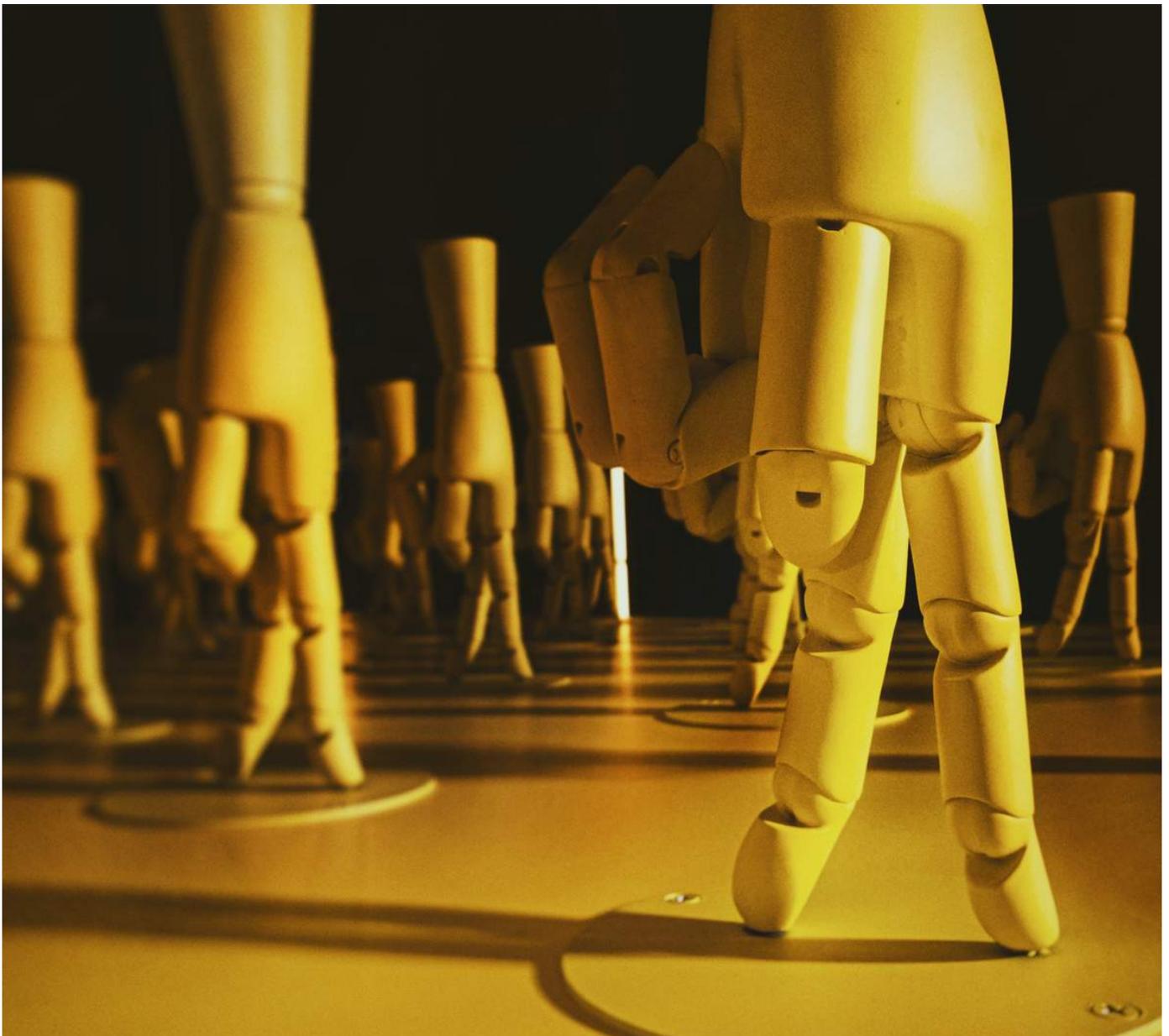


ROYAL CYBER

*ROBOTIC PROCESS  
AUTOMATION*

*White Paper*

THE NEXT STEP  
IN RETAIL  
AUTOMATION



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The retail industry is in the grip of the biggest upheaval in its history.

Retail disruptors Amazon and Alibaba, alongside companies from other sectors such as Netflix & Uber, are tearing up the rule book. Between them they are pioneering new customer-centric services & supply chain models that are redefining & elevating consumer expectations.

For many retailers, the digital transformation seems like an elusive and constantly moving target. Their aging legacy systems are so deeply woven into the core of their operations that any meaningful changes are both risky and prohibitively expensive. Fully adopting disruptive technology is like trying to change the wheels on a speeding car. But it doesn't have to be like this. Transformative technology already exists that doesn't disrupt existing legacy systems and enables retailers to work within their existing enterprise ecosystem, while creating the platform for longer-term innovation afforded by robotic process automation (RPA) and artificial intelligence.





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**02**

Why should retailers be interested in RPA?

**05**

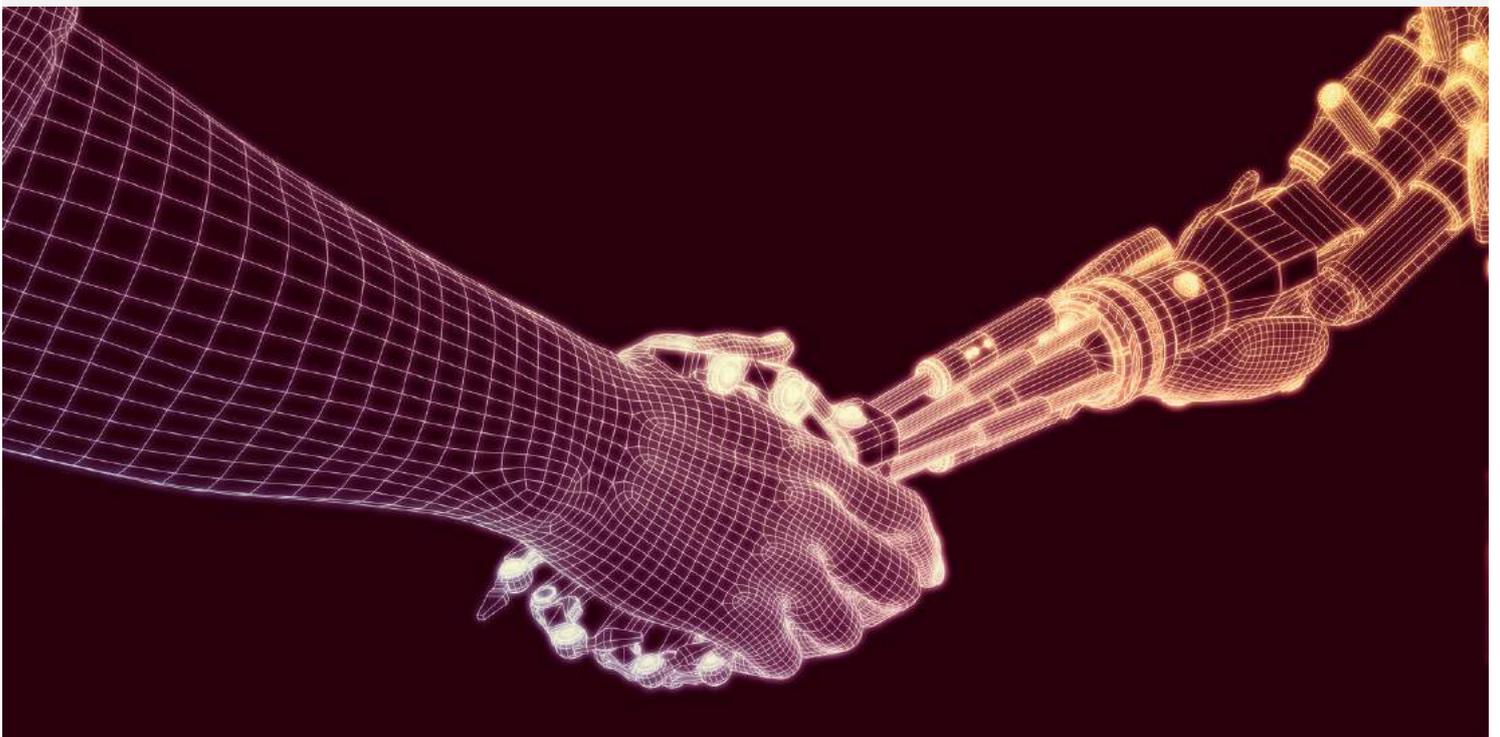
Retail benefits of RPA?

**06**

RPA in various segments of Retail

**15**

Conclusion





# WHY SHOULD RETAILERS BE INTERESTED IN RPA?

## WHAT IS AN RPA ROBOT?

RPA is a technology that harnesses the power of fast and highly efficient robots. They are intelligent software that can recognize objects in a virtual environment and adapt to change. A “robot” can emulate and integrate the actions of a human interacting within digital systems to execute a business process.

Software robots utilize the user interface to capture data and manipulate applications just like humans do. They communicate with other systems and trigger responses in order to perform on a vast variety of repetitive, rules-based tasks. Only substantially better: an RPA software robot never sleeps, makes zero mistakes and costs a lot less than an employee.

## WHY SHOULD RETAILERS BE INTERESTED IN RPA?

RPA automation can stretch from the retail supply chain right through to the back office and out on to the shop floor. Back-office tasks ripe for RPA include invoice processing, bill checking, payments and practically any financial process. In these cases, you can set an RPA robot to work and leave it unattended, using its computer vision to handle high volume tasks in the background. The best unattended robots are now self-healing and self-managing, capable of sensing and evaluating change.





# WHY SHOULD RETAILERS BE INTERESTED IN RPA?

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Moving to the front office, think of call centers, chat robots and areas such as human resources and legal where there are exceptions that need human insight and approval. Shop floor tasks include workforce optimization, trade promotions, store layouts and much more.

RPA is of relevance in retail today, given the level of automation on which the industry depends and the vast data flows that it is now trying to get to grips with as a source of competitive advantage and cost management.

The beauty of RPA, especially for retailers with disparate systems, is that it can automate multiple standalone processes

without the need for duplicate data input or analysis.

Another benefit of RPA is that it is a precursor technology, working in harmony with existing retail systems, while also being a significant yet manageable step towards adopting disruptive tech such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning.

Robots can act like people. They can go to Citrix and get what they need, go to SAP, access another antiquated system and then put everything in an Oracle database. Just like humans—super-fast, super-accurate humans. With the agility and speed to do more—and let your real people focus on the important stuff.





# WHY SHOULD RETAILERS BE INTERESTED IN RPA?

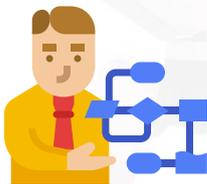
## DO THE FOLLOWING RETAIL SCENARIOS SOUND FAMILIAR?



“Your staff are always tied up with high volume and repetitive tasks. How much time do they spend on these tasks daily and what value-added activity could they be doing instead?”



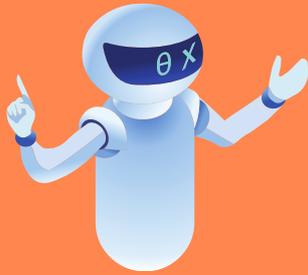
Your organization is still trying to eradicate data errors in transaction handling, making forecasts and planning unreliable.”



“You are reliant on complex business processes and disparate systems. These systems fail to meet your digital transformation needs, but you can't risk or afford to replace them.”



“You need to cut costs and/or increase productivity quickly to remain competitive.”



## ATTENDED VERSUS UNATTENDED ROBOTS. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

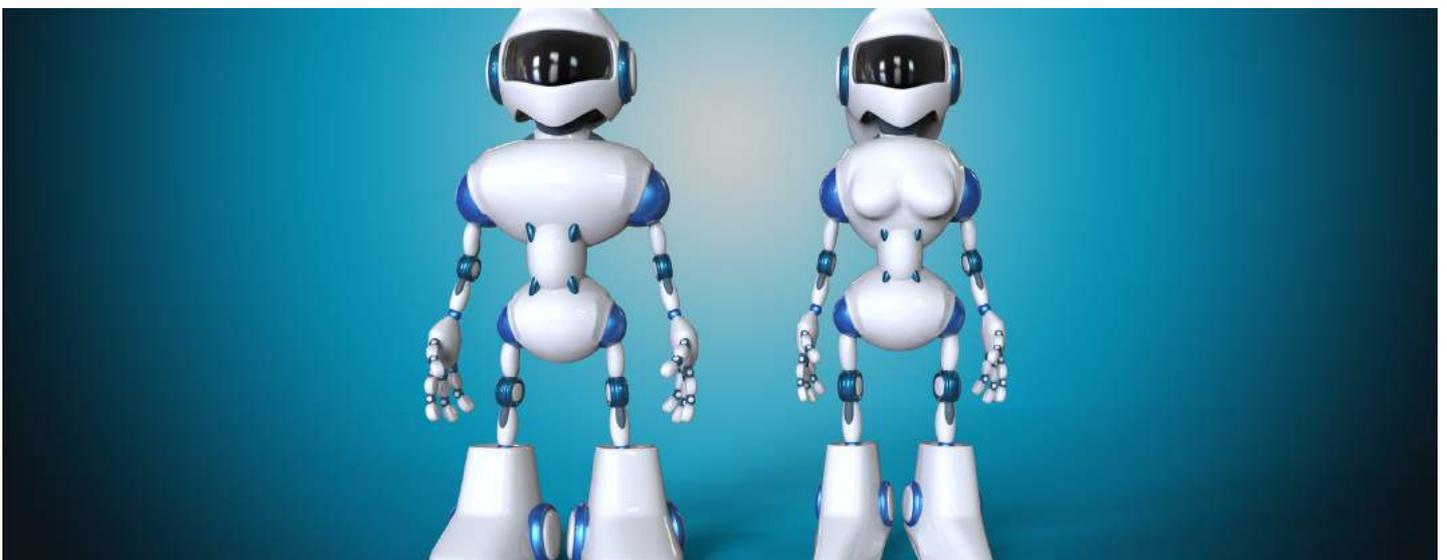
### THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF RPA SOFTWARE ROBOTS;

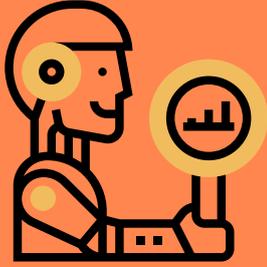
Unattended robots that automatically complete pre-set tasks over time, at scale with minimal employee intervention and attended robots that respond to employee-triggered actions by automatically completing specific processes.

While unattended robots quietly and diligently carry out their work with little human input, attended robots effectively act as an 'extra pair of hands', completing essential routine tasks on behalf of a specific team or employee so that the human can focus on more value-added

outcomes. Many companies start with unattended robots and automate complete processes, redeploying staff elsewhere to gain immediate ROI.

Attended robots are a big part of RPA's future. They come front-office ready - processing augmented workflows that extend the capabilities of your human managers. Having the digital fluency to manage blended human and robot teams is one of five "super skills" the Institute for the Future calls critical for success in the evolving workplace.





## WHAT ARE THE RETAIL BENEFITS OF RPA?

### THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF RPA SOFTWARE ROBOTS;

Retailers are finding themselves under pressure on two fronts. Margins are continually being squeezed while customer expectations continue to grow.

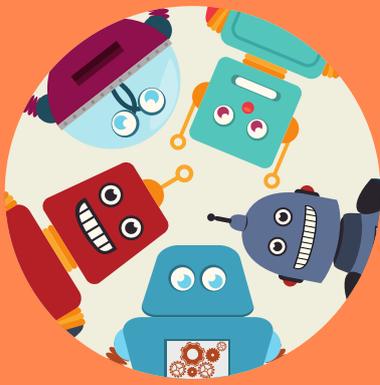
Squeezed margins are nothing new to retail and retailers are used to taking cost out of their operations. However for many, any further cost savings could negatively impact customer experience.

RPA offers retailers an effective way to square this circle. RPA can increase operational efficiency and productivity by cutting costs, boosting data confidence and speeding up processes, giving retailers an opportunity to redistribute their resources and boost customer experience.

### HERE ARE THE TOP TEN RETAIL BENEFITS OF RPA

1. Improved efficiency
2. Improved data quality and control
3. Employee satisfaction
4. Customer satisfaction
5. RPA works in harmony with existing IT systems
6. Data for process improvement
7. First strategic step towards AI
8. Efficiency first
9. Scalability and flexibility
10. Fast to implement





## RPA EVOLVES IN VARIOUS SEGMENTS OF RETAIL

RPA in the supply chain

RPA in the back office

RPA on the shop floor





## 2.1 RPA IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN

RPA is becoming increasingly advanced. This means it can now automate beyond tasks based on well-defined rules. An example of this is that supply chain judgements can be made based on data patterns, and RPA robots can trigger an alert if a delivery is likely to be late and automate supply/ demand balancing.

### 2.1.1 DEMAND & SUPPLY PLANNING

Until recently, demand and supply planning has been a laborious task that involved hunting for and gathering snippets of data, standardizing and formatting them, running simulations, finding out exceptions, and finally confirming and communicating the demand and supply plan.

All of these tasks can be automated and streamlined with RPA, helping retailers to increase capacity and asset management while significantly improving customer, supplier and employee satisfaction

### 2.1.2 LOGISTICS, SUPPLY CHAIN AND INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

Communication is a key ingredient of supply chain success. Emails automatically generated and sent using RPA is just the start of effective communications, alerting suppliers and customers when orders are booked, shipped, delivered or delayed. RPA can also help retailers monitor and maintain inventory levels, so they can

ensure they have enough stock to meet demand. Stock level notifications can be automatically generated when products need replenishment. After assessing past orders, RPA can also help determine optimum order levels, improving procurement, reducing cost and lowering waste.



## 2.1 RPA IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN

### 2.1.3 QUOTE, INVOICE AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

In most retail operations the source-to-pay process is standardized and repeatable, making it a great fit for automation. For example, a retailer that wants to source a specific product can use RPA to interrogate a database of suppliers, identifying companies that sell the product within a defined list of variables, cost being

the most obvious. The RPA robots can then generate a request for quotation and review multiple quotations when they come back, based on costs, fulfilment times etc. Once supply begins, an RPA robot can continually monitor the contract and the suppliers' performance.

## 2.2 RPA IN THE BACK OFFICE

Traditional ERP systems have a set of integrated applications allowing retailers to collect, store, manage and interpret data from different business activities and departments in one place, but that's not to say these applications are easy to use, quick or cost effective.

Here are just some of the ways RPA can streamline back-office processes, speed them up, boost data confidence, limit the need for human intervention and create opportunities for innovation.



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#### 2.2.1 CUSTOMER SUPPORT MANAGEMENT

RPA can automate time and resource-hungry customer-focused activities such as complaints

handling, loyalty scheme management and maintaining unconnected databases.

#### 2.2.2 RETURNS PROCESSING

Manual returns processing can be an incredibly time-consuming and expensive task if it is not done efficiently. Returns processing can, however, be transformed into a highly structured and rules-based process, making it a great fit for RPA.





## 2.2 RPA IN THE BACK OFFICE

### 2.2.3 ACCOUNTING & FINANCE

A certain level of accounting and finance automation can be achieved through existing systems such as ERP. RPA, however, is the next step forward in this journey, automating a large swathe of activities including order and invoice

processing, accounts payable and accounts receivable, account reconciliation, procure to pay, order to cash, record to report cycles and consolidating account information.

### 2.2.4 MARKETING AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

Reliability and speed are crucial for retailers when it comes to marketing and consumer behavior analysis. Speedy analysis and decision making can inject real agility into a retailer's operation, giving them significant competitive advantage over other retailers.

Campaign analysis is another area where RPA can be used to great effect, helping marketers assess their current actions and decide on the future course of action. It brings clarity in determining campaign goals, ascertaining campaign budget and identifies specific channels that need improvement.

The biggest benefit RPA provides here is that past actions can be repetitively performed in the future without manual effort. If a retailer tweaks strategy based on analysis, then RPA can help in measuring effectiveness of new strategies.

Product categorization is one of the most important but ignored functions in the retail industry. Customers quite often fail to find numerous products online because of poor product categorization. RPA however can integrate with inventory databases assigning attributes and categorizing products for a seamless customer experience.



## 2.2 RPA IN THE BACK OFFICE

RPA can also supercharge consumer behavior analysis driving effective trade promotions, store specific planning, new product introductions, customer on-boarding from websites,

managing subscription renewals, claims processing and complaint handling and loyalty card management, to name but a few.

### 2.2.5 PAYROLL MANAGEMENT

Payroll demands perhaps the greatest amount of admin of any HR process, with every pay cycle calling for accuracy, timeliness, and well-planned coordination across numerous departments. Get any one of these steps wrong and a retailer is guaranteed to demotivate their workforce and possibly even cause them financial hardship. High-quality service is therefore non-negotiable, but, as with all retail cost centers,

there is a constant pressure on payroll management budgets. RPA presents a rare opportunity to simultaneously improve the consistency and quality of service in payroll, while also driving down the total cost of delivery. It also promises to liberate finance and HR employees from essential high volume, repeatable tasks so they can analyze the increased level of data created during automation.





## 2.2 RPA IN THE BACK OFFICE

### 2.2.6 EMPLOYEE ON-BOARDING

RPA can streamline employee onboarding by updating and synchronizing all HR databases with the same employee information. This makes manual data double entry a thing of the past, so there's less chance of introducing errors and HR teams are freed up to spend more time on value-added activities such as building relationships and fostering the corporate values and culture.

Once liberated from routine admin, RPA can help HR teams deliver personalized onboarding experiences for new employees. All the essential processes, the initial meetings with supervisors

and briefings on safety, logging time and submitting expenses can be automatically organized in one place, in one bespoke experience.

Meanwhile thanks to RPA, a data-driven approach to on-boarding means that employee information can be collected effectively and kept in one place ensuring HR professionals have the information they need to do their jobs quickly and effectively.

RPA can also be used for employee off-boarding, consolidating leaver data from business areas and updating disparate HR and payroll systems.





## 2.2 RPA IN THE BACK OFFICE

### 2.2.7 CALL CENTERS OUTSOURCING

Using RPA in customer call centers can strip out layers of cost and make it financially viable to bring this valuable function back on shore.

It's standard practice for call center operators to toggle between multiple systems, searching for, and inputting data while speaking to customers on the telephone. If a customer interaction takes too long or the employee can't find the data

They need, the customer suffers, and brand loyalty is eroded. RPA streamlines this process by integrating data across multiple systems, so the employee has all the information they need on one screen. The employee also only needs to enter data once. This avoids errors and liberates the employee to focus on the customer, rather than carefully entering data in multiple systems.





## 2.3 RPA ON THE SHOP FLOOR

### 2.3 RPA ON THE SHOP FLOOR

#### 2.3.1 WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

Workforce optimization is arguably one of the most critical, data-heavy processes used on the retail shop floor. Workforce optimization is, in fact, a series of processes ranging from forecasting and scheduling to performance management and related email or text messaging with quite a few other processes in between.

RPA can streamline workforce management enabling real-time agility by linking and synchronizing databases in HR, sales and payroll updating and analyzing data and automatically triggering emails and text messages keeping employees informed.

#### 2.3.2 TRADE PROMOTIONS

Setting up shop floor trade promotions requires a significant amount of backend admin work that can tie up employees & hit retailers' bottom line. Key admin tasks include creating and allocating funds for promotions and generating reports that give visibility of promotion performance. These processes are highly repetitive and involve manual inputting of data, which often makes them error prone.

RPA, however, can automate up to 80% of trade promotions processes including validation, invoice processing, quality audit and payment approval. RPA can deliver a range of additional benefits including sustained accuracy, which cuts the sampling percentage needed for quality audits.



## 3. CONCLUSION

### 2.3.3 STORE SPECIFIC PLANNING

RPA can interrogate existing databases to give retailers a better view of individual store layouts and the demographics of customers who shop

there. Equipped with this information retailers can fine-tune individual store inventory and the level of prominence they give each product.

## 3. CONCLUSION

**Robotic process automation offers hard-pressed retailers with a golden opportunity to achieve a raft of seemingly contradictory goals.**

For example, it can eliminate errors while increasing speed, reduce cost while boosting customer experience, and transform digital capabilities without being disruptive. It also removes many of the repetitive elements involved in any task handling, thereby making life easier for employees by freeing them to focus on more productive,

### **Rewarding and creative tasks.**

If you would like to find out more about how RPA can deliver the above benefits for your retail operation, it's time to contact Royal Cyber. You can email us at [info@royalcyber.com](mailto:info@royalcyber.com) or visit [www.royalcyber.com](http://www.royalcyber.com).



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55 Shuman Blvd, Suite 275, Naperville, IL 60563 USA. | Tel: +1.630.355.6292  
Email: [info@royalcyber.com](mailto:info@royalcyber.com) | Website: [www.royalcyber.com](http://www.royalcyber.com)