledge workers believe that using tech to automate tasks would improve their work life

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# RPA & Automation - Their Effects on Organisations



# Tackling the Global Productivity Problem

## RPA AND AUTOMATION PRESENT SOLUTIONS TO MANY CHALLENGES THAT ORGANISATIONS FACE

Half of knowledge workers in the UK are struggling with workload demands, of which 72% believe automation would help alleviate the problem.

### BUSINESS DECISION MAKERS

Three quarters (76%) feel as though they are struggling to meet customer demands – of which almost all (95%) believe that automation would help solve the problem.

**76%** of business decision makers feel as though they are struggling to meet customer demand

**95%** of those business decision makers believe that automation would help solve the problem

### BUSINESS DECISION MAKERS

4 in 5 business decision makers see automation (88%) and RPA (86%) as solutions to the global productivity problem.

Automation



RPA



Knowledge workers are struggling with workload demands, decision makers are struggling to meet customer demands, and too much time is being spent on administrative tasks. These are all issues which the majority believe could be alleviated through automation. With global productivity growth stagnating at one-tenth of what it was 40 years ago for some economies, according to research from the [Brookings Institute](#), new data points to automation technology as a likely solution, and workers are willing and ready to embrace it.



**85%** of business decision makers believe that RPA/and or automation offers more to the business than just time and cost savings

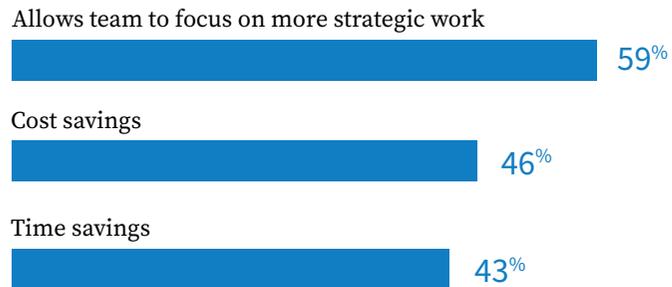
**83%** of business decision makers believe that RPA/and or automation helps their organisation connect siloed departments

**92%** of decision makers believe that RPA is important for driving digital transformation while 94% believe automation is important for this



### BUSINESS DECISION MAKERS

Business decision makers in the UK view the following as the key benefits of RPA/automation



Business leaders view RPA and automation as core to their digital transformation efforts, and understand that they must adopt the technology or die in this competitive business environment. The benefits of the technology are plentiful and even transcend departmental silos, a challenge that many companies still struggle to address.

## BUSINESS DECISION MAKERS

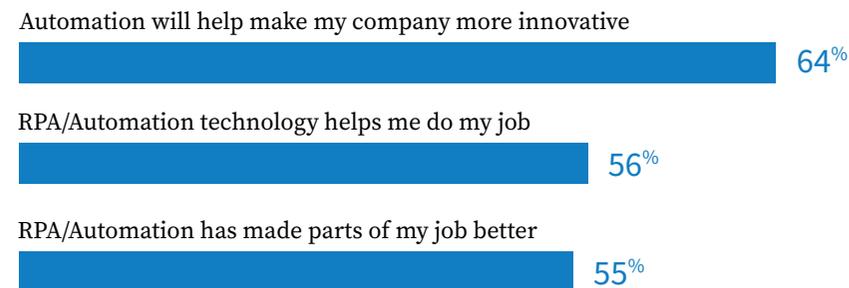
The top benefit of RPA according to decision makers is that it allows the team to focus on more strategic work (59%).

Knowledge workers view the following as the key benefits of RPA/Automation:



## ARE BUSINESS LEADERS AND THEIR EMPLOYEES ALIGNED ON THE BENEFITS OF AUTOMATION?

Two thirds of knowledge workers agree that automation will make their organisation more innovative (64%) and just over half say it improves their job (55%).



From improving one's job and saving on time and costs, to allowing teams to focus more on strategic work and making the organisation more innovative, both knowledge workers and decision makers agree that automation offers a great deal of benefits. The more closely aligned on these benefits an organisation's employees are across all levels of the business, the easier it will be to introduce automation and embed Digital Workers as pivotal members of a blended future workforce.



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# Implementation of Automation and RPA



# Business Implementation of RPA on Upswing

## DECISION MAKERS ARE READY TO REAP THE BENEFITS, KNOWLEDGE WORKERS CLOSE BEHIND

Business leaders in the UK are ready to deploy automation and reap the benefits. A significant majority have plans in place to roll out automation across their organisations, with a goal of seeing benefits not just in time and cost savings, but also the ability to scale other emerging technologies. While there's an eagerness to deploy automation and, in many cases, plans in place to do so, there remain challenges as business leaders pursue their automation ambitions.

### BUSINESS DECISION MAKERS AND KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

The majority of both knowledge workers and decision makers agree that their organisations understand and are prepared for automation, from meeting requirements (85%) to having solid security processes (82%).

My organisation dedicates time to understand how automation can grow and scale across the business



Our digital workers meet policy requirements set by our organisation



We have solid security processes in place for our digital workers



### BUSINESS DECISION MAKERS

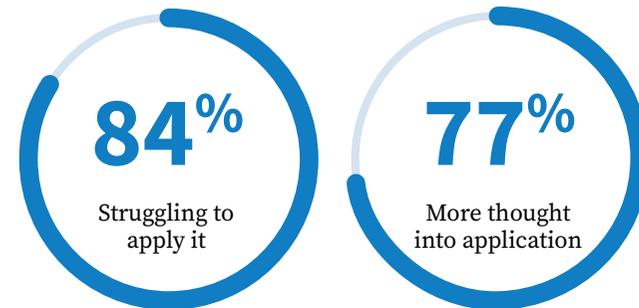
Almost all organisations plan to extend their use of automation.

**94%** of business decision makers plan to extend the use of automation across their business

**93%** of business decision makers have a clear plan for rolling out the use of automation across their business

### BUSINESS DECISION MAKERS

4 in 5 decision makers believe that despite automation being rolled out and understood, they are struggling to apply it (84%) and more thought needs to be put into its application (77%).

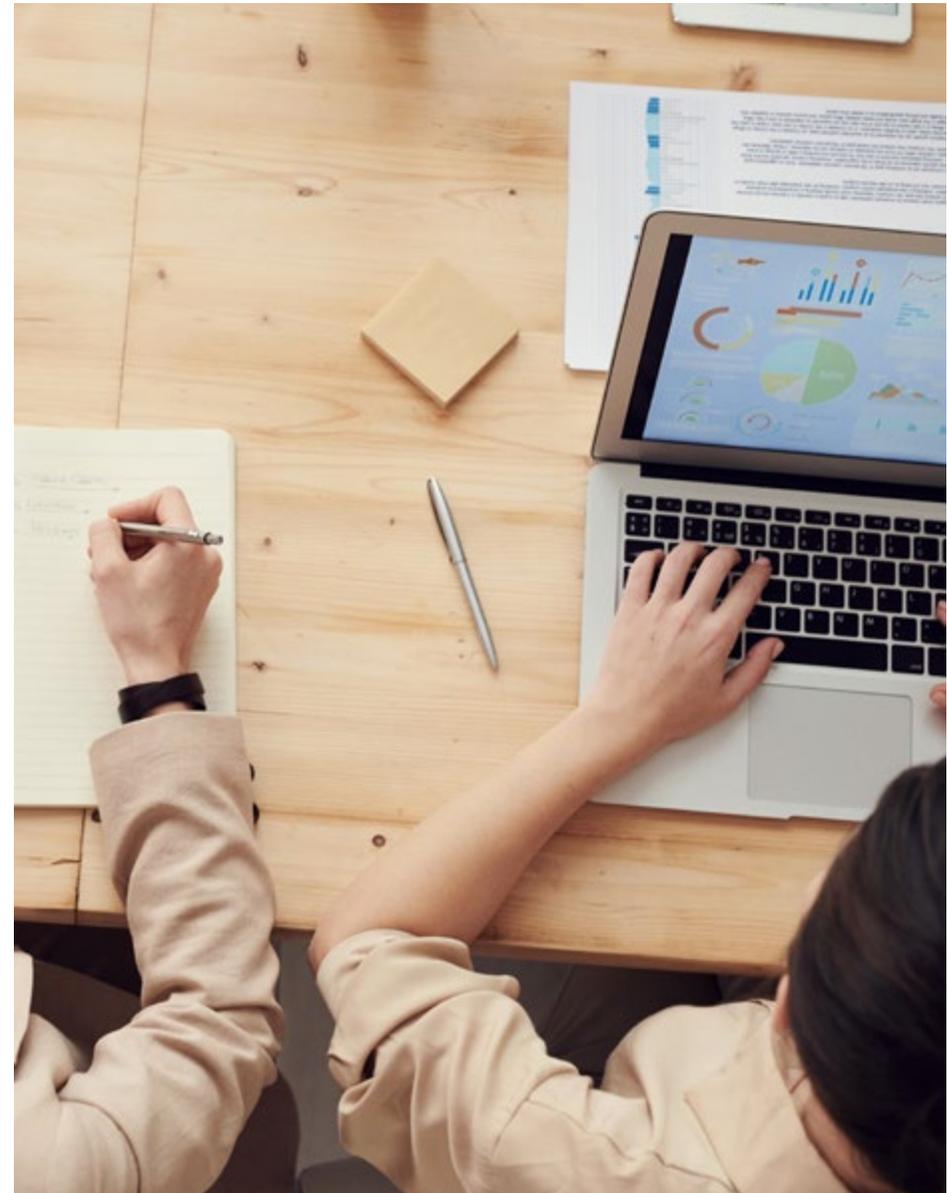


**65%** of knowledge workers believe that their organisation is applying automation effectively

**93%** of decision makers believe that their organisation is effective at applying automation within the workplace

**90%** of business decision makers believe that their organisation knows how to maximize the potential of RPA

Our research finds a slight discrepancy between how knowledge workers and decision makers view the efficacy of their businesses' automation initiatives. Overall, decision makers are more likely than knowledge workers to believe that their organisation is applying automation effectively and that its integration into the workforce has been a seamless process. This reveals a communication gap about where automation is being deployed, how the rollout is progressing and a timeline for future implementation plans. More transparency into the overall process and the benchmarks set by the organisation will help employees to be fully supportive of these efforts as they continue.



# Communication Around RPA & Automation



# When it Comes to Effective Implementation, Communication is Key

## BUSINESS DECISION MAKERS

Decision makers are overestimating their clarity towards employees regarding automation and how it will impact them.

## BUSINESS DECISION MAKERS AND KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

While almost all decision makers (97%) believe that the communication regarding their organisations' rollout of automation was successful, just 60% of knowledge workers believe the same.



## KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

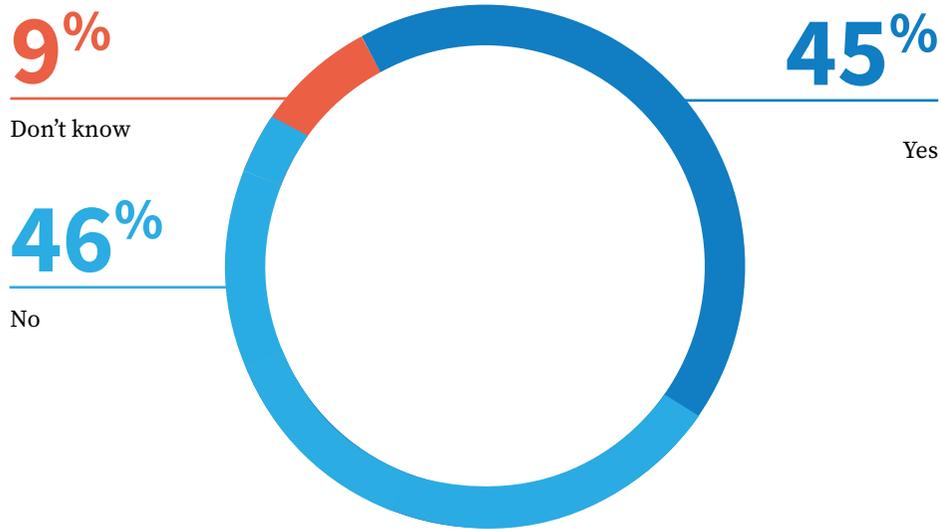
Two thirds of knowledge workers know who to approach with questions about changes due to automation (66%).



The huge economic impact of RPA cannot be realized without people. Businesses have to make sure that their employees are properly prepared to face this change in the way they work. If they are not, they risk missing out on making real progress. The data shows that decision makers seem to be over estimating how effective and successful their communication has been regarding the rollout of automation. As organisations move forward with plans to make automation a critical part of their business structure, they will need to prioritize bridging the communication gap, or risk losing the satisfaction and engagement of their employees.

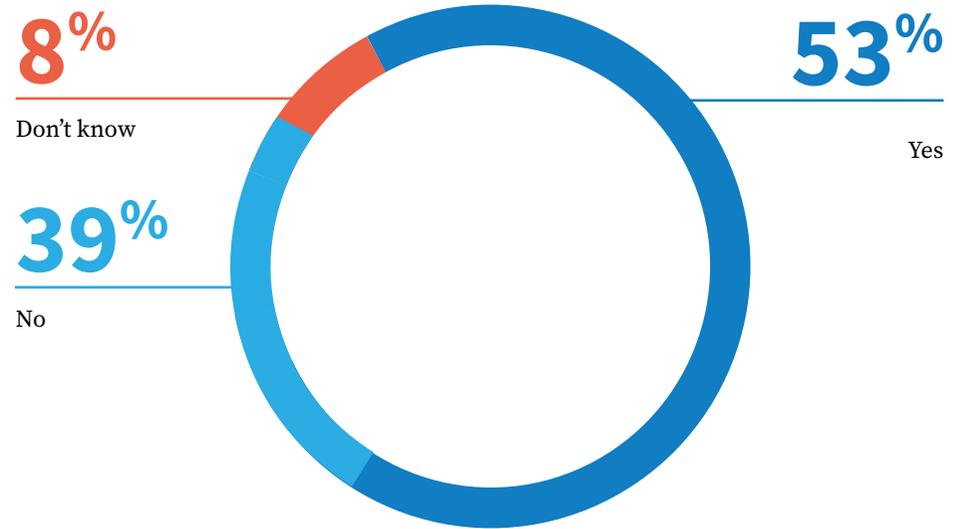
### BUSINESS DECISION MAKERS

Nearly half of employers have talked to their employees about RPA (45%). Of these, three quarters have discussed how it would affect their jobs (76%).



### BUSINESS DECISION MAKERS

Over half of employers have talked to their employees about Automation (53%). Of these, 7 in 10 have discussed how it would affect their jobs (70%).



While the benefits of automation are recognized consistently across the workplace, businesses are still challenged with introducing Digital Workers in a way that facilitates seamless adoption and automation success. Communication remains critical when rolling out automation and RPA, and those organisations that go to great lengths to effectively communicate how these technologies will directly impact jobs will ultimately reap all of the benefits that RPA and automation have to offer.

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# An Adapting Workforce



# Growing Trust in Automation and a Willingness to Reskill Alongside Digital Colleagues

## BUSINESS DECISION MAKERS

Decision makers in the UK are positive in their outlook on the relationship between staff and digital workforces:

Adopting new tech will attract the most talent



New hires are prepared to work with a digital workforce



## KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

Majority of knowledge workers (84%) feel that they understand how technology will impact their jobs. Almost half are even excited at the opportunities that automation will create (47%), an aspect that is over-estimated by decision makers (66%).

- 84%** of knowledge workers understand how technology will impact their jobs
- 47%** of knowledge workers are excited at the opportunities that automation will create
- 66%** of business decision makers are excited at the opportunities that automation will create

Overall, there's a growing level of trust in and adaptation to digital colleagues. With almost half of knowledge workers excited at the opportunities that automation will create, employees are continuously moving to embrace the benefits of automation. The businesses that provide employees with guidance and learning as Digital Workers are introduced will enable the smoothest transition.

## BUSINESS DECISION MAKERS AND KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

3 in 5 knowledge workers in the UK believe that their employers should do more to build trust between the human and digital workforces (62%) while 88% of decision makers agree that this is something they have to work on.

- 69%** of companies provide learning opportunities for new skills/ qualifications when they introduce technologies that will transform their job
- 81%** of these do so on a continuous basis
- 78%** believe it is the employers' responsibility to reskill or re-educate staff if they implement automation
- 76%** of knowledge workers feel comfortable in reskilling for a change in work role
- 71%** of knowledge workers believe that using tech to automate tasks would improve their work life

## BUSINESS DECISION MAKERS

According to a majority of business decision makers in the UK:

Their employees would trust working alongside a digital workforce

83%

They would trust a digital colleague to manage their employees

82%

Organisations are still overcoming challenges to introducing automation, but leaders see positive change on the horizon. Two-thirds of knowledge workers report that automation improves their job, and 3 in 4 feel comfortable reskilling for a change in work role (76%). As organisations become more adept at communicating automation strategies, both business leaders and employees alike will reap the benefits of RPA and automation with greater speed and frequency.



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# Contact Us



Business leaders are increasingly turning to RPA and automation to address many of the challenges of working in our current economy. Across every industry, the need for automation and RPA is widely felt. Global productivity has stalled, and businesses are struggling to maintain digital transformation initiatives and remain competitive against their peers. However, these technologies may present the solution to many of the challenges businesses are facing, with the benefits seen by decision makers and knowledge workers alike.

While it's clear that business decision makers and employees are unified on the fact that there are benefits to automation, there's a communication gap regarding how automation is being deployed. The responsibility is now on organisations to ensure this evolution proceeds smoothly and efficiently so they can stay at the forefront of their industries.

Ultimately, people will continue to be the element that sets a business apart and the huge economic impact of RPA cannot be realized without them. Businesses have to make sure that their employees are properly prepared to face this change in the way they work in order to reap the true benefits of RPA and automation.

Find out more at [www.blueprism.com](http://www.blueprism.com)

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## About Blue Prism

Blue Prism's vision is to provide a Digital Workforce for Every Enterprise. The company's purpose is to unleash the collaborative potential of humans, operating in harmony with a Digital Workforce, so every enterprise can exceed their business goals and drive meaningful growth, with unmatched speed and agility.

Fortune 500 and public-sector organisations, among customers across 70 commercial sectors, trust Blue Prism's enterprise-grade connected-RPA platform, which has users in more than 170 countries. By strategically applying intelligent automation, these organisations are creating new opportunities and services, while unlocking massive efficiencies that return millions of hours of work back into their business.

Available on-premises, in the cloud, hybrid, or as an integrated SaaS solution, Blue Prism's Digital Workforce automates ever more complex, end-to-end processes that drive a true digital transformation, collaboratively, at scale and across the entire enterprise.

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# Methodology



The research was conducted by independent research firm Sapio on behalf of Blue Prism. 1,725 business decision makers (those with a final say over budget spend of technology implementations) were surveyed in the UK (202), US (402), Japan (106), India (101) Australia (106), Germany (101), Singapore (100), France (100), Sweden (103), United Arab Emirates (103), Russia (100), China (100) and South Africa (101). A further 5,063 knowledge workers (workers whose main capital is knowledge, whose job is to “think for a living” and who have access to technology as part of their day-to-day jobs) were surveyed in the UK (510), US (1023), Japan (250), India (503) Australia (250), Germany (253), Singapore (255), France (251), Sweden (250), United Arab Emirates (250), Russia (507), China (599) and South Africa (250). All respondents worked in organisations with 250+ employees. In addition, the respondents worked in companies in which automation had already been adopted. All interviews were conducted online by Sapio Research during March 2020.