The IT Automation Imperative

What executives need to know

Red Hat | SHADOW SOFT

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Accelerate business with automation

Your organization likely adopts new technologies for a number of reasons—from creating efficiencies to modernizing their environment—but the truth is, if the latest and greatest solution doesn't deliver tangible business benefits, **what's the point?**

Automation is one solution that can deliver on multiple business benefits, spanning from business resiliency to improved speed in bringing innovations to market and a solid return on investment (ROI).

"

"In the past, two main benefits drove the need for infrastructure automation: return-on-investment opportunities (e.g. cost savings) and speed to market. Today, automation is just as critical to addressing the growing workforce challenges and keeping pace with the added demands from the [line-of-business]."[1]

Jenvin Jensen
Research Vice President,
Infrastructure and Operations, IDC

[1] IDC Analyst connection, sponsored by Red Hat. "*IT automation: A life raft to IT leaders drowning in a sea of workforce and business challenges,*" #US48398621, Oct. 2021.

Another benefit of automation is it **reduces the risk** inherent with homegrown tools, which often are developed to perform a singular function.

When knowledgeable staff move away from the organization, they take with them skills and context for the tool, which can render the project useless. Automation helps to remove these types of risks, which can be a significant benefit to your organization.

Use automation to help improve your digital infrastructure resiliency

In "*Automation for digital business resiliency*," an IDC InfoBrief, sponsored by Red Hat,[2] automation is referred to as a "critical enabler of resilience because it helps to ensure performance, compliance, and security across dynamic workloads and hybrid cloud infrastructure."

The InfoBrief states that "digital infrastructure resiliency ensures business success by anticipating, detecting, and proactively remediating digital business disruptions even when they are faced with unexpected failures, breaches, or errors."

In light of these definitions, the report finds that resilient digital infrastructure delivers outsized business outcomes in areas such as revenue, faster time to market, operational efficiency, employee productivity, and cost savings.

The report identifies the top opportunities for automating digital infrastructure resiliency to help ensure digital trust and cybersecurity over the next two years.

Survey respondents are prioritizing the following:

38%
Automation for infrastructure configuration standardization, compliance, and remediation.

32%
Standardized and automated incident and threat response.

27%
Consistent and unified user access control and identity management.

26%
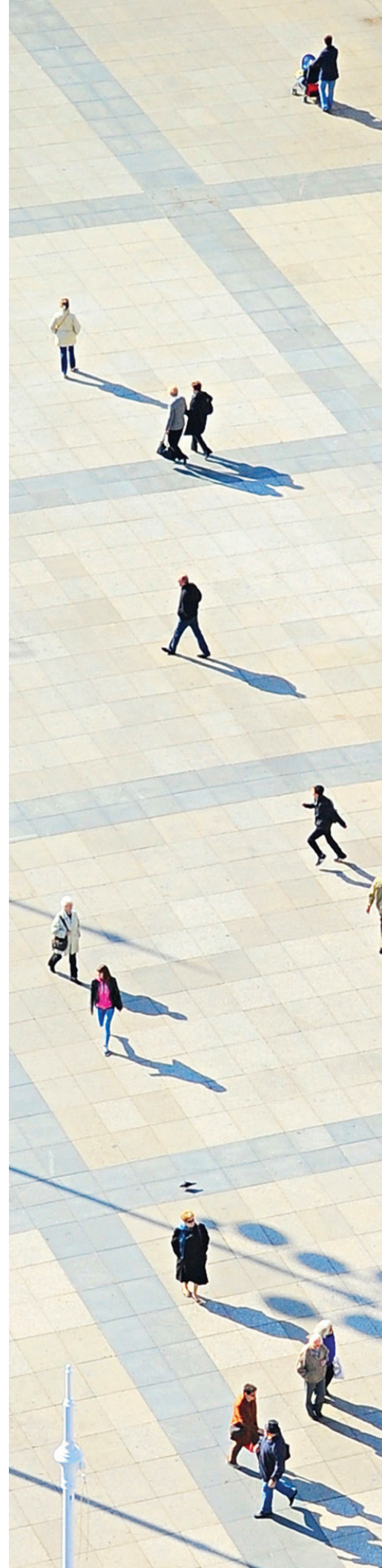Unified networking and edge security solutions.

26%
Artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML) observability, dependency, and threat analytics.

26%
Automated container image scanning, hardening, and validation.

For more insights into digital infrastructure resiliency, read the IDC InfoBrief.

Use automation to help you retain IT talent

The great resignation is impacting companies across industries, making the job market a hot one for talent. Knowing that it's invariably less expensive to retain current talent than recruit, hire, and train new employees, it's imperative for organizations to keep the IT staff they have. Automation can play a critical part in this retention.

In an article in The Enterprisers Project by David Egts, four suggestions are given to help retain and attract new talent using automation.³

Egts concludes his article by predicting that "the Great Reprioritization is coming—and automation will be essential to keep employees happy and engaged in their work."

Read the entire article, How automation strategy can help you retain IT talent.

Read the article →

1.

Turnover is a fact of life, but automation can blunt its negative effects

Use automation to codify processes to deliver objective consistency that humans simply cannot.

2.

An automation community of practice lets everyone share their best ideas and build on each other's work

Introduce automation across an organization so processes belong to the community of practice, not just to individual employees. This can provide a sense of belonging within an organization.

3.

Automation leads to meaning and purpose

Free teams from repetitive, manual tasks so they can focus on work that is closely tied to their organization's mission. This enables your team to become more consciously aligned to the organization's purpose.

4.

Automation integration with workflow tools turbocharges meaning

Integrate automated tasks with workflow tools so employees are reprioritizing based on meaning and purpose. This is critical to retain top talent.

   ³ Egts, David. "*How automation strategy can help you retain IT talent*," The Enterprisers Project, 11 Oct. 2021.

What's the best way to measure business value?

By the numbers. Here's what IDC found when looking at the **business value** of Red Hat® Ansible® Automation Platform.

The business value of Ansible Automation Platform

An IDC business value whitepaper, sponsored by Red Hat, revealed the value and benefits realized by customers using Ansible Automation Platform. These organizations used Ansible Automation Platform to standardize and automate IT operations, and container and configuration activities across cloud environments and teams in a consistent and repeatable model.

The whitepaper concluded that the importance of automation to a business has never been greater and came to the following conclusions.

Organizations using Ansible Automation Platform realized:

667%

five-year ROI

ROI

600%

500%
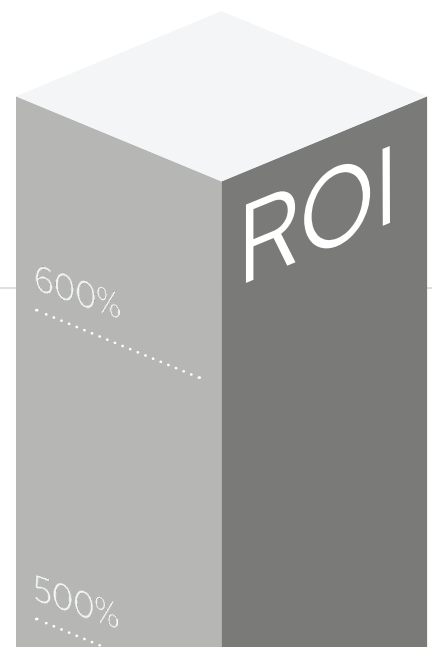
76%
reduction in unplanned downtime

75%
faster deployment of new storage resources

39%
more applications developed per year

30%
more efficient IT security teams

30%
more efficient IT infrastructure management

29%
more efficient network infrastructure management

400%

300%

200%

100%

To learn more about the business value of Ansible Automation Platform, read the IDC whitepaper.

Read the whitepaper →

10 months
to payback

$1.9M
total new revenue gained per year[4]

 [4] IDC business value whitepaper, sponsored by Red Hat, "*The business value of Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform*," #US48678022, Oct. 2021.

A holistic approach to IT automation

A combination of ever-growing factors including the importance of a resilient network for remote workers, the complexities of managing a hybrid cloud environment, ongoing efforts towards digital transformation, and the consistent need to manage security risks, makes **the need for automation critical.**

By thinking about automation strategically, and extending it throughout your organization—beyond traditional IT domains, such as marketing, sales, human resources, or legal departments—your teams can move faster, operate with more predictability and efficiency, and open up new ways of working.

This is because it allows you to shift manual, low-value tasks away from employees and refocus their efforts on higher-value work.

A holistic approach to IT automation with a unified strategy focused on your unique business needs can help your organization **achieve the speed, scale, stability, and security** required to not just operate, but to win in your market.

How to take a holistic approach

Harvard Business Review Analytic Services' recent survey revealed that 79% of respondents consider a unified, organization-wide approach to implementing IT automation to be either "extremely important" or "very important."

Yet, it also found that just over half (53%) of respondents are in agreement with the statement: "Our organization plans to completely automate IT processes end to end, rather than just automate parts of the processes."

79%

Extremely important

Very important

53%

Plan to completely automate IT processes

Why this disparity?

The survey suggested that this finding could reflect that either organizations are holding back and not being aggressive enough in their IT automation approach, or don't have enough experience or trust in IT automation. This factor is supported by analysts interviewed for the report.

A report from technology consultancy IDC suggests this reluctance tends to fade as they become more familiar with holistic approaches.

❝

"As automation is implemented and replaces some of the older, slower, manual processes, organizations increasingly understand the benefits and gain comfort with becoming more aggressive in their approach to IT automation over time. They also learn more about how to create more sophisticated automations tied directly to business goals."

Mary Johnston Turner
Research Vice President,
Future of Digital Infrastructure Agenda

While IT automation won't be embraced by every organization immediately, those that make it a strategic priority will be a step ahead.

As Thomas Anderson, Vice President and General Manager of the Ansible Business Unit, Red Hat, states, "Without automation, there will be increasingly less opportunity to compete and win....Ultimately, automation is about velocity, agility, and survival. It's time to give your organization and support needed to make that change happen."

Ready to learn more?
Read *Taking the lead on IT automation: IT leaders as evangelists for their automation strategies.*

Read the survey →

When you're looking for a holistic IT automation solution, it's important to think about a number of factors, from portability to training.

The e-book *An IT executive's guide to automation: The need for transformative automation* provides a checklist for what to seek out in an IT automation solution, starting with the most critical: choosing a holistic automation platform versus a tool to manage specific problems.
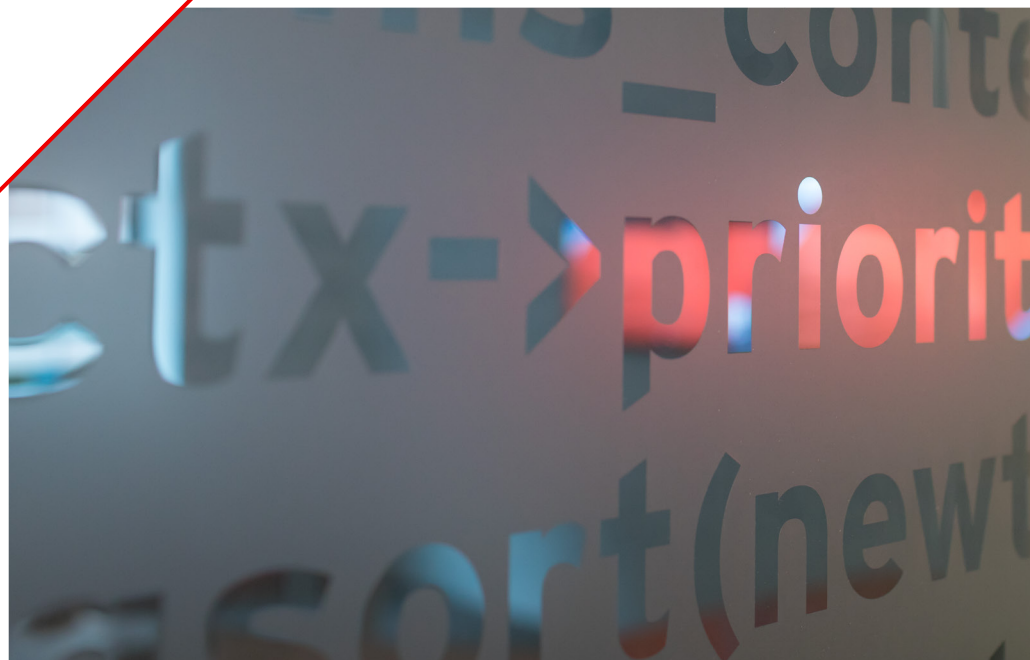
What to look for in an IT automation solution

Once you understand why you want to automate and how to successfully incorporate automation into your organization, you need to choose an IT automation solution.

☑ **Don't settle for a tool**

As an integral part of your organization's digital transformation, look at automation holistically. When you can automate workloads in addition to tasks, you can change entire processes and free up employee time.

☑ **Find an automation platform that supports multiple workloads and domains as a single solution**

As you automate, you will want flexibility and agility. As an enterprise, you potentially have thousands of containers, so you need to find an automation solution that can automate and orchestrate container deployment, networking, scalability, and availability.

☑ **Select an automation platform that is easy to adopt**

Find an automation platform that will be embraced across your organization. Look for a technology with an easy-to-learn programming language and shareable, certified content.

☑ **Embrace an automation solution that doesn't lock you in**

When you choose an automation platform that's built on open source technology, you benefit from the freedom of interoperability and the absence of vendor lock-in.

☑ **Ensure your automation platform includes management tools**

Find a platform that includes analytics, role-based access control (RBAC), and the ability to seamlessly share content.

☑ **Decide on a vendor that provides consulting and training solutions**

Your organization doesn't need to manage implementation and training on your own. Find a vendor that can help you build your automation platform and educate your workforce on how to effectively use it.

Excerpted from An IT executive's guide to automation[5]. Read the entire e-book here.

By applying IT automation to every aspect of your business, you can start to **increase efficiency**, reduce operational costs, and improve flexibility within your organization.

Want to learn more about how to kickstart automation efforts across your organization? Get Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform: A beginner's guide for insights and industry best practices.

Get the guide →

    5 "An IT executive's guide to automation," Red Hat, 22 June 2022.

One platform, many benefits

[Ansible Automation Platform](#) is designed to help organizations at any stage of their automation journey.

This multifaceted automation solution is engineered for maximum flexibility, which means that organizations can use it to automate any IT environment, at any scale, in any location.

While your end goal may be holistic automation throughout your organization, you still need to start somewhere. Here are some primary benefits that different categories, or domains, can bring to your entire organization through automation.

Automate your infrastructure to cut down on complexity

Ansible Automation Platform helps you reduce the complexity of modern IT environments. Use a consistent solution to build, deploy, provision, and manage infrastructure across multiple and different environments, including physical, virtual, or containerized. Help your organization adapt to change, reduce security risks, and manage costs.

Want to learn more?
Read the e-book, *[Automate infrastructure workflows.](#)*

Read the e-book →

> "In the next five to six years, digital infrastructure will be largely sourced, managed, and optimized using intelligent, policy-driven, self-driving, and self-healing automation..."[6]

IDC's FutureScape:
Worldwide Future of Digital Infrastructure 2022 Predictions

Keep pace with network provisioning with automation

Use a single solution to help teams integrate across networking and other areas for a faster response with Ansible Automation Platform. From edge devices, to increasing cloud demands, networks are growing in size and complexity. Ansible Automation

Platform helps teams keep pace with network provisioning and validation, configuration management, and infrastructure awareness in a way that manual methods simply cannot.

Want to learn more? Watch this Ansible Network Automation Overview video

Swisscom

Switzerland's leading telecommunications company, automated more than 15,000 network components, including servers, firewalls, network devices, and storage devices.[7]

Learn more about Swisscom's story →

1,500
Network components

[6] IDC InfoBrief, sponsored by Red Hat."Automation for digital business resiliency," #US48845122, March 2022.
[7] Red Hat case study."Swisscom automates IT with Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform," 25 Sept. 2018

Gain stability and consistency at the edge with automation

Ansible Automation Platform provides a stable foundation for deploying end-to-end automation, including to edge environments, where data is generated, end-users interact with devices and systems, and services are used. As your IT landscape extends from the datacenter and the cloud out to the edge, security, consistency, and compliance must remain solid. Ansible Automation Platform extends a consistent experience across your entire infrastructure, enabling your organization to scale automation in heterogeneous environments. With a common platform you can build, run, and manage the entirety of their highly distributed systems with security-focused automation workflows delivering resilience, across a wide ecosystem and even to remote locations where network connectivity may be intermittent.

Want to learn more? Read the e-book Automation at the edge: 7 industry use cases and examples.

According to the IDC report "Automating the last mile: Ensuring consistency and stability at the edge":

73%
of organizations view edge computing as a strategic investment.

54%
of organizations expect to invest in edge-related IT automation in the next 24 months.

59%
of large enterprises reported a return on investment of fewer than 12 months for IT automation projects.[8]

Learn more about automating at the network edge in this video.

Watch the video →

Approach automation with a focus on security capabilities

Ansible Automation Platform provides users with a streamlined and efficient way to automate security practices—a high priority for most organizations facing a growing number of enterprise security threats. Ansible Automation Platform helps organizations respond to threats in a coordinated, unified way through a curated collection of playbooks, modules, and roles. This includes threat hunting, incident response, and an enriched approach to investigations.

Want to learn more? Read the e-book Simplify your security operations center.

287 days

to identify and contain a data breach

According to the IBM Security Cost of a data breach report 2021, the average number of days to identify and contain a data breach is 287. The report found that "Security AI/automation was associated with a faster time to identify and contain the breach" and that it had the biggest positive cost impact.[9]
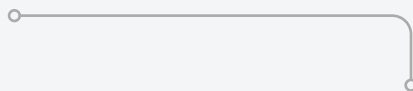
Reduce complexity with cloud automation

Ansible Automation Platform helps you ensure your cloud deployments work effectively and efficiently across public, private, multicloud, or hybrid cloud, taking the guesswork out of the process. Use Ansible Automation Platform for provisioning, configuration, and compliance.

Want to learn more? Read about cloud support with Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform or read this e-book, Connect your hybrid cloud environment with IT automation.
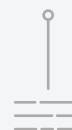
"We run Red Hat Enterprise Linux on Microsoft Azure as part of our cloud infrastructure, so we had experience working with Red Hat technology and their teams. Ansible Automation Platform met our technical specifications and benchmarking requirements and offered local support."[10]

Vikas Bhandari
Director, Group Engineering and Delivery, Cloud & Infrastructure, AIA Group.

See how AIA Group migrated 90% of its workloads to the cloud.

Simplify your application deployment with automation

Automate application deployments with Ansible Automation Platform. It's the simplest way to deploy your applications and services all from one platform, regardless of where they are. Playbooks, which are simple to write and maintain, make your installations, upgrades, and day-to-day management reliable and repeatable.

Want to learn more? Read the use case for application deployment.

"During a very challenging, fast-moving situation, automation has helped create standard, repeatable processes."[11]

Sean Greer
Director of IT Service Delivery, City and County of Denver

Learn how Denver, Colorado is able to support remote work with Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform.

Learn more →

[10] Red Hat case study. "AIA Group automates IT provisioning with Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform," 1 April 2022.
[11] Red Hat case study, "Denver supports remote work with Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform," 29 April 2021.

Once you've decided what domain to start with, it's time to consider where to run your automation in order to deliver a consistent experience across everything, everywhere.

Ansible Automation Platform can do this because it's container-native. This gives you the flexibility to create repeatable automation, efficiently manage it, and then scale it on demand across your:

Datacenter

for agnostic automation, integration into business workflows, or maintaining a common language or framework across multiple IT domains.

Public clouds

for provisioning, application life cycle management, or cloud administration.

Hybrid cloud

for infrastructure coordination, configuration management, life cycle management, or business continuity.

Edge

for event-driven automation, disaster recovery, mass configuration, or remote updates and compliance.

Want to learn more about Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform?
Get a product overview, including features and benefits, in this datasheet.

Visit the datasheet →

A snapshot of success

A real-world look at achieving business value with automation comes through the results of organizations who have adopted an automation strategy.

Here are some stories of organizations that are successfully using Ansible Automation Platform.

BlueCross BlueShield

BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina saves 70,000 work hours with Red Hat

"

"By automating complex, repetitive tasks with Ansible Automation Platform, we're demonstrating how IT can create business value through cost-effective, consistent, and efficient work. In the first two years alone, we executed 200,000 Ansible Playbooks and saved an estimated 70,000 hours of work. At a staff payment rate of, say, US$50 or $75 per hour, we've avoided a massive cost."[12]

Peter Bojovic
Director of Technology Infrastructure,
BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina

70,000 hours
saved with Red Hat

BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina:

- Created in-house IT team to replace costly externally managed service.

- Saved 70,000 work hours by automating VM provisioning.

- Established organization-wide focus on agility.

Read the full customer story here.

Read the story →

[12] Red Hat case study. "Insurance provider saves 70,000 work hours with Red Hat." 13 May 2021.

ADB

Asian Development Bank saves hundreds of hours by automating infrastructure management with Red Hat

"

"Ansible Automation Platform helps us complete work faster, safer, and with more resiliency. Red Hat is helping to make the Asian Development Bank more modern and adaptable."[13]

Pierre Passin
Deputy Director-General,
Asian Development Bank

Asian Development Bank:

- Saved hundreds of work hours every year by automating database cloning, patching, and recovery.

- Improved infrastructure security and reliability.

- Optimized automation strategy with expert guidance.

Read the full customer story here.

Read the story →

[13] Red Hat case study. "Asian Development Bank saves hundreds of hours by automating infrastructure management with Red Hat," 2022.

AIA Group delivers services faster with automated IT provisioning

"

"Leveraging the use of cloud and automation solutions, we are making a step change in building our technology, digital, and analytics capabilities to drive agility across our operations and meet our customers' evolving needs."[14]

Marcel Malan
Head of Group IT Operations,
AIA Group

AIA Group:

- Automated its infrastructure deployment and configuration processes.

- Enhanced the experience of its customers, distributors, and partners significantly.

- Improved working conditions for its employees.

Read the full customer story here.

Read the story →

    [14] Red Hat case study, "AIA Group delivers services faster with automated IT provisioning," Jan. 2022.

Bring the vision to reality

How could automation benefit your business?

What could your organization do if your teams were connected and your automation was coordinated?

Imagine uniting teams, eliminating isolated groups, and:

- Drastically accelerating speed to market.
- Fostering a DevOps culture.
- Scaling hybrid cloud environments.
- Increasing infrastructure stability.
- Maintaining continuous compliance.

Or automating tasks and creating a collaborative DevOps environment while:

- Lowering end-to-end production costs.
- Minimizing human errors and downtime.
- Reducing complexity in your IT environment.
- Working to eliminate security vulnerabilities.
- Decreasing mean time to repair.

Ready-to-Accelerate Assessment

Find out how well your company is poised to embrace the future.

Take the assessment →

The building blocks for an automation strategy

Focus on these three phases for automation adoption to achieve efficiency, reliability, and a competitive edge.

Accelerate for efficiency
Automate for speed

- Automation modernization
- Focus on tasks
- Team-centric
- Repeatable and model-based

Orchestrate for reliability
Engineer for scale

- Enterprise automation
- Focus on workflows
- Multiteam
- Standardization and governance
- Deployment strategies

Innovate for a competitive edge
Design for agility

- Automation-first culture
- Business impact focus
- Broad collaboration
- Reinvention of workflows

How to launch enterprise automation

1.

Start small, think big. Begin your automation journey by automating simple, often-repeated tasks to see the benefits quickly.

2.

Grow into automating more complex tasks, across domains, and throughout full IT processes.

3.

Appoint an automation architect to help your IT organization adopt an automation-first mindset and help you figure out where to start and how to progress. Learn more about this critical role in The automation architect's handbook.
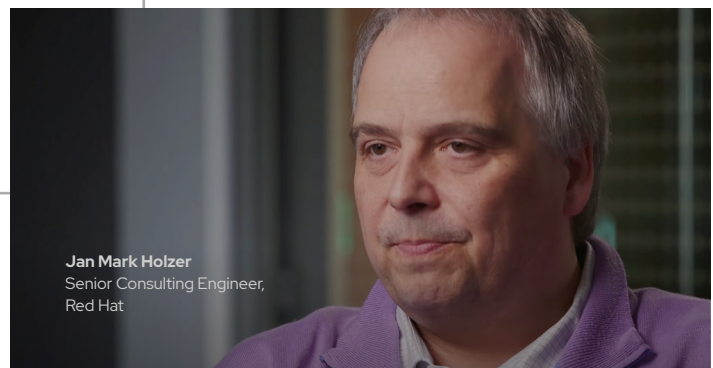
Get on the path to manifesting the art of the possible by working with the Red Hat Executive Briefing Center.

Connect with executives, technical thought leaders, and product owners to assess and address the business challenges that are unique to your organization.

Watch an overview on the Red Hat Executive Briefing Center Program

Watch the video →

Jan Mark Holzer
Senior Consulting Engineer,
Red Hat

Where to go from here

The problems you can solve, the breakthroughs you can make, and the value you can realize with the Ansible Automation Platform are endless. But how do you get started?

Learn more about what's possible. Visit the Ansible Automation Platform landing page.

Visit the landing page →

Contact us to discuss your automation strategy

Contact us →

Ready to get started now? Start a 60-day trial subscription

Start trial →

Engage with our Red Hat Consulting team to help you take your next step.

Contact us →