

The State of IT Automation

New Pressures Invite
New Opportunities



Business leaders assess their most urgent automation goals and priorities amid the challenges of digital transformation and the pressures of global macroeconomic trends, including the aftereffects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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About this report

If 2021 was the year of surviving—adapting to urgently needed optimizations and changes—2022 has emerged as the year of thriving. The power of automation is beginning to reach a tipping point for IT. To understand this better, Resolve tapped Gatepoint Research to gather insights from senior IT leaders about the latest IT automation trends as they play out in the real world.

Between April 2021 and April 2022, Gatepoint Research invited select business leaders to participate in a landmark survey of IT automation trends and strategies, discussing their latest directions in IT automation. Hundreds of IT decision-makers responded.

Where These IT Decision-Makers Sit in Their Organizations



In Gatepoint's survey, these leaders shared their most urgent priorities along with the current status of their automation goals. Resolve then measured the latest results against the survey performed in 2021, comparing goals, use cases, benefits, obstacles, and other measures to illustrate the direction of progress.

The Digital Enterprise Races Ahead on IT Ingenuity

Globally, the business landscape has changed radically, ramping up pressures both internally and externally, driven by the ongoing pandemic, economic volatility, and political strains, as well as accelerated advancing technology.



Workforce trends are in flux



The cloud is a fait accompli



Remote and hybrid employment are here to stay



Growing cloud adoption offers both new challenges and business benefits

Meanwhile, innovation and digital transformation are raising the competitive stakes. **IT must evolve from its familiar “keep the lights on” perception, often taken for granted, to a true driver of change.**

The Evolving Role of IT

The role of IT has evolved from a reactive support function into that of a strategic leader, foundational to the organization. That fact explains the pivotal role played by IT, often led by the CIO.

In fact, IT is acknowledged as the engine driving:



Productivity



Compliance



Employee satisfaction



Cost savings



Customer loyalty



Enterprise-wide automation

As digital transformation efforts accelerate, automation is considered critical in creating and sustaining business value, as well as competitive advantages in fast delivery and agile operations—with IT at the forefront of these efforts.

Wherever you sit in IT, whether Operations, Service Management, Network Operations, or Cloud Operations, automation provides a lever for change.

Automation Opens the Highway to Change

Wherever you sit in IT, whether Operations, Service Management, Network Operations, or Cloud Operations, automation provides a lever for change. It raises efficiency and productivity, reduces human error, and accelerates your goals. Automation enables enterprises to transcend defects and redundancies, liberating staff from manual, tedious processes to focus on higher-value tasks.



Key Findings

Overcoming Impediments to Change

76% of those surveyed identified lack of technical skills and talents shortages as their top IT challenges

Top 3 Automation Goals

-  Improving overall efficiency
-  Controlling costs
-  Increasing self service

More than **80%** of IT leaders have time and cost savings as their main automation objective

IT Automation is Already Here

Automation is currently deployed in the following top areas:



Functions Prioritized for IT Automation

The need for automation is expanding from a single IT problem to whole IT department and crossing functional boundaries across the enterprise

- 1** IT operations management
- 2** IT service management
- 3** Event and incident remediation
- 4** Network operations management
- 5** Autodiscovery and dependency mapping

Growing Sense of Urgency

54% of IT leaders are looking to implement IT automation within the next year



Top Factor in Selecting an IT Automation Solution

75% of survey respondents cited fast time-to-value and ROI as their key consideration in choosing an automation solution provider

Pursuing technology-led transformation

Conversations with today's leaders on what is top of mind



Overcoming Impediments to Change

The challenges leaders are powering through

Merely reacting to business issues in a conventional way won't work anymore. Rather, success will be defined by how quickly IT can get ahead of the game and create new value for the business. The path to achieving success is through automation.

Rapid changes in the digital landscape have introduced a whole new set of tools from DevOps, cloud, and AIOps, extending across the IT ecosystem. As this tool complexity grows, solutions providing incremental or piecemeal progress will yield only short-term benefits. Winning with automation requires IT leaders to think and plan holistically and strategically for the long term.

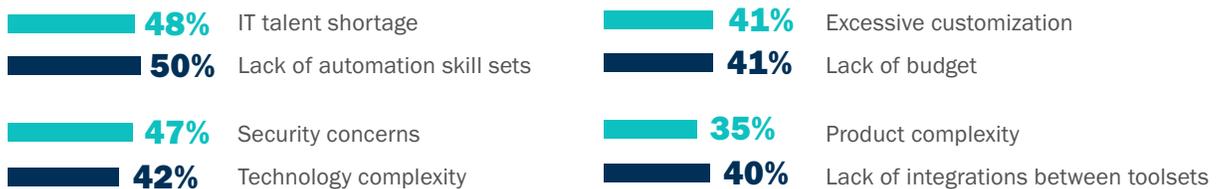
What's Holding Back Critical Automation Goals?

As with any new technology implemented since the outset of the industrial revolution, automation will bring about a skills shift.

However, there are some obstacles to implementing IT automation. 48% of all IT leaders in 2022 agree that talent shortage is their biggest obstacle in realizing their automation goals. Security concerns bulk second at 47%. Between those two, you can see what keeps leaders awake at night. Excessive customization is third on the list at 43%.

Top Obstacles to Implementing Automation

■ 2022 ■ 2021



What Challenges Can Influence Agility and Speed of Execution?

When implementing automation, leaders can face an array of challenges, including the need to drive team collaboration, choose the best tools and testing approaches, acquire human resources with know-how, and calculate costs and ROI—a tall mountain to climb!

2022 saw over three-quarters of respondents call talent and staffing shortages their top pain point. Manual, repetitive tasks stagnate progress for 57% of respondents, while tool integration difficulties, at number three, raise barriers for 42% of executives.

By contrast, 2021's survey showed lack of integration across various technology platforms as the biggest challenge for 54% of respondents, with too much time spent on manual, repetitive IT tasks choking off potential productivity benefits for 48%. Cost and operational efficiency issues were the number three concern at 39%.

Leading Challenges IT Executives Face

2022

76%

Talent and staffing shortages

57%

Manual, repetitive IT tasks

42%

Tool integration difficulties

33%

CMBD inaccuracies

18%

2021

48%

54%

28%



Automate. Innovate. Celebrate.

Why automation is the backbone of the digital enterprise

Business leaders want to become the heroes of automated infrastructure provisioning, testing, proactive maintenance, and other key activities. To get there, they are seeking the convenience of a single pane of glass with full-stack visibility to help streamline operations, boost performance, and reduce mean time to resolution (MTTR).

In this environment of increasing complexity, IT is foundational to automating, simplifying, and orchestrating business processes. Rather than being relegated to technology consulting or a fix-it resource, IT now leads the charge to digital transformation; automation is the key to delivering results and accelerating toward strategic business goals.

Automation is the key to delivering results and accelerating toward strategic business goals



IT Automation—How Are You Deploying This in 2022?

Organizations rarely maintain homogeneous environments. That means IT is tasked with managing a diverse catalogue of tools and applications amidst often incompatible endpoints.

This can result in erratic automation sprawl—a consequence of inadequate strategy, with self-motivated system administrators writing scripts to facilitate their work. By contrast, a well-thought-out plan reflects end-to-end process automation, as opposed to a point-in-time script executed locally with barely any audit log.

Scripting leads the field as the most powerful way to automate simple, repeatable tasks and free enterprises of manual inefficiencies. While it is the quickest form of automation, IT leaders should be wary of the security challenges non-standardized scripts can cause, including perils of un-intended execution.

Automating the orchestration of scripts through a centralized hub, on the other hand, can increase IT visibility and enhance business agility, enabling quick adaptation, bringing the best of both worlds together.

How IT Automation is Being Deployed Today

66%

Automate scripting to cut costs, troubleshoot & speed service delivery

44%

Use self-service for end-users

29%

Go with unattended automation



Efficiency is Top of Mind for Leaders

Increasing efficiency is one way to improve your organization’s bottom line. Being able to do more with existing time and resources allows organizations to increase productivity.

In 2022, improving efficiency still crowned the wish list at a whopping 78%, although cost concerns moved up to 49%. Again, increasing self-service options remained third at 33%. The time and cost savings of self-service are truly dramatic, as omnichannel experiences makes it easy, quick, and popular for users to resolve their own service desk and customer support needs.

Consistent year over year, leaders express a fierce commitment to drive efficiency and save time. In 2021, 83% named saving time / improving efficiency as their highest automation priority—far above saving money, which came in at just 32%. Tied for second place was increasing self-service options—also a priority for 32%, probably reflecting artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot advances in natural language processing (NLP), natural language understanding (NLU), and machine learning (ML) that keep expanding self-service capabilities.

Efficiency Wins Every Time

■ 2022 ■ 2021

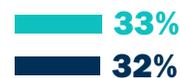
Improve efficiency



Save money



Increase self-service options



Enterprise-Wide Automation is Here, Now

Use cases and outcomes IT leaders are prioritizing

2022 promises to be the year that enterprises are reimagining the role of technology and its impact on business—the vector of change being automation.

Technology companies are reaching for the ease and speed of building automation workflows with no code—the ability to create them with drag-and-drop ease, no need for complex APIs or development from scratch. Whether the challenge is automating simple, repetitive manual tasks and day-to-day runbooks, or taking on complex process orchestration, businesses are seeking to solve common challenges by means of purpose-built intelligent automation. (Fast ROI is high on the agenda too!)



Companies are solving common challenges with ease and speed building automation workflows with no code



Having an automated system in place for IT service requests, for example, simplifies incident management dramatically and allows resources to be automatically routed to requests. Employee account setup becomes a breeze when IT can trade manual for automated onboarding—reducing time spent, errors, and costs.

Whether it's the shift to remote working, the demand for digital, or increasing security threats, automation has emerged as the capability that businesses rely on to rise to the challenge in a very short timeline.

With that in mind, we asked which use cases our executive IT leaders have made a priority.

Which Priorities Take Precedence in IT Operations Management?

Businesses face unrelenting pressure to accelerate time to value. Fortunately, automation is now able to create purpose-built solutions for nearly every IT function. IT operations management, for example, can automate infrastructure provisioning, testing, incident resolution, proactive maintenance, and more!

In 2022, 45% of leaders called IT operations management their top priority, with cloud operations close behind at 43% and IT service management at 34%.

In 2021, provisioning and deployment stood out as the top automation use case for 53% of respondents, while service desk requests polled 42%, tied with incident management as the main priority. As many additional use cases clamour for automation, expect a march forward in all of these areas.



45% of IT leaders consider automation core to their IT operations strategy

Evaluating an IT Automation Solution: Key Factors to Look for

Choosing an automation platform has significant repercussions for the business.

Once an organization has put budget aside for automation and evaluated where to start, one of the most important decisions is which platform to choose. What factors are most important to IT as they evaluate solutions?

Leaders easily came up with desirables to turbocharge, scale, and ease automation. For example, pre-packaged components and no-code workflow processing empowers teams and speeds time to value and ROI—major must-haves for nearly three-quarters of respondents. Plug-and-play tool integration helps create customized workflows and automate processes at a click.

What IT Leaders Are Looking for in a Solution

73%

Fast time to value & ROI

63%

Integration with other tools

58%

Scalability

19%

SaaS



Exciting Outcomes Await

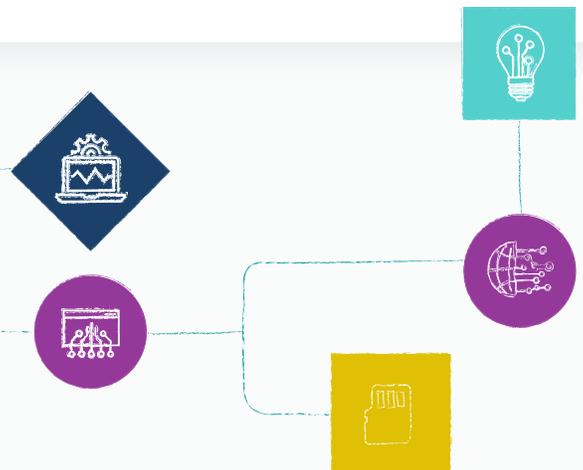
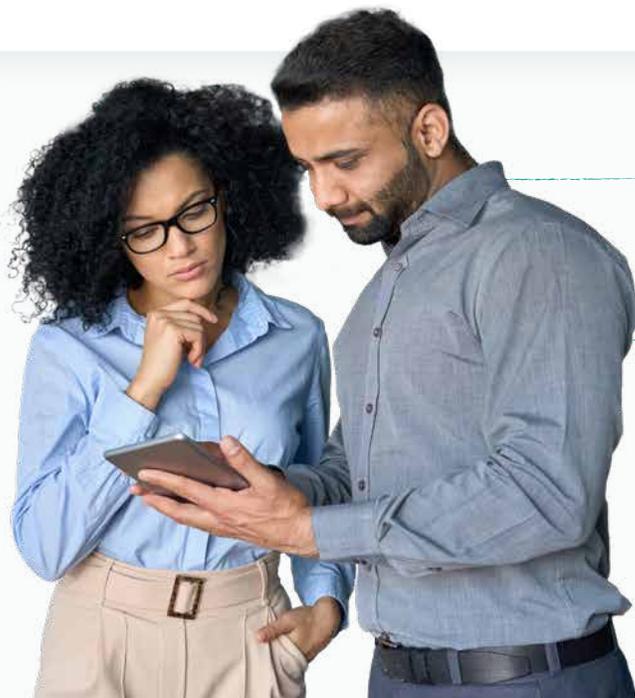
The automation resources are here now to propel business

IT's top goal to move at the pace of the business is unattainable without the right technology. Fortunately, purpose-built automation solutions for nearly every IT function are now a reality. With the right platform, IT can execute millions of automations every day on the most complex IT endpoints on the planet! This not only saves time but also enables IT to scale.

In IT service desk management, the effects of automation are particularly notable. With nearly every workplace affected by the Covid pandemic, the service desk has had to ramp up its capabilities in a blisteringly short time.

The top trends of 2022 reflect that the pandemic has continued to add urgency and pressure. Leaders are working to adopt tools that reduce manual labor for their IT teams. Tickets, incidents, problems, and service requests have swamped many service desks, making automation priority one for large enterprises—and for smaller businesses too, whose already overburdened teams must often wear many hats.

75% of IT leaders point to fast time to value and ROI as their highest priority



AI and ML Continue to Transform the Distributed Enterprise

Businesses have turned to AI to enable the service desk to grow its capabilities while controlling headcount. Using AI technologies, organizations can turn over many routine functions to chatbots and virtual assistants. Elevated by advanced NLP and ML, automation is rapidly enabling self-service while also helping remote and on-site workers alike escape manual tasks while raising productivity.

Automation Initiatives Take Center Stage

In 2022, IT operations management is the most likely functional area to have launched automation initiatives in surveyed organizations (reported by 67%), followed by IT service management (29%). Nearly half (47%) of respondents say their cloud operations have active automation projects underway.

In 2021, nearly two-thirds of respondents said their IT operations team had active automation projects in place, and 56% reported initiatives being launched by the infrastructure or cloud management team.

Most Likely Areas to Adopt Automation in 2022

67%

IT operations management

47%

cloud operations

29%

IT service management



Summary

The Automation Superhighway Is Wide Open

Where businesses demand more from their IT teams, complexity accelerates apace. That's why IT leaders are eager to move ahead quickly to automate manual processes and routine tasks. It's no secret that these volumes of mundane—yet still necessary—activities claim employee time that could be better applied to high-value concerns.

Both the 2021 and 2022 surveys reveal IT challenges and persistent roadblocks that many IT leaders like you are facing.

One positive trend is that when it comes to obstacles, even back in 2021, only 26% of leaders pointed at 'resistance to change' as a significant problem. And just 8% saw lack of executive sponsorship as a hurdle. Although 2022 saw 11% of respondents noting 'low or no executive support,' that number is still encouragingly low.

You can interpret these figures as proof that automation acceptance is growing fast and will continue to rise.

Change Is On the Horizon

2022

Only 11% of respondents noted 'low or no executive support'

2021

Only 8% of those surveyed saw lack of executive sponsorship as a hurdle

Nearly all leaders are engaged with automation projects. In 2021, 73% of respondents listed their organization at the intermediate or advanced stage of automation implementation. The vast majority (83%) praised time savings and improved efficiency as the most notable benefits.

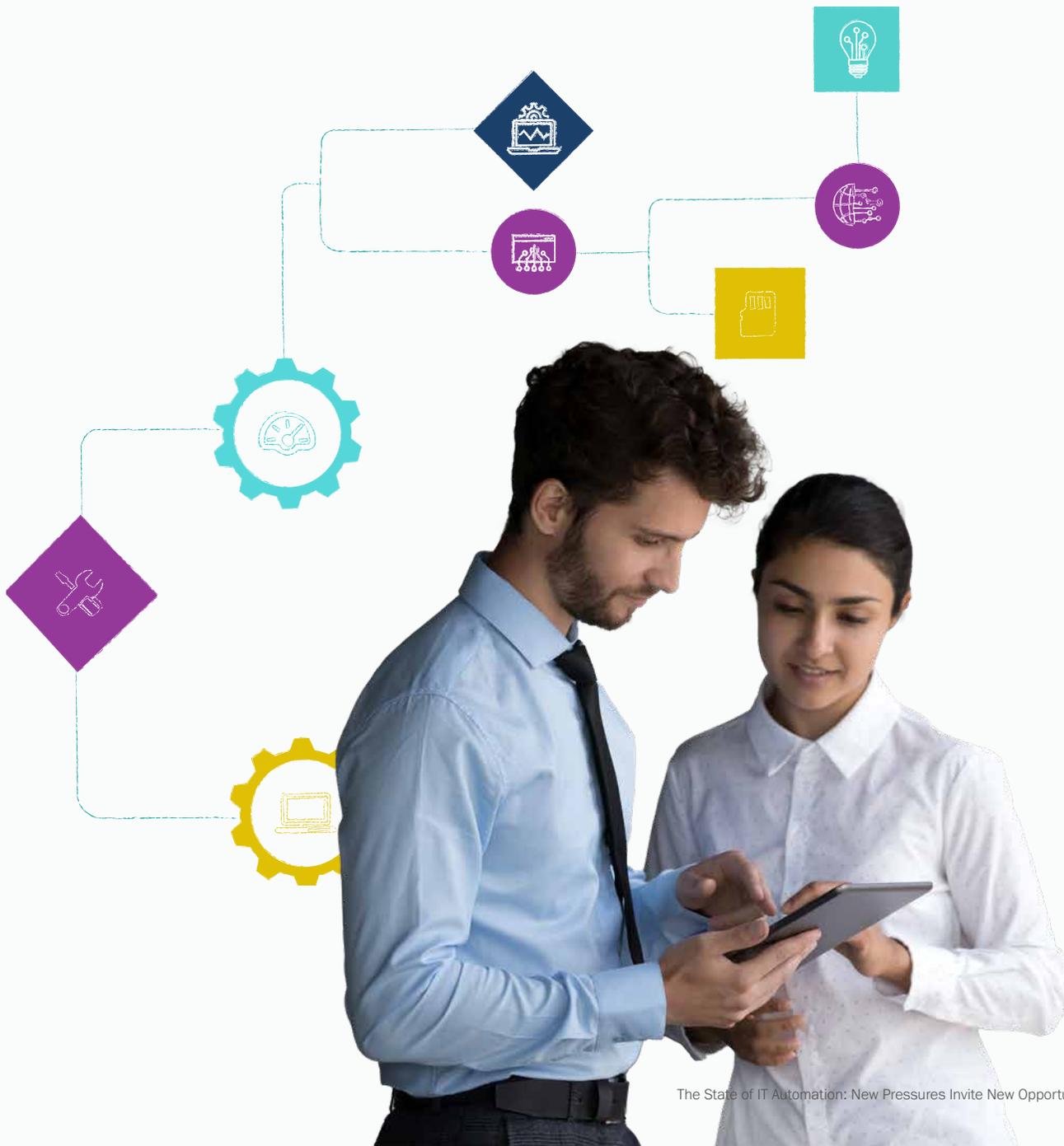
In 2022, IT operations management, cloud operations, and IT service management were the top IT functions that leaders were eager to automate. 29% of respondents replied that increasing automation in the coming year is extremely—even critically—important. For another 42%, automation is nearly that vital.



What Do These Trends Say About the Future?

Intelligent automation is a critical priority, and the stature of IT leaders is rising substantially in the modern enterprise. Today, IT automation is no experiment but rather an essential building block for growth, competitiveness, and survival.

New technologies will continually come to the forefront, many of them solving a part of the puzzle for the business. To be a true driver of change, IT needs to leverage automation to glue these systems together in order to stay agile, increase visibility, and drive productivity across the organization.



About Resolve

Resolve solutions are architected to overcome major challenges of automation and digital transformation. Resolve lets you unite all of your IT silos, with seamless, out-of-the-box integrations and pre-built automations. Using Resolve requires no coding to support functions spanning software, hardware, security, networking, cloud, virtualization, operating system, RPA, and task automation.

Resolve enables businesses to accelerate and simplify provisioning, patching, proactively updating, and incident resolution. These powerful capabilities help you achieve automation excellence throughout your hybrid compute environment. With Resolve, you can automate everything from simple tasks to complex processes across servers, VMs, databases, storage, and apps, spanning the on-prem and cloud infrastructure. And with Resolve, you even gain flexibility to automate processes that don't always follow a standard template.

Ready to try automation today?

[GET A FREE TRIAL OF RESOLVE ACTIONS >](#)

