

Embracing the Automation Revolution: The AL Survival Guide

1. Stay goal focused

Keep up with the pace of change, but don't forget to move with purpose.

As digital transformation continues to gather pace, organisations are understandably keen to create additional value and reduce costs through innovation. Before taking the leap because everyone else is, however, it's important to prioritise the initiatives that align best to your own business ambitions. At Automation Logic, we believe linking business objectives to IT programmes is a key requirement to create the business case and prepare the cultural foundations for change. Set clear and attainable goals but avoid vanity metrics. Concentrate efforts on putting in place meaningful measures that deliver real action insight instead.

2. Build sustainable skills

Balance the immediate needs of your business with the need to develop future proof skills.

With enterprises increasingly looking to automation to deliver new value, people with IT automation skills are in extremely high demand. Those wanting to stay ahead during the automation revolution need to therefore review how they hire, contract, redeploy and retrain to make sure they have the skills they need to adopt emerging tech. Doing this will enable organisations to balance the immediate needs of their business with growing the skills needed to achieve future success. DevOps has emerged as a methodology to unify development and operations teams and support the faster end to end delivery of quality software. Our belief is that a culture of continuous learning, as well as a commitment to building sustainable capability in areas such as DevOps, is therefore critical.

Case Study 1

Aligning business and IT goals and staying focused through times of change is a common challenge across enterprises today. To try and help organisations stay focused and improve ways of working, AL have designed a DevOps Capability Workshop. The goal of the workshop is to gather together key stakeholders to determine current DevOps capability level and produce a prioritised roadmap for continuous improvement.

Case Study 2

One way AL have begun to address the skills shortage is through the launch of our DevOps Academy, equipping STEM graduates with the technical and commercial skills they need to support organisations on their automation journey.

3. Make culture count

Encourage openness, collaboration and knowledge sharing across your organisation.

As automation becomes the new normal, it will have a huge impact on organisation culture. Putting people at the heart of digital transformation will ensure that it's a positive one. Methodologies such as DevOps place significant emphasis on the ability to collaborate across organisational boundaries, and this is often a new way of working for traditional organisations. We believe that in order to build the workplace of the future, organisations need to define new ways of working to drive a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing across IT teams. The key is to empower IT teams to do their jobs effectively with well performing teams and individuals recognised and rewarded and be clear on what is expected of them.

4. Optimise for efficiency

Don't just document the process, make sure everyone understands their role in its success.

The key goal of IT automation is reducing the reliance on manual process which in turn should serve to optimise existing IT processes. When working on an automation project, visualising workflow so that each team and each individual understands their role in a given process can help to identify who needs to be engaged, at what stage and show the hand offs between different disciplines (e.g. architecture, development, or security). Documenting and effectively communicating new process and/or process changes is key, and so is having workable fit-for-purpose change request approvals.

Case Study 3

AL has seen the importance of organisations needing to define new ways of working to drive a culture of collaboration and knowledge share across IT teams. AL was engaged by The Ministry of Justice to help build a software delivery platform for the MOJ's digital services (new, internet-facing government services). A big part of the success of the programme was around building sustainable capability through techniques such as mentoring and pairing and the team is now self-sustaining with civil servants in all key strategic roles.

Case Study 4

Our engineers always tell us that there is nothing quite as effective as face-to-face communication. However, when delivering complex programmes for Central Government and banking, they've seen that that using tools such as Jira and Trello to breakdown activities into individual tasks and creating a ticket for each, helps give visibility of what is being done across a team. If there's a ticket for each element, for example one for design, automation, deploy, tasks can be linked together to visualise a flow of work between disciplines.

5. Set the standards

**Establish what best practice looks like –
then put someone in charge of making it happen.**

Automation should enable intelligent working and key to this is defining and adopting a set of standards to manage things such as minimum quality boundaries. Standards can support, for example, the evaluation of technology and tooling choices. Standards should help to provide effective guidance and consistency for IT teams but organisations must also be prepared to build, measure, learn for continuous improvement. Defining an incremental automation roadmap sets the priorities but there are still dependencies on selecting the right tools for the job. As well as providing the training people need to learn new skills.

Case Study 5

Often, retrospectives are not run as part of business as usual even though they could deliver tremendous value in capturing best practice. At AL, our engineers regularly share what they've learnt through delivering short 'show the thing' webinars where they talk about their experiences using specific tools, technologies or working practices. This commitment to regular knowledge sharing helps enable us to grow our collective skills and collaborate for results. We have also seen this work well within our clients business environments.

Want to know more about better business through automation?

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