

# Citizen Developer Program

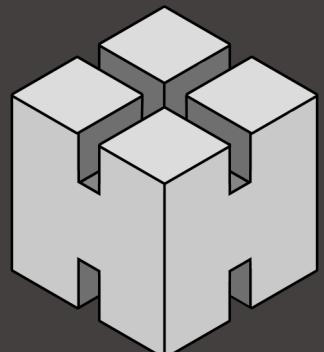
## Buzzword or Game Changer?



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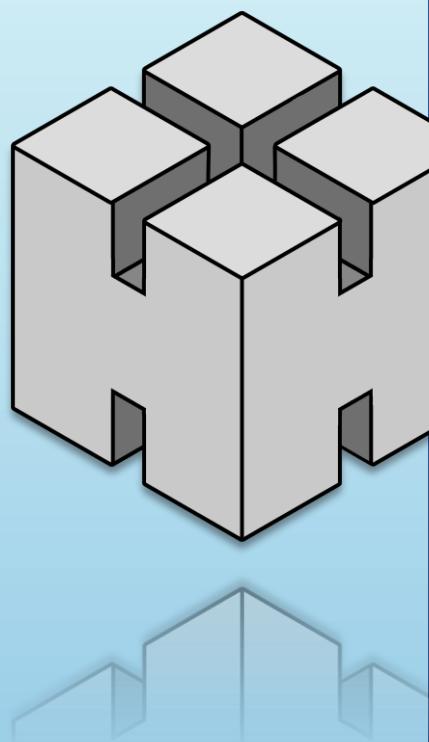
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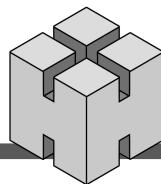
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## Why establish an RPA Citizen Developer Program?

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According to [Gartner](#), a citizen developer is an employee who creates application capabilities (robotic process automation, in this case) for consumption by themselves or others, using tools that are not actively forbidden by IT or business units. A citizen developer is a persona, not a title or targeted role. The best citizen developers tend to have structured thinking, and a tendency or inclination for exploring new digital technologies.

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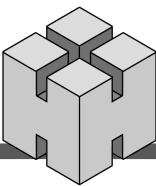
## Executive Summary

A major buzzword these days, a citizen developer program (CDP) is a powerful device available in the corporate toolkit to scale up enterprise automation, particularly a Robotic Process Automation (RPA) program. When done right, it can bring great benefits, increasing workforce productivity and engagement, reducing risk and cost, speeding up value delivery in the enterprise, increasing ROI, and disseminating RPA adoption. However, CDPs will often be created without a proper strategy and implementation roadmap, leading to poor execution, frustration, and disappointing results.

In this paper, we share our learnings and observations from multiple real-life experiences to help you set up a successful RPA citizen developer program, raising awareness of pitfalls and listing actionable steps.

RPA Citizen Developer Programs provide the opportunity to a significant number of employees that are not in traditional IT job roles to learn an exciting, relatively easy-to-use technology and to optimize their business processes without having to rely on IT staff and their development timelines, priorities, or budgets. CDPs have the potential to enable quick productivity gains without the cost of adding expensive IT resources while giving business users control over their priorities and delivery timeframes. IT will be a key partner in this journey, providing guidance, oversight, and support, while retaining control of the platform. Citizen developers may use this platform for themselves or a department or a larger number of business stakeholders while following the prescribed different governance guidelines. A CDP may also open doors to new career directions.

The low code/no-code capabilities of major RPA platforms (UiPath, Automation Anywhere, Blue Prism, Microsoft Power Automate, and others), easy to learn and use, intuitive platforms, and readily available online self-help are major factors that make a CDP viable for many RPA projects, particularly simple ones. Projects with medium to high complexity are suitable only for experienced citizen developers, while highly complex ones are better left to dedicated RPA developers.



## First things first – establish a traditional RPA program

The proven approach for establishing a successful citizen developer program is to start with a traditional RPA program, with dedicated resources. For firms starting their RPA journey, a CDP should be part of their overall RPA strategy and roadmap, to be added after establishing a solid foundation. For RPA programs that are well underway, a CDP can be added, and the overall strategy adjusted accordingly, leveraging the lessons learned and adapting policies and procedures from the traditional RPA program. During the early phases of your program, you may start planning for the impact of CDP in some key areas:

- **Bot Ids** – Identity and Access management Ids to be created exclusively for CDP bots
- **Policies and Procedures** – CDP specific, approved by Compliance, Audit, Risk, and Legal
- **Bot monitoring** procedures for CDP
- **Training** – Training programs created for citizen developers can be adapted from the training provided to RPA developers and may also be tailored for different citizen developer profiles – developers, power developers, bot managers, etc.

## Start small and scale-up

The RPA CDP should be rolled out similarly to the traditional RPA program: start small, select one business team or department, and scale it up afterward. Some key elements are:

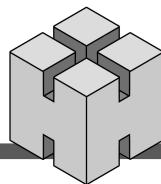
- Establish a dedicated Citizen Development Program team within the Center of Excellence (CoE)
- Identify potential processes to be automated, categorizing and prioritizing the opportunities by complexity and expected benefits
- Establish a “Community of Practice” for a wide audience
- Identify and train potential citizen developers
- After training, citizen developers will start their RPA journey, under the guidance of the RPA CoE
- Identify those citizen developers who could influence their teams as part of the CDP, nurture them, encourage full participation in a community of practice

## Establish the Citizen Developer Program

A dedicated team within the RPA CoE, focusing on specific citizen developer needs while providing oversight for policy compliance, vendor relationship management, RPA software upgrades, infrastructure, platform upgrades, and overall support and enablement, is critical for a successful citizen developer program.

There are multiple new roles required for CDP. These roles would ideally be performed by fully dedicated resources, but some of them may be fulfilled by core RPA CoE team members wearing multiple hats:

- RPA COE Lead may take on the additional responsibility of **RPA CDP Program owner**, an overall owner of the CDP program, with overall responsibility for tracking and reporting the benefits of CDP to senior management, by managing relationships with different business units participating in the CDP.
- RPA Business Analysts (BAs), as process intake/discovery owners, will work with the business units initially to help them identify and prioritize opportunities (if needed), create appropriate documentation, verify test cases and test data, etc.
- The Project Manager manages the program, monitoring the status and effectiveness of each project and the program as a whole.
- RPA CDP Platform Manager manages permissions in the RPA platform, code migration between environments (Dev to QA to UAT to Prod), application installation/set up, monitors bot activities, and performs other technical tasks.
- Development and support engineers help to:
  - Create and publish standards (naming conventions, coding standards, versioning, etc.).
  - Oversee the CDP training program and mentor new developers, as needed.
  - Review and approve process designs (requesting design revisions, as needed).
  - Review code before moving to UAT and Production (utilize code review tools if available), prepare for platform migration, and promote code to Production, as needed.
- Communications Manager manages the Community of Practice, to communicate with citizen developers, businesses, IT, and across the organization; maintains an internal site – using SharePoint pages, Confluence, or similar tools – publishes, monitors, and responds to internal social media / Yammer.



## Implement policy or guidelines for selecting Citizen Development projects

Establishing clear guidelines to identify which processes can be developed by citizen developers and which ones should be routed to a traditional RPA development team is critical for a successful CDP.

- For simple processes, governance, development standards, and procedures should be light, reflecting that simplicity. This will enable a significant number of citizen developers to develop, deploy and maintain their processes.
- For more complex processes, more governance is required. It is better to handle that automation through a traditional RPA development team. As the citizen developer program matures, dedicated resources (internal or external) may be identified to work in a hybrid model, following CDP procedures.

## Establish Tollgates

RPA CDP should establish an appropriate level of governance and tollgates:

- For simple process automation, a use case coupled with a simple process description or flow may suffice. The documentation should be reviewed and approved before going live.
- Before deployment to production, the code should be reviewed to ensure that it works as designed, requirements are met, and good/approved standards are followed – naming convention, coding standards, etc. Changes should be implemented as needed, following change management procedures.
- Testing requirements should be established – required test data should be available for testing. Test results should be stored for audit purposes.
- A formal approval process needs to be established for each stage.

Guidelines and rules should be established for:

- Completion of UAT
- Completion of supervised production
- Change management and maintenance
- Code fixes

## Monitor Bot activities

Bot activities should be monitored to ensure that bot licenses are being fully utilized, benefits are realized, and issues are being addressed.

- Bot licenses that are not utilized after deployment should be investigated for redeployment if they are no longer needed.
- Unattended bots that are used within narrow time slots (and low utilization rate) may be able to perform other tasks during existing idle time slots.
- Bots that are failing often may need to be redesigned, redeveloped, or retired.
- Bots may be performing unauthorized actions. Bots that are not following approved procedures may need to be redesigned or prevented from running until violations are resolved.

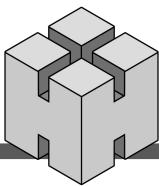
## Validate the benefits and value delivered

Early in the program, it should be defined how the benefits will be measured for the RPA CDP. Multiple metrics should be developed and may include:

- Number of bots deployed, or number of process automated per month or quarter
- Number (or percentage) of transactions processed through automation – per month/quarter/year
- Estimated number of hours saved per month/year
- Other quantifiable and unquantifiable benefits like revenue lift, SLA improvement, accuracy improvements, rework compliance, employee morale, should be considered and incorporated into the overall benefits
- ROI – cumulative and monthly/quarterly estimates

## Establish a Community of Practice

Creating a community of practice, using a forum-like environment, curated by the COE, for internal RPA CD teams to share experiences, suggest solutions, and receive COE communications, is crucial for the long-term success of the citizen developer program. Yammer and similar tools will keep the buzz going, enabling the community to share success stories. This dynamic will also enable the RPA CDP COE to gauge the level of satisfaction, address potential pain points, causes for frustrations – and address them in a timely manner to ensure the success of the CDP.



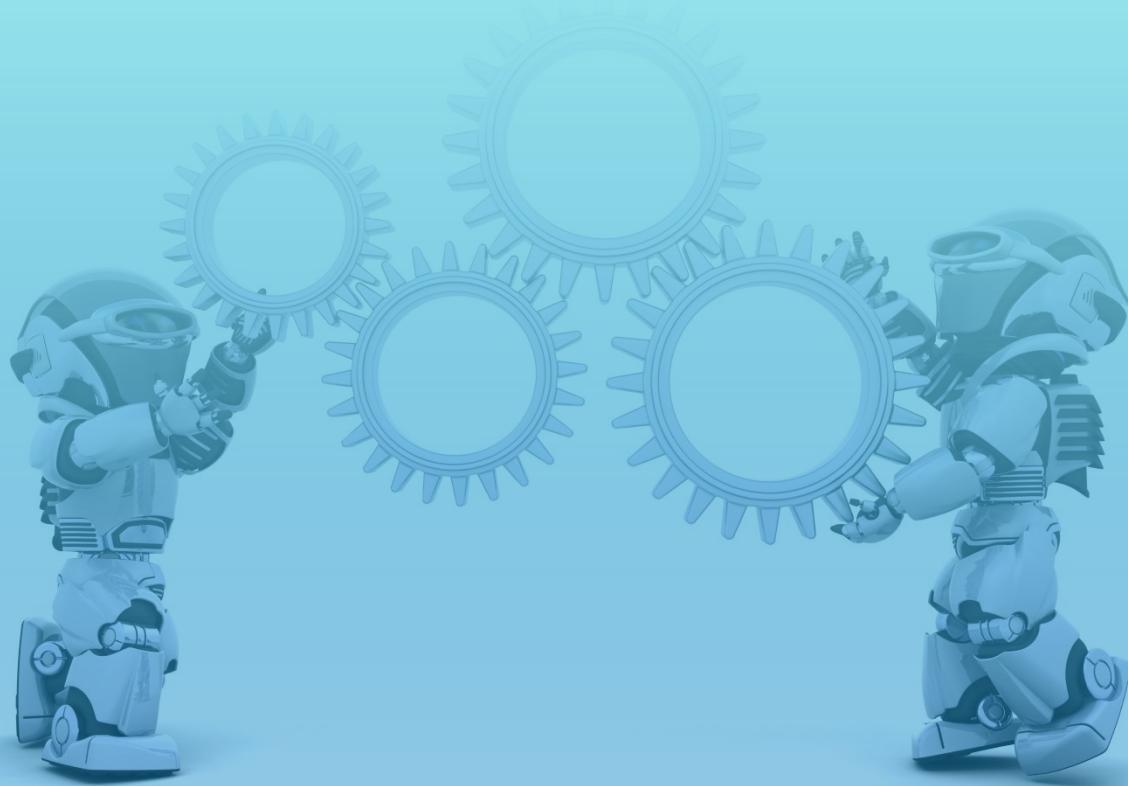
## Conclusions

RPA citizen developer programs have a greater chance of success as an extension to traditional RPA programs, with their governance and committed resources.

Policies and procedures, standards, tollgates, roles and responsibilities, and monitoring tools should be established early in the process, led by a Center of Excellence, comprised of experienced RPA practitioners, with internal or external resources, as needed.

Business units should be encouraged to join the CDP at their own pace, based on their individual readiness, talent mix, automation needs, and other interdependencies.

Establishing a Community of Practice will go a long way to ensure that citizen developers stay engaged and informed, share experiences, and follow best practices as the program and the RPA platform evolves. This forum will contribute to the continuous refinement of policies and procedures as the CPD program progresses.



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