

inside zhero

Let's take a look at what is happening at Zhero



MESSAGE FROM IZAK

It is the festive season and the run-up to Christmas this year has been a busy one indeed. In mid-November, I made a 2-week trip to London, accompanied by our Strategic Leadership Team. Our busy itinerary included meeting with clients and hosting our annual UK Christmas party.

Shortly after returning to Cape Town, we celebrated the season with our SA team. You can read about all these exciting events and more in this issue.

"Efficiency is doing better what is already being done," - Peter Druker

In 2023 I encourage you to apply these words to both your business and your IT. By implementing automation into your business you are able to transform your operational efficiency by unifying your team and business processes. Our feature this month looks at how you can make 2023 work for you through business process and IT automation.

From the Zhero family, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Izak Oosthuizen
Bestselling Author and
Founder and MD of Zhero

MAKE 2023 WORK FOR YOU

5000 YEARS IN THE MAKING

Although automation has a long history dating back more than 5,000 years, automation of data-related tasks only began in the 1960s. Since then its use in business has grown in leaps and bounds. Nowadays, business leaders and managers see automation as a one-stop shop for increasing productivity, efficiency, and security. Businesses that buy into digital process automation also have enhanced service delivery, superlative customer experience, significant cost savings, and heightened team morale.

WORK SMARTER

Business Process Automation (BPA) is creating software to automatically perform repetitive and mundane tasks that would normally be done manually. By allowing machines to complete routine activities, business automation enables your employees to focus on things that add value. As such, they work smarter, not harder. As Clara Shih, the American businesswoman, and CEO of the financial services company Hearsay Social says:

"Rather than wringing our hands about robots taking over the world, smart organizations will embrace strategic automation use cases. Strategic decisions will be based on how the technology will free up time to do the types of tasks that humans are uniquely positioned to perform."



HOW CAN I AUTOMATE?

A business process is simply a series of steps that you perform in a specific sequence to achieve a specific goal. Examples include quoting, billing, invoicing, ordering marketing, and customer service.

BPA software allows you to set up automation rules for each step in a process as well as specific triggers that set them in motion. If your SME is small, there's less chance of human error. As you scale, the risk increases and you should identify repetitive and manual tasks that can be automated to improve efficiency and reduce errors.

Forbes suggests five strategies when you apply BPA to your operations:

- **Functional areas of operation** – identify the areas of your business that offer the best opportunities for improvements in efficiency such as inventory management, sales, and customer service.
- **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** – all processes would be clearly defined and documented showing the steps involved and the actions to take.
- **Find repetitive tasks** – as the owner of an SME, you'll experience the pain your employees feel when doing manual and repetitive activities and you can identify how tasks can be completed using automation and according to your SOPs.
- **Prioritise** – After identifying all the humdrum tasks, you'll probably have a list of automation possibilities as long as your arm. Select the ones that directly impact your productivity and automate those.
- **Digitally transform** – You don't need to craft your own BPA software. Request a demo from business processes management companies and explore which existing technologies can best support your business.



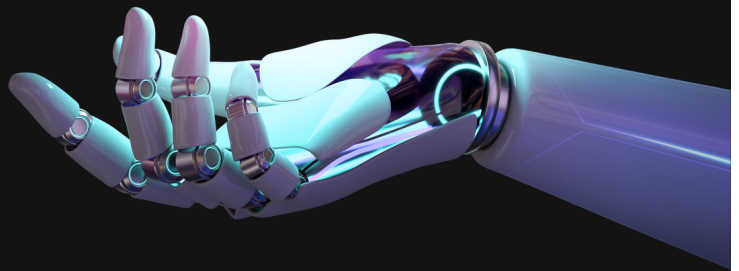
AUTOMATION BENEFITS

Marshall McLuhan, the Canadian philosopher, and media specialist once made this rather controversial statement:

"The age of automation is going to be the age of 'do it yourself.'"

McLuhan's words may seem like a contradiction, however, they accurately describe the role of automation in businesses today. BPA simplifies many tasks, enabling almost anybody to do fairly complex tasks themselves instead of relying on a dedicated specialist. This improves productivity and efficiency and saves money. Other BPA benefits include:

- timesaving
- higher revenue and profits
- minimised errors and risk
- improved standardisation
- improved compliance
- improved scalability
- enhanced customer service and experience



DON'T HYPER-AUTOMATE

When contemplating automation, don't start by fantasising about the money you'll save when you lay off most of your employees and replace them with Artificial Intelligence (AI). Automation isn't about firing but about getting all your team players to add value to your business. Companies that have fully automated systems, so-called hyper-automation, often end up paying more for the human touch. Back-office automation is fine as your customers won't know whether it's a human or a robot doing the work. But for your business to truly shine, you need superlative customer experience. And automation isn't the ultimate business processes solution. Bill Gates says of efficiency:

"The first rule of any technology used in a business is that automation applied to an efficient operation will magnify the efficiency. The second is that automation applied to an inefficient operation will magnify the inefficiency."

THE HUMAN TOUCH

Before automating a process, ensure that it adds value, is efficient, and can be fully supported by AI. You can then empower your people with digital capabilities. AI does the monotonous work while employees service your customers with a preferred human touch based on their intelligent thinking abilities.

Remember that robots aren't decision-makers and human intervention is necessary when AI gets confused – if only to avoid costly mistakes. In reality, there will always be a need to escalate decisions to the managers and other personnel.



WHAT ABOUT AUTOMATING IT?

Automating your IT is a subset of BPA. VMware, the Dell Technologies-owned virtualisation and software provider, defines IT automation as:

"The process of creating software and systems to replace repeatable processes and reduce manual intervention."

With IT automation aka Digital Process Automation (DPA), software is used to set up, facilitate and repeat instructions and processes that save time and free up your IT employees to do more creative and strategic work. Your manual business processes – those previously carried out by humans - become automated through an accelerated delivery of IT infrastructure and applications. From a slightly more technical perspective, you could describe DPA as a series of operations that enable the integration of tools, people, and processes through automated workflows.

WHAT IT CAN I AUTOMATE?

The possibilities of IT automation for your business are almost endless. The most common areas that IT departments address include cloud automation, security automation, network management, resource provisioning, and configuration. The long and the short is that once your IT is automated, your IT staff and by extension other employees have more time for more worthwhile activities.

Take, for example, a new hire on their first day. With IT automation in place, they can hit the ground running with access to the apps they need and with the right permission levels in place. Employees are productive from day 1 plus DPA shows that you're organised and committed to the success of your team players.

IT AUTOMATION BENEFITS

Just as the possibilities of IT automation are almost unlimited, so are its benefits for your business. These include lowering costs, reducing errors, improving systems and data reliability, increasing productivity, being able to adapt and make changes faster, and providing a bigger window for scalability. In addition to the value, IT automation will add today and in the short term, broader prospects include:

- Your team becoming increasingly self-reliant
- Your team having higher expectations of your business
- A big improvement in customer experience and satisfaction



BPA VERSUS DPA

Both BPA and DPA rely heavily on digital transformation so aren't they the same thing?

Not quite. BPA is a much broader strategy going beyond the realms of IT automation or DPA. In essence, DPA focuses on using technology to transform individual segments of a business operation. Some say that BPA is more employee-focused whereas IT automation is driven by rationalising digital processes.

THE ADIDAS SUCCESS STORY

The success stories tied to IT automation are as abundant as its possibilities and benefits. Adidas, Europe's largest sportswear manufacturer and the second largest globally after Nike, is a case in point. In 2010, the German retail giant decided to automate its IT across 400 factories. Adidas adopted a start small, think big, scale fast approach. The results were astonishing with a 60% reduction in operational supply chain costs, a 50% reduction in factory onboarding time, and an 87% faster contract approval cycle.

As you can see, the results speak for themselves.



CITY'S INSTITUTE FOR CYBERSECURITY HOST

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGY

Zhero was proud to be a sponsor of this year's International Conference on Financial Technology hosted by **City, University of London**. The conference, chaired by our very own Head of Research, Professor Raj Muttukrishnan, focused on cybersecurity, AI, data privacy and security, secure data sharing, fraud detection and prevention, and more. Izak made a special trip to London to attend the two-day event, which ran from 15 December to 16 December at City's Northampton Square.

Izak was selected as one of five panelists to discuss the development of open banking and digital identity in the UK. The discussion explored the relationship between opening banking and digital identity, the potential challenges, and the predicted key areas of symbiosis.

Throughout the conference, Izak was joined by two members of Team Zhero. Vin Jauhal, our knowledgeable and motivational Transition Coordinator teamed up with Richard Jones, Zhero's Head of Commercial, to discuss and showcase the company's services and achievements and how they benefit the Fintech industry.



TWO WEEKS IN LONDON

On 14 November Zhero's Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) arrived in London for two weeks. The multi-purpose visit included meeting the UK team at the new office in Farringdon, connecting with clients, carrying on with day-to-day work activities, and attending work-related functions, including parties at The Folly, GA KingsX, and Drake & Morgan. There was even time to squeeze in some sightseeing with Big Ben, London Eye, Madam Tussauds, and Camden Market being among the top picks.





Here's what the team had to say about their two weeks in London:

Izak: *"This was a special moment for both Zhero and me. I felt honoured to bring the SLT to see the city where Zhero had its humble beginnings more than 16 years ago."*

Davin: *"This was my first visit to the UK and I found it eye-opening. Great to meet the UK team and catch up with our clients. I can't wait to return in March."*

Natasha: *"It was great seeing the UK guys face to face instead of on Teams. And our new office is awesome. The London weather? Give me sunny South Africa any day."*

Anri: *"I was looking forward to this trip for months and was not disappointed. The UK team and office, our clients, the Christmas party, and the sights of London all made it a memorable adventure and one that I will never forget."*

Wesley: *"I'm a bit of a newbie to travel and this was my first time away from my homeland. I am grateful and privileged to meet Zhero's UK team and to see such a fascinating city."*

Richard: *"A totally unforgettable experience! Meeting the SLT team from SA has provided us with the opportunity to grow and strengthen our relationships which will allow us to kick on into the next phase of Zhero - Massive growth!!"*

Lynne: *"I'm no stranger to London having lived there for 12 years - it's like my home away from home. Plus I got the chance to meet some of our fabulous and inspiring clients. A thoroughly enjoyable time."*

LET'S BE MERRY 🎄

The English idiom *"eat, drink and be merry..."* is often ascribed to the Greek philosopher, Epicurus. The words also aptly describe Zhero's reasons for celebrating this Christmas, including two acquisitions, the appointment of Prof Raj as our Head of R&D, our collaboration with Israeli MSP, Cybecs, our new partnership with the Cyber Resiliency Centre of London, as well as relocating to our new home in Farringdon Road in London. The celebrations culminated in not one but two Christmas parties – the first in London and the other in Stellenbosch in the Western Cape.

On 24 November, the UK team and the SLT met in the afternoon to share a meal at the Drake & Morgan in King's Cross. This was followed by drinks and snacks with some of our clients. 9 December saw the SA team in festive mode, enjoying dinner and drinks at Diemersdal Wine Estate with the UK guys joining the party via video link. Inspirational speeches were given by Izak, Davin, and Lynne and the highlight of the evening was Zhero's annual awards ceremony. For Twane, recently promoted to Sales Manager, it was a clean sweep, taking four of the ten awards up for grabs. Jamie, Nadia, Nico, Elizabeth and Anthony were also honoured.

Both events proved to be an amazing opportunity for Zhero to come together, celebrate this year's achievements and embrace the festive season that is close at hand.



OUR AMAZING TEAM

IT'S BEEN 6-MONTHS ALREADY?

We are pleased to announce that Jamie Chamberlain, part of our New Business team, will be celebrating his 6-month workiversary at Zhero this month!

Jamie is a born salesman and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the table. We love having Jamie around as his vibrant personality gets everyone in a good mood!

Over the last few months Jamie has demonstrated the characteristics of a true Zhero ambassador, so much so that he was awarded the Zhero Vision award at our Annual Zhero Awards Ceremony in the beginning of December.

Happy 6-months, Jamie!

JOIN OUR AMAZING TEAM

THINK YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

We are always on the lookout for top talent. If you have what it takes to help us shift the dial up a notch, stay in touch for exciting opportunities.

Cape Town, South Africa

Account Manager

If you enjoy working with clients and giving them the best customer experiences, we are looking for you!

[APPLY HERE](#)

Head of Projects

If you have a strong technical background and enjoy driving a team to excel, we are looking for you!

[APPLY HERE](#)

Service Desk Team Lead

We are looking for someone with a strong technical background, who is passionate about working with people and is ready to take the next big step in their career.

[APPLY HERE](#)

Interns

If you are a keen learner and looking to enter a dynamic IT company then look no further!

[APPLY HERE](#)

London, United Kingdom

On-site Engineer

We are looking for someone with a strong technical background, who is passionate about working with people and is ready to take the next big step in their career.

[APPLY HERE](#)



MEET THE TEAM

Brandon Lee Maharaj

PROJECTS ENGINEER

1. What made you realise you want to go into the IT industry?

As a child, I really enjoyed playing Mario Brothers. The game would often crash because my PC could not take the beating (excuse the pun). Sorting out my PC issues is something I really enjoyed doing and that is why I decided to pursue a career in the IT industry.

2. What's your most-used productivity tool?

Listening to music is a great tool used to be in a flow state of mind. I listen to techno, it helps me focus.

3. What do you enjoy the most about your job?

Interacting with different clients around the world. I am fascinated with people and different cultures.

4. How would you describe yourself?

Driven and enthusiastic about things I am passionate about. I am also very observant.

5. Do you have any hidden talents or hobbies?

When I am not on the cricket pitch, I enjoy drawing and painting.

6. Are you a sports fan?

I am a sports fanatic. Cricket, football, rugby, tennis, F1 - anything that requires a certain skill that will help you to excel in your playing field.

7. What is your favorite series?

It has to be Stranger Things.

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