Human Resources

Introduction to Workflow Automation

RICOH
imagine. change.
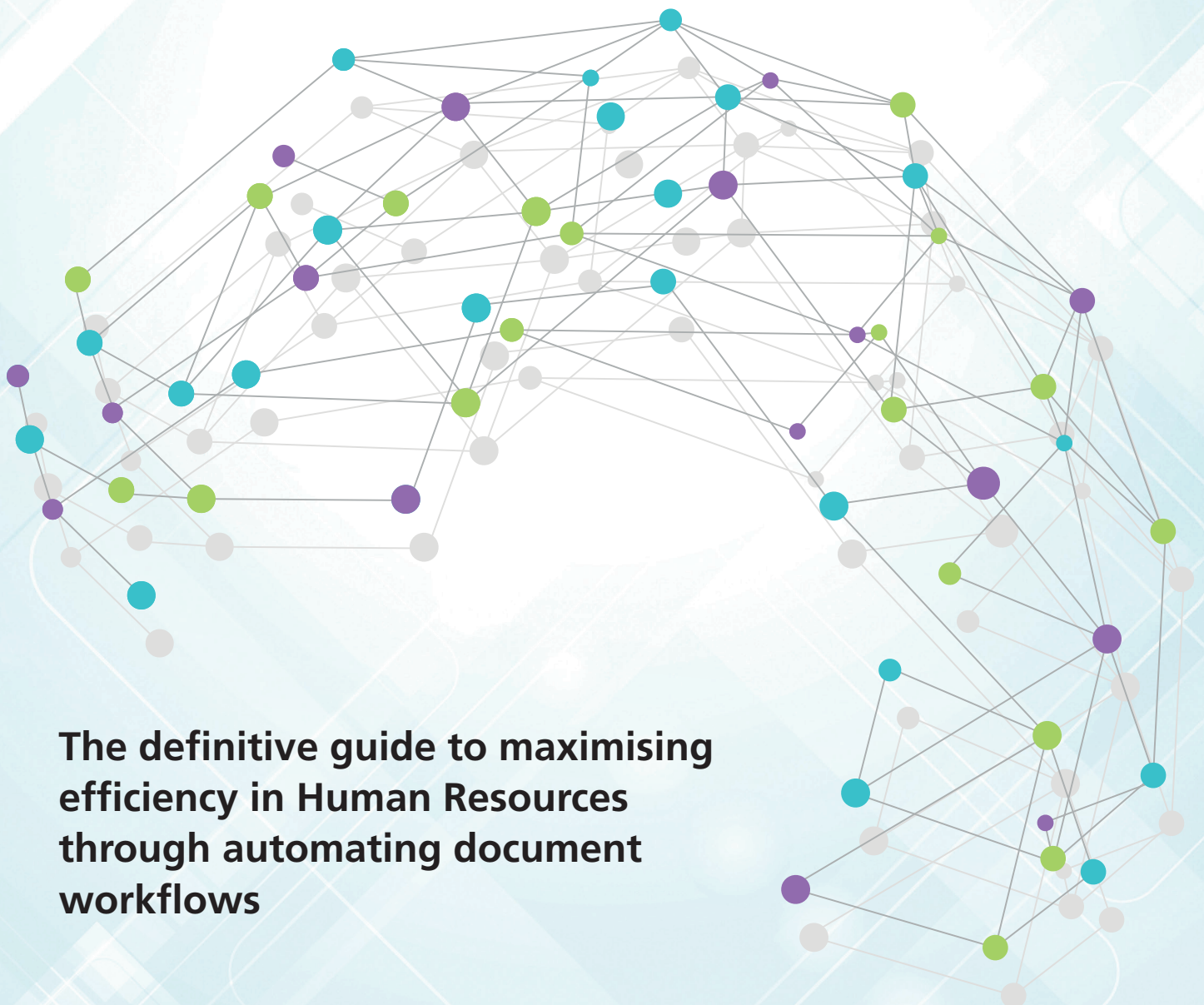
The definitive guide to maximising efficiency in Human Resources through automating document workflows

The Human Resources Professional Association (HRPA) reported in a 2017 survey that 52% of HR professionals believe their organisations were unlikely to adopt artificial intelligence in their departments in the next five years. However, human resources is one of the most document-intensive departments in most businesses. Given that both automation and HR are predominantly about enabling employees to work smarter, freeing up their time and helping them achieve more; HR should be one of the first departments where businesses implement automation and AI technology.

Despite the rapid embrace of digital technologies in the workplace, documents remain at the heart of many business processes. This is particularly true of the HR department where contracts, recruitment and performance reviews are all of crucial importance. But HR, like every department, must keep up with the ever increasing pace of business life, facilitating anytime, anywhere access to securely stored information. Relying on the management, routing and approval of paper documents slows down these processes, crucially affecting a business's speed and agility.

Employment contracts, reference checks, on-boarding/exiting and performance reviews all fall within HR's remit and all require substantial volumes of sensitive data collection. Automated workflows can improve the efficiency and accuracy of these regularly repeated tasks, helping HR departments to maintain compliance with data regulation and improve employee satisfaction rates.

Digitising these document intensive processes within the HR department provides the perfect platform for wider digital transformation. It provides an effective groundwork for information mobility across the business, resulting in greater accuracy, efficiency, and employee satisfaction. Many SMBs still distribute HR documents like performance reviews, new-starter kits,

or employment contracts around their organisation manually. This approach can lead to lost or incomplete documents, bottlenecks and missing data. However, many organisations are afraid of implementing a technological solution to automate and improve these back-end, manual processes.

80%

of employees cited increasing business process efficiency as a very important factor in driving digitisation

In 2017, research commissioned by Ricoh Europe found that 59% of employees think that better technology would have the most positive impact on their working day. These employees are excited by the prospect of greater speed and flexibility from new technologies: more immediate access to data (44%), a reduction in repetitive tasks (41%) and automation of admin tasks (36%). On top of the productivity cost of slower processing, missed deadlines and lost files, with the advent of GDPR, manual processes pose a huge cyber security risk. Mishandling data can result in fines of up to €20 million or 4% of a company's global annual turnover under this new regulation.

For the HR department, a streamlined document management process typically starts with indexing and archiving data. This helps businesses ensure compliance with regulations and allows for comprehensive audits. By reducing the amount of time staff must devote to admin, digitising frees up their time to add greater value to the business. 80% of employees cited increasing business process efficiency as a very important factor in driving digitisation, closely followed by ensuring regulatory compliance and reducing operational costs.

Some of the most pressing trends driving business transformation today are employee demands, specifically around increased work-place flexibility. Employees increasingly expect their employers to cater to their individual workstyles. Automated HR workflows help businesses manage employees efficiently and flexibly. The demand here is clear. Our market research has found that 52% of workers say their employers are failing to meet the needs of different generations in the workplace. Automated HR workflow tools make sure staff have access to workplace information whenever and wherever they need to access it. This improves efficiency and drives employee loyalty and NPS.

Technology is only as effective as its integration within workplace culture. Interesting, only a third of business leaders say they actively foster an atmosphere of agility. HR has an important role to play in reinforcing an agile culture, helping the wider business to react quickly to customer and employee needs. Successful workflow automation programmes should be supported by HR with effective change management practices and training to drive employee adoption of new technologies.

Given its strategic importance within the business the HR department is the perfect place to begin the journey towards automation and digitalisation. Here are some of the strategic benefits and outcomes that stem from automated document workflows and digital storage.

52%
of workers say their employers are failing to meet the needs of different generations in the workplace

Strategic benefits from automated document workflows

Reduce inefficiencies and human error

Manual workflow processing inevitably results in inefficiencies and mistakes. Contracts and sensitive payroll information can be sent to the wrong person, contractual deadlines can be missed, PRP can be delayed or employees can be frustrated by lost information. Automated workflows eradicate or minimise the possibility of these errors in HR processes, speeding up document routing and helping employees sign off documents once they get to their destination. Ricoh's Human Resources Records service manages all forms of HR files from contracts and pensions to healthcare and bonuses. Sensitive information is stored carefully and remains instantly retrievable, making it easier to respond to queries, approve documents and minimise errors.

Optimise processes to improve employee satisfaction

As well as the cost saving and productivity benefits of digital acceleration, it plays a key role in recruiting and retaining top talent and skilled workers. 62% of European employees agreed that the best businesses spend a lot on new technology. Employees today expect to have access to more information, more quickly than ever before, via a broad array of devices and applications, if they are to perform at their best. Employers also broadly align with this line of thinking;

70% believe productivity-enabling workplace technology lies at the heart of their organisation's ability to thrive, and 64% believe document management technologies will have the most positive impact on the way their business operates. Automating expense management is a perfect place to start as it brings consistency and speed to a process that is notoriously frustrating and long-winded for employees. Ricoh's expense management solution reduces the risk of fraud, automatically collates detailed expenses data and minimises the time wasted by employees on internal processes.

Improve access to information and simplify the back office

Routine activities can be streamlined and a sequence of steps within each automatic process can be configured to ensure consistency, completion, and efficiency. These back-office benefits are amplified when their output spans multiple departments and business functions, which is directly the case with human resources. Simply put, if employees across a business can benefit from quicker access to vital HR information then productivity skyrockets. Ricoh's Contract Management service effectively streamlines document search and retrieval. The solution gives greater flexibility and control to employees who can easily search and store vital documents in a secure fashion.

Business continuity

In an always-on economy, business continuity is essential for long-term success. With digitised workflows, copies and back-ups can easily be produced and recorded. As well as cutting down on storage costs, this process reduces the risks of data being irretrievably lost in the case of serious incident or disaster. By using digital storage to create data backups and facilitate multiple user access, businesses can improve information availability throughout the organisation.

Ensure regulatory compliance

With increased availability comes increased accountability. Automated workflows provide businesses with demonstrably compliant systems. Auditable, transparent systems are a crucial component of data privacy and protection regulations. This is particularly true for industries that are entrusted with safeguarding sensitive, personally identifiable data. Regulations such as the GDPR require businesses to be accountable for the information they hold at all times. Capturing all relevant data such as the time and date that a file was last accessed, modified, shared or printed, and by whom, can often prove pivotal when demonstrating a visible audit trail. This simply isn't feasible for many businesses with manual or legacy systems. Installing an automated workflow system makes it far

easier for internal and external agents to audit and review a company's data policies. Ricoh's Document Governance solution can effectively manage user access and activity around sensitive information, setting authentication requirements according to internal guidelines. In addition to reducing operation costs, this solution helps HR departments meet security, sustainability and compliance objectives.

Minimise unstructured data

The ability to automatically turn paper-based and manually entered information into digital records is essential in modern business. Organisations naturally accrue a huge amount of unstructured data through their regular operations. Manual entry will only ever catch a fraction of this data. Aside from the threat of regulatory penalties, businesses are missing a vital source of revenue by letting this data slip through the net. Data is the lifeblood of modern enterprise and can inform every aspect of business operations. By investing in automated workflow processes, businesses can boost productivity and improve decision-making throughout their business by turning unstructured, lost data into valuable business intelligence. Ricoh's managed Scanning and Archiving service aims to make employee's lives easier by freeing them from the burden of document and information management tasks. It is adaptable, user-friendly and mobile, dramatically aiding collaboration and driving productivity.

Big data analytics

Laying the foundations for workflow automation tools is an incredibly useful process for learning about the data you hold as a business. As mentioned, unstructured data can be incredibly valuable if it can be collated, analysed and deployed effectively. The same is especially true of any data silo within the HR department. Digitising and automating data collection and processing turns these silos into smart data hubs for use across the business. With a transparent workflow automation system, it becomes much easier to spot inefficient elements of workflows where bottlenecks occur.

CSR and environmental impact

Automated document management services help businesses improve energy efficiency, resource conservation and human wellbeing in line with corporate sustainability targets. Digitalisation gives organisations an opportunity to demonstrate the positive impact they have on the environment. Modern business produces an astonishing number of documents. These documents can require a huge amount of energy when printed. Digitising and automating workflows naturally minimises this environmental impact, directly contributing to sustainability goals.
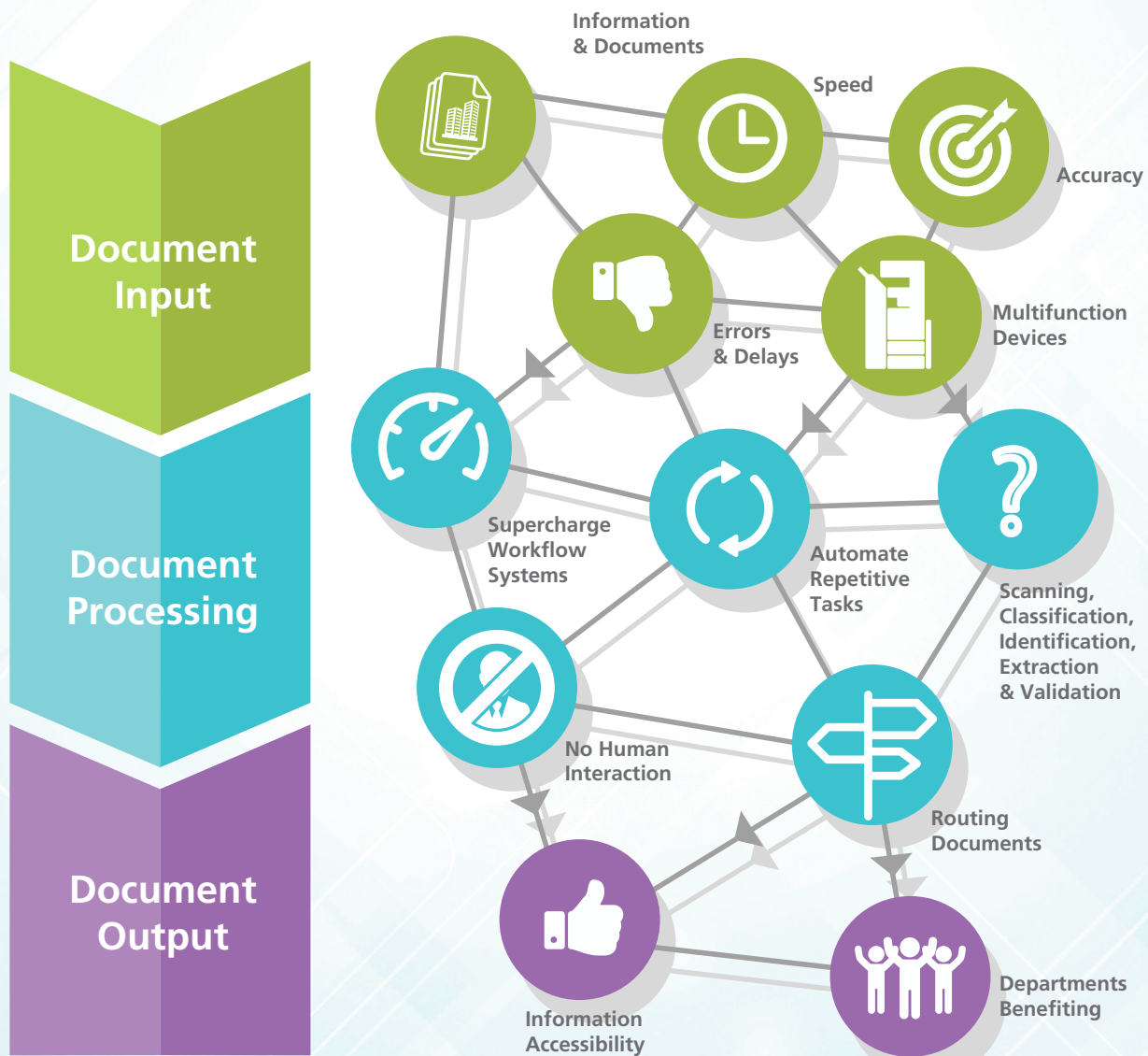
Case Study: agefiph
ouvrir l'emploi aux personnes handicapées

Agefiph is a French public service organisation that promotes the integration of people with disabilities in the workplace. Agefiph handles more than 30,000 compulsory declarations of disabled employment every year, each of which can run to 20 pages in length. Ricoh processes and records all declarations for the organisation. To safeguard data integrity and protect confidential employment information, documents are processes within an ISO/IEC 27001 accredited datacentre. With automated, digitised services, Agefiph can collect payments faster and reduce processing costs. Visibility is also improved as companies can view their declarations online, reducing the volume of queries.

So where to start with workflow automation?

Workflow automation means streamlining the flow of your information – capturing, managing, and transforming and utilising it. Ricoh's workflow services begin by evaluating the way information flows throughout the business. Then Ricoh helps redesign, implement and manage an enhanced set of business process that mirror the organisation's unique needs.

New applications and technologies are only effective if they integrate with your current working environment. Ricoh workflow services create the best possible fit between business applications, innovative technologies and the processes they are designed to enable. Ultimately, the goal is to reduce costs, time wastage and minimise risk while improving customer service and satisfaction.

Document Input

Document Processing

Document Output

Information & Documents

Speed

Accuracy

Errors & Delays

Multifunction Devices

Supercharge Workflow Systems

Automate Repetitive Tasks

Scanning, Classification, Identification, Extraction & Validation

No Human Interaction

Routing Documents

Information Accessibility

Departments Benefiting

Ricoh delivers workflow automation services that can improve the way your HR department collaborates and shares information with the rest of the business. From your core infrastructure to the tools your people use and the way you communicate, Ricoh services connects your employees and customers to the right information, at the right time, in the right form, no matter where they are. Learn how your HR department can gain from workflow solutions, start using information more effectively and take a strategic role in your business' future.

To find out how you can digitise your business, contact:

🌐 ricoh-europe.com   📱 020 7465 1000   ✉ contact@ricoh-europe.com

f facebook.com/ricoh-europe

🐦 twitter.com/ricoheurope

RICOH
imagine. change.

www.ricoh-europe.com