THREE KEY WAYS INTELLIGENT AUTOMATION CAN ELEVATE AGILE WAYS OF WORKING

Intelligent automation is a key disruptor in the financial services space capable of enhancing organisation's ways of working. This technology has the potential to completely transform the fabric of organisations. By harnessing the power of intelligent automation, Agile teams can elevate their processes and practices, delivering value smarter and faster.

Intelligent automation combines artificial intelligence (AI) and robotic process automation (RPA); two capabilities that have been growing in significance since the late-20th century. Today, intelligent automation is all around us, powering features such as chatbots, language translation apps, and social media feeds. Recent data show that the AI fintech industry could grow to $26 billion by 2026[1].

Mainstream interest in this technology has been propelled by the recent launch of ChatGPT, a chatbot powered by OpenAI that uses large amounts of data to generate natural language. Dubbed the "connective tissue for digital transformation", intelligent automation is becoming increasingly integral to the evolution of organisations across financial services. An early adopter of intelligent automation, financial services account for around 29% of the RPA market[2]. This technology is therefore set to impact the way employees within the financial services space build new products, interact with customers, and organise their teams.

THE AGILE LENS

When an organisation embarks on an Agile transformation, they reorganise into cross functional teams, shift to a value focused, customer-centric approach, and streamline their processes by reducing waste.

As an Agile Coach, I know that the key to a successful Agile transformation is three-fold, requiring a change in mindsets, processes, and technologies. An increasingly important tool in the world of financial services, intelligent automation must be considered part of the technology element of this equation.

What follows is an exploration of how intelligent automation can enhance Agile methods and techniques.

1. Intelligent automation can help teams understand the wants and needs of the customer

A clear and detailed understanding of the customer is central to an Agile delivery. Techniques such as empathy mapping, creating personas, and running focus groups are all designed to help product owners in Agile teams do just this.

Intelligent automation capabilities can bolster these insights by using big data to produce metrics on large sample sizes of customers. Rather than capture quantitative data alone, intelligent automation can process and analyse qualitative information such as emails, chatbots, social media, and customer reviews.

Additionally, by converting product features into virtual models, the technology can predict whether customers will be satisfied with it upon release. These fast and predictive capabilities can in turn help product owners within Agile teams unlock the wants and needs of the customer.

2. Intelligent automation can facilitate Agile ceremonies and support Agile roles

Agile ceremonies, typically facilitated by scrum masters, provide structure and cadence to a team. They also help to encourage Agile values such as transparency and collaboration. Key ceremonies include sprint planning, stand-ups, and sprint retrospectives.

Intelligent automation can facilitate these Agile ceremonies, as well as recommend optimal sprint plans, check dependencies, and monitor the overall status of the team. In essence, this technology can support the responsibilities of a scrum master.

The recent launch of ChatGPT has also sparked conversation on whether AI can provide support to Agile coaching, teaching teams about Agile principles and practices. Such applications, however, cannot replace Agile roles, as their accuracy is still

in question, and they don't provide the personal touch and emotional intelligence integral to scrum mastery and Agile coaching. Rather, intelligent automation can help bolster the tooling available to Agile teams, elevating their ways of working.

3. Intelligent automation can optimise DevOps

DevOps is an Agile practice that integrates development and IT teams to improve the speed and quality of delivering software. Intelligent automation can power DevOps by automating testing and reporting, as well as speeding up and scaling deployment. RPA can create robots that automate processes a business is seeking to improve and AI which can incorporate self-learning functions to ensure software testing is self-sufficient.

An example is the software package Docker, which creates a virtual container that builds, shares, and runs applications. By providing these optimising functions, intelligent automation can help to evolve DevOps into a more dynamic and autonomous software development method.

Beyond transforming the experiences of clients and customers, intelligent automation can elevate Agile ways of working. Through automating key stages in the Agile delivery cycle, this new technology can help teams streamline their processes. Capabilities such as AI and RPA can analyse large pool of client data, automate Agile ceremonies, bolster the tools available to Agile consultants, and strengthen software development tools. These transformative functions can empower Agile teams to deliver value faster and smarter.

1. https://www.thebusinessresearchcompany.com/report/ai-in-fintech-global-market-report
2. https://techmonitor.ai/technology/ai-and-automation/intelligent-automation-financial-services-leading-the-way

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JN_5133