



Adapting the enterprise to new realities

Intensifying competition for viewers and advertisers, combined with ongoing declines in subscribers, is putting pressure on top-line performance at many media and entertainment (M&E) companies. At the other end of a margin squeeze, costs are escalating – especially in the critical areas of content and talent. Unsurprisingly, the mantra of cost cutting has reared its head again as a key priority for management teams; however, the solution today is more holistic and nuanced than simple brute-force reductions. What the M&E industry requires is a new level of operational excellence – the kind of strategic expense reduction that delivers short term results and long term efficiencies.

Automating intelligently

In the year ahead, the conversation on operational excellence must include an in-depth assessment of the potential benefits offered by a new breed of intelligent automation (IA) technologies such as robotic process automation (RPA), artificial intelligence, machine learning, computer vision and natural language processing.

As an example, EY research shows that the implementation of RPA alone can deliver savings of 20% to 35% over current processes. The real premium in these technologies is their deployment in combination together and alongside existing systems. They can launch and scale rapidly, avoiding high levels of investment, generating quick returns, and redefining the next layer of IT infrastructure.

To date, many of these technologies have been rolled out in the back office. Often, they play a generic role, knitting together legacy systems to make areas such as compliance and reporting more efficient. In the year ahead, this portfolio will develop to include many more solutions that are specific to the M&E industry. We will see their deployment in everything from content recommendations to media planning.

Previously manual and disconnected processes can be delivered more effectively. For example, ingesting a piece of content using a combination of RPA, computer vision and machine learning can automate the process of tagging metadata reducing costs of content curation, bringing efficiency to the process and enabling other capabilities. It will become the engine that drives recommendations and helps in the creation of publicity and marketing material, and in a world of bespoke, object-based media, it could ultimately lead to the creation of new content.

Understanding the impact

Just as technology has been the catalyst of disruption, it is also a huge part of the solution. And yet a technology-led approach risks missing the bigger picture. Any deployment of intelligent automation needs to be seen in the wider context of enterprise change.

Today's enterprises have processes in abundance that are ripe for IA and they will likely have many more of them in the future. The greatest opportunity and consequently the greatest impact are to be found with processes that are data-intensive, repetitive and rule-driven and have electronic start and end points.

M&E companies need to identify the kind of rules-based processes where intelligent automation is relevant, determining the specific criteria for impact and then mapping each process in detail to assess the likelihood of achieving that impact. Once prioritized M&E companies should target specific processes for proof of concept modeling.

The good news is that many of these technologies will drive operational excellence into the enterprise, deliver cost efficiencies and also unleash a raft of ancillary benefits, from driving innovation to mitigating risk.



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