BOTS & PEOPLE | ESCRIBA.

E-BOOK

HR: Get Digitalization Done!

Content

Who is ESCRIBA?

"*Software and IT are playing an increasingly central role for companies. In the future, every company will also - or perhaps even primarily - be a provider of software. No-/Low-Coding is the key technology here.*"

Dr. Juergen Erbeldinger, CEO ESCRIBA

The ESCRIBA AG...

... after 20 years in the process automation market, sees no- and low-coding technology as the sustainable accelerator for the last mile of digitization of HR departments.

... provides over 2 million employees of top German companies with fully digitally created documents via fully digital processes.
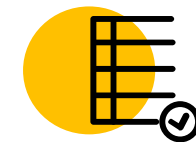
... combines the power of digital workflows and case management with the advantages of object-oriented document creation.

Who is BOTS & PEOPLE ?
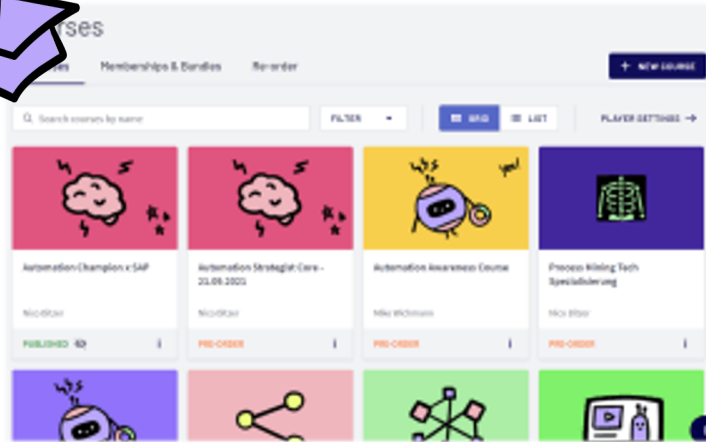
ACADEMY

In the Automation Academy you learn everything about Process Automation. Whether Process Mining, RPA, Cloud Automation, API and Co, you put together your own learning journey from various modules.
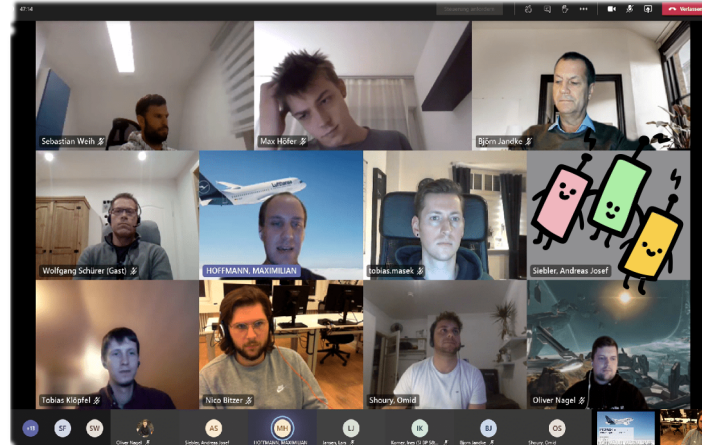
COMMUNITY & KNOWLEDGE

In Germany's only Knowledge Hub for Process Automation you can satisfy your hunger for knowledge free of charge with e-books, videos, podcasts and much more! Become part of the automation community and stay part of it even after your training.
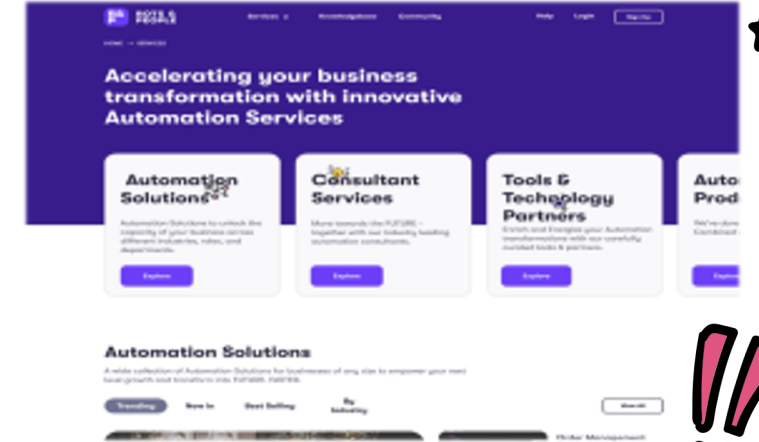
MARKETPLACE

The Marketplace functions as a workbench for flexible and scalable automation solutions, in that every important project step is embedded in an Automation as a Service system and can be booked individually.

What is HR digitization

HR digitization is the use of digital technologies to minimize human intervention in routine operations and employee processes to a reasonable level.

Focuses on automating tasks and processes that help HR teams save time and money, increase fairness and compliance, and effectively improve the overall employee experience.

The digitalization of HR as a basis for success

HR departments often have a hard time with digitalization and automation in their field. This is also due to statements such as "robots are stealing our jobs". But this concern is unfounded, because digital process automation is nothing to be afraid of.

According to the [Harvard Business Review, the](#) average company loses 21% of its productivity to repetitive tasks. This also affects HR departments, which have less time to deal with the most important thing: people, due to these monotonous processes.

Across all industries, Human Resources (HR) teams are challenged to innovate and develop new ways of working, improving efficiency with the same number of employees while staying ahead in the war for talent.

But in reality, HR teams large and small spend a lot of time every day doing administrative tasks, sifting through resumes, consolidating timesheets, creating reports, briefing employees and co-workers, answering policy questions, and processing leave requests and parental leave applications, prepare payrolls

and more like that. There is a lot of hidden potential here for the digitalization and automation of internal workflows.

Instead of repetitively processing mountains of documents, HR experts then have time to increase the success of the business, talk to talents and actively promote employees.

Process automation rebalances the HR equation, so to speak, and puts the focus on people!

Unfounded fears & hidden potential

Thanks to countless examples from other functional areas, we know that automation does not make jobs obsolete. Despite all the prophecies of doom that the relationship between HR and employees will become more impersonal as a result of the automation of HR processes, it turns out that HR is actually becoming more human.

By freeing you from processing repetitive requests and manually executing the same thing over and over again

Introduction

people are given more time for advisory activities and for supporting managers and colleagues with complex issues. In addition, they can focus more on securing the future of the company by thinking about strategies to optimize employer branding.

In addition, HR is becoming more data-driven. More digital touchpoints will generate more data points over time, giving HR managers the ability to gather more feedback, identify the right HR strategy and iterate processes.

More data also means HR teams can gain real insights into their employees' needs and preferences, and then build effective processes based on those insights.

The ultimate goal of any digitization and automation effort is to increase efficiency. While sales, marketing, accounting, finance and production have long been at the forefront of companies' automation offensive, significant automation potential still lies dormant in HR departments.

Consequential problems in the absence of digitisation

Streamlining processes, optimizing workflows and identifying new efficiencies opens up space for HR professionals to create new strategic approaches to people management. Automation drives progress by eliminating certain task functions where humans are inefficient, inconsistent, or exposed to risk. Failure to leverage existing AI and automation solutions can have negative impacts, such as reduced productivity, more errors, higher HR costs or poorer candidate selection.

Lack of awareness as the main problem

Digital technologies such as machine learning (ML), for example, make it easier to select the right candidates by identifying top talent faster in the recruiting process through automated keyword searches and other indicators. Automating HR compliance processes eliminates issues or challenges with rules and policies.

Introduction

Automation solutions ensure careful review and management of personal data in the HR department.

However, the reasons why many HR departments lag behind in automation, for example, despite all the known advantages, are largely due to a lack of awareness of the automation process itself and a lack of willingness to critically examine their own processes. In both cases, the cause is a lack of knowledge about the possibilities of hybrid automation technologies.

Study by IDG

In the following, a digital study* with a focus on digitalisation and HR is presented, which provides an interesting insight into the lives and problems of the HR professionals concerned.

*The study "Digitalization in Human Resources" was conducted by IDG Research Services and published by Computerwoche, but also CIO and TecChannel. It comprises 355 completed and qualified interviews. Participants and respondents were top (IT) executives of companies in the DACH region: strategic (IT) decision-makers in the C-level area and the specialist departments (LoBs), IT decision-makers & IT specialists from the IT area, senior HR employees and female employees.

Key statements of the study

Only 45.4% of HR professionals are satisfied with the level of digitalization in their company.

The Computerwoche study showed that HR is the only department not rated as "fully digitized" by any of the respondents and generally lags far behind all other areas.

Although the heads of HR departments see the status of digitization as slightly better than other employees, they give themselves the worst marks overall.

The overall satisfaction level is 58.3%, which is much higher. The IT department - who could guess - is the most satisfied department with 65.4% when asked about the company's level of digitalisation.

Wie zufrieden sind Sie mit dem derzeitigen Grad der Digitalisierung in Ihrem Unternehmen insgesamt?

Angaben in Prozent. Basis: n = 355

0,8
2,3
9,9
15,0
58,3

28,6

Gesamt-ergebnis

43,3

IT-Abteilung 65,4
Personalabteilung / HR 45,4

○ Sehr zufrieden ○ Zufrieden ○ Eher zufrieden
○ Eher nicht zufrieden ○ Nicht zufrieden ○ Gar nicht zufrieden
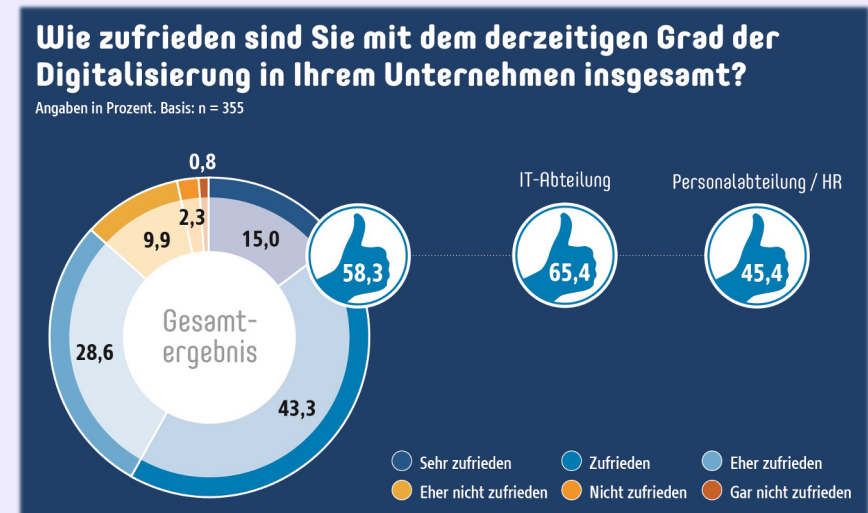
When asked about their own department's progress in digitalization, the HR department only gives itself a grade of "Satisfactory".

Across all areas, HR only attests itself a satisfactory degree of digitalization and rates itself the worst of all areas.

Once again, the IT department comes off best, although this should come as no surprise.

13

The HR department also finds itself in last place when it comes to process automation.

The HR department also gives itself the worst score in the comparison for digital process automation, although the differences here are not as high as for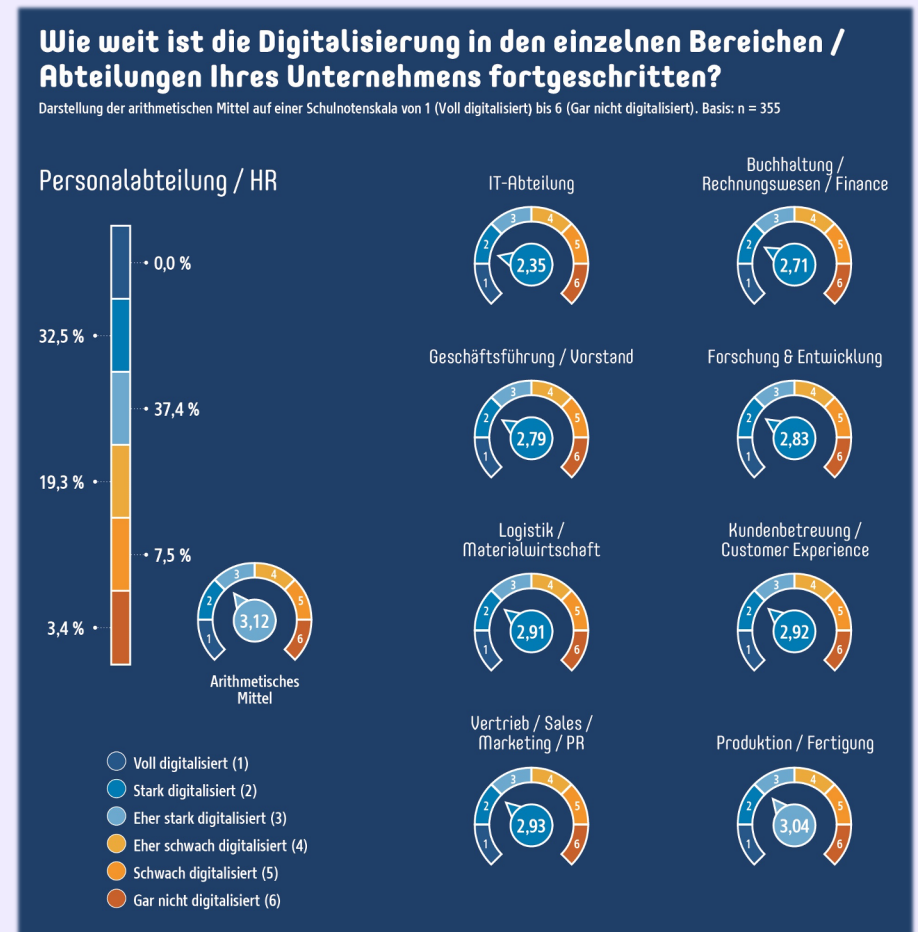 digitalization in general. When asked about the individual processes and their degree of automation, it is noticeable that there is a large discrepancy between the perception of the specialist department and the management, which certifies that the HR department has above-average automation.

Particularly in the area of personnel development, monitoring of personnel matters and personnel recruitment, the difference in perception amounts to a whole 0.9 points.

Wie automatisiert laufen Prozesse / Arbeitsabläufe der (eher) stark digitalisierten Unternehmensbereiche ab?

Dargestellt sind die arithmetischen Mittel auf einer Skala von 1 (Komplett automatisiert) bis 5 (Gar nicht automatisiert). Filter: Abgefragt wurden nur solche Bereiche, die zuvor als mindestens „eher stark digitalisiert" ausgewählt wurden. Basis: n = 344

2,30	IT-Abteilung
2,34	Logistik / Materialwirtschaft
2,36	Produktion / Fertigung
2,39	Buchhaltung / Rechnungswesen / Finance
2,47	Geschäftsführung / Vorstand
2,50	Restliche Unternehmensbereiche
2,52	Vertrieb / Sales / Marketing / PR
2,57	Forschung & Entwicklung
2,58	Kundenbetreuung / Customer Experience
2,63	Personalabteilung / HR

More than 91% describe Excel as an important digital tool in their daily work.

The overwhelming majority of employees in HR departments still see Excel as an important digital tool for their daily work, while almost a third of respondents even consider it to be "very important".

Wie wichtig ist Excel für Ihr Daily Business im HR-/Personalbereich?

Angaben in Prozent. Filter: Nur Mitarbeiter der HR-/Personalabteilung. Basis: n = 98

Eher unwichtig — 8,4
Sehr wichtig — 30,5
Wichtig — 28,4
Eher wichtig — 32,6
Gesamt-ergebnis
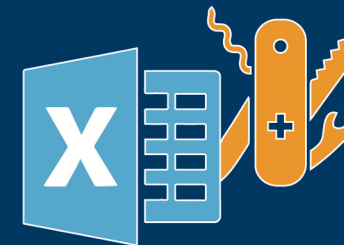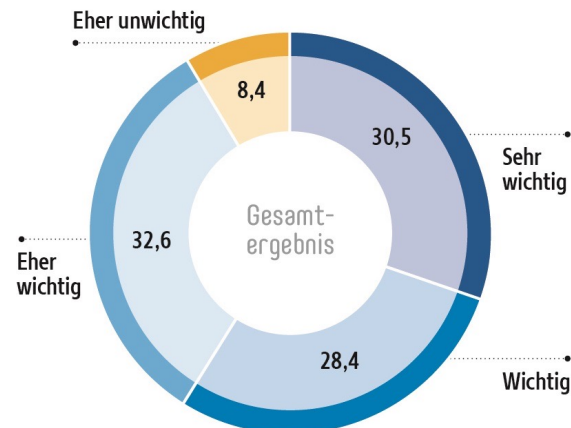
Allzweckwaffe Excel

Mehr als 91 Prozent der Personaler schätzen das Tabellenkalkulations-Tool als wichtig für ihr Daily Business ein.

One in four sees working with IT as a barrier to digitisation.

Was sind die größten Hemmnisse der Digitalisierung im HR-/Personalbereich Ihres Unternehmens?
Mehrfachnennungen möglich. Angaben in Prozent. Filter: Nur Mitarbeiter der HR-/Personalabteilung. Basis: n = 98

Kategorie	Prozent
Datenschutzbestimmungen	34,7
Mitbestimmung (Betriebsrat)	33,7
Fehlende Digitalkompetenz	27,6
Zusammenarbeit mit der IT	26,5
Kein Budget / zu wenig Budget	25,5
IT Governance	9,2
Andere / weitere regulatorische Hemmnisse	7,1
Weiß nicht	10,2
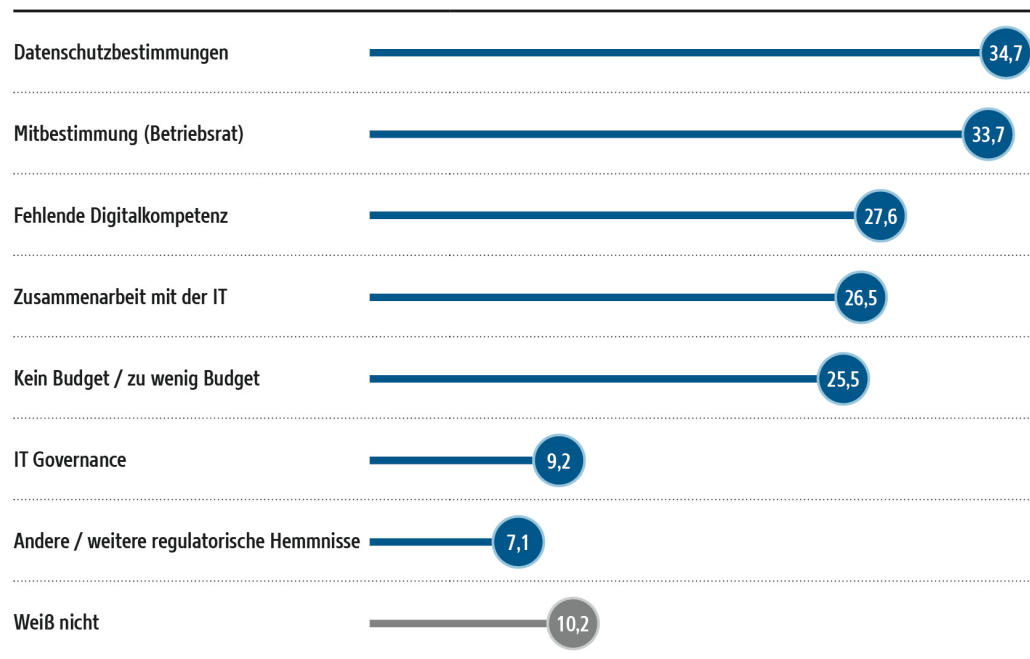
In addition to data protection regulations and the works council, employees name the lack of digital competence and cooperation with IT as the biggest obstacles to digitization in their department. A lack of budget is also a problem that HR departments have to deal with on a regular basis.

More than 60% of the respondents would like to increase employee satisfaction with digitalization.

By a clear margin, most of the respondents consider it important to increase employee satisfaction in personnel management with the help of digitalization.

Welchen Nutzen erwarten Sie aus der Digitalisierung im HR-/Personalbereich für Ihr Unternehmen insgesamt?

Angaben in Prozent. Mehrfachnennungen möglich. Basis: n = 355

Höhere Zufriedenheit der Mitarbeiter mit der Personaladministration	62,5
Kostenersparnis	47,9
Erhöhte unternehmerische Wertschöpfung	47,6
Höhere Zufriedenheit der Mitarbeiter mit der Personalentwicklung	36,9
Anderen/weiteren Nutzen	1,1
Weiß nicht	3,9
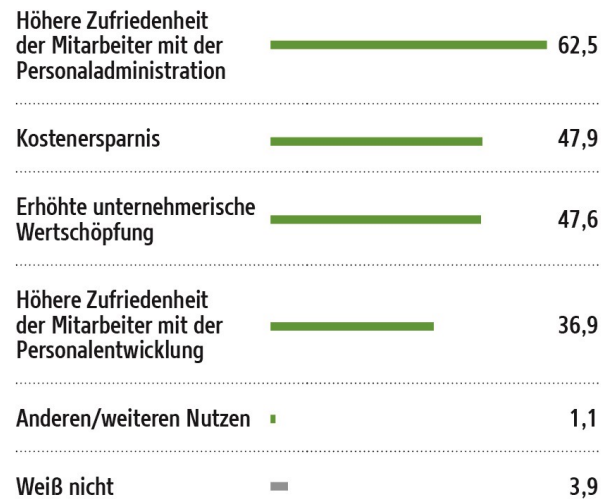
Only then come cost savings (47.9%), increased corporate added value (47.6%) and increased employee satisfaction in personnel development. It is important to note here that employee satisfaction plays an important role for most of them.

88% agree that their own continuing education in IT topics is essential in order to get ahead in digitization.

The vast majority see their own continuing education in IT topics as an important foundation for the successful digitization of their area and the company.

Selbsterkenntnis: Lernen, lernen, lernen

Der These, dass die eigene Weiter-bildung in IT-Themen essenziell ist, um die Digitalisierung erfolgreich voran-treiben zu können, stimmen 88 Prozent der Personaler zu.
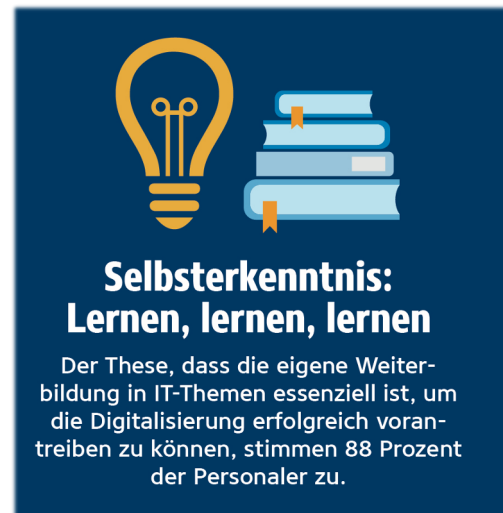
39.1% see the rights and duties of IT shifting to HR.

„Rechte und Pflichten der zentralen IT verlagern sich in die HR-Fachbereiche."

39,1

5,4

Core processes are already digitalized for the most part.

Welche der aufgeführten Technologien / Tools setzen Sie im HR-/Personalbereich bereits ein, und welche planen Sie einzusetzen?

Angaben in Prozent. Basis: n = 355
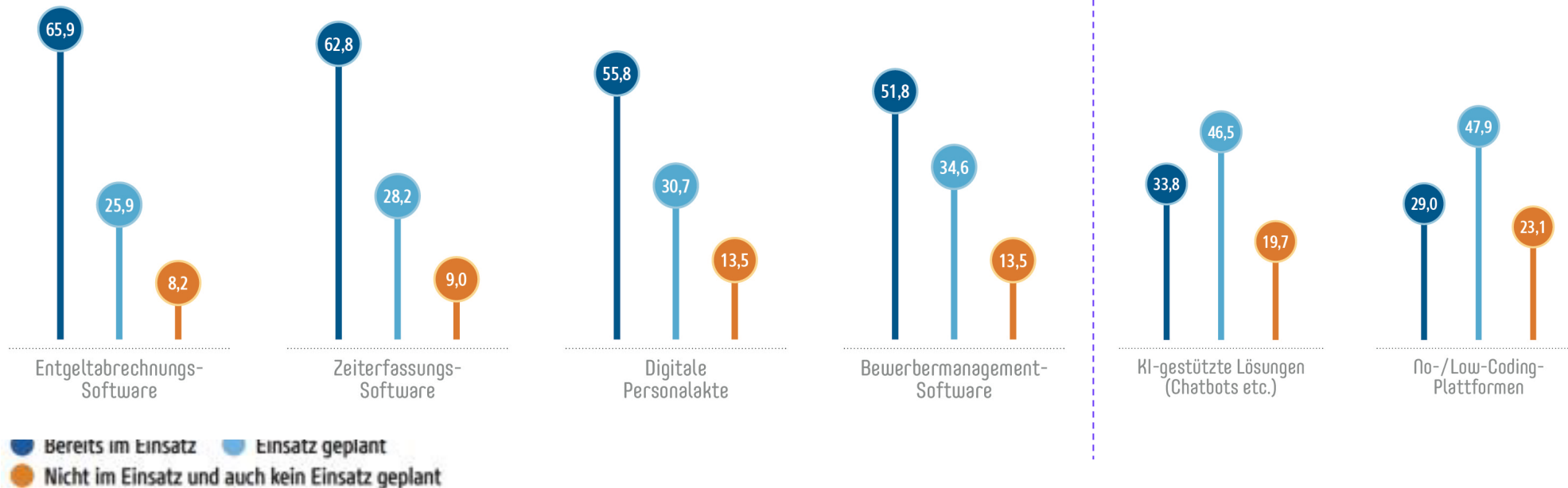
Innovative IT solutions are planned, but not yet holistically in use. More than 1/4 ~~dy~~ use No Code/Low Code and 1/3 AI.

Entgeltabrechnungs-Software	Zeiterfassungs-Software	Digitale Personalakte	Bewerbermanagement-Software	KI-gestützte Lösungen (Chatbots etc.)	No-/Low-Coding-Plattformen
65,9 / 25,9 / 8,2	62,8 / 28,2 / 9,0	55,8 / 30,7 / 13,5	51,8 / 34,6 / 13,5	33,8 / 46,5 / 19,7	29,0 / 47,9 / 23,1

Bereits im Einsatz   Einsatz geplant
Nicht im Einsatz und auch kein Einsatz geplant

More than a third of HR employees would like to be able to use no code/low code functionalities.

Können Sie als Mitarbeitende des HR-/Personal-bereichs im Self-Service-Portal neue Funktionen/ Tools einrichten, ohne über Programmierkenntnisse verfügen zu müssen?

Angaben in Prozent. Filter: Nur Mitarbeiter und Mitarbeiterinnen der HR-/Personal-abteilung. Basis: n = 98

- 5,1
- 23,5
- 35,7
- 35,7

● Ja
● Nein, die Möglichkeit hätte ich aber gern.
● Nein, ich habe aber auch keine Zeit / kein Interesse, hier etwas selbst einzurichten.
● Weiß nicht
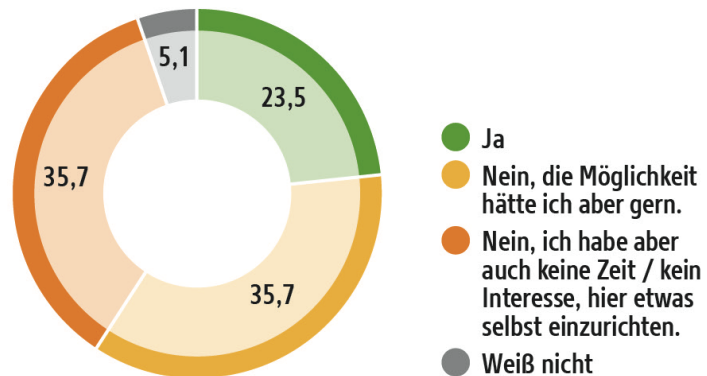
No Code/Low Code platforms (NLC for short) offer the possibility - even without great programming skills - to create and further develop new functions and tools for the internal workspace and customer support. One third of the respondents would be happy to have knowledge and opportunities in this area. Almost a quarter even use them already.

Conclusions

No-and-low coding is the right way to alleviate digitization pressures in HR!

- The lack of IT resources demands more in-house development in the departments.
- The HR department is already considered to have good IT skills.
- There is a high demand for NLC offers.
- Excel knowledge provides a good starting point for the introduction of NLC.

Want more info?

Here's the complete study!

- The high rate of digitalisation of core processes and planned introduction of NLC offers opportunities for automation (e.g. with tools such as Intergromat, Workato, Zapier or the Escriba HR-Suite)
- There is a demand for knowledge and handling of NLC.

HR Automation & No Code/Low Code

Low code/no code platforms help to reduce the pressure to digitize in HR departments and to empower employees to drive this forward in their department despite a lack of IT resources.

Combining this with HR automation ensures that HR professionals can finally focus on their real work: people.

In this chapter, you'll learn more about HR automation and LNC technology strategies and technologies.

HR Automation: What is it?

Processes exist in every company. A process is a sequence of activities and tasks linked to certain rules with the aim of making a measurable contribution to achieving the company's goal. This is why we often only talk about a business process.

Every process has a beginning and an end, one or more triggers, and leads to a specific result. Processes can be simple or complex, depending on the number of steps the process requires and the number of systems involved.

In recent years, technological The evolution of business process automation has brought about various tools that can automate different types of processes and thus provide solutions for the inefficient and time-consuming workflows in companies. Process automation is the automation of sometimes more and sometimes less complex business processes with the help of various modern technologies, such as Robotic Process Automation (RPA) or also NLC solutions in the form of Integrated Platform as a Service (e.g. Integromat).

Types of automation

Automation tools are responsible for the automation and control flow of multi-step processes. Different business areas have specific automation needs and these needs can be met by specialized process automation software that transforms complex, multi-system dependent steps into effective automation.

The various tools provide the respective missing interfaces between systems and software that were previously filled by humans. Their advantage lies in the ability to run on different

types of infrastructure, including at the network edge, where business decisions are made, and in cloud environments that can scale on demand.

Integrated Platform as a Service (iPaaS)

Integration Platform as a Service (iPaaS) is an intelligent platform consisting of cloud services for business process automation and an excellent tool for various integration scenarios, such as data integration, sytsem integration and hybrid integration.

iPaaS enables seamless integration of thousands of business applications and the free flow of data across all channels - so data management also benefits. It is used by companies that want to automate applications and workflows in their cloud. iPaaS does this by creating an interface through which data and apps can be connected, enabling entire processes not only to be mapped, but also to be modeled, data migrated, complex integrations created and a complex sequence of workflows automated. Instead of using staff resources for mundane, time-consuming

processes, cloud integration services enable you to efficiently integrate and automate these tasks to deliver better customer experiences and improve employee productivity.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

Robotic Process Automation is not about physical robots replacing humans in a company. RPA refers to the automation of business processes by digital software robots, so-called RPA bots. RPA feels particularly comfortable with repetitive, rule-based work tasks that rely on digital data.

These tasks include queries, calculations, creating and updating data sets, filling out forms, creating reports, cutting and pasting, and other high-volume, transactional tasks that require moving data within & between applications.

RPA offers the possibility to control arbitrary rule-based processes or single sections with the help of digitally readable inputs by so-called software robots, which imitate human interaction with the systems. These are customized programs that, after programming,

run independently at the desktop level of company computers and previously take over manual processes.

Digital Process Automation (DPA)

The evolution of BPM (Business Process Management), which focuses on optimizing business processes for greater efficiency and leaner execution, led to DPA (Digital Process Automation) as we know it today. DPA is all about create and implement applications and workflows that streamline and automate

missing interfaces between legacy systems. DPA software solutions include applications that bridge systems and users and simplify the workflow that replaces the manual business process. DPA is about digitization first, and then automation to enable it to execute in a more customer-centric way as a top priority. After all, DPA is not only about the employees, but especially about the customers.

Intelligent Process Automation (IPA)

Intelligent Process Automation (IPA) - Hyperautomation - is the collection of technologies and software that are combined. Primarily these are Digital Process Automation (DPA), Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Merging applications of AI and related techniques, such as computer vision, cognitive automation, and deep learning with RPA catalyzes richer and can unleash automation opportunities. IPA is effectively the crème de la crème of process automation.

Levels of automation

There can be different levels of maturity of automation in the HR department.

The lowest level

At this level, there is no automation at all. HR teams are largely manual and lack digital systems - basically the opposite of "paperless". An example would be an onboarding process where the HR manager has to walk each new employee through every step, from paperwork to system training to account setup.

The second stage

At this level, there is some degree of task-based automation. Notification emails about the expiry of holiday entitlements are sent automatically or payrolls are created automatically.

The third stage

At this level, automated self-services help employees find the right information and allow them to complete some tasks themselves.

This could be a change in bank details, a quick look at holiday balances or entering hours into a timesheet.

The highest level

At this level, entire processes are automated. This is because by connecting different systems together, a process can be carried out without a human having to monitor and trigger each step. For example, onboarding automates the entire process, from ordering work materials to setting up accounts to signing paperwork.

This means that HR employees no longer have to deal with repetitive tasks and can focus on people.

No Code/Low Code: What is it?

Low code and no code platforms are designed to quickly design, build, and launch applications without worrying about the intricacies of underlying operating systems or scalability requirements. To solve business problems faster than is possible with traditional software development, LC/NC tools leverage visual programming interfaces, pre-built building blocks, and artificial intelligence (AI) tools to integrate semi-structured and unstructured data sources. Integrated templates for various automated workflow scenarios support application developers to create even complex process logics. LC/NC tools allow the user to visually define user interfaces, workflows, and data models of the application, and if necessary, through handwritten code (LC). In addition, there are connectors to various back-ends or services and an Application Lifecycle Manager, an automated tool for building, debugging, deploying and managing the application in test, staging and production.

Low code

Low-code programming allows complex software to be developed in significantly less time. The reason for this is that developers can avoid repetitive code sections or manual coding and focus more on the architecture of the solution and the strategic aspect of the application.
With minimal coding, visual softwre modules can be dragged and dropped into a workflow to create applications. Through preconfigured integrations and security features developers can build reliable applications without relying on security or integration specialists.

Low code is an intuitive, visual approach to software development that can also be used to automate tasks, end-to-end processes, and complex workflows. Since complex or specific automation projects in particular always require coding at some point, LC automation tools also offer the possibility to do this, which in turn requires some programming skills.

No Code

No Code software is suitable for use by so-called "citizen developers". These are employees without any programming knowledge who want to develop an application for a specific use case or quickly digitize and automate tasks and processes. NC solutions enable the user to develop applications via an intuitive drag-and-drop interface by arranging prefabricated, already coded building blocks according to the application requirements.

User-friendly visual elements simplify and streamline the design process. That's because all the elements users need to create an app are already built into the tool. Using NC platforms also allows Citizen Developers to quickly respond to changing business needs, as the feature set and high level of integrations of NC tools allow users to automate any process according to their business needs - but with less option for customization and scalability as with low code RPA tools.

NLC: Fuel for digitization

LC and NC tools will play a critical role in accelerating application delivery over the next few years, becoming the fuel for digitization. According to a survey by KPMG, since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, the number of executives who see no-code and low-code development tools as the most important automation investment has already nearly tripled. By 2024, Gartner expects 65% of all apps to be developed using NC/LC tools. As the demand for business applications can no longer be met by the number of professional programmers, more and more employees will take programming into their own hands

and click together applications that meet their specific needs.

From consumer to prosumer

As Dr. Juergen Erbeldinger aptly puts it, employees will change from consumers to prosumers. It will no longer be the hours worked that represent productivity, but the self-developed applications bring along an expression of the reified know-how and productivity. The knowledge mapped in this way can then be easily scaled within the company.

The use of NC and LC tools by employees thus opens up an opportunity for smaller companies in particular to compensate for competitive disadvantages due to the war of tech talent, which the large and rich companies will decide in their favor, by getting more out of the available resources. Especially since NC/LC also allows (software) projects to be implemented that until now only large companies could afford. Being able to think software will become the skillset of tomorrow.

NLC = Speed

No Code/Low Code platforms are revolutionizing the software industry by shortening the learning curve and making software development faster, easier, and accessible to everyone. They provide better problem-solving capabilities and enable the easy and fast creation of business applications both on the web and on mobile devices. Without programming experience, applications can be built in just a few steps.

NLC & Process Automation

The commitment of hyper-scale vendors such as Microsoft with its Power Platform or Google with AppSheet shows the importance of No Code/Low Code as an important center of business innovation for the future. Workflow technology and iPaaS solutions are becoming increasingly popular due to their ability to create, orchestrate and automate end-to-end business processes and personalized customer engagement workflows in an NLC manner. While workflow automation and iPaaS solutions focus on improving the interoperability of existing apps, a second category of LNC innovations focuses on helping employees to create their own custom applications.

App builders increase the speed of application operationalization. Robotic Process Automation (RPA) based on no-code/low-code platforms provides the ability to automate everyday tasks that increase productivity without disrupting underlying business processes. Intelligent Process Automation (IPA) takes the core premise of robotic process automation and adds a shot of Artificial Intelligence.

NLC automation platforms for IPA are no longer subject to the restrictions of RPA and can work with both semi-structured and structured data. What is certain is that No Code/Low Code automation platforms will successively open up more and more automation technologies and thus make the practical application of artificial intelligence accessible to an ever larger circle of employees.

Which is the right automation technology?

In order to find out which is the right automation technology, it should first be clear which problem is to be solved by the automation. In other words, which processes you want to automate.

Furthermore, the decision for an automation technology depends on the desired degree of automation and which system and application scenarios are available. In any case, it makes sense to consider the topic holistically in an HR area.

However, NCL platforms offer a good entry point into the world of automation and general digitization of the HR department.

TIPS:

NLC solutions are not self-propelling.

Employees should build up knowledge and

experience about and with the tools through

training and **further education.**

Use Cases & Competencies

HR digitization in general and process automation in particular can be an abstract construct.

Accordingly, in the next section follow a few use cases that would like to concretize this journey a bit as well as important key competencies that are needed for the implementation.

Automation of onboarding

Employee onboarding is an important process that poses enormous challenges for many companies. Poorly organized onboarding can have negative consequences. Because the steps in a company's onboarding workflow are typically repetitive, this process is easy to automate with everyday tools. As with other business processes, onboarding involves the exchange of data between the HR department and the new employee. The database used Airtable in this case.

The setup and integration is done via Integromat.

The automated process ultimately sends an email with links to documents and resources to the new employee and assigns them a task on the project management platform. The data from the Airtable record is then passed to the Slack module (> Create a Message). Here, Integromat then automatically creates a welcome message.

Automation of recruiting

Recruiting technical talent is one of the biggest and most expensive challenges. Recruitment-as-a-Service (RaaS) companies, for example, use global advertising campaigns to attract engineers and developers from all over the world, or deploy armies of recruiters on LinkedIn and Xing to catch all the candidates who are down on their luck. Flexiple, on the other hand, decided to leave the beaten path by changing their recruiting process and start to automate them with Integromat.

Freelancers log in to the self-service web dashboard developed with Flexiple's Webflow to review new opportunities. Login details are automatically synced by Integromat. When a freelancer applies for a project, Integromat stores the details from Webflow in Airtable. Then, Integromat automatically sends a "first reply" email. Flexiple has also fully automated the creation of freelancer accounts and updating of project details.

Automation of acceptances or rejections

With the abundance of applications that have to be processed by HR employees on a daily basis, an automated acceptance or rejection can save some manual effort.

With Airtable as the data basis, the NLC automation tool Integromat (see illustration) can be used to create an HR automation in just a few steps that sends acceptances or rejections by mail via Microsoft Office - depending on the input in Airtable.

This way, the e-mails only have to be composed once and never have to be sent individually again.
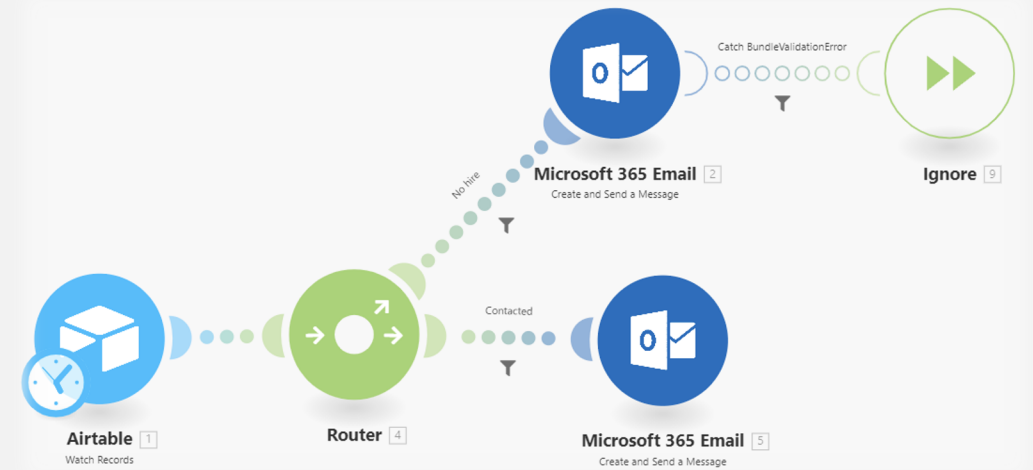
Key competencies are in demand

With increasing digitization and automation within companies on the one hand, and the demand for more technical skills in the workforce on the other, it's five minutes to twelve in many HR departments in terms of the technical skills they need themselves. Increasingly in demand are key competencies that HR staff are often unfamiliar with, most notably an understanding of business processes and organisations as complex systems and the optimisation of the systems through automation technologies.

Basic knowledge of the application and mastery of innovative technologies is the ticket to the career elevator for every HR administrator today, or at least for a seat on the future-proof Jobexpress.

Skills Gaps

While technological skills are quite high on the agenda for employers today, any type of technology needs employees who can use, maintain, repair and configure them, the skills

are currently in short supply in the HR sector. At the moment it seems like HR is unprepared for the significant skills gaps that automation and digitisation are tearing. The lack of a clear understanding of the impact of automation and digitization on the work in the HR department and on the requirement profile of employees, as well as the lack of knowledge and the lack of training opportunities is slowing down the

solution to the skills problem in the HR environment in many places. To make matters worse, automation is advancing faster than the internal corporate knowledge required to support it is growing. Yet companies have a variety of approaches available to them to close the skills gaps. They can look outside the company and hire new employees with the right skills. But they can also build the skills they need internally, by providing appropriate training to

employees to prepare them for new roles and responsibilities.

Automation Academies as a solution

In view of the well-known shortage of specialists with the necessary technical skills, external training of HR employees to become automation experts is certainly the most effective way. The automation basics can be learned at various automation academies without the need for prior knowledge.

Just as the skills of employees have changed, so has the training methodology of an Automation Academy. Today, state-of-the-art learning technologies and methods are combined with a holistic technological perspective to build the necessary skills for automating processes. Interactive collaboration tools like Microsoft Teams turn the classroom into a virtual space for learning.

The monolithic, one-dimensional understanding of automation training with a very strong product focus is giving way to vendor-independent, cross-system and cross-product training with a view to the hybrid use of different automation technologies. The training objective is to train HR employees to become Automation Architects and/or Automation Strategists. The primary goal is to impart an automation mindset that enables employees to implement, identify, analyze, evaluate processes in a more efficient manner.

It is about understanding the possibilities of automation in the company and the potential benefits. With 360° training, even HR staff and employees of smaller companies without a Center of Excellence can get into process automation and automate individual processes.

It's more than just skills

Upskilling and reskilling HR employees to become automation experts is a suitable means of counteracting the shortage of skilled workers and closing the skills gap within HR departments. This is because 360° training empowers employees with a newly acquired automation mindset and comprehensive automation skills to automate their department's processes even more effectively through hybrid use of technology and to increase the efficiency of their work.

It is not exclusively about teaching basic skills of digitalization and automation. It is rather about improving the quality of jobs and the satisfaction of employees through the interlinked use of automation technologies in the HR department, but also in the entire company, contrary to the common view that automation destroys jobs. Because that is actually the core task of HR.

Digitization and Mindset

For the successful digitization and automation of HR, it is not only the skills that are crucial, but especially the correct mindset - in other words, the attitude.

The following is an interview with the founder of the No Code/Low Code provider ESCRIBA, Juergen Erbeldinger.

Digitisation? Yes, but please with attitude!

With NLC platforms, a technology is available that makes it possible to also address the topics and processes that were previously left out due to healthy or unhealthy 80:20 pragmatism.

Three levels can be distinguished: Governance, Ownership and Coding. All three are concerned with the question of how we want to deploy and use technology securely and how this changes our working environment.

Especially approaches of the New Work movement and many aspects of agile management are closely related to NLC technology and influence each other. We are all faced with the challenge of developing a position and attitude on this so that we can use the opportunities and appropriately meet the challenges and risks.

Interview with Dr. Juergen Erbeldinger

Sebastian: Juergen, you have been dealing with the digitalization of HR areas for 25 years. What has changed or not changed in this task over the course of time?

Juergen: Ultimately, this is exactly what is reflected in the study. 25 years ago, client server systems were introduced or modernized for payroll accounting, 15 years ago it was a matter of tapping economies of scale and synergy effects by setting up shared service centers and for a good 5 years now, it's the it's the move to the cloud that's been at the forefront of HR IT. Interestingly, it is always about getting the core processes into the term. People like to point out that they work Pareto-optimally, which means that they practice "healthy" 80:20 pragmatism. Exactly the missing 20% are actually then realiter 40% and represent the actual problem. In this sense, pragmatism is then unhealthy. There is a lot of work in the missing 40% and often it is precisely here that the points of contact with the employees and applicants.

What is new is that there is an increasing awareness among decision-makers in the HR sector that these issues are an important or even the most important field of action.

Sebastian: Technology has made quantum leaps during this time. How have people changed in their attitude and behavior? Which points are particularly important when you look at the digitalization of HR from this perspective?

Juergen: In the past, it was very difficult to support the missing 20% to 40% system technically. There were no applications, or if so then very specialized, so you had to buy an application zoo. Then you had the 95/5 problem: you only needed 5% of the application's capabilities, so you were buying 95% empty functionality. Conversely, that 5% didn't cover everything you needed, and so on. This is changing with the advent of no- and low-coding technology, especially the NLC platforms, as we offer them.

I can cover a large part of the missing 20% to 40% gap with a platform. As an HR decision-maker, I define the scope of services myself, so I don't have a feature deadweight, and that's the most important thing for me, because the applications are created and/or the responsibility is taken by HR people themselves.

Sebastian: The CW study, which you co-designed, revealed that many HR people believe that the rights and duties of central IT are shifting to the business department.

Is this the kick-off for a democratic self-organisation of digitalisation?

Juergen: The term "democratization" is a bit too high, but in essence it is correct. Through no/low coding, a part, I think even the majority of the design authority will shift to the specialist area, i.e. to the HR areas. Especially when it comes to content and user experience. In the future, the business department will be less dependent on IT and will be able to act more autonomously.

Both sides, IT and HR, will welcome this, because there is no potential for conflict here. One challenge, however, will be how to deal with data protection, information security, (cyber) security and so on. One of the challenges in the context of NLC will be to develop a suitable governance model and embed it in the company. For modern HR decision-makers, this is an opportunity to position themselves early on. In the course of digitalization, internal structures and spheres of power will also be renegotiated.

Sebastian: But still, compared to other staff functions and departments, HR is rated as little digitized in the study. Do you share this assessment, and what are the most important reasons for this?

Juergen: I do not share the assessment. The study results are so close together that this is not statistically relevant. The only outlier is the IT department, which is not surprising. It is interesting that none of the respondents perceives the HR department as fully digitized and that the satisfaction with regard to

digitalization is lowest in the HR department. Here, the HR department obviously cannot live up to expectations. This also fits in very well with the fact that the IT competence of the HR department is valued by the management and the other departments as good to very good.

I see an opportunity here for HR to step into a leadership role, because obviously people expect more from HR and trust them to do it.

Sebastian: According to the study, planning for innovative IT investments in digital HR has started. How do you see the market trends since the pandemic, who is driving the demand and what are the most important targets?

Juergen: We actually don't see a real trend, or not yet. We still see many departments that are only now switching from analogue file management to an e-file. The topic of digital signatures is on the agenda for many. In the larger companies, we see many HR departments

struggle with the fact that they have introduced cloud solutions which, compared to the previously used on-premise applications, no longer support many processes or no longer support them as well. In this case, they either try to buy in special applications, which leads to a fragmentation of the IT landscape, i.e. an application zoo, or they help themselves with the simplest on-board tools. Often these are Outlook and Excel. In our opinion, this is the reason for the study result that 91% of HR managers consider Excel to be important or very important for their work. We recommend the

HR decision-makers to focus on NLC (no/low coding). With an NLC platform, they can on the one hand close the gap created by cloud migration and at the same time drive digitization themselves.

Sebastian: So you're fully committed to no/low coding technology when it comes to automating core HR processes. What roles and tasks need to be created in the HR departments to get this technology up and running successfully?

Juergen: Yes, we are fully committed to no/low coding technology and are not alone in this. Gartner, Forrester and of course our study partner Computerwoche/IDG see NLC as one of the most important developments in the field of software applications. We see three roles that need to be concretized and then filled in the companies. At the highest management level it is the NLC governor. Here it must be regulated how NLC technology is to be used, who is allowed to introduce and change what and to what extent process and application standards have priority. Security, information security and data protection must be regulated at this level. The second role, i.e. the first and second management levels in the departments, should deal with the role model of the product owner(s). It is a matter of understanding what an NLC platform can do and of commissioning and managing suitable application development. This role carries technical aspects but more importantly aspects of agile management. From our experience, there is a lot here that need to be catched up.

The third role, the role of the no-coders, then concerns rather the employees:
How do I build simple applications in a short time, use them productively and continuously improve the applications? It is precisely here that the combination of technical skills and the new NLC skills offer opportunities. The position of payroll accountant or social insurance specialist can be significantly modernized with the NLC skill profile and may thus become more attractive again.

Sebastian: Do I understand it correctly that we are talking about the interplay of technology and New Work here?

Juergen: Absolutely. In a certain way, it is precisely the no/low-code technology that enables and requires the implementation of central demands from the New Work movement. These two topics are mutually dependent. With the help of NLC I can shape my working environment more strongly than ever before. On the one hand, this increases participation and

at the same time, also the responsibility. If NLC standards become established in the next few years - which is to be expected - new habits and new types of employment relationships and earned income will emerge. I can imagine that in the future employees will bring their own NLC applications. The theme will then be "Bring Your Own Software. If we think this through to the end, there could also be remuneration for the use of this (personally brought) software.

Ready for digitization?

With the following questionnaire designed by ESCRIBA you can find out how high the digitalization maturity level is within your area.

The Feasibility Checker

The automation of personnel administration processes has a major impact on corporate structures and procedures.

Use the ESCRIBA Feasibilty Checker to question the maturity of your department for the digital future:

- Penetrate the subject matter from the four different angles of Discover, Define, Confirm, and Deliver.

- Get quick guidance on relevant issues before implementing NLC.

- Develop your point of view on technology & change in a structured way.

Be perfectly prepared for conversations with employees, superiors or service providers.

Feasability Checker

Your future is ready!

This is followed by a conclusion that reiterates the messages of this e-book and the importance of digitizing and automating HR.

Digitization is teamwork!

Since a large part of the company's innovative power lies in the hands and minds of its employees, they need not only the right expertise but also the right skills.
In order to be able to drive and accompany future-oriented digitization with NLC solutions and process automation, extensive knowledge of NLC and automation technologies as well as their application and possible uses is required at the interface between expertise and planning - in addition to the correct mindset.

Digitization is not a question of "if", but of "when". The HR area should therefore not run behind its possibilities and especially in comparison to other areas, but become a pioneer of digitalization and automation.

This is only possible if both management and employees pull together and competencies and structures are built up in a sustainable and smart way.

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