(1) Avoiding Pitfalls in Automation Programs: Lessons from Cognizant -

Transcript:

(00:00) [Music] hey everybody it's Gabriel we are live from Imagine I'm here with my main man Micah and we've got a little sit down with my good friend Marissa kokona from cognizant Marissa how are you I am fabulous and thank you so much for having me here today thank you not only you here to uh chop it up with us a little bit but you guys are also a platinum sponsor so thank you very much of course we're happy to sponsor we're happy to be here been very proud sponsors of automation anywhere for I

(00:37) think pretty much from the beginning yeah I think you have you guys day yeah they're day ones they're day ones you guys have been uh a tremendous partner um it's amazing to see you know last year we're in New York y started to get an uptick in the in the attendance it was a little more intimate but it was fabulous just to have everyone back in place again now we're here in Austin double the attendance double the energy is I mean it's I thought last year the energy was great holy cow with all the

(01:04) new announcements with all the new things um tell me a little bit about how it feels to be back you know at a at an event like I'm sure you have multiple events you've been at already but we do but this one feels really good there's a lot of energy I love the movement also the way this is set up there's floors you can interact with people there's demos there's master classes we had our clients speak this morning so this has really been phenomenal just also get back in person I know we've been doing

(01:28) it for the last year but this feels like we're getting back into a normal flow of meeting people getting together I think we were still dabbling the last year because it was you know postco so I agree the energy has been phenomenal at this event I would say that a big trend of this imagine is moving customers from start to accelerate or accelerate to scale and part of that means thinking about the people and the roles that Empower your automation program right um you know the theme of this year's imagine humans to the power of AI but we

(02:00) ' always been about making work human freeing humans from you know the tedious and the mundane um with Micah and the Pathfinder program and the company and the way the platform's built we are empowering companies at three different phases whether it's starting accelerating or scaling y um but when it comes to the people and how you need to position them or or build the teams for those different phases how do you approach that how are you at cognizant when you're talking to your various clients in those different phases um

(02:35) what are some of the keys to those to the makeup of those teams yeah you know it's funny I think there's a lot of focus always on the technology first right you have to get it implemented you start building you get your PC's but what we really see to move past that initial stage to be able to accelerate and then ultimately reach scale and I would even say sustain right it's how we actually are working now is using Automation and these tools and Technologies a part of our day job we have to think about the people element

(03:00) how do you bring them along this journey and most start with like awareness sessions raising that digital IQ of the organization and I think that is a great place to start but then you do need to start moving past it think about people's jobs are now impacted by this technology in their organization so it may be employees have to work alongside digital workers they may have to be helping build maybe not building maybe they're just helping funnel ideas much like L6 Sigma is right not everyone's a

(03:29) master black belt but most are aware they could do continuous Improvement everyone could be a part of this automation journey and I'd even move as far as like technology embedding Journey that we're doing into how people are going to work in the future and then I think the next piece is going to be now how do managers have to think about this how does HR have to think about hiring differently how do we do learning differently because now not you know not just doing like an infos training every year compliance training maybe we also

(03:56) have to add some technology training into the mix so that we're continually evolving to meet also with how this entire industry is evolving I like that you know for a lot of automation programs that are just getting started they usually start quite small right it's maybe an automation lead or an IT leader and a couple people who are doing some development talk to me about how cognizant has been able to coach customers through growing and scaling through that because as people start it's like everyone's wearing multiple

(04:23) hats and everyone's doing multiple things but as organizations start to grow their automation practice it starts to see that people are moving into specializations so how does cognizant complement that and how are you coaching people through that so we help them through that Journey right so it does typically start with a Coe team or a lead for the program we help them think about how do you start expanding out into the business how do you bring your it technology teams and business together and then how do you start to

(04:49) elevate it as well because you also need to get senior leaders bought in they need to understand the benefit and it's this isn't an initiative I do think there's a sometimes that is the focus to me this is is how do you use this as a lever to achieve your strategic initiatives because that's really the power of what this technology can do so we help them along that Journey whether it's creating the strategy helping to have the executive conversation also then getting into the leaders how do you

(05:15) incorporate this into your role how do you make that blend we even have built training programs for them multi-tier too so things like in their LMS programs to how do you do the Technical Training for employees how do you do basic awareness and having that ability to here is how it starts ingraining into the organization itself and how it begins to integrate and also importantly it's not just about you know we all started with the RPA space but this has truly evolved into intelligent hyper automation right and we need to think

(05:43) about gen also and how does that impact how do we incorporate to be able to drive those outcomes for the organization and so we think about how do you integrate across all those layers into rethinking the process how do you integrate across the Technologies and very then importantly like we're talking about here how do you help people along this journey because we're not all Native to these tools in Tech not everyone's going to embrace it the same way so you have to think about the medium in which you're going to deliver

(06:08) and then help each of those different personalities personas to be able to learn evolve and then ultimately sustain in your organization I love that so it's all about upskilling you know as a part of um imagine we're actually launching Pathfinder Academy which is new training for automation leads for Developers for citizen developers so I'm really excited about people being able to experience that kind of stuff and get Hands-On uh with our software in a new way one other thing you mentioned that I want to hit

(06:34) on is this idea of promotion and engagement is something that we talk about with the Pathfinder program and it's not something that really I'll be honest comes natural for a lot of it leaders if I was leading an IT program it's one thing for me to do that it's another thing for me to be a self-promoter or a marketer you know why you why are you looking at me when you say that well I'm wearing socks to have my own face on them so that is true you are so I want to I want to hear your perspective on how you're coaching

(07:02) different automation leaders cuz it is kind of a different a skill you know it is even if you're in the business not everyone's out there you know doing promotional awareness training coffee chats hackathons I mean there's a whole element here of Engagement that is different than traditional technology deployment I actually think that's why honestly some of the industry struggled for the first few years because it is an element of having to bring process together in a way that you maybe never

(07:28) did before that type of work this is having to spend time with the people I mean there's even an element of you know we think of change management which is really what this starts touching on you do have to spend time with people it takes you have to take that time to actually explain things like even if we put the trainings out there and they're self-paced there's something to be said of also making time to sit down and explain and answer questions on Where are we going how we hope this will work

(07:52) what are they seeing as a challenge because it might make you better yeah it's another big piece and I think it's about you know helping people build these new muscles of Engagement um we've done some really cool things also around creating what we call a community of practice because we find that also automation teams only have so much bandwidth to be able to go out and do all of this right and maybe not everyone's so comfortable with it either so it's how do you also engage the community to self-learn self te answer

(08:19) questions U maybe create a little bit of uh healthy competition right a little gamification if you can add in to is always nice and what we've seen is that when you do that you start to get not it's not an initiative it's not just a metric you start to feel it and if you feel it that's different that's a Tipping Point in an organization where you know you're starting to create a real change and and a positive one yeah a little bit of that fomo too right get people excited about like what am I

(08:48) missing out on because I don't have this capability I would want that you I'm like wait a minute you can do that I want I want that oh yeah we've done some creative things with clients too on just prizes they could give out rotating Awards um like special designed things also because custom stuff yeah it's really exciting for them because it's also it's it's making people engag they want to be a part of it it's a cool thing to put on their desk if they're in the office or even you know if they're

(09:15) not in the office we we ship it to them so on your uh Zoom call or teams call it's sitting there proudly displayed but there's a lot of fun stuff like that and also look we all spend a lot of time at work right and we know we're going to have to do our job but if you can make things more fun engaging and and make people want to do more because it just feels good yeah I mean doesn't that also make all of us feel better too that's yeah and that's that's why we're here right so you can do that so you talked

(09:43) about some I mean those are amazing Concepts Amazing Ideas things that that um customers can use are using to help amplify the success the possibilities create that awareness of of the programs right um we also have a segment of our show here called keep it real okay yeah we're keeping it real now okay so those are some examples of successes what are the things where do people fail what are the things you've tried even that just didn't work you're like we give a shot didn't work like what are those I want to hear that give

(10:18) me the dirt I mean there's a lot of things that I would say I've seen go wrong on these programs I actually ran an automation program myself before I came into cognizant so I was in the early days so I have all the scars too from this learning curve I think you know I could I don't think there's long enough time in this segment for all those life lessons we had along the way I think a couple of things one is when you're setting your program up like everyone's like is it a Coe is it Federated is it a hybrid is it I don't

(10:46) know pick a term for it look at they all can work it it's what works best for your organization there is no checklist to make an automation program successful if it was we'd all be doing it it would be really easy and I'd probably be in a different at this point because we've been at this for like a de you had your Jed my taii last night actually it was very creative um but yeah I would say that's one is that there is no checklist to all of this there you have to think about what's going to work in your organization

(11:16) everyone has to document but that doesn't mean you have to document in the same way you don't have to use a Word document you might have an online portal use you have to think about what is going to work for your organization how are people going to want to use this what's going to be most natural and easy cuz that's what this is supposed to be right so I think that's one when it comes to ideation top down alone doesn't work bottoms up alone doesn't work it takes both you need the top down because

(11:42) you're going to find big connected Solutions that's where you're going to get the bigger benefit in Roi but you need the Grassroots because that's your buyin that's also making things better easier for your organization which by the way if you make things better you get better quality you get faster and guess what you will get Roi too it's just going to take a bit more time but when you go for the big swing initiatives people are going to want to work with you more because you also help

(12:06) think about them along this journey I think the other thing is think about the technology Suite that you have because look you have to think about how to integrate there's a lot of tools and texts out there to be able to think end to end process Automation and you want to think how do you complement how do you think about those joint Solutions how do you think about building in a way that reuses and so that it makes it easier to support and maintain in the long run because most focus on get something build get it out there but you want this

(12:36) to run and in a way that doesn't break down that isn't brittle and so you have to think about the governance piece the maintenance piece how do you continue to harden and improve and I think one of the things too that you guys are doing is really nice when you're talking about like Pathfinder and also even some of the um ways to monitor how the program is running it's that continuous Improvement element if you don't make the program better over time obviously it's a business process it evolves and

(13:00) we want things to get better faster so that people don't say hey my my bot failed or my document didn't intake correctly or my dashboard wasn't refreshed on time you know all of that's frustrating for your un user so you have to think of how does it come together how do you make it as seamless as possible for your users and then on the back end we're all running a business we can't forget that just because we're excited about something so you have to keep the eye on how do I keep using this

(13:27) to drive results and outcomes back into the organization yesterday we were doing some stuff and we were talking about that right reusability um uh the the resilience um supportability maintainability sustainability all of those things all of those abilities all the abilities yeah um which is which is awesome because to your point like again sort of almost going to The Silo mentality it can be sort of at a micro level too where you're like I'm going to build this solution um it doesn't scale with if I change a platform or I get if

(13:58) I'm on now or among whatever yeah and then we they upgrade alternate breaks now we're we're stuck so those are like key considerations to do but I agree um we can go so much further and I hope we get the chance to do so but thank you so much again for for joining us it's always a [Music] pleasure

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