

# Embracing hyper-automation for business growth

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Hyper-automation is considered to be one of the most important trends in the ICT sector today. Companies looking to increase the momentum of their digital transformation journeys must embrace this if they are to remain relevant and competitive in the connected business environment.



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Many decision-makers are familiar with the concept of automation. This refers to using technology to automate tasks that once required humans. For its part, hyper-automation deals with the application of advanced technologies that include artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to increasingly automate processes and augment the skills human resources provide the organisation.

Despite fears that automation, and more specifically hyper-automation, will replace jobs, the reverse is true. While sophisticated technologies take over much of the menial and administrative-heavy job functions of people at the organisation, this frees them up to apply higher cognitive thinking to their work and evolve their roles inside the organisation.

While it is still early days for hyper-automation, many companies have experimented with elements of it especially when it comes to robotic process automation (RPA). As expected, those who have reported success from it relate to how the technology has enhanced people's jobs instead of making them redundant. Of course, for this to work, there must be a willingness to adapt to a changing environment and reskill or upskill the people resources of businesses across industry sectors.

## Change management

With hyper-automation referring to the combination of automation technologies that exist to augment and expand human capabilities, it has the potential to make the workforce significantly more productive. However, it is not only about technology.

In many respects, hyper-automation must focus on overcoming change management resistance. Currently, there is a lack of demand by businesses for automation. This is not because the processes or technological components are lacking. Instead, it is getting people to identify those tasks that are prime for automation and looking beyond the fear of job cuts to implement them.



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Therefore, preparing the business for automation is the first step even before going to the IT department to ensure the right technologies are in place. Hyper-automation essentially requires multiple technologies working effectively together. It revolves around seamlessly integrating what could be considered disparate elements and ensuring it enhances processes and functions inside the organisation.

Continued education will certainly help reduce resistance to hyper-automation. And then the realisation will come that it is a vital stepping-stone into the future of work. It will empower organisations to conduct more high-value tasks with people learning new skills for a digitally-driven business environment.

## Focus on benefits

As expected, more advanced markets have been more open to implementing hyper-automation. Developing countries like South Africa are sceptical given the high unemployment rate and the incorrect perceptions that must still be changed. But by focusing on the reasoning and the benefits of hyper-automation, companies will start deriving more value from it as will employees will benefit from more enhanced skills.

For example, the financial services sector is primed for hyper-automation. RPA has become an important aspect of this with some companies already featuring more than 700 bots to conduct elements of automation. And for manufacturing which is traditionally quite lean with its resources, hyper-automation ensures people become more productive and companies can derive the most value out of them.

This is not to say that integrating hyper-automation will not be without its technical challenges. Technology must collaborate with a myriad of functions inside the organisation. With this giving rise to the smart workplace or intelligent enterprise, the focus must remain on the benefits and how the technology will help overcome traditional business limitations.

Companies, therefore, need to take a holistic approach when it comes to hyper-automation. This entails them examining their dated processes and identifying the most important ones that need to be replaced first. The focus must be on optimising what has come before instead of just throwing technology at the problem and hoping it sticks.

Hyper-automation can be a significant business tool, but it must be managed properly to be implemented in the right way to ensure people embrace this innovative change.

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