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By James Thomas.

Automation is the future of work – and it isn't because of the labor shortage. While the “Great Resignation” has brought the importance of the employee experience and workflow automaton into national discussions, the lack of skilled employees isn't the problem.

The issue lies in the lack of meaningful work.

Employees spend over **three hours a day** on automatable work. These repetitive

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employee engagement plummets. The work isn't meaningful, the workflow is taxing, and employees aren't able to use their full skillset.

In fact, **9 out of 10** employees would take a pay cut for a more meaningful work experience—furthermore, workers who feel that their job has purpose are 69% less likely to quit.

So, where do automation workflows come in?

Automation is no longer a competitor

For years many workers eyed automation with suspicion. Today, we know that workflow automation is not here to snatch up human jobs but to complement the employee experience. And this is particularly true for AP and AR departments. Financial professionals don't have enough time in the day for both manual processing tasks, such as invoice matching, and delving into analytics or strategy.

Automation tools provide a way for accounting professionals to boost their productivity and reduce their time on repetitive tasks. At the same time, workflow automation decreases the chance for human error and expense fraud. While human interaction is still required in continuing the software and dealing with exceptions, automated workflows are far faster and more accurate than editing processes. Time spent on invoice processing alone can drop from 11.7 days to 3.1.

In other words, automation isn't replacing workers. Instead, it's streamlining boring, meaningless processes and making it easier for existing employees to do their jobs well.

Enhancing the employee experience

The combination of artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and

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Meanwhile, AP and AR teams can focus on business operations strategy, foster relationships with other departments, and provide more detailed insight and review into business spending. In other words, they can be seen as prominent stakeholders in the business and provide meaningful insight to the management team.

Providing tools for meaningful work

There are a few items to consider for CFOs and accounting department managers looking to invest in automated workflows.

First, what automation technology software will most meet your needs. Generally, a few features every AP automation workflow will need are:

- Invoice AI automation to capture, verify, and reconcile invoices.
- Data extraction and matching automation to capture data from receipts.
- VAT reclamation and processing capabilities.
- General workflow automations that can collect and present in-depth data from your AP process.

Ideally, these tools should be intelligent automation solutions – meaning that they learn and optimize the process automatically over time. Furthermore, they should be compliant with payment security and AP reporting standards.

Finally, the best long-term solution will also be cloud-based. These platforms make remote work a cinch and allow your AP team to easily work from anywhere.

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