

HOW TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS WITH WORKFLOW AUTOMATION

From pro-paper traditionalists to technology trailblazers, we have four key stages that businesses like yours might identify with in their journey towards digital and automation maturity. At the top end of this scale, businesses are leveraging the benefits of digitised and automated workflows throughout their organisation to drive efficiency, productivity and competitive advantage. Yet no matter what stage a business is at, there is always room to grow. Read on to discover where your business belongs, and what's next in your digital journey.



Traditionalist

Alright you Traditionalist, you advocate of paper and pen... it's time to take your business out of the dark ages and into the digital world! Legacy workflows and the 'busyness' of everyday work is keeping your employees stuck in the world of paper-based and manual processes... and you're missing out on the world of benefits that technology enables. The good news is, your opportunities to innovate are huge...



Digital Convert

Digital Converts have embraced digital technology to an extent to improve the functionality, accessibility and security of documents and workflows – but digital processes are still ad hoc and fragmented, rather than seamlessly automated.



Automation Expert

Automation Experts are already benefiting from having built some end-to-end automation into everyday business processes – minimising the level of human intervention required so employees are empowered to focus on what they do best.



Tech Trailblazer

At this stage, an organisation has in place some of the most up-to-date innovations in digital technology. They have embraced the principles of automation and are already reaping the benefits of building end-to-end automation into everyday business processes: not only in cost savings and improved efficiency, but in taking the next step to leverage business data to deliver superior value to stakeholders and boost competitive advantage.

As a Traditionalist you are likely working almost exclusively with manual and paper-based processes, with minimal or no digitisation of documents or workflows. At this stage, technology in the workplace is basic – enabling standard scanning to email and output printing perhaps, but with significant human effort required to enable everyday business workflows.

Invoicing processes, for example, are still paper-based. Archives are hard-copy, stored in file cabinets and not backed up. Headcount and investment in administration is likely high. Collaborative discussions are limited to people physically in the room and are recorded on paper flipcharts. Without digital workflows in place, work is constrained to the bricks and mortar office.

Employee attitudes' towards digitisation may be mixed. Some may be comfortable with the traditional manual workflows they're used to and fearful of change. Others, particularly those that are digitally savvy in their personal lives, may feel frustrated by the lack of digitisation in their professional workplace.

[Find out what this means for your business](#)

What this means for your business

As a business still dependent on paper and manual workflows, you are likely facing high costs in both physical and human resource. Your employees' efficiency and value to the team may be compromised by their time spent on administrative tasks. And in undertaking those tasks, there is naturally a higher risk of human error.

Without digitising your documents your business data is at higher risk of breach. 'Unstructured' data such as paper documents left on desks or in filing cabinets is a risk to your business' compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). And without digital backup of your data, your business continuity is undermined; could your business survive significant data loss through flood or fire?

Finally – have you considered the impact of delaying technological innovation on the business' capacity to recruit and maintain quality talent? Research has shown that today's savvy jobseekers consider digital sophistication in the workplace a key factor in the companies they target.



Opportunities for growth

For a business at this stage, there is risk in maintaining the status quo – to both your business' security and its growth. Embracing digital technology – and starting the journey towards automation – can not only help to mitigate these risks, but deliver exponential benefits to your business' efficiency, productivity and competitive advantage.

- Reduce cost of manual labour in everyday document management workflows
- Reduce errors related to human error
- Shift employees' investment from administration towards business critical tasks
- Digitise and secure business data to ensure regulatory compliance
- Ensure business continuity through digital back-up of files
- Enable more agile and flexible ways of working through digitising workflows
- Future-proof the business and improve competitive advantage by embracing technological innovation to maximise capabilities



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Recommendations

As a Traditionalist your first step is to start building the technology infrastructure to enable the basic digitisation of documents. Upgrade the capabilities of your current print device to a Multi-Functional Printer to facilitate secure scan direct to folder functionality. Get your paper archives digitised, safely stored and securely retrievable to ensure GDPR compliance as well as business continuity.

Investing in a more sophisticated device can deliver a huge return in value – giving you the tools to start getting your data organised and secure, your everyday workflows more efficient and your employees freed up to focus on what they do best.

And if you're not sure where to start, why not ask an expert? Ricoh offers consultancy services to determine the best way forward in office technology solutions for businesses like yours.



To discover how Ricoh can help your business take the leap into digitisation and start reaping the benefits, visit us at [ricoh-europe.com](https://www.ricoh-europe.com)