

# AUTOMATE REPETITIVE TASKS

TOP 10 USE CASES  
FOR ROBOTIC  
PROCESS  
AUTOMATION  
FINANCE

NEW  
FOR  
RPA

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# Freeing up the workforce

With the global economy facing economic headwinds it's more important than ever for Finance teams to be entrenched as a key business partner within an organisation to help ensure financial resilience and navigate stormy seas.

Finance leaders need to be able to focus forwards and have agile teams which help the business increase its overall agility and be prepared for what lies ahead. To achieve that it's essential to free up time, resources and brainpower from day-to-day operations and inward-focussed processes.

Employees today spend up to 20% of their time on mundane, repetitive tasks that can be easily automated.

According to an IOFM survey, 84% of a typical procure-to-pay professional's time is spent doing repetitive tasks, such as updating supplier information, capturing invoice data, and approving payments.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA), which enables businesses to offload some of these cumbersome tasks to a Digital Workforce, giving human workers more time for the jobs they are uniquely capable of and drive productivity and innovation.

38% of managers report compliance improvements are the leading benefit of RPA followed by improved productivity/performance Source: Nice

# Freeing up the workforce

This intelligent automation can help ensure business continuity and financial resilience, for example by ensuring operations are running smoothly and payments are made on time.

This positively impacts suppliers and customers, as well as the brand's reputation. In addition, for industries which are highly regulated, RPA gives process visibility with standardised, transparent workflows to help meet governance and compliance needs.

***"Our key objective. when we embarked on the robotics journey, was to free up our team members from routine, repetitive activities."***

**- Lori Pedersen**

Manager in IT  
Global PMO  
Hitachi Vantara


# What is Robotic Process Automation?

**Robotic Process Automation (RPA)** is an intelligent automation software technology that anyone can use to automate digital tasks. With RPA, software users create robots, or “bots,” that can learn, mimic, and execute rules-based business processes. “Unattended” bots are predominantly used for rules-based, back office tasks where the bots are set a task, programmed and then run without human intervention.

As well as numerous finance process uses, they can support across the business, e.g. supporting network operations for IT and payroll processing for HR.

To support front-office and customer-facing tasks, “attended” bots are triggered by humans as and when needed, for example retrieving customer payment and credit records from different systems when a customer calls a contact centre. The customer still deals with the human, but the bot helps the agent handle the query much more quickly, efficiently and accurately: good for the customer, contact centre representative and the organisation.

**RPA software bots can interact with any application or system the same way people do—except that RPA bots can operate around the clock, non-stop, much faster and with 100% reliability and precision.**



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# Finance Leads The Intelligent Automation Way

A good number of regular tasks performed by Finance teams are perfect for automation.

Finance teams are known for doing “whatever it takes” to get the job done, but at month and year-end in particular, this can put them under extreme pressure. There’s now an opportunity to use intelligent automation to both drive the transformation of Finance and impact the lives of team members.

In implementing RPA and freeing up Finance teams to use their time, energy and skills in ways more valuable to the business, hard-working Finance professionals of all levels will enhance the value they add to the business and achieve greater job satisfaction. For the business, this lifts staff productivity and motivation, along with increasing operational efficiency and reducing the risks of errors and inaccuracies.

***"Automate everything or risk being left behind"***

**Top Technology Trends  
That will define 2021,  
Gartner , October 2020**

# The RPA Top Ten

Sempre Analytics has helped a number of its customers leverage the intelligent Digital Workforce platform from Automation Anywhere, to reduce repetitive tasks in Finance. We've put together the top 10 use cases for automation in the Office of Finance split into; Purchase to Pay, Order to Cash and Record to Report.

## Purchase to Pay

### 1. Supplier Account Setup

The creation of a new supplier is usually a manual process where users need to create the records in the company ERP system in order to generate purchase orders and process invoices. Typical processes for automation are:

- New Supplier Creation: RPA opens completed form from a new supplier, opens ERP, creates supplier, opens form, copies and pastes form content into the system.
- Supplier Check: RPA accesses third-party websites for validation, e.g. credit check, VAT validation or Companies House.
- Account Management: RPA monitors email inbox, updates details, does manual work then passes to a human for final approval.

## 2. Purchase Order, Delivery Note and Invoice Processing

Following on from the supplier set-up above, the generation of purchase orders and subsequent purchase invoice processing is typically generated via manual input from externally generated documents.

RPA works 24/7 to accelerate this process by monitoring an email inbox for supplier invoices, IQ Bot then reviews unstructured data contained within documents, such as PDF's, to extract key information.

Once the data has been captured it can then be processed directly into the ERP/Purchase Ledger [e.g. COINS, MS Dynamics etc.], cutting down the time spent manually inputting and achieving a higher degree of accuracy.

RPA can also be used to log into and access a supplier's/merchant's portal. Performing 'self-service' functions, for example, retrieving ePODs or monthly statements. The bot can then input, process and check against records in your ERP.



### 3. Payment Run Validation and Processing

Despite financial systems having batch payment functionality available to their end users, many payment runs continue to be run manually. Tasks such as the production of payment files, the manual settlement of invoices, and payment amount validations are very time-consuming.

RPA bots can be configured to automate the tasks, while still keeping all the necessary checks and 'human' approvals in place to ensure the right suppliers are receiving the right payment at the right time.

Furthermore, bots can be automated to notify suppliers when their payment has been processed whilst concurrently monitoring your supplier inquiries email inbox and dealing with queries.

# Order to Cash

## 4. Customer Account Setup

The creation of new customers is typically a manual process where users need to create the records in the company ERP system in order to generate sales invoices, with master records being held in a CRM/Billing system.

As a small example the following steps could be automated;

- Quote received via email
- Quote is downloaded and the document is scanned for the company information
- Error and exception handling take place
- Credit check on an external website
- If criteria are met the bot logs into the ERP system and creates a new customer
- If the criteria are not met a user is notified and the appropriate action can be taken

## 5. Sales Invoice Processing

Sales invoices can vary massively between B2B and B2C companies. Where RPA can help is when multiple non-integrated systems are involved in the process, examples of which include:

- Automatically generating draft sales invoices from external sources, e.g. time recording or third-party contractors
- Obtaining supporting information, e.g. timesheets, delivery notes reports, and automatically attaching to the sales invoice communication
- Adding invoices and supplementary details to customer records in the CRM, from multiple source systems
- Flagging payment records on customer accounts
- Monitoring and dealing with customer queries, e.g. monitoring email inbox and routing/actioning query emails

## 6. Credit Control

Most Finance systems have credit control functions and reminder workflows built in, but they often require manual intervention, especially where the billing system is external to the Sales Ledger. RPA can be used to:

- Update customer records in other systems outside of Finance and 'put them on hold'
- Notify support facilities to hold/re-direct support handling until payment is made
- Automate communications to site-specific managers and sub-contractors as needed
- Integrate advanced Machine Learning to determine the best course of action for debt collection processes based on multiple criteria

# Record to Report

## 7. Period Closing and Rollover

Period end is usually a set of identical tasks which are completed manually in a specific order. RPA can record and replay these tasks to bring them together into a one or more bots to remove the need for human intervention.

### These tasks include:

- Checking for unposed items and notifying users
- Closing of ledger and period change
- Generation and distribution of reports

## 8. Journal Processing

Manual journal entries can be a time-consuming activity, adding particular pressure at month end and so increasing the risk of mistakes and inaccuracies.

Journal postings of over 100 lines at a time are commonplace within Finance, which on average take between 30-60 minutes each to complete.

The use of RPA in this area removes the need for physical paperwork for approvals within the workflow and therefore reduces the time input journals and improves the accuracy. Increased auditing controls can also be implemented within bots to reduce the likelihood of fraud and give greater transparency.

## 9. Report Generation & Distribution

Often report data is held across multiple systems and/or databases across the business. Sometimes reports need to be extracted from a financial system and manipulated to a specific format, copied to a shared location or merged into an existing file, all of which involves a person to complete the task. Similarly, some data may only be only accessible within a company's database and requires extracting and transforming into a usable output. All of the above could be fully automated:

- A screen recorder can access the companies Finance system to run standard reports from the front-end application and store them in a specific location for users to access
- RPA can use MS Excel functions to open, manipulate and merge data.
- A bot can also use SQL connector to extract data from one or more company data sources
- Email connectors can notify or send reports to the correct recipients within the business

# Finance and Beyond

## 10. Risk and Compliance

Regulatory compliance and risk mitigation are important in all industries but are particularly key in highly regulated ones such as Construction. To help reduce risk and ensure compliance, RPA can support numerous tasks including checking of onboarding information, such as bank account details, company addresses and certificates required for payment. It can also deal with the submission of regulatory information such as HMRC returns.

A bot process could be used to ensure material compliance certification is available and correctly stored in records management, based on a supplier or third-party contractor. Automating risk mitigation processes, plus the increased accuracy and trackability of using RPA, counts positively towards compliance achievement, tracking and proof.





## Lead the way!

Whether or not your business is already using or considering automation, Finance has an opportunity to be at the forefront of this exciting area of digital transformation and prove the value that RPA can bring. Don't get left behind – lead the way!

- Ensure continuity in operations and payments made on time
- Automation of financial reporting and disclosure of processes to improve accuracy and reduce staff burden
- Use of automated monitoring, alerts notifications and news updates to identify and deal with issues quickly
- Streamlining and acceleration of cash reporting to stay up to date with liquidity position

# Why Automation Anywhere

Automation Anywhere is a **global leader in Robotic Process Automation (RPA)**, empowering customers to automate end-to-end business processes with intelligent software bots – AI-powered digital workers that perform repetitive and manual tasks, resulting in dramatic productivity gains, optimized customer experience and more engaged employees. The company offers the world's only web-based and cloud-native intelligent automation platform combining RPA, artificial intelligence, machine learning and analytics to help organizations rapidly start and scale their automation journey from the front office to the back office to every office. Its Bot Store is the world's first and largest marketplace with more than 1,100 pre-built, intelligent automation solutions.

**Automation Anywhere** has deployed over 2.6 million bots to support some of the world's largest enterprises across all industries in more than 90 countries. For additional information, visit [www.automationanywhere.com](http://www.automationanywhere.com)



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SEMPRE

**Sempre Analytics has been supporting Finance teams for over 10 years, helping them to:**

- Increase financial resilience
- Optimise their operational efficiency through instilling intelligent automation and planning across the business to drive out inefficiencies
- Make smarter decisions by having the right data in the right place at the right time and, importantly, in the hands of the people who need it
- Sempre's combination of Finance expertise, technical know-how and in-depth experience in the construction and housebuilding industry means we have a thorough understanding of finance processes and the pressure Finance teams are under, as well as the critical role technology can play in helping them.

Sempre has a motto of "treat your customers like friends and your colleagues like family", and is proud to count Crest Nicholson, Countryside, MMC Gamuda, and Laing O'Rourke among those friends.

Sempre has helped these companies to transform their Finance data strategies, giving their Finance leaders the support, tools and know-how necessary for effective, data-driven Finance transformation as part of their wider digital transformation drive.

# PARTNERSHIP

Sempre's partnership with Automation Anywhere makes us an ideal partner to work with your organisation on your intelligent automation.

In addition, both Automation Anywhere and Sempre are partners with DataRobot, the industry-defining Automated Machine Learning solution.

The integration of Data Robot's platform into the Automation Anywhere solution extends the business process automation to include decision-making using automated machine learning and artificial intelligence.

The three-way partnership between Sempre and these two industry-leading technologies, makes Sempre uniquely placed to help you investigate, initiate and deliver maximum value from your intelligent automation.



**DataRobot**

**sempre | analytics**



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**WHAT NOW?**

To help you establish which RPA opportunities could be most valuable to your business, we are offering a **free Finance Automation Assessment**

An experienced Sempre consultant will work hand-in-hand with you to explore and prioritise the use cases for your Finance team.

If you are interested in taking up this offer please email [info@sempreanalytics.com](mailto:info@sempreanalytics.com) or visit [sempreanalytics.com/financeautomation-construction/](https://sempreanalytics.com/financeautomation-construction/)



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