



AI LEADERS PODCAST: THE AUTOMATION ADVANTAGE PODCAST

AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

BHASKAR GHOSH: It is about the empowering people in the decision making and driving business with the power of automation.

JOYCE KLINE: Hello. I'm Joyce Kline, a Managing Director in Accenture's Applied Intelligence Practice and I'm the North America Applied Intelligence Lead for the work that we do in Aerospace and Defense. And I'm here today with Bhaskar Ghosh, who is Accenture's Chief Strategy Officer, where he directs the company's strategy and investments and RP, who is the Global Automation Lead at Accenture.

Bhaskar and RP wrote a book called, *The Automation Advantage*, which offers the first comprehensive blueprint for using and scaling AI powered intelligent automation. And I'm glad to have Bhaskar and RP here today. First of all, congratulations on the book. What led you to write *The Automation Advantage*? Bhaskar, let's start with you.

BHASKAR GHOSH: First of all, thank you, Joyce, for inviting us in this AI Leadership Podcast. So when we started writing this book, I think that is a question we had debated a lot, why should we write a book on automation?

I think two things very important and that point of time to motivate us. Number one, was step change in technology in the last few years. And number two, is the maturity of the market. Let me explain. The automation is not a new concept. All the industrial revolution is all about the automation. But in the last few years, the sum of this technology like cloud, data, analytics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, all came together and got matured. So the whole focus of automation, so paradigm of automation got shifted from the traditional focus of cost reduction, effort elimination, it moved to a new paradigm of value creation, better decision making, growing business and so on.

So I think that was the step change in technology motivated us. And the second thing is about the maturity of the client. We are talking to our different Accenture customers for many years regarding the automation. The people used to ask me earlier, that business technology is matured, is artificial intelligence mature enough to create an impact in the enterprise? But the last few years, the discussion has changed.



Nobody is asking that question. The people are ready to accept the new technology and most of them has done some prototype, done some experiment and they want to adopt that in the enterprise level and scale up the technology.

So with that maturity, we thought that this is the right time instead of talking to the different – our customer one at a time and explaining them the concept, why not write a book, so that it will help all our stakeholders. So that was the genius and the origin of writing this book which inspired us.

JOYCE KLINE: Well, thank you, Bhaskar, that is certainly a fascinating backdrop for the book. And from my experience, you're hitting on the key things that our clients are facing, that step change in technology, as well as the maturity within their processes.

So I'm curious, what is intelligent automation? And can you also set the stage for everyone in terms of the benefits that intelligent automation provides?

BHASKAR GHOSH: Joyce, the book the way we defined – we have defined three things. First, we talked about the individual automation, which deals with the human efficiency. Second, we talked about the industrialized automation and which deals we did group efficiency or the team efficiency. And third, we have talked about the intelligent automation which is about the business efficiency or the business value.

Intelligent automation is primarily driven by the artificial intelligence and, of course, the perquisites that cloud and data and so on. Primary value for intelligent automation is the better decision making, better business outcome with the power of technology, power of automation, power of artificial intelligence.

JOYCE KLEIN: So perfect. That really helps to set the stage for the differentiation that automation plays in a client's journey.

You know, I'm very curious, can you share some information associated with the role that AI plays in intelligent automation and how an organization should adopt AI into their business?

RP PRASAD: You know, I don't see or says – I know when you speak to Julie, Julie talks about AI like this. Cloud is the enabler, data is the driver, but AI is the differentiator and AI plays a significant role in the way businesses can grow through the differentiated lens. The intelligent automation and AI, both of them, are intersect of the time when you could start collecting the data, you start finding patterns in it and you make AI and machine learning models to do predications, recommendation engines, not in LP models.

Organizations are making greater use of data analytics, data driven decision making, quantitative process management and quantitative project management is not new, but what is very critical is the decision that you make using the data and data driving the war on intelligent automation as a fuel to grow your organization and enterprise business is critical.



I often say, AI is the user interface or AI is the UI of the data. Data plays a critical part of AI and both are a key and a large scale automation efforts. These both are very, very important to drive the efficiency within the organizations.

Organizations today, embrace automation, along with AI and, as Bhaskar mentioned, that's when the combination of intelligent automation and AI comes to drive efficiency within the enterprise.

JOYCE KLEIN: Thank you, RP. What I really appreciate is your comment that AI is the new UI of the data. That's a really nice catch phrase for all of us to remember. And also, your emphasis on efficiency because I feel that that's what everyone is striving to achieve in their automation journey.

You know, let's move to another question and I'm curious about implementations. Are implementations a one size fits all or are there different types of things that an organization needs to consider when building out their intelligent automation journey. And maybe if I could add on, do you start immediately or do you wait until the time is right?

RP PRASAD: I think that's an excellent question. I will start and I would like Bhaskar to provide additional insights on this. We make sure that when you start in any enterprise in automation, an automation implementation, an intelligent automation implementation, one of the very critical aspect is, it has to align to the strategy of the enterprise business, organization business and business priorities.

RP PRASAD: You know, it is like a journey. As (inaudible) says, if you don't where you are on a map, a map won't help. It is very important to enterprises to assess and prioritize where we are in the enterprise automation journey and it's called Point A to Point B journey. You need to identify where you are and defining your business priorities, aligning with journey map, to where you want to get to using automation.

Depending upon the size of the organization, it is very important to define the governance approach, operational approach, implementation approach, the tooling selection, the criteria, how to implement AI, what is the data strategy, all of that is an integrated plan.

Most of the organizations do need to do plan the plan. In our book, we have a chapter that talks about how do you do planning and how do you approach each of those enterprises based on their business priorities establishing this plan.

In addition to the plan, as a technologist, I always said, modern IT and modern technology, modern architectures, play a significant role. Cloud, cloud enablement, security, security in making sure that entire automation is secure and your business is secure is very critical aspect of this.

And then platform centric approach and product and platform engineering concepts are very critical to establish your automation journey. Most often, the enterprises takes significant investment and look at how to drive automation, what types of tools to select. What is



more important is in relation to the typical traditional non-functional software and systems integrating specs like performance, security. All of this user acceptance, usability, ease of use by the users. This becomes a critical elements of automation.

So in summary, remember the Point A to Point B, you need to know where you are, performance because it's mean plan the plan. You need to plan, how to plan and what plan elements should include and make sure that every element of non-functional requirements to what we call in the traditional software engineering are integrated into the overall plan.

BHASKAR GHOSH: Maybe I can add one point here that as RP talked about the journey, that's very, very important. The question is that today, I see that most of the large enterprise helped experimented to with AI in there some pocket. Some of them are successful to taking that to enterprise level, but most of them struggle at the different stage. The question is why?

The reason is their journey. One needs to understand what is the status of your organization? And in this book, we have defined the clear five steps. And depending on where you are, you need to plan how you go to the next step and how you reach the destination of intelligent automation and embrace AI.

The steps are very simple, like say we talked about the foundation level automation, which is primarily tools driven. Then we talked about optimize, which is primarily the process driven. You cannot just automate everything if your code processors are not aligned.

Third, we talked about the efficiency, which are primarily the RP driven, that is robotic process automation, driven to remove the critical task. Fourth point we talked about the predictive, which is the data driven. So naturally, if we have to do more analytics and better decision making, you need to have the right data architecture within the organization to make that happen.

And the final step is the intelligent, which is AI driven. Now, it is not that one need to follow the sequential path, people can do this thing parallely, but there are some different density. Like if you do not have the right data, then you will not be able to be successful in implementing AI in the large scale in the organization.

So one need to understand the part where you are in the journey and in your plan that what is the destiny, where the destination for your journey and align that with your business strategy.

JOYCE KLINE: That's a very helpful set of recommendations and a roadmap. Building off of the plan and the journey that you described, I'm curious, what should an organization do that's undertaking a major transformation such as an ERP implementation? Do they wait to get started or do they begin now?



BHASKAR GHOSH: So I feel that, you know, people need to have the overarching view of the organization when you drive this automation. I will not recommend that you stop the implementation or any particular project you are doing, but the point is you need to understand that you need to have a clear plan that the different engagement, a different project, if you take and create these silos of the data and then, how are you going to connect those silos together to create that seamless integration across the organization, as well as the data is concerned.

So the point is that one needs to – it is extremely important in today's world that you wanted to have the clear view of the future implementation and then, you start your - you know, the island of information or the island of technology transformation. Because otherwise what will happen, you'll be successful in all projects, but then ultimately, all the systems will not talk to each of them, not share the data, will not be able to achieve your final ultimate objective.

RP PRASAD: Just to add to in addition to what Bhaskar mentioned, right. One of the critical aspects when I speak to the clients, one of the things that I talk to all the C-suite executives is, your process drives your automation and your process drives your implementation of intelligent automation. If you are processes inefficient, implementing automation makes your inefficiently run no more efficiently. So it is very important and critical to do process optimization before establishing enterprise-wide organizational automation.

Once you get the process correct, then you start implementing automation and automation plan. That gives you more efficiency play. And like Bhaskar mentioned, we go through the steps within the book on the Chapter 1, you will see the process efficiency, process optimization is foundational for driving automation implementation out of organizations.

JOYCE KLINE: Thanks so much, RP and Bhaskar. That's really some very helpful information as I know that there's a lot of organizations out there that are in the throes of making some major transformation and investment decisions and your recommendation in terms of getting the data right and making sure the processes are right, will definitely be helpful for them in setting their North Star.

You know, one of the other things that I'm very curious about is what are the types of barriers that exist when applying intelligent automation and one of the things that would be helpful is perhaps bucketing those barriers into the process related, technology related and strategy related barriers that exist for organizations?

RP PRASAD: So let me give one critical example for each of those elements. The way I said it like, in the technology, the most important is the application stack, the abilities related to legacy architecture and the data in (inaudible) are how do we look at the current technology stack and making sure that it is compliant and it is modernized to the current needs of technology and evolution. And that plays a significant role within the organization.



In fact, that is the easiest part, that the most toughest part in the entire implementation is we spend a lot of time talking about strategy and aligning to the organization business goals and business priorities, assume that we got that.

The most critical part is talent, skills and change management within the organization. How do we get the right level of commitment from the leadership team to make sure that we can implement it? Make sure that we have the right level of governance to make sure that there is a progress. We have measures and metrics, KPIs that are aligned to track the improvements and the benefits that are exerting due to automation.

So the whole change management part of it is the people's skills, talent, the change management, leadership commitment and that makes very critical element in driving the overall implementation. When you get that right, that align to right business alignment and strategy to the plan and the correct modernized technologies that can help to drive the implementation together can fuel the automation at ease.

BHASKAR GHOSH: Well, I think we have covered - I think those are the critical – you know, the barriers and the change management is critical for the success.

JOYCE KLINE: Thanks so much, Bhaskar and RP. You know, it's really interesting when you step back, it really comes down to the change elements are really what drives a major initiative success, regardless of what the implementation is that we're talking about. It does often come down to the talent, the skills, the components of the organizational readiness that really helped to make an implementation or a major initiative successful.

You know, I'm curious when you step back, what's really needed from a people, skills and culture perspective to plan, to implement and really maintain a transformational automation effort that has the full support of a leadership of an organization? Can you describe those components?

BHASKAR GHOSH: So the way I look at it, the automation journey, automation implementation is not a technology project. It is all about the change management and the culture change in the organization. First of all, it's extremely important to communicate very clearly the end objective of this automation because historically, automation was all about the effort reduction and the productivity.

Now, when we are talking about the intelligent automation, which is empowering people to do their work, which is very different goal and focus for the automation than for what was there, the traditional focus. So it was really extremely important, so that the people understand the benefit of embracing this new automation of the intelligent automation in their day-to-day work. So I think that is important.



The other point is about the leadership. That everybody talks about they're embracing automation and they're embracing the artificial intelligence in their world, but one need to make sure that within the organization, we develop that culture. So irrespective of the level of the person in this organization should be ready to take help of the automation in the decision making process. Look at the data, look at the prediction of the machine and take the decision jointly. So it is about the empowering people in the decision making and driving business with the power of automation.

We have seen many examples, even in the medical industry, we see that how technology is helping doctors to diagnose. So, of course, doctors can diagnose without machines, but now the machines are advanced enough that can help. So I think those are the examples and we can see in the enterprise, there are various areas where the managers can take a decision now based on the technology.

So it is about the communication, it is about the change management, it is about the culture of the organization and finally, it is commitment of the leadership and the people to embrace the automation.

Adding back is all I will say that to be successful in the automation journey in the enterprise and to adopt intelligent automation.

JOYCE KLINE: So, Bhaskar, if our listeners are interested in learning more about the book and how they might be able to obtain a copy, where should they go?

BHASKAR GHOSH: I will say that this book will really help to create the differentiation in the business with power of automation and intelligence. That is why it is important for people if those who are trying to adopt technology, adopt artificial intelligence in the enterprise level, this will be handbook for them to implement step-by-step in the organizations. This book is available in Amazon now and many other main book stores. Also, it is available with [Accenture.com/automationadvantage](https://www.accenture.com/automationadvantage) for pre-order.

JOYCE KLINE: I'd like to thank RP and Bhaskar for a great discussion about their book, The Automation Advantage. And I'd also like to thank all the listeners for joining us, to hear about what makes The Automation Advantage such an interesting read, as it will help organizations in planning their intelligent automation journey and it'll describe the key components that an organization needs to get right, things such as data, processes, the people component, as well as that change journey that an organization needs to be on.



You know, I'll summarize it by saying, The Automation Advantage provides a comprehensive approach for intelligence automation and something that everyone should spend time learning about and reading.

So with that, we'll sign-off for now and please remember that you can subscribe and share this podcast with your friends and colleagues. And thank you again for joining us today on the AI Leader's Podcast.

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