

A UIPATH WHITEPAPER

# The Way We Work.

How the robot revolution makes businesses more productive, makes processes more efficient, and changes the employee experience for the better.

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# Let's rework how we work.

When did working become so hard? Our days are filled with email, meetings, and administrative work. We're constantly reviewing checklists, responding to messages, completing forms... our to-do list is endless.

And it keeps getting longer. Work doesn't stop when we go home at night, when we leave for the weekend, or even when we get on an airplane. It doesn't matter where you stand on an org chart or where you sit in the office. The work keeps piling up.

Some people even question whether a lot of the work we do really matters. David Graeber wrote a book titled *Bull\*\*\*\* Jobs: A Theory* (the asterisks are ours, but you get the idea). He argues that more than half of the work we do is meaningless, and that it's damaging to our psyches.<sup>1</sup> Ouch.

Whether you agree with that assessment or not, you've probably noticed that a lot of the *work you **have to do*** doesn't seem like *work you **should be doing***. You're not alone. One recent report found that employees in the United States (U.S.) and United Kingdom (UK) say they only spend about 40% of their time on "primary tasks."<sup>2</sup>

In other words, we spend a lot of time working on things that feel like distractions from our main purpose. But work doesn't have to be a four-letter word. Work is great when it works. When it's fulfilling. When it has a clear purpose. Maybe we need to start asking: How can we make work better? How can we **get rid of the routine and repetitive work** that's still important, but isn't where we **really accomplish something meaningful**?

**In other words, how can we rework work itself?**



A recent report found that employees in the United States (U.S.) and United Kingdom (UK) say they only spend about 40% of their time on "primary tasks."

# The future of work ain't what it used to be.

In 1930, economist John Maynard Keynes made some predictions about how the working world would look in 100 years. One of the most notable predictions was that we would be working 15-hour weeks, thanks to the productivity gains brought about by new technologies.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Keynes would probably be surprised (and maybe even concerned) to find that in the 2020s, the 15-hour work day is a lot more common than the 15-hour work week. So, what happened?

But Keynes got it partly right. Technology has made us a lot more productive. But instead of using the time we've freed up for leisure, we've filled it up with more work. Instead of using technology to work less, we've used it to accomplish more—at a quicker pace, any time of day, anywhere we happen to be.

Convincing today's shareholders and business leaders that we should bring back the idea of a 15-hour work week is a tough sell. It's a lot easier to convince them that we should rework work itself. How? We can use software to **automate the manual, repetitive, and time-consuming tasks** that eat up so much of each work day. Specifically, we can use software robots. Yes, there is such a thing, and they're coming to an enterprise near you. More on that in a little bit.

Not only would you make the workplace more efficient (What CEO wouldn't like higher productivity?), you would make it more enriching and fulfilling for the people doing the work (What VP of HR wouldn't like higher employee satisfaction and retention?).

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# Icebergs, turnover, and the bottom line.

## Yes, there's a connection.

So, before we get up-close-and-personal with software robots, let's look at what we mean by "reworking work." Basically, we need to flip the script so we can focus more on the work that matters versus how we currently do things.

To see what we mean, imagine an iceberg. Not the ones that are the terror of trans-Atlantic luxury cruise-ship captains, but the less threatening metaphorical ones.

Now stay with us . . . most work in modern enterprises is like an iceberg. The part of our work day that we devote to our primary responsibilities (the work related to the title on our business cards) is just the part of the iceberg that you can see above the waterline—only around 40% of the total, according to one estimate.<sup>4</sup>

Most of our work day is spent in other ways. That's the submerged portion that's hidden from view.

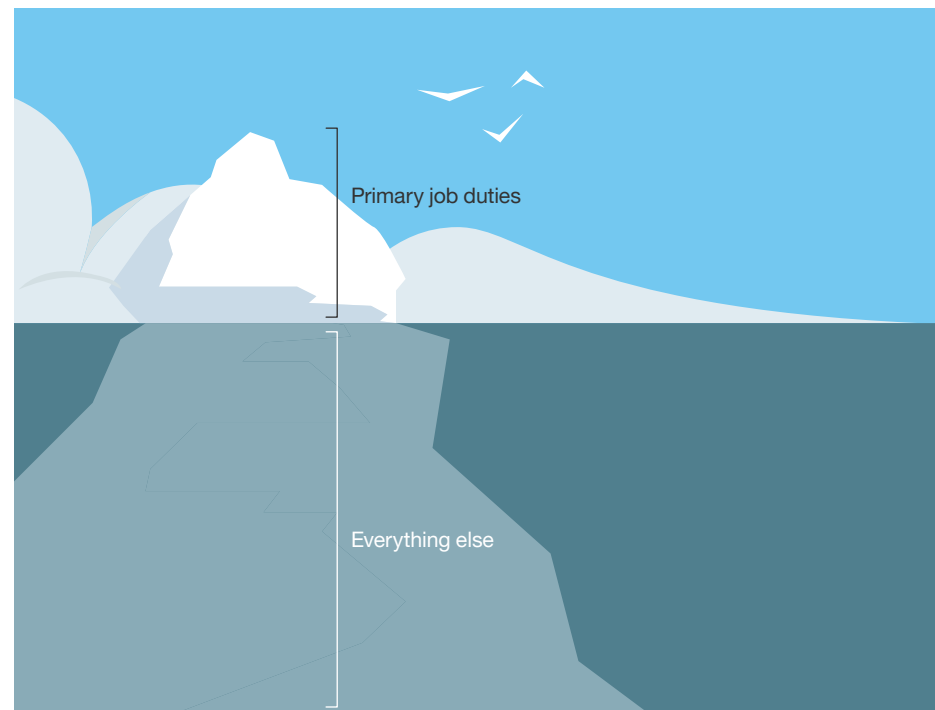
A lot of that work 'below the waterline' is still critical. It just seems like a distraction, even though it makes up the bulk of our workday. Have you ever heard someone say after completing a tedious task that they have to get back to their "real" job?

The more that work feels like routine busywork, the less satisfying our jobs can be. Only **42% of U.S. employees** say they look forward to coming to work.<sup>5</sup> That's a problem for businesses. Low job satisfaction can have a bottom-line impact. If you don't view your work as meaningful, you're less likely to do a good job—and the more likely you are to look for work

where you can make a difference. One survey found that **turnover costs U.S. employers more than \$1 trillion a year**, and the cost of replacing just one employee can run from one-half to two times the employee's annual salary.<sup>6</sup>

Even though we're living in an age of high-tech digital transformation, the fact is that repetitive, labor-intensive work isn't going anywhere. The work still has to get done.

**But do people have to do it?**



# Robots to the rescue.

Back when John Maynard Keynes made his prediction about the 15-hour work week, he was thinking mostly about manufacturing jobs. Since then, we've all seen how mechanical robots and automation have transformed the modern factory floor.

The modern enterprise workplace is different. Yes, technology is everywhere (just try to imagine your job without screens and keyboards). But a lot of processes still need hands-on, human intervention.

So, even though technology is now woven into the fabric of work, there's tremendous opportunity to automate routine and repetitive tasks. And that's where **Robotic Process Automation (RPA)** comes in.

**RPA automates repeatable business processes.** The kind of processes that most businesses still look to people to complete. The kind of processes that make our jobs less interesting and less fulfilling.

With RPA, businesses can train software robots to learn and perform routine tasks based on a set of rules. **RPA robots can mimic virtually any actions that human users perform.** They can log into applications, move files and folders, copy and paste data, fill in forms, extract data from documents, and scrape browsers. They can interpret, respond, and communicate with other systems to perform a variety of repetitive tasks. **And they do it all better, faster, and with no mistakes.** (That might sound threatening in a “Robots

are coming for my job” kind of way—but it's actually good. And we'll explain how soon.)

Any high-volume, rules-driven, repeatable process is a good candidate for RPA. By

one estimate, about **30% of all tasks in 60% of all jobs could be automated.**<sup>7</sup> And with advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), those numbers will probably keep growing.



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# Busting the “innovation destroys jobs” myth.

Maybe you're thinking: *Sure, automating processes is good for businesses, but what about the people doing the work? They may not like the mindless and repetitive parts of their jobs, but they don't want a robot to replace them.*

Do landmark innovations like RPA inevitably lead to job loss? Let's look at a couple of familiar examples.

It's true that a more innovative approach to auto manufacturing put a lot of the people making harnesses and buggy whips out of work. But the years between 1907 and 1917 saw a 33X increase in the number of cars registered and

a 134X increase in the number of commercial, agricultural, and military vehicles.<sup>8</sup> That translated into a lot of jobs. Not to mention all the supporting jobs in the steel, glass, rubber, and textile industries. Entire new categories of jobs emerged to keep the factories and supply chains running.

We saw something similar with automated teller machine (ATMs). As ATMs became ubiquitous in the 1990s, the average number of tellers per bank branch dropped from 21 to 13—but the total number of tellers employed increased. Why? Banks opened more branches, and they needed more people focused

on relationship management and complex transactions.<sup>9</sup> Instead of doing the routine transactional tasks that the ATM took over, tellers started doing work that was more engaging and...wait for it...less robotic.

That's the same dynamic that businesses see with RPA. With RPA, **businesses become more efficient and productive, while work gets more interesting and meaningful for workers.** Instead of eliminating a lot of jobs, RPA creates new possibilities and opportunities. For workers and employers.

**But don't just take our word for it.**

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# The proof is in the process improvement.

As the leader in robotic process automation, UiPath has been witness to some pretty impressive automation success stories. Here are just a few favorites.

 Interested in more RPA success stories? We've got a bunch here.

## Nielsen

Data is the lifeblood of Nielsen's business. The global market research firm aggregates and analyzes vast amounts of data to help clients in retail, manufacturing, media, and advertising make better business decisions and smarter investments. To do that efficiently, the company wanted to reduce the manual work involved in delivering data, insights, and analytics to its customers. By automating manual back-office processes, Nielsen's employees were able to refocus their time and attention on adding value for customers and helping Nielsen thrive in a new era of media consumption.

With the deployment of the UiPath Enterprise RPA Platform, Nielsen automated key processes across more than **20 business units in more than 40 countries**. In total, the company saved an estimated **347,997 hours** in just 18 months and plans to exceed its goal of saving 500,000 hours in the near future.

## The New York Foundling

Each year, The New York Foundling helps 30,000 people in need through services, support, and advocacy that strengthen families and communities. It's one of the oldest social services in New York State, so it's no surprise that it had developed a lot of paper-based, manual processes along the way. Clinicians also had to navigate at least five different systems to catalog and maintain data related to the families that the organization serves, which took a lot of time and created a work environment with high turnover.

A UiPath employee recognized that the organization would be a good candidate for the UiPath Bridge program, a charity-focused initiative that brings the power of automation to deserving organizations. And with the help of its advocates at UiPath, the New York Foundling team automated several of the hands-on, paper-intensive processes that were a distraction from its staff's core mission.

UiPath robots now save clinicians four hours per week in manual data entry, and staff **turnover has decreased by 42%**. Overall, The New York Foundling gets back close to **100,000 hours in manual work** annually—freeing staff members to spend more time with the families they work with, especially those at acute points in their treatment.

## Swiss Re Group

Swiss Re Group is one of the world's leading providers of reinsurance, insurance, and other forms of insurance-based risk transfer. This industry giant recognized that to continue to be a market leader, it needed to empower employees to intensify their focus on generating new business and operating more efficiently. To do that, Swiss Re had to move workers away from repetitive tasks. And they looked to UiPath for help.

The company targeted a bank account reconciliation process for its initial pilot with UiPath. It was an immediate success, reducing reconciliation **times from 15 business days to just three—an 80% improvement**. Following the pilot, Swiss Re quickly automated another **100 processes** with UiPath RPA technology. UiPath RPA robots now perform the work of approximately **65 full-time employees** each year. Just as important, existing staff have redirected their energies to providing the service and support that fuel the company's ongoing success.



# The takeaways.

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## Mundane, repetitive work takes up a LOT of time.

Research—not to mention personal experience—shows that we spend the majority of our workday doing things that aren't related to our primary job responsibilities that make work meaningful and rewarding.

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## RPA automates the work that makes work a chore.

The routine, the tedious, the repetitive. . . RPA robots can take over tasks that make work less interesting, less engaging, and less fulfilling—freeing us to do more meaningful work.

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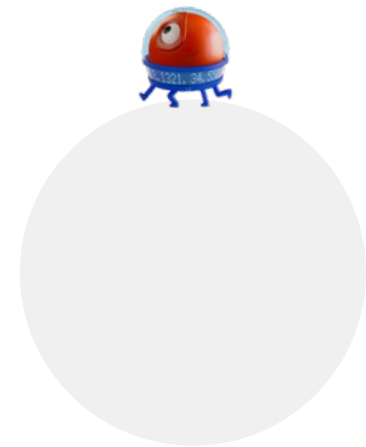
## Businesses see dramatic gains.

Not only does RPA free workers from the kinds of work that people don't like to do, it also does it faster and with greater accuracy. It makes the business more efficient in some pretty dramatic ways. Just look at the **UiPath success stories**.

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## And people become more important than ever.

Because we don't have to be bogged down by robotic tasks, we're free to do what people do best. Like think creatively. Innovate. Solve problems. Help customers. Make things better.



# The wrap-up.

It's a new era for businesses and the people they employ. The **'automation first'** era. RPA is making businesses more efficient, and it's taking mundane, repetitive, and unfulfilling tasks off the to-do lists of workers.

Instead of replacing workers, RPA replaces the tedious parts of work. It actually enhances the contributions of the "human resources" in the enterprise by freeing people to put their talents, energy, and creativity to work in new ways. Ways that create more value for the organization.

**Visit [UiPath.com](https://UiPath.com) to learn how your business can reboot work.**

**> Download the Forrester report on  
The Future of Employees and RPA**



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<sup>4</sup> “The State of Work.” *workfront.com*, Workfront Inc., 2019

<sup>5</sup> “10 Employee Engagement Statistics That Will Set the Tone for 2020,” *HR Technologist*, January 3, 2020, <https://www.hrtechnologist.com/articles/employee-engagement/employee-engagement-statistics/>

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<sup>7</sup> “A Future that Works: Automation, Employment, and Productivity,” *McKenzie Global Institute*, January 2017, <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/Digital%20Disruption/Harnessing%20automation%20for%20a%20future%20that%20works/MGI-A-future-that-works-Executive-summary.ashx>

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<sup>9</sup> “Robots at the gate: Humans and technology at work.” *Barclays*, 11 Apr. 2018, [www.investmentbank.barclays.com/our-insights/robots-at-the-gate.html](http://www.investmentbank.barclays.com/our-insights/robots-at-the-gate.html)