JADU

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

How to automate and commercialise for sustainable growth.

WHITEPAPER

Birmingham City Council

Braintree District Council

Cherwell District Council North Oxfordshire

Lichfield district council

West Northamptonshire Council

Wigan Council

To deliver better services and efficiency, the public sector must use automation technology to become more strategic and effective.

It is only through the automation of operations and core services that the public sector can live up to its mission of providing for the most vulnerable in society, whilst also seamlessly delivering core services to the wider community.

Public sector automation is about more than reducing operational costs - (important as that is) automation is improving services, reducing the cost to serve and providing a deeper community connection.

Public sector organisations at the forefront of automation adoption are using this technology to redesign their processes, review structures and create new revenue streams to continually improve the services they provide to their citizens.

This wholescale modernisation of the public sector is necessary to meet changing citizen expectations, bridge funding gaps and revitalise communities ravaged by the pandemic lockdowns.

VITAL MISSION

"If we are passionate about place making, then we have to make sure that what goes on in our buildings is giving us the capacity and head-space to make a difference," says the Chief Executive of Lichfield District Council, Simon Fletcher.

The UK local authority CEO captures the opportunity and challenges succinctly. Citizens value public spaces but do not equate such services as bin collection with the community. This is creating a demand for more efficient government bodies that better serve citizens.

To deliver better services and efficiency, the public sector must use automation technology to become more strategic and effective.

Automation offers accuracy, consistency, scalability, and traceability. Automation can enable governments to provide outstanding levels of customer experience, driven by innovations that are as sensitive to people as they are to technology.

- McKinsey & Company, global management consulting firm

Automation provides the public sector with the opportunity to increase self-service offerings to citizens, drive up communication levels, improve cross-agency or departmental working, improve interoperability of systems and quickly resolve issues the citizen has. All of which, as we will see, reduce failure demand on the authority.

Adoption of automation is not only essential for making the public sector more cost-effective; as the 2020s have shown, the public sector is expected to become an emergency service when society faces major challenges.

The Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns demonstrated how those government bodies at the forefront of automation and usage of technology were able to respond to their citizen's needs.

If we had not had the BRUM account, we wouldn't have been able to distribute the enormous amounts of business grants that the Government asked us to do.

We paid about £317 million in grants, so we paid out more than we probably collected.

- Peter Bishop, Director Digital & Customer Services at Birmingham City Council.

Birmingham's BRUM account, developed using the Jadu platform, has created a single account and web service for citizens of Europe's largest public body. Registrations grew to 500,000 during the pandemic lockdowns.

Birmingham City Council

Over
2 MILLION
Jadu Connect cases tracked

Over
500,000
active users to the BRUM account

Over
2.7 MILLION
Jadu forms submitted

Over
£167 MILLION
payments processed

Stats correct as of February 2022

Geraldine Mahney, Customer Service Manager at West Northamptonshire Council says, "We are going back to a need to see people face-to-face. We are seeing call lengths going up."

She adds of increased pressures on local authorities to support their community members who have been hit hard by the recent economic fallout and refugees from the war in Ukraine.

Climate change will create, on a regular basis, localised issues that will require government agencies to respond as swiftly as Birmingham did in the pandemic lockdowns.

Not only will local and national bodies have to respond to climate-caused emergencies, but tackling climate change will require the public sector to implement radical changes in communities and guide local businesses and citizens to ways of reducing carbon emissions.

Local infrastructure will be required to predict and prevent impacts, as well as increased engagement with local parishes and the provision of funding and support.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Covid-19 not only changed the role of the public sector in an emergency, the pandemic lockdowns also accelerated the digitalisation of society.

Sectors such as retail, education, health and financial services talk of five years of digital transformation being achieved in six months.

Citizens, therefore, expect the same level of digital interactivity, seamless connectivity and 24-hour online services from their civic bodies. "Previously, we only operated during office hours, but citizens expect services to be available 24 hours a day," says Kevin White, Digital Services Manager at West Northamptonshire Council.

"We as a local authority have to achieve the Amazon or Uber-like experience, as we have got a population that has expectations that are rising," Fletcher of Lichfield District Council says.

The challenge for the public sector is delivering the Amazon experience on a significantly smaller budget whilst competing for talent in a resource-scarce market.

▌▌ Digital customer service within the council is about freeing up the customer service team and enables them to deal with those people that need the most help. Digital has had a big impact and has been an enabler.

- David Spilsbury, Applications and Web Team Manager at Cherwell District Council.

Without a good customer experience, though, the public sector faces the prospect of losing the trusted relationship it has with its citizens. According to McKinsey & Company, satisfied citizens are nine times more likely to trust a government and believe that the government body is delivering the services expected of it.

Automation enables the public sector to focus its resources on the citizen and their experience, and not the mundanity of processes.

▌▌ We recognise that the residents don't want a deep relationship with us. Transactions have to be quick and easy, just like going to an insurance firm to get an instant quote.

- Simon Fletcher, Chief Executive, Lichfield District Council

We can now triage those residents that don't need a relationship and focus on those with acute needs," Fletcher says.

In Birmingham, the BRUM account provides all the forms and payments a citizen requires.

While automation and integrations ensure these services are connected to Birmingham City Council's customer relationship management (CRM) system

This enables citizens to manage their council tax, benefits and additional services.

Platforms like the BRUM account demonstrate how the public sector needs its technology services to easily blend into the lives of the citizens it serves.

Bishop at Birmingham City Council describes BRUM as a 21st-century service that ensures that the city's residents can interact with the council safely and securely.

We have been able to deliver more and at pace, so now there is a much closer connection between the city councillors and residents than existed previously.

- Peter Bishop, Director Digital & Customer Services at Birmingham City Council

White at West Northamptonshire agrees: "Not everyone wants to use a website, so instead of channel shift, we've provided technology shift.

West Northamptonshire Council now has bots for email and voice, resulting in 24/7 customer channel contact."

We wanted to keep all channels open, but buy using automation, we are making sure that all channels are sustainable.

- Kevin White, Head of Digital Services, West Northamptonshire Council

West Northamptonshire Council is using automation to ensure it does not disengage with any community in its borough, no matter their level of technology maturity and experience.

"BRUM account is the technology platform for being able to provide those excellent online experiences that the council wants to provide for our citizens. By giving them some key information in one place, that is easy to access, and it's easy for us to scale,"

says Cheryl Doran, Assistant Director IT of the platform at Birmingham City Council.

"It is about how we make the digital offer so good that it will be people's default option," Cherrie Root, Corporate Director, Braintree District Council. Peter Bishop adds: "We want to exploit the functionality, to help with the council's ambitions in how IT services its needs."

Doran says the BRUM account has enabled the council to see where it can improve customer service, and, having gained so many new users during the pandemic lockdowns and seen a change in behaviour by citizens, Birmingham is taking the opportunity to review the customer service strategy.

"Agile and flexibility have become the cornerstone of the Council and that will never go back," Root says of the impact of the Covid-19 working patterns on Braintree District Council.

"Now it makes sense to for us to look at the digital council from a different position, the digital customer would not have entertained video calling before," she says of the change in behaviour, adding that the cohort that changed patterns during the lockdowns is now "the biggest convert".

OPTIMISATION TO BRIDGE GAPS

Automation not only delights citizens with service improvements. A more efficient public sector has become essential following a decade of reduced budgets from the central government.

High-level services, which do attract some additional funding from the central government, are increasing in cost, so forward-thinking authorities are looking for methods that reduce the ability of a case or intervention to escalate in cost.

"Over the last 10 years, there has been less money, and we have struggled to adjust as a sector, and it has been a challenge to our processes," says Fletcher.

Local authorities are also seeing increased financial pressure in core areas such as education, highways and waste management; in the worst cases, this has led to some authorities sinking into high-profile bankruptcy. Independently generating revenue has therefore become important.

However, the pandemic and its seismic shift in behaviour has disrupted local government revenue-generating plans. With businesses reconsidering the role of the office, employees work from home and no longer require office space, which many local authorities own and operate.

In addition, parking and the digitisation of society have impacted the high street as consumers move their purchasing power online. "We, like others have a funding gap", says Root at Braintree. "Local authorities continually need to review and innovate to ensure that key services can be delivered well, at best value."

Transformational local authorities, however, are in tune with the

changes in behaviour. Cherwell District Council created and owns the Graven Hill development company, a new self-build property development within its region.

"The funding gap is a big challenge as the central government grants are diminishing year on year," Spilsbury of Cherwell says.

Faced with these challenges, automation is an opportunity for the public sector to reduce the cost to serve through simpler processes, enabling team members to spend their time on essential services rather than monotonous activities. It also leads to a reduction in the failure rate.

▟▟ Automation plays a role in end-to-end services, and you are cutting out council staff re-keying information at the back office, so you are saving money," Spilsbury says.

▟▟ We call it the Virtual Council, and it is the automation of absolutely everything in the council," White at West Northamptonshire says.

The East Midlands authority has already created a series of proof of concepts (POC) to validate its plans to automate the organisation.

"We are breaking down traditional silos. A local authority is typically a set of vertical silos.

We are moving to a horizontal type of organisation focused on the customer, policy and performance," Lichfield's Simon Fletcher says of how moving away from traditional working methods is allowing for greater commercial freedom and automation.

Advisors McKinsey & Company estimates that as many as four out of five processes in HR, finance, and application processing are at least partially automatable, with the potential to reduce costs by at least 30%.
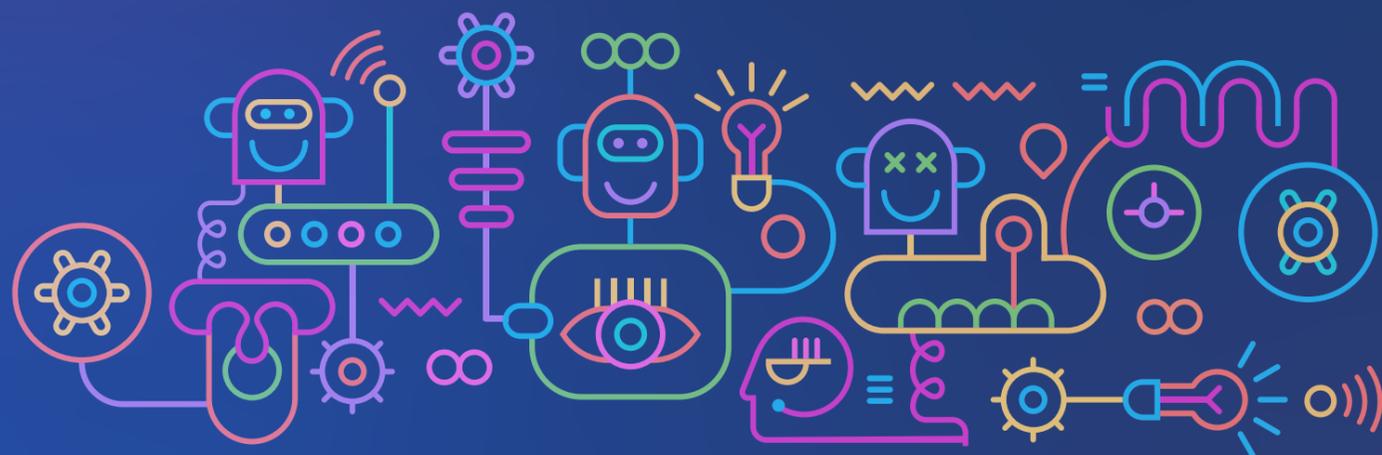
European neighbours Estonia demonstrate what is possible, with 95% of its citizens filing their tax returns online, and the Baltic nation has a growing online business residency scheme that is boosting its economy.

In Birmingham, CIO Peter Bishop believes the pandemic has shifted attitudes towards greater automation. He says many in local government had not understood "the art of the possible" that technology offered to their organisations and citizens.

As a result, the council's technology was not fully exploited before the pandemic, but now it is. He says: "At peak times, we are processing 30,000 transactions. I think it is safe to say that we are seeing the take-up of the digital channel."

Business lines such as human resources (HR), finance and procurement make little difference to the citizens, and according to McKinsey, up to 80% of the tasks could be automated, which, even allowing for implementation and ongoing software costs, will create savings of 30%.

All three business lines can use robotic process automation (RPA) to extract data from forms, clean it if necessary, trigger next actions, or, if required, send anomalies to staff to deal with. RPA, and most automation, work best when organisations transform their business processes.

However, White at West Northamptonshire is amongst a number of public sector technology leaders that find that RPA can carry out an old process so cost effectively that it is a major saving just to move a process to a robot.

DEALING WITH FAILURE DEMAND

Slashing the time spent rectifying issues that were not effectively delivered the first time is now essential if the public sector is to deliver enhanced services at lower costs.

From missed bin collections to benefits payments, the disruption to citizens' lives and the working operations of the civic body is too high.

Automation provides the public sector with the opportunity to deliver the right service the first time, every time and, in addition, provide accurate data that will ensure continued efficiency.

Business advisory group McKinsey & Company reports that failure demand has a significant impact on the morale of public sector employees. Failure demand is often the result of poorly designed services or business processes.

Fletcher at Lichfield says if there are policy changes to benefits, then just like in retail or financial services, that change should be passed onto the citizen on the same day.

"We have high levels of failure demand, that is often residents contacting us if they don't understand the literature.

So we are actively looking to design out failure demand using system design thinking," he says.

Mahney at West Northamptonshire agrees: "We do have a lot of avoidable contacts, and it is because half the time we don't write for the audience," she says.

Across all sectors, simplicity and reliability have demonstrated their ability to deliver quality outcomes for the organisation and its citizens or customers.

"Automation limits the human elements, and so we can become error-free," White at West Northamptonshire says.

We have over 100 online forms and nine complaint forms; it should be just one complaint form. The failure demand comes from not every online form being end-to-end," Fletcher adds.

"Well-designed automated services are unimpeded by human frailties, like the fatigue or distraction that causes people to enter data incorrectly or make calculation errors".

It is also important for services to avoid needlessly extensive efforts on the part of customers, as citizens have limited time and energy to engage with government," writes McKinsey & Company in its 2020 paper on automation in government.

www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/automation-in-government-harnessing-technology-to-transform-customer-experience

Enhanced integration of asset management software with content management and case management software can drastically reduce failure demand.

Deep integration ensures the customer can easily see the open cases that matter to them on a map, whether it be a missed bin collection, pothole, benefits claim or change of service requirements.

With the ability to view updates and potentially subscribe to alerts, an automated government body can avoid the need for a service request.

Automation delivers a good customer experience at little cost, yet preserves the reporting data that will go on to be valuable to the authority.

Automation using RPA also benefits public sector employees, as it removes what is dubbed 'swivel chair integration' where valuable human resources are spent on re-keying data, a process that is highly vulnerable to human error.

Reducing failure demand is vital if the public sector is to meet its post-pandemic enhanced remit for the delivery of value. One consultancy in the Nordics estimates that failure demand generates between 40 and 70% of customer contact in the public sector.

Advanced public sector bodies demonstrate that this needn't be the case. Using a resident's postcode, Birmingham City Council's BRUM account can ensure the information on waste and recycling collection dates is correct and tailored to the citizen, an important feature in a city as large as Birmingham.

Suppose a resident has to scroll through pages and pages of information for every area of the city. In that case, it is a poor online experience and, in the long term, could prompt a move away from using the council's technology offering.

The council has over two million customer cases being tracked through the BRUM account and has 2.7 million digital form submissions being made, which automates processes and reduces the cost base of the local authority.

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Automation and enhanced integration recognise that all aspects of the public sector are important. The weight of priority placed on fly-tipping or benefits payments is dependent on the citizen.

For the public sector, responding to these issues is the only priority, and integration enables rapid and cost-effective resolution.

Birmingham, Braintree, Lichfield, Cherwell, Wigan and West Northamptonshire are six examples of public bodies that have automated services and increased integration.

As a result, put the citizen at the heart of their processes. Integration is allowing the public sector to develop hyperlocal services through collaborations with the voluntary sector, parish councils or other civic agencies, all of which ensure the right information is delivered and customers receive the information and services that they need and are interested in.

Mahney at West Northamptonshire says the authority has four guidelines for putting the community central to its operations, these being: website improvement, meeting the citizens where they are and consolidating resources for all interactions onto one system, and finally learning from customer service to improve the local authority.

As Birmingham City Council put it: "We want to create a shift in how we think about and interact with you so that you are at the centre of everything we do".

Birmingham City Council

Braintree District Council

Cherwell DISTRICT COUNCIL NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Lichfield district council

Wigan Council

West Northamptonshire Council

Wigan ♡ Council

HOW WIGAN BECAME A COMMUNITY CENTRIC ENABLER

Ethnography is the comparative scientific study of human peoples. When combined with optimised digital services, the two can make a real difference to people's lives.

Now, this may sound like tech sector buzzword bingo gone mad, but Wigan Council is a trailblazer in the use of ethnography and digital services to benefit its community.

The public sector, and in fact, all organisations, become process-oriented. This need to follow a process - often well-meant to ensure efficiency and governance, can remove an organisation from the community it serves, which in turn reduces the ability to deliver a real change that benefits both the community, and the organisation.

Wigan Council trained its staff in ethnography in order to ensure they took time to talk and listen to the individual needs of the citizens.
This was about more than appearing to be a warm and fuzzy organisation. It has also led to reduced costs and burden on the local authority while also improving the lives of the resident in question.

James Winterbottom, Director of Digital, Leisure and Wellbeing at Wigan Council, says "the council staff now put the assessment form away and have a conversation with people. It is simple but profound."

One example Winterbottom shares is of a local pensioner, he is a keen runner, but dementia led to him getting lost a number of times and having to be found and returned home by the police.

With the UK's police forces over stretched and under-funded, the running had to be stopped; this led to the dementia worsening.

When visited by Wigan Council, the ethnography training meant the family was asked what would make a difference to them, rather than being asked to complete a document and enter into a process.

Allowing the pensioner to get back to running would benefit everyone in the family.

Wigan Council didn't put its official powers into play; instead, Wigan Council embraced the people of its community and put the pensioner in touch with another local runner. Now the pensioner has a running buddy who ensures he both runs, and gets home safely.

This is not only a heartwarming story, but Wigan Council has reduced its financial burden. The pensioner's health has improved and they are living an active and healthy life, and Wigan Council services are available for others.

"In 2010, the huge cuts in public services, and with big social differences and health inequality in our community, we had to work differently," Winterbottom says. "There was a big increase in demand, and public servants were putting in a lot of provisions," he says of demand going up as budgets were cut by 40%.

> ❝ You have got to think differently and get the right approach in place,"

Winterbottom says.

Today Wigan has one of the lowest council tax bills for the region, as a result of the ethnographic approach ensuring residents and the council understand and play their part in 'the deal', as the partnership between both is named.

Clear and constant communication plays a part in this; residents have some of the UK's best recycling and waste sorting behaviours, all of which lower the cost to the council and keep the Council Tax bill down.

"The technology connection enhanced humanity," Winterbottom says of the role the Jadu technology platform plays in the move to this approach.
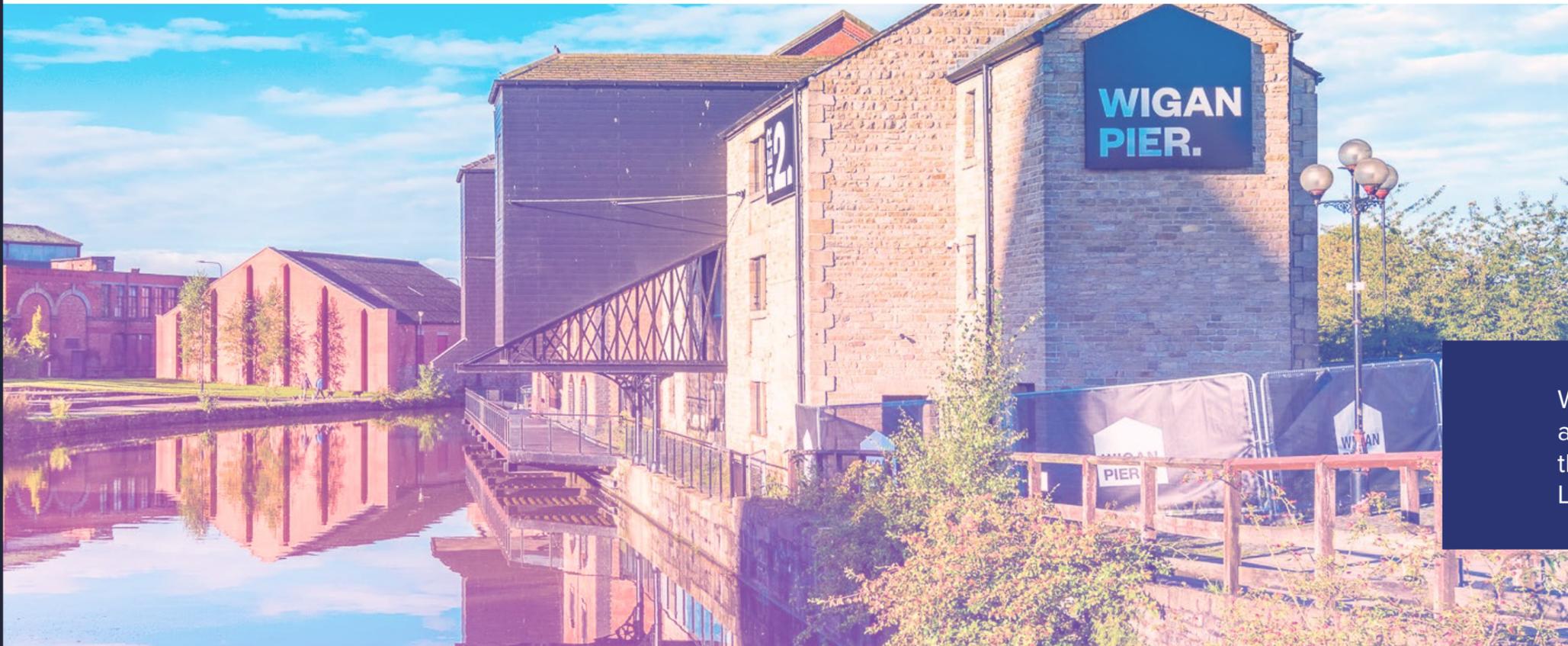
Wigan Pier is the name given today to the area around the canal at the bottom of the Wigan flight of locks on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal.

EPILOGUE: THE ECOSYSTEM FOR AUTOMATION AND DIGITAL

There are many challenges faced by public services in delivering digital, from scarcity of talent and resources - to the dealing with the legacy of back-office, line-of-business applications.

Organisations that understand digital service is the only viable strategy for managing customer interactions for better outcomes, and are continually looking for ways to become more efficient through automation.

The ecosystem needed to support automation is focused on people and skills, as well as tools and platforms. Establishing a methodology and discipline in creating a culture and capability in a sustainable way, means a mindset change, and perspectives of what the future looks like needs to shift.

It is widely accepted now, that building sophisticated code and integrations in-house will lead to sustainability challenges. Often, custom made integrations will not be supported by any vendor and therefore the onus falls upon the organisation and its teams to iterate, support and maintain custom apps and connections.

Every automation will require maintenance and management. Robotic Process Automation, for example, cannot 'just run' in the background. As services and needs change, so too will the programmatic automations need to change. As service design plays a significant role in modern digital services, it is essential that real users (in the community) are put at the centre of all service design.

IT teams driving service design have seen poor practice, including force fitting new, low-code platforms into legacy, politically driven and poorly designed services.

Therefore, C Level leadership must play a leading role in facilitating a digital culture where automation and user focused service design can thrive. Only then will skills and talent retention be possible. People need to feel like and know, that their efforts are making an impact.

TEAM

AUTOMATIONS

USERS
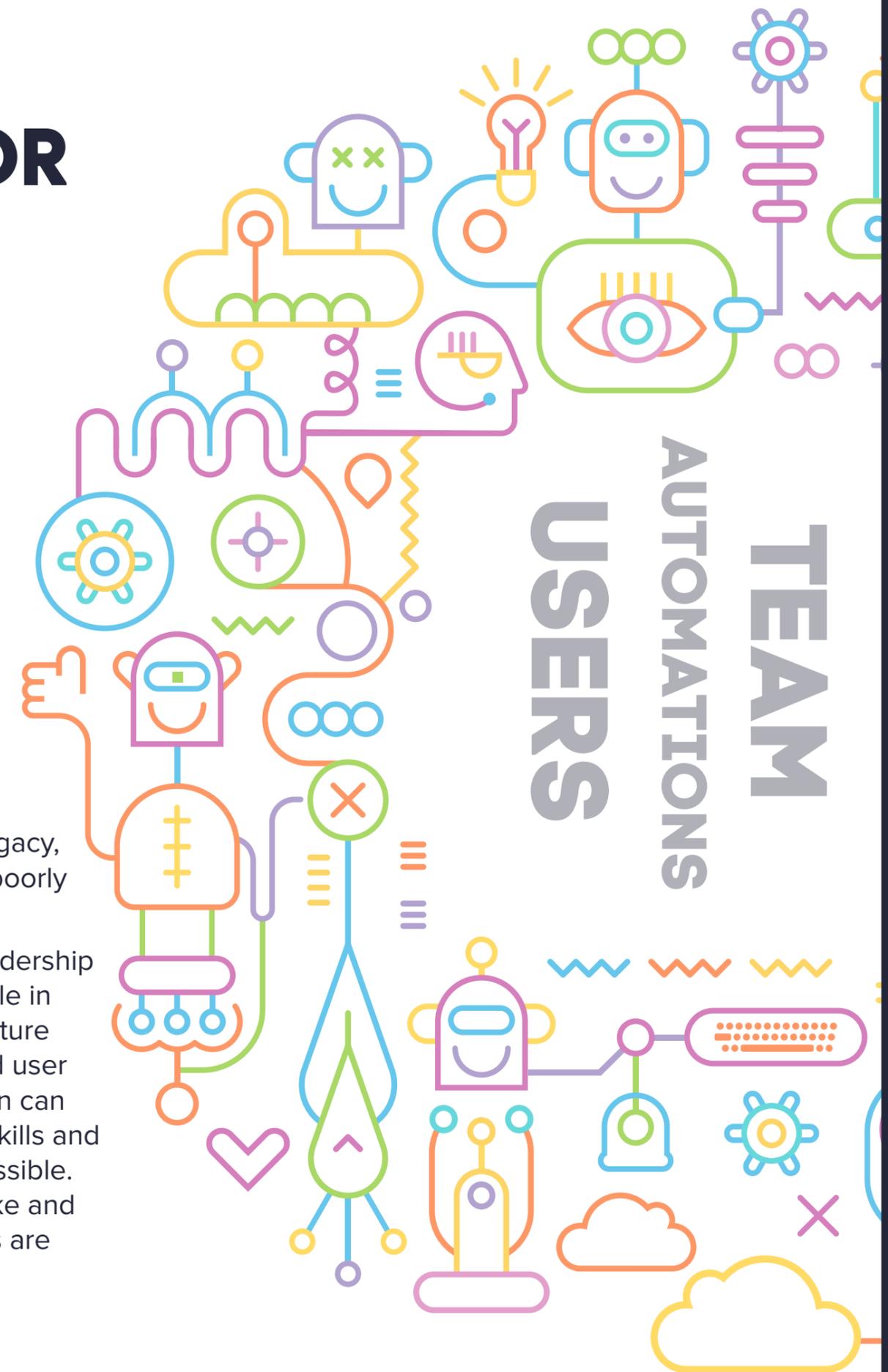
Establishing 'The Team' flywheel is critical to establishing the entire eco-system.

The team needs a focus on leading digital service creation with User Needs and Service Design. Having the right digital skills (including service designers), business analysis resources and equipping the people with the right low-code tools, is an essential first step to a digital service centric ecosystem. This is amplified by focusing all design on the user.

In a world where customer expectations of online service delivery are outpacing capability for most organisations to deliver.

Where every major company on the planet seems to be on a mission to build a superstar tech team. And that means developers, cloud specialists and cybersecurity professionals are being snapped up at a rate that means it's almost impossible for hiring managers to keep up.

Organisations must establish standards and a culture where people have the skills, capabilities and tools to automate, integrate and design to deliver fit for purpose digital services.
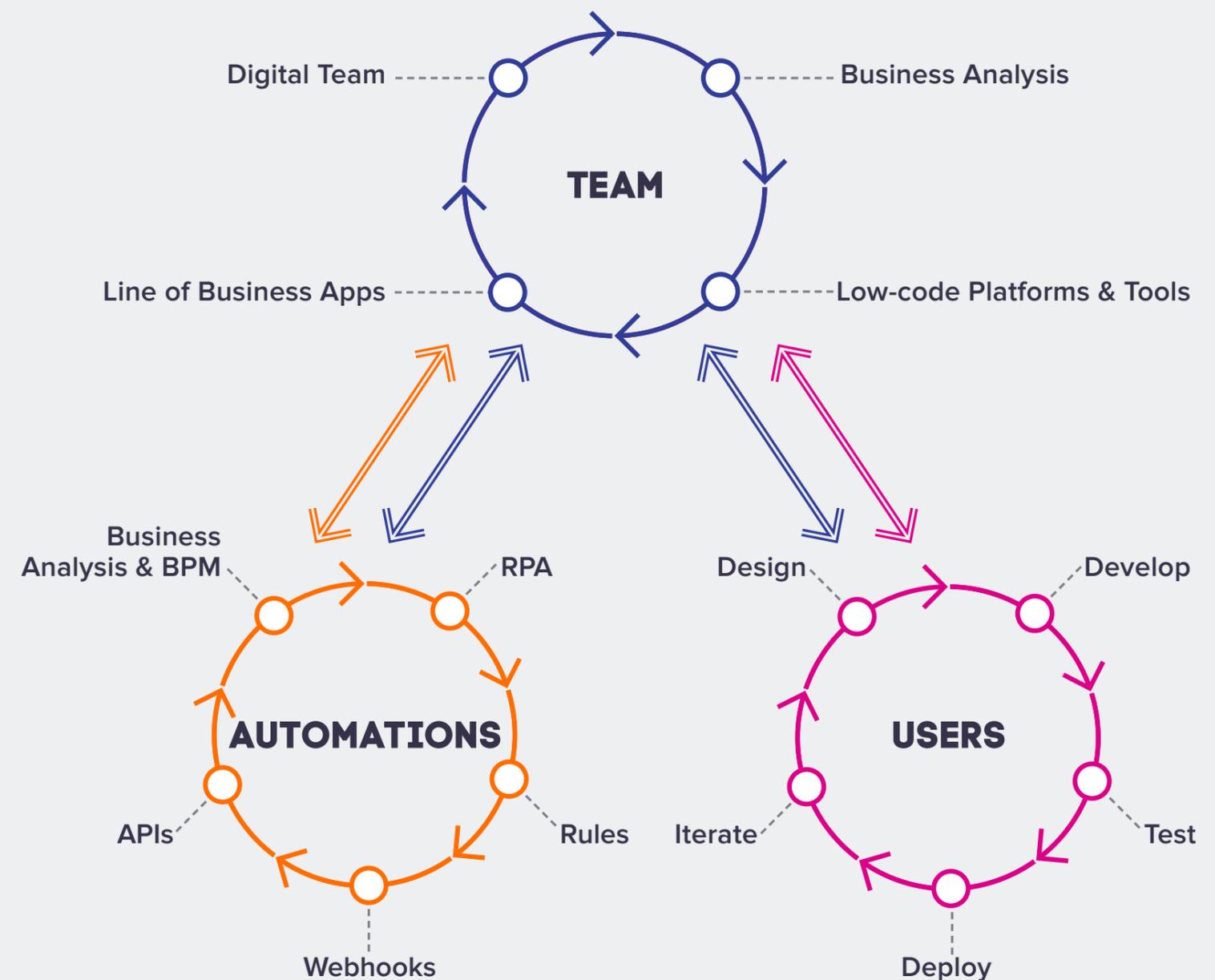
The three 'flywheels' for creating a sustainable ecosystem for digital automation to succeed.

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