

Creating a Virtuous Cycle with Automation for Good

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Automation of business activity has been happening for over 200 years. However, the changing economics of computing means that automation projects can be started much more quickly and cheaply than ever before. IDC's extensive EMEA Emerging Technology Survey (July 2021) showed that 67% of organizations already use intelligent automation technologies or plan to do so over the next year. What's more, the power of automation technologies means that their impacts can be more profound than ever before.

Any organization looking to maximize and multiply impact needs to pursue automation with a specific intention. However, without clear goals and direction, organizations risk missing the full potential of automation and overlooking its ability to enable a positive social impact.

To that end, we propose an "Automation for Good" manifesto based on the following five key principles:



People are at the heart of automation projects, both as enablers and as beneficiaries. Viewing people purely as a cost or overhead to be removed from an activity diminishes the automation opportunity and demeans the value of human engagement as core to the automation process.



Automation creates new personal development opportunities and skills horizons. The biggest gains will come when those opportunities and horizons are opened equally to all employees regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability.



Automation is a multipurpose tool for transforming organizations. Organizations can improve more than operating costs with automation; they can work to meet ESG and sustainability goals by decreasing material waste and energy usage, and increasing resilience and transparency. Public sector organizations can improve their mission effectiveness, enhance interactions with citizens and businesses, save taxpayers' money, and create financial benefits for a larger population, decreasing socioeconomic gaps.



Automation dividends should be invested in furthering your purpose. Resources returned through automation (money, workforce time, skills) can be used to further organizations' broader missions to deliver positive value to society, and by doing so can further increase employee engagement.



Automation should be pursued in the light, not in the dark. The value of automation is amplified when organizations are transparent about their automation efforts, sharing their successes and challenges and reporting on all delivered outcomes.



Source: IDC, 2021

Implementing the Automation for Good Manifesto creates a virtuous cycle between organizations, employees, and societies:

Employees benefit from being able to focus on higher-value tasks and more meaningful work; they have the opportunity to develop new high-value skills and apply those skills in the service of actions to make a difference.

Organizations benefit from engaged employees who can see how the changes they participate in are driving toward goals that benefit everyone — and so are less likely to leave; the workplace is also more attractive to new potential hires. Along the way, employees engage in making changes and improvements that make the organization more effective and more resilient.

Societies benefit from sustainable and less wasteful organizations that provide long-term value and create meaningful employment opportunities for citizens. They also benefit from workforces trained in high-value disciplines that can bolster countries' economic development efforts.



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