ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION DELIVERS BUSINESS VALUE QUICKLY

Global RPA Survey Results—Adoption, Benefits, and Lessons Learned

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Introduction

Business and technology professionals around the globe were surveyed about their experiences adopting and scaling RPA. This report summarizes key findings about RPA adoption rates, implementation challenges, success factors, benefits expected and gained, and lessons learned.

Executive Summary

Early RPA success is exceptionally high (89%). Although adoption is still in the early stages, nearly half of the companies surveyed already have bots in production. Starting small, with 10 or fewer bots, companies are automating processes ranging from HR and IT to sales, customer service, finance, compliance, and auditing. Already, companies are realizing the efficiencies they expected, including faster processes, fewer errors, lower costs, and higher employee productivity. More than half of the companies with bots in production save 30+ hours each week.

When it comes to scaling RPA, companies are taking a measured approach. Adding bots requires overcoming integration, security, and skill-level challenges—and companies indicate that RPA tools must be equipped with the necessary capabilities. Lessons learned and benefits cited by practitioners suggest that RPA can deliver quantifiable business value quickly, which further fuels RPA momentum.

Key Findings

- **RPA is still in the early stages, and bot deployments are small.**
  - RPA adoption is still early, with 69% starting in the last two years
  - 49% of companies already have bots in production
  - Most companies start small: 57% with 10 or fewer bots, 16% with 11–20 bots
- **RPA is already delivering business value.**
  - Early RPA success is exceptionally high at 89%
  - 79% of processes automated are business functions
  - More than 50% of companies save 30+ hours each week
- **Practitioners have identified success factors for adopting and scaling RPA.**
  - Pick the right processes, understand them well, and start small before scaling
  - Scaling RPA requires overcoming integration, security, and skill-level challenges
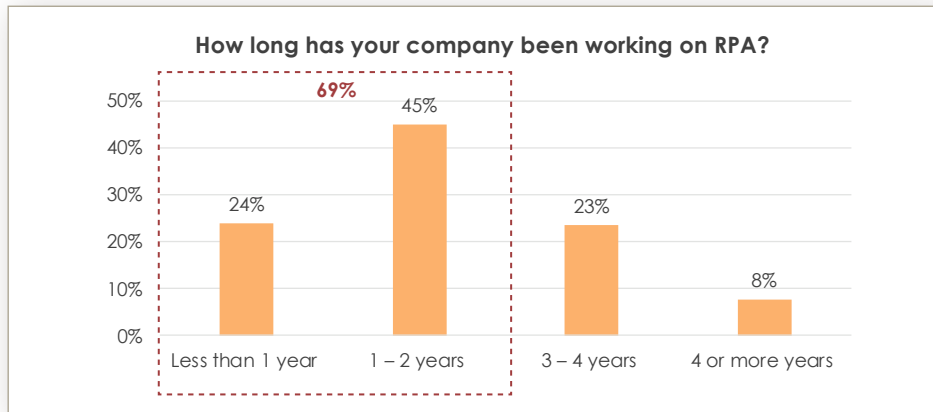 - IT and business stakeholders must be aligned and work closely together
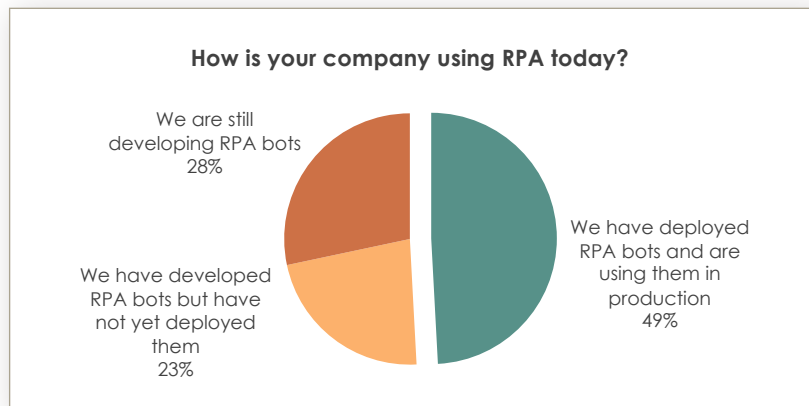
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RPA Adoption Is in the Early Stage

RPA adoption is still early, with 69% of companies starting in the last two years.

How long has your company been working on RPA?

Category	Percentage
Less than 1 year	24%
1 – 2 years	45%
3 – 4 years	23%
4 or more years	8%

69% (Less than 1 year + 1 – 2 years)

Half of the companies are still working on developing or deploying bots; the other half have bots in production.

How is your company using RPA today?

- We are still developing RPA bots: 28%
- We have developed RPA bots but have not yet deployed them: 23%
- We have deployed RPA bots and are using them in production: 49%

Companies with bots in production start small: 57% of them have 10 or fewer bots; 16% have between 11 and 20 bots.
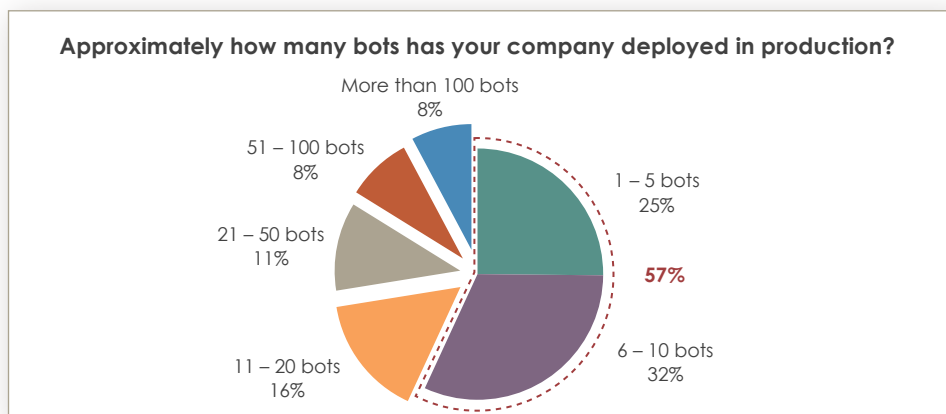
Approximately how many bots has your company deployed in production?

- More than 100 bots: 8%
- 51 – 100 bots: 8%
- 21 – 50 bots: 11%
- 11 – 20 bots: 16%
- 1 – 5 bots: 25%
- 6 – 10 bots: 32%

57%

More than half of the companies (58%) are using more than one RPA solution, which suggests they are just starting their RPA implementations. The primary reason for 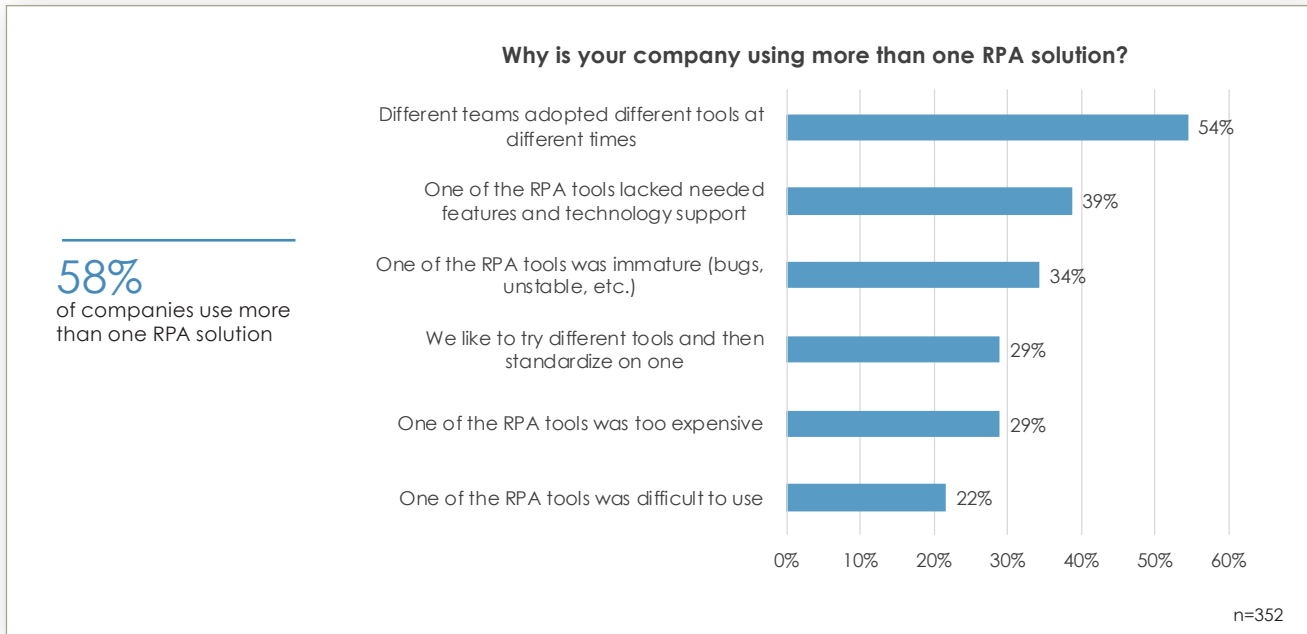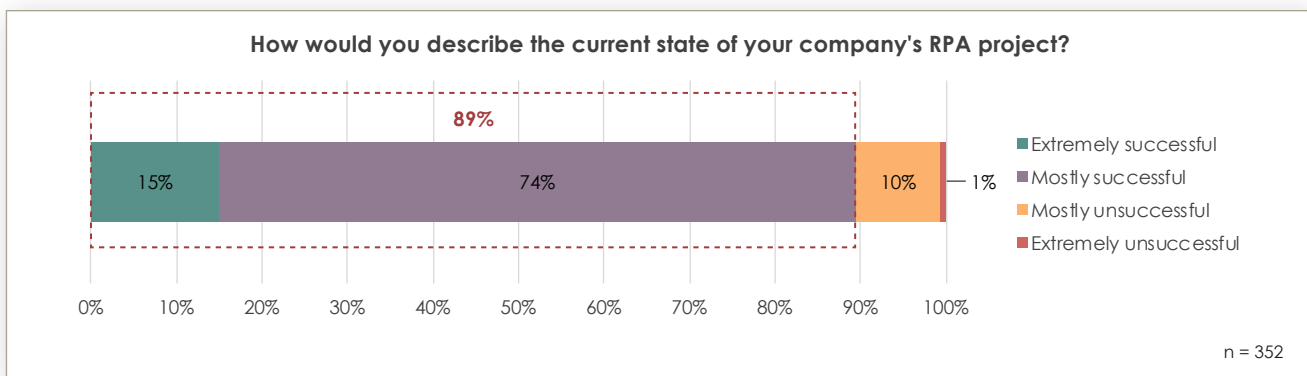multiple tools is that different teams have adopted different tools at different times (54%). 39% of the companies say their RPA tool lacked required features or technology support, so they added another tool. 29% say they are testing multiple tools before standardizing on one.

Why is your company using more than one RPA solution?

58%
of companies use more than one RPA solution

Reason	Percentage
Different teams adopted different tools at different times	54%
One of the RPA tools lacked needed features and technology support	39%
One of the RPA tools was immature (bugs, unstable, etc.)	34%
We like to try different tools and then standardize on one	29%
One of the RPA tools was too expensive	29%
One of the RPA tools was difficult to use	22%

n=352

RPA Delivers Real Business Benefits

Early RPA success is high: 89% of companies say their RPA projects are extremely or mostly successful.

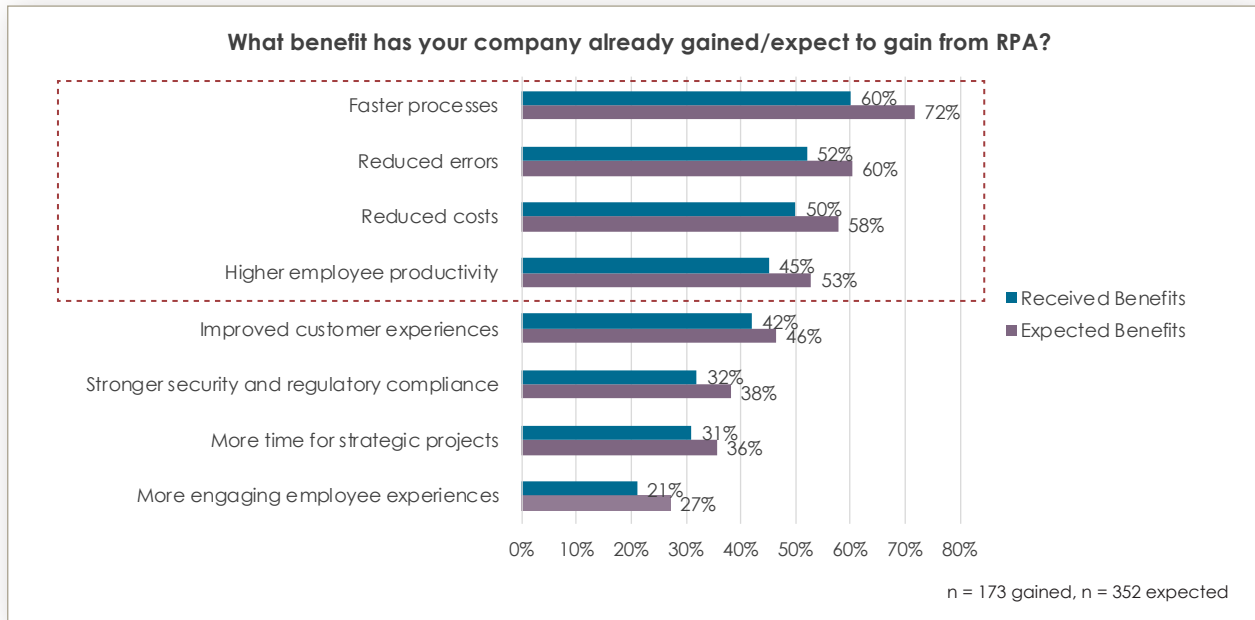**How would you describe the current state of your company's RPA project?**

89%

Extremely successful	Mostly successful	Mostly unsuccessful	Extremely unsuccessful
15%	74%	10%	1%

n = 352

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Companies expected efficiency gains, and their expectations are being met. Bots in production are delivering faster processes, fewer errors, lower costs, and higher employee productivity. The alignment between projected and actual results suggests that RPA is delivering what it was intended to deliver.

What benefit has your company already gained/expect to gain from RPA?

Benefit	Received Benefits	Expected Benefits
Faster processes	60%	72%
Reduced errors	52%	60%
Reduced costs	50%	58%
Higher employee productivity	45%	53%
Improved customer experiences	42%	46%
Stronger security and regulatory compliance	32%	38%
More time for strategic projects	31%	36%
More engaging employee experiences	21%	27%

n = 173 gained, n = 352 expected

In the future, companies expect to gain more efficiencies, and executives have higher expectations for improved customer experiences and higher employee productivity.
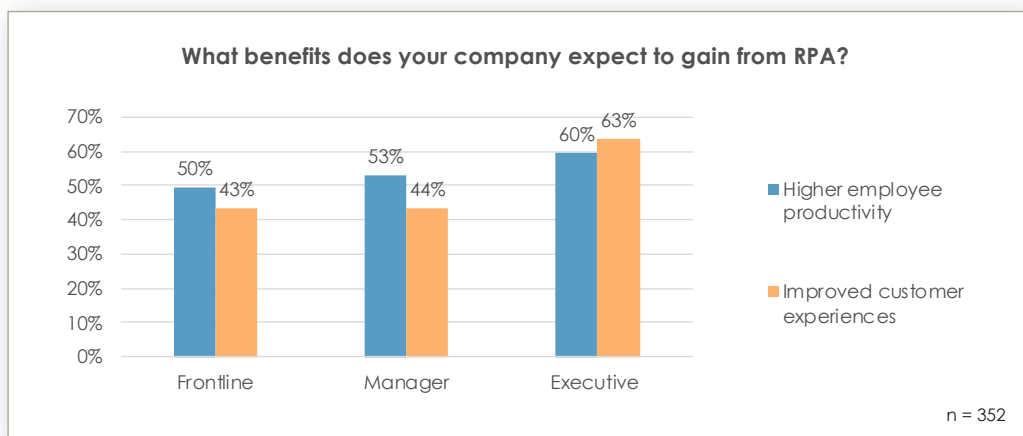
What benefits does your company expect to gain from RPA?

	Higher employee productivity	Improved customer experiences
Frontline	50%	43%
Manager	53%	44%
Executive	60%	63%

n = 352

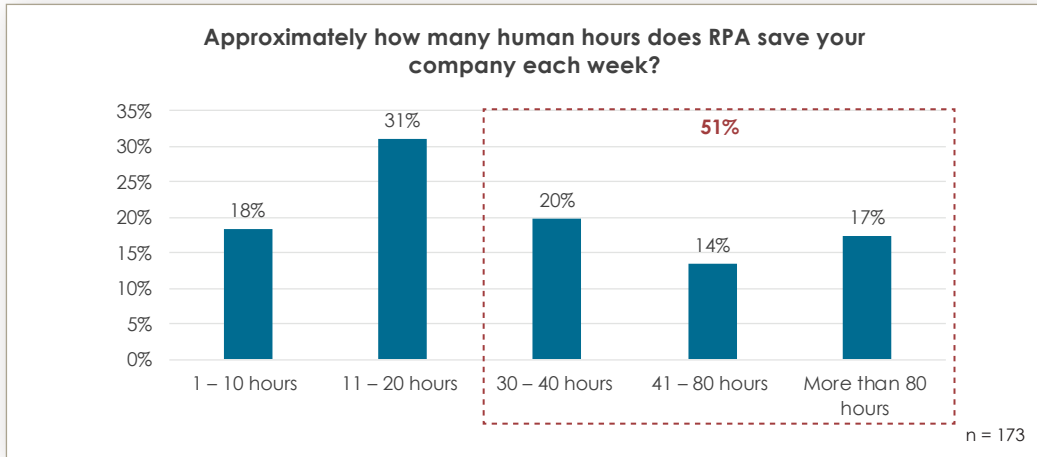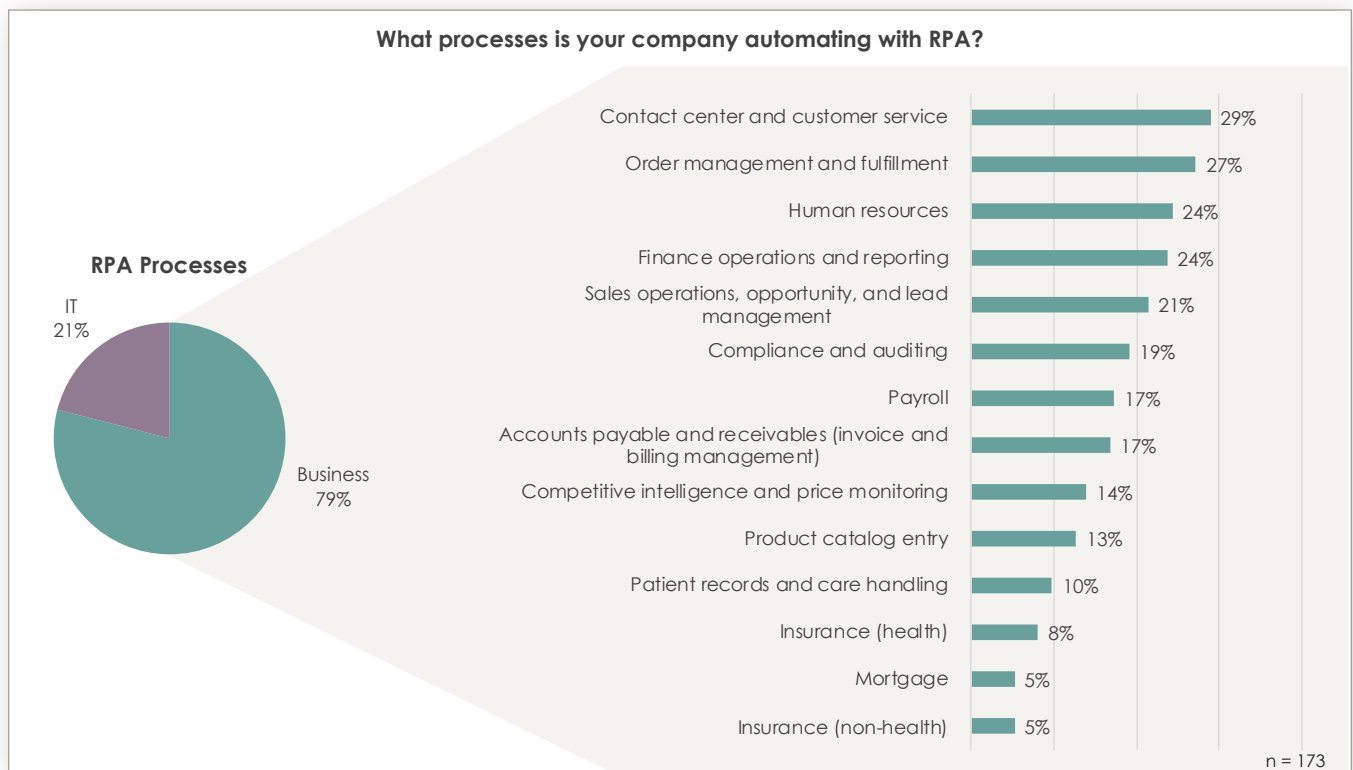51% of companies with bots in production save 30 or more hours each week. Breaking that down further, each week 20% of companies save 30–40 hours, 14% of companies save 41–80 hours, and 17% save more than 80 hours.

Approximately how many human hours does RPA save your company each week?

Category	Percentage
1 – 10 hours	18%
11 – 20 hours	31%
30 – 40 hours	20%
41 – 80 hours	14%
More than 80 hours	17%

51% (30–40 hours, 41–80 hours, More than 80 hours)

n = 173

RPA Processes Span Functions and Departments

RPA is a company-specific undertaking, driven by business needs. Findings suggest that there is no prescribed starting point or path to automating processes with RPA. Companies are automating processes ranging from HR and IT to sales, customer service, finance, compliance, and auditing. 79% of them are business functions; the rest fall under IT.

What processes is your company automating with RPA?

RPA Processes
- IT 21%
- Business 79%

Process	Percentage
Contact center and customer service	29%
Order management and fulfillment	27%
Human resources	24%
Finance operations and reporting	24%
Sales operations, opportunity, and lead management	21%
Compliance and auditing	19%
Payroll	17%
Accounts payable and receivables (invoice and billing management)	17%
Competitive intelligence and price monitoring	14%
Product catalog entry	13%
Patient records and care handling	10%
Insurance (health)	8%
Mortgage	5%
Insurance (non-health)	5%

n = 173

As RPA adoption grows, companies plan to automate more business functions, with a focus on compliance, auditing, and finance operations and reporting.

What processes does your company plan to automate with RPA over the next 12 months?

RPA Processes

IT 15%

Business 85%

The focus on automating business functions will grow to 85%, versus 79% currently

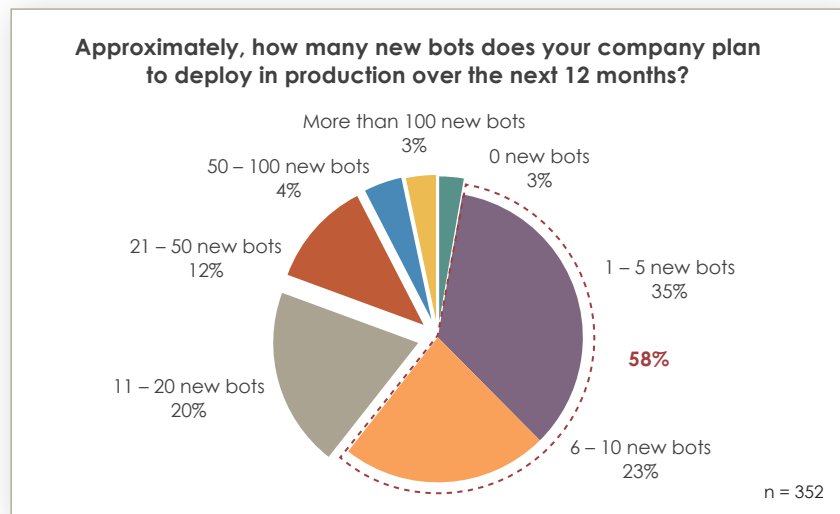| Process	Percentage
Compliance and auditing	28%
Finance operations and reporting	26%
Order management and fulfillment	24%
Contact center and customer service	23%
Human resources	22%
Sales operations, opportunity, and lead management	22%
Product catalog entry	21%
Competitive intelligence and price monitoring	20%
Accounts payable and receivables (invoice and billing management)	20%
Payroll	17%
Patient records and care handling	10%
Insurance (non-health)	10%
Insurance (health)	9%
Mortgage	6%

n = 352

Bot Growth Is Measured

Early RPA success is high, but companies are taking a measured approach to adding bots. 58% of them expect to deploy 10 or fewer new bots over the next twelve months; 20% expect to deploy between 11 and 20 new bots.

Approximately, how many new bots does your company plan to deploy in production over the next 12 months?

- More than 100 new bots 3%
- 50 – 100 new bots 4%
- 21 – 50 new bots 12%
- 11 – 20 new bots 20%
- 0 new bots 3%
- 1 – 5 new bots 35%
- 6 – 10 new bots 23%

58%

n = 352

This measured approach may be due to scaling challenges. Companies say their top three challenges are integrating RPA with other technologies (39%), understanding RPA security risks (39%), and addressing a shortage of RPA skills (38%). These challenges underscore why IT and business teams benefit when they work closely together. Business-IT alignment can help to ensure that complex integrations are executed skillfully and securely, and that companies develop digital transformation strategies, the lack of which is a challenge of its own (31%).

What challenges is your company facing when trying to scale (grow) RPA?

Challenge	Percentage
Difficult to integrate RPA with other technologies	39%
Need to better understand RPA security risks	39%
Shortage of RPA skills	38%
Lack company-wide digital transformation strategy	31%
High RPA costs (infrastructure, ongoing maintenance, etc.)	27%
RPA tool doesn't meet automation needs	21%
Poor change management	19%
Inflexible licensing models	19%
Other	2%
We have not experienced any scalability challenges	7%
We have not tried to scale RPA yet	6%

n = 352

Micro Focus Robotic Process Automation (RPA) provides a practical, noninvasive way to build, scale, and secure automated business processes, from legacy to modern, across the enterprise. Combining screen-based UI automation with API operations, Micro Focus RPA centrally orchestrates the work of software robots. The intuitive design interface makes designing end-to-end automations easy for any use case—whether simple or complex. Record screen actions. Drag-and-drop API content from the rich content library or import custom Python operations. Apply advanced workflow logic for decision-making, parallel-processing, and error-handling. Secure robots make it possible to run RPA with confidence. Robots use privileged access management, run on locked screens, and use encrypted passwords. All their actions can be tracked with unique IDs in detailed logs. The highly capable robots are primed for enterprise action.

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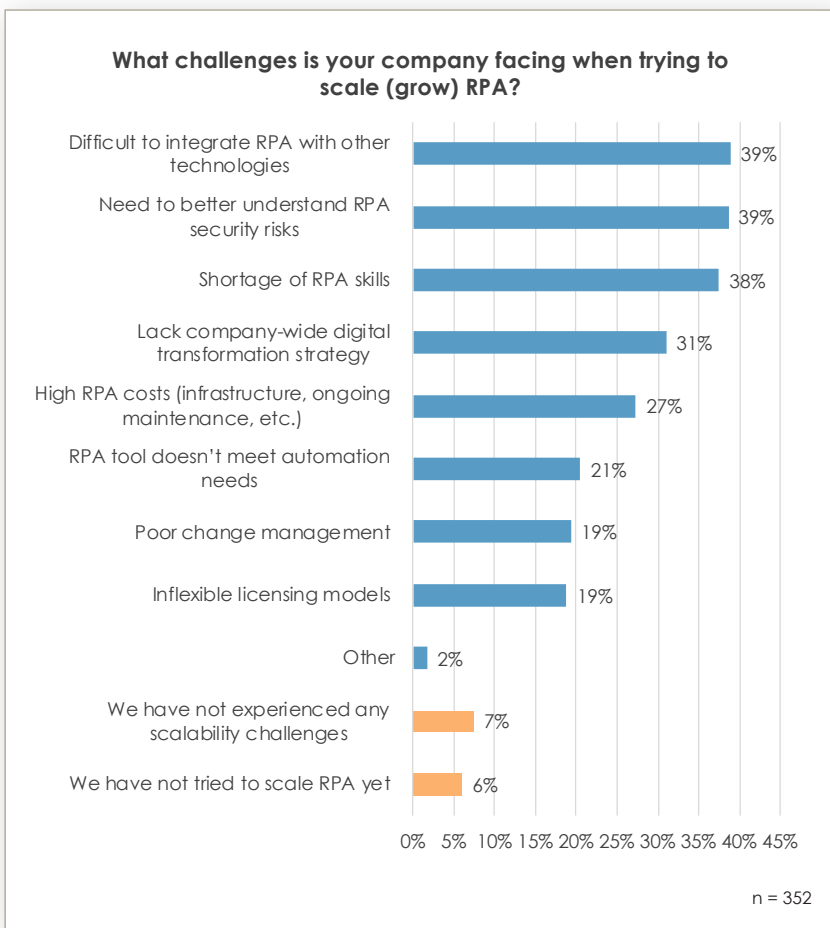
Other challenges, including high costs, immature tools, and poor change management are often related to early technology adoption. As such, these challenges are likely to wane as tools mature and companies implement effective change management.
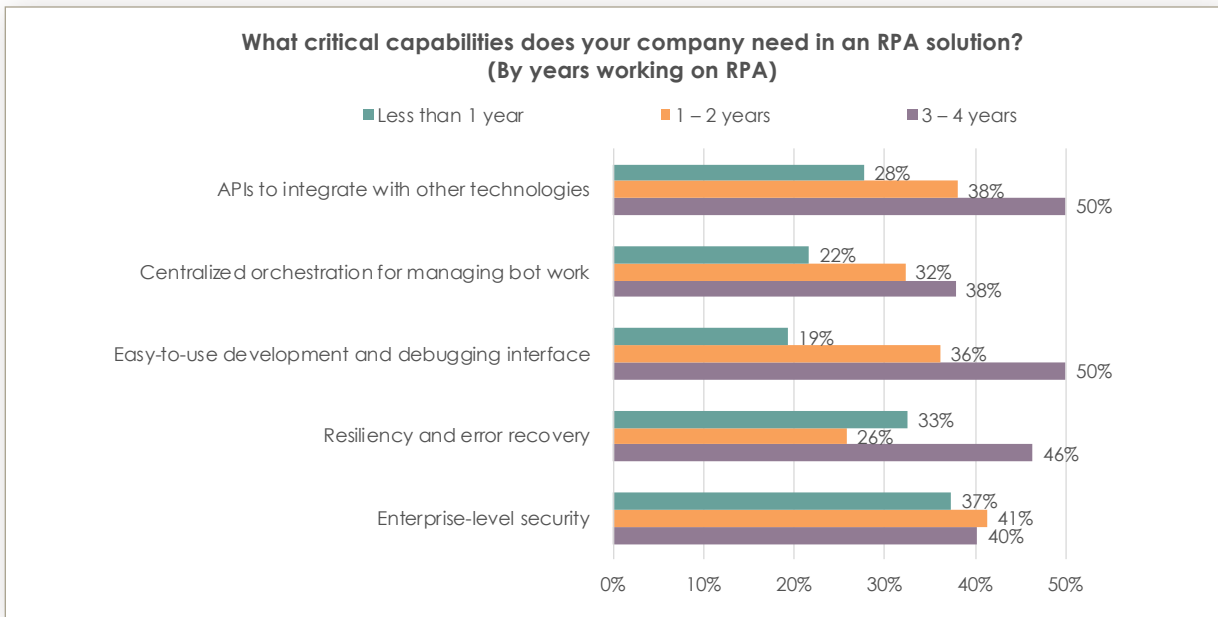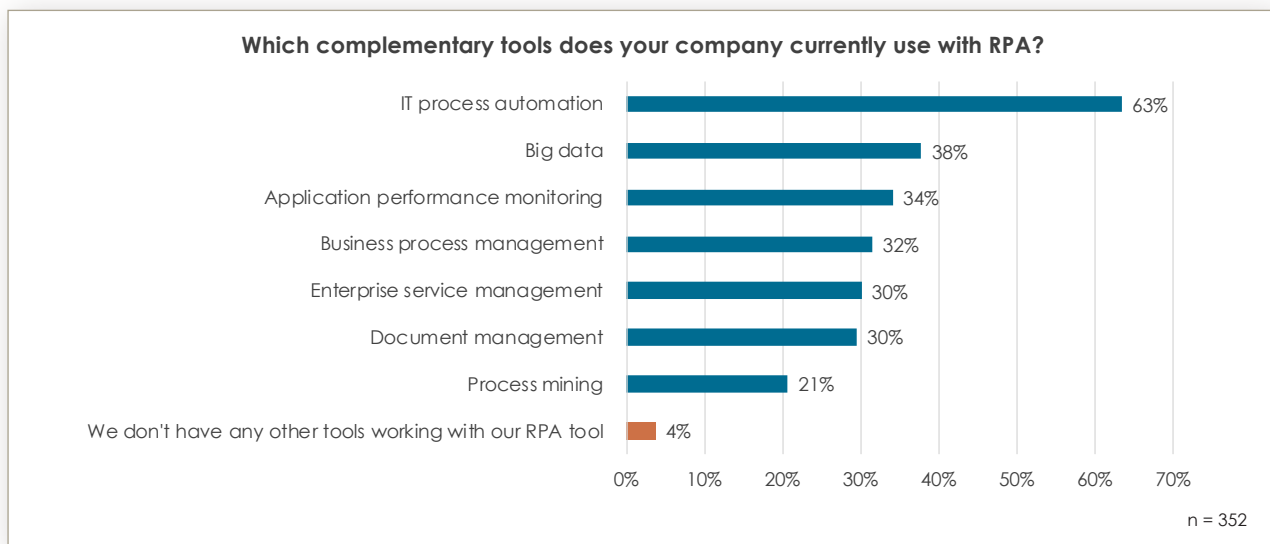
RPA Capabilities Needed—Integration and Security Are Key

Integration tops the list of critical capabilities companies need in an RPA solution. Over time, as RPA experience grows, APIs for connecting RPA to other technologies become even more import. 50% of companies with 3–4 years of experience say integration is critical, compared to 38% with 1–2 years of experience. Across all RPA experience levels, the value companies place on enterprise-level security remains high.

**What critical capabilities does your company need in an RPA solution?
(By years working on RPA)**

■ Less than 1 year   ■ 1 – 2 years   ■ 3 – 4 years

Capability	Less than 1 year	1 – 2 years	3 – 4 years
APIs to integrate with other technologies	28%	38%	50%
Centralized orchestration for managing bot work	22%	32%	38%
Easy-to-use development and debugging interface	19%	36%	50%
Resiliency and error recovery	33%	26%	46%
Enterprise-level security	37%	41%	40%

The tools most frequently used with RPA are IT process automation tools (63%). This finding reinforces the importance of integration as an essential RPA tool capability. RPA is not a standalone solution. It needs to work well with other tools and function as part of a larger digital transformation strategy.

Which complementary tools does your company currently use with RPA?

Tool	Percentage
IT process automation	63%
Big data	38%
Application performance monitoring	34%
Business process management	32%
Enterprise service management	30%
Document management	30%
Process mining	21%
We don't have any other tools working with our RPA tool	4%

n = 352

On the security front, companies cite data encryption (29%) and full audit trails for bots (32%) and humans (28%) as critical needs. Small differences across the data, however, suggest that all security features are important. Data loss prevention, integration with a credential vault, bot policy compliance, and role-based access credentials for bots are only a few percentage points apart.
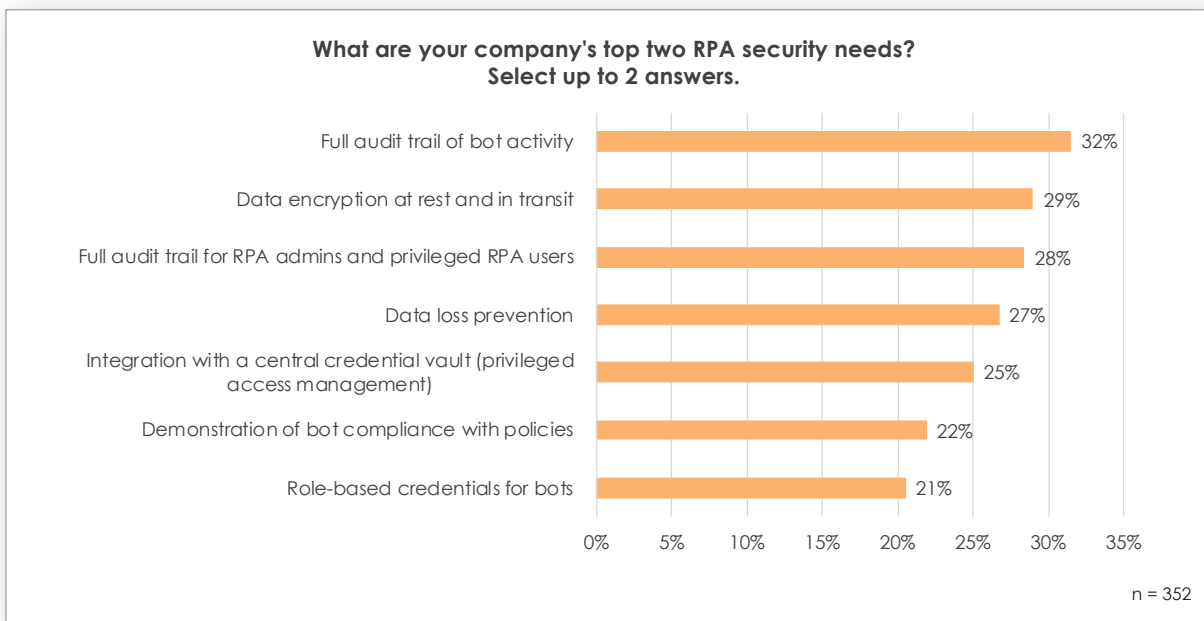
What are your company's top two RPA security needs?
Select up to 2 answers.

Security Need	Percentage
Full audit trail of bot activity	32%
Data encryption at rest and in transit	29%
Full audit trail for RPA admins and privileged RPA users	28%
Data loss prevention	27%
Integration with a central credential vault (privileged access management)	25%
Demonstration of bot compliance with policies	22%
Role-based credentials for bots	21%

n = 352

Charting the Path to RPA Success

The top lessons learned by practitioners suggest a roadmap to RPA success. Highest on the list are picking the right processes to automate (47%), understanding them well (47%), and starting small before scaling up (40%). Ensuring business-IT alignment and making RPA part of a holistic digital transformation strategy should further strengthen the outcome.

In your opinion, what are the top lessons learned from your RPA project?

Lesson	Percentage
Pick the right processes to automate	47%
Understand the processes you plan to automate	47%
Start small and scale up	40%
Ensure business-IT alignment	35%
Make sure RPA is part of your digital transformation strategy	30%
Assign resources for ongoing bot maintenance	29%
Select an RPA solution with rich set of APIs	28%
Implement a change management process	27%
Get C-level buy-in	27%

n = 352

Conclusion

RPA adoption is still in the early stages, with small bot deployments, maturing tools, and skills in development. Even so, nearly all companies with RPA implementations are saving time and cutting costs. RPA is easy to adopt with fast value delivery and manageable challenges. It can automate a vast range of processes with fast, accurate, and secure bots.

To move forward and scale RPA, companies need to overcome their current integration, security, and skill-level challenges. For that reason, the RPA solution they choose matters. The research points to the importance of picking an RPA solution with strong integration and security capabilities, as well as tools that are easy to use, so that companies can scale RPA with confidence.

Finally, business and IT teams can benefit from working together. Their alignment is the best way to ensure that the right processes are chosen, implemented, and supported over time.

Survey Methodology

Business and technology professionals from medium-sized companies to large enterprises around the world were invited to participate in a survey on their use of RPA. Participants represented all seniority levels, and all had direct RPA responsibilities. 352 participants completed the survey, which was administered electronically. A token compensation was offered for participation.

Company Size

- 500 – 1,000: 18%
- 1,000 – 5,000: 31%
- 5,000 – 10,000: 15%
- More than 10,000: 36%

Industry

- Technology (software and services): 23%
- Financial services: 14%
- Telecommunications: 9%
- Healthcare and medical: 9%
- Manufacturing: 8%
- Government and public sector: 8%
- Education: 7%
- Retail: 5%
- Energy and utilities: 4%
- Technology (not software and services): 3%
- Professional services–other: 3%
- Transportation and distribution: 2%
- Media and advertising: 2%
- Nonprofit: 1%
- Professional services–legal: 1%
- Other: 1%
- Pharmaceutical: 1%
- Professional services–accounting: 1%
- Hospitality and entertainment: 1%

Location

- Middle East or Africa: 2%
- Asia: 4%
- Mexico, Central America, or South America: 5%
- Australia or New Zealand: 1%
- Europe: 13%
- United States or Canada: 75%

Job Level

- Executive (C-level): 15%
- Frontline professional: 35%
- Director or manager: 50%

RPA Responsibilities

- I support existing RPA processes: 44%
- I review RPA solutions: 43%
- I make RPA solution recommendations: 39%
- I make decisions about RPA: 34%
- I implement RPA: 32%
- I am an RPA stakeholder: 28%

About Dimensional Research

Dimensional Research provides practical marketing research to help technology companies make their customers more successful. Our researchers are experts in the people, processes, and technology of corporate IT and understand how IT organizations operate. We partner with our clients to deliver actionable information that reduces risks, increases customer satisfaction, and grows the business.

For more information, visit www.dimensionalresearch.com.

About Micro Focus

Micro Focus delivers enterprise software to empower our 40,000 customers worldwide to digitally transform. With a broad portfolio, underpinned by a robust analytics ecosystem, the company enables customers to address the four core pillars of digital transformation—Enterprise DevOps; Hybrid IT Management; Security, Risk & Governance; and Predictive Analytics. By design, these tools bridge the gap between existing and emerging technologies, so customers can run and transform at the same time.

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