



Accelerating Automation

How Businesses are Adapting to a Post COVID-19 World





METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted online in the United States, United Kingdom and Germany by The Harris Poll from May 22 – May 30, 2020 among Business Leaders (VP, SVP or C-level roles) within organizations of 250+ employees and who have decision making authority as it relates to automating business processes.

This report summarizes the key findings of the research. For more information on the data, contact K2.

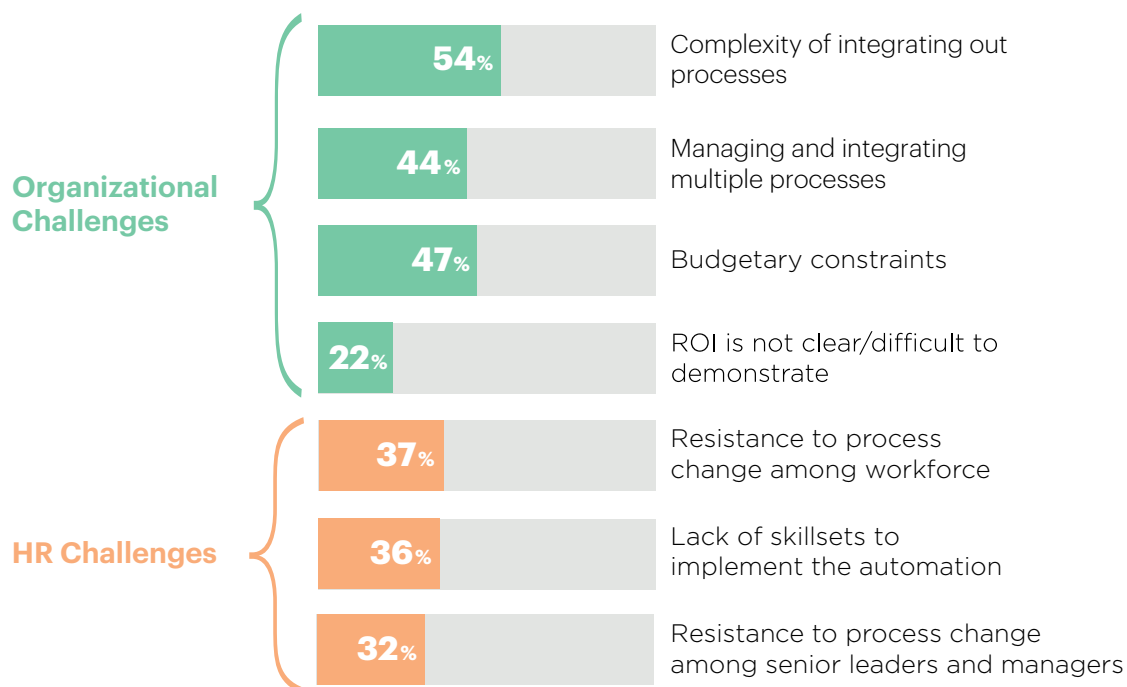
Business process automation is challenging at the baseline – and COVID-19 has made it feel nearly impossible. However, it is more important now than ever.

Across industries and countries, it is clear that process automation and digitization are viewed as critical to long-term organizational success.

92% of business leaders across regions agree that to survive and flourish, companies must enable digital channels and process automation in the workplace.

However, it is equally apparent that achieving the desired end state is no easy task. 86% of businesses say they face one or more key barriers to process automation: complexity, limited budgets, lack of required skillsets and/or a resistance to change.

The complexity of process automation is the top challenge. However, limited budgets are also a common roadblock. When it comes to human resources, there are two main challenges: lack of relevant skillsets and internal resistance to change.

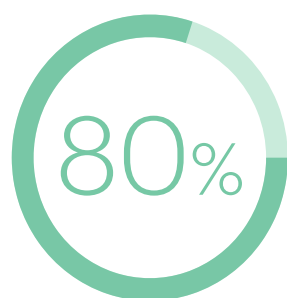




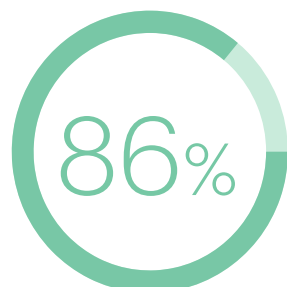
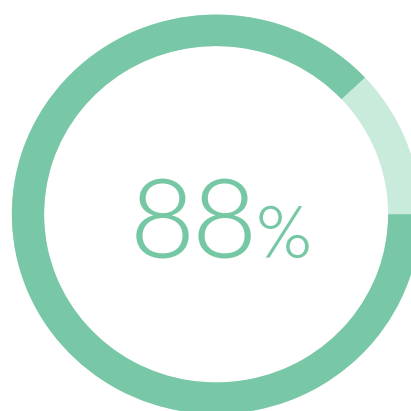
And these are just challenges *before* COVID-19 is introduced to the mix.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken most businesses to their core – forcing a complete departure from ‘status quo’. 80% are facing new challenges related to COVID-19 – either a need to develop new processes to address COVID-19 realities (60%) or challenges stemming from a distributed workforce (59%) - maintaining operational efficiencies in the new distributed environment and enabling remote workers.

Roughly 8-in-10 business leaders feel their organizations had been moving at about the right pace of process automation before COVID-19. However, the disruption of the last several months require that paradigm to be re-evaluated as nearly all believe that automation will be critical to business survival moving forward.



face new challenges as a result of COVID-19



face non-COVID-19 challenges

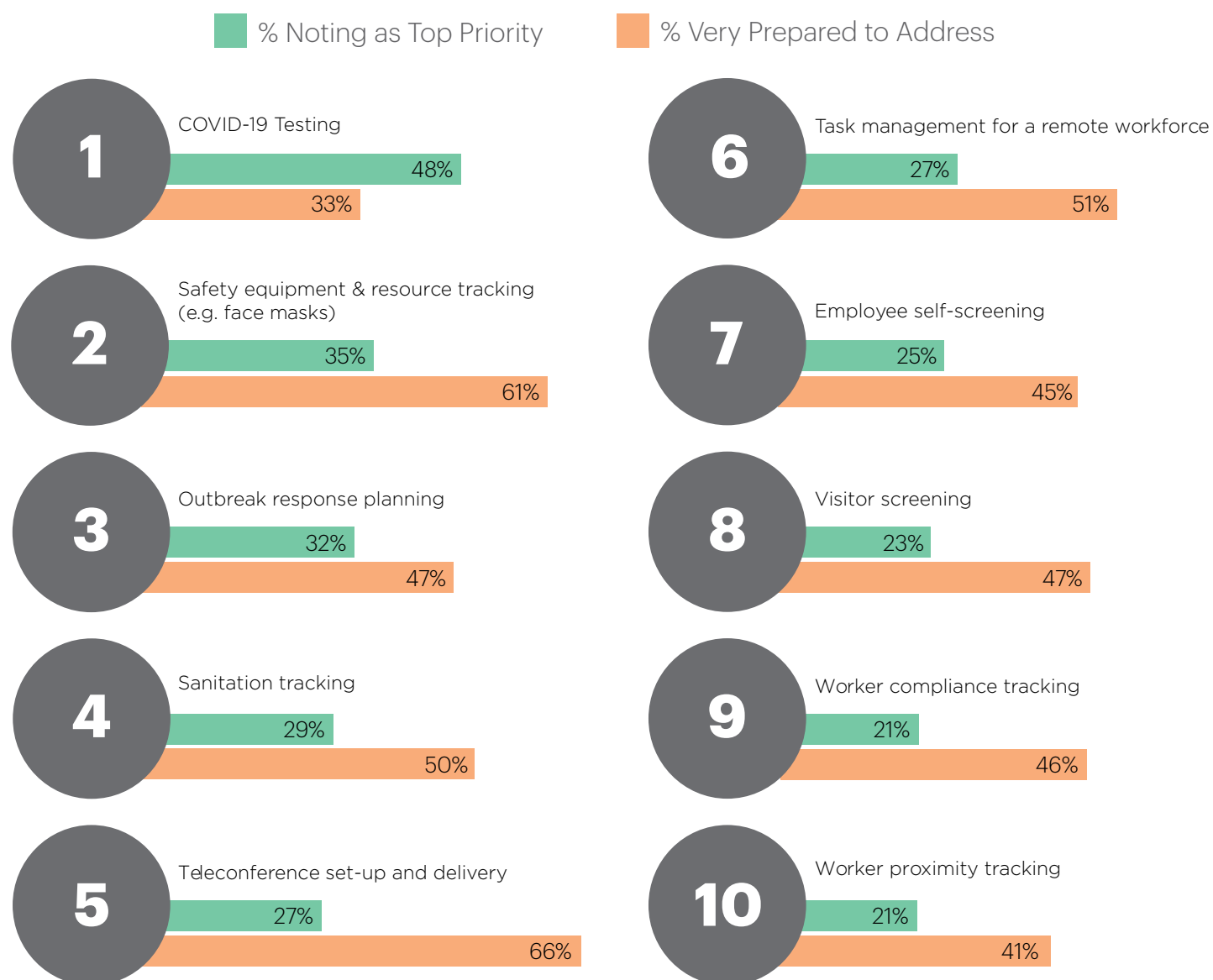
of business leaders agree that an important outcome of the pandemic is an increased need for process automation

Businesses are prioritizing development of new, automated processes to address COVID-19 realities, but only 7% are prepared to deal with the breadth of issues COVID-19 brings.

The top COVID-19 related priorities are: COVID-19 testing, safety equipment and resource tracking, outbreak response planning, sanitation tracking, and task management for a remote workforce. However, most businesses are not logistically well-equipped to address these emerging needs. In fact, businesses are least prepared to deal with what they see as the top

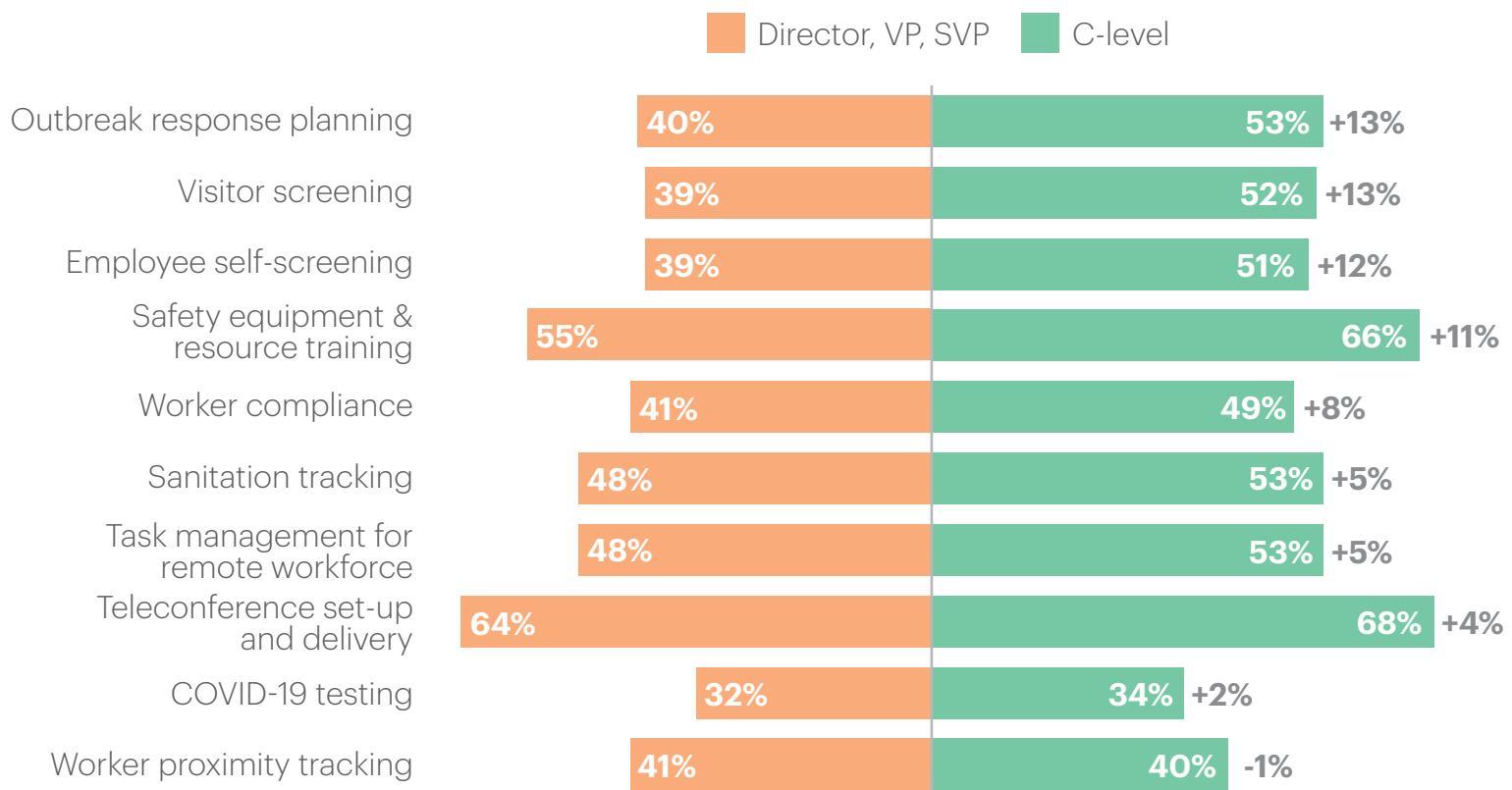
priority – COVID-19 testing. Only one-third believe they are 'very prepared' to address this and only about half are prepared to deal with the other top priorities.


Only 7% of businesses surveyed are very prepared to deal with all of the new COVID-19 needs.



There is a disconnect - The C-suite is more likely to believe their companies are prepared to address new needs than the teams under them.

C-level executives and their teams agree on the top pandemic-driven priorities, but disagree in many cases about how prepared companies are to actually address new process needs. For example, 53% of C-level execs believe their companies are very prepared for outbreak response planning versus only 40% of lower level leaders. A similar disconnect is seen for many other COVID-19 needs – safety equipment and resources tracking, employee self-screening and visitor screening.





Most companies have ambitious goals for the next year considering their current state – on average, half of processes in organizations are not yet automated.

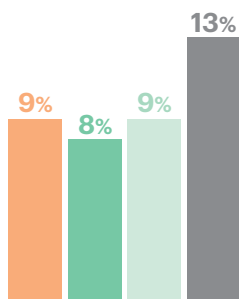
Many organizations are still in very early stages of process automation, and still rely heavily on manual processes.

On average, only about half (51%) of business processes are automated.

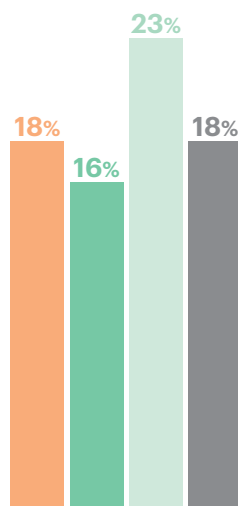
Businesses in the US have automated a greater percentage of business processes than those in the UK and Germany.

Across regions, only 1-in-5 are embracing process automation in its most advanced forms, and nearly 1-in-10 are at the beginning, having only taken initial steps toward automation. Businesses in the United States are further along the adoption curve than are those in the United Kingdom and Germany. And in all countries, Enterprise organizations (1000+ employees) have embraced more sophisticated forms of automation than their Mid-Market (250-999 employees) counterparts.

Intelligent Automation Implementation Levels



Content mgmt. systems only



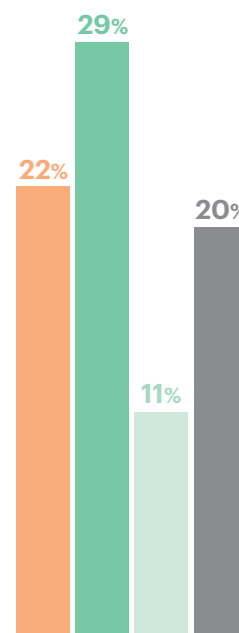
Simple workflow or electronic forms



Business process automation for human-based tasks



Business process automation combining human-centric tasks, robotic process automation & business intelligence to drive continuous process improvement

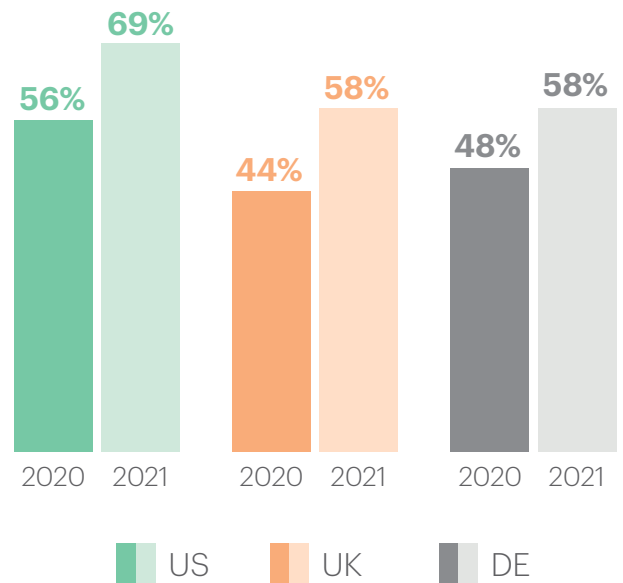


Machine-based automation, utilizing AI, machine learning, IoT and/or chatbots to drive company-wide digital transformation & efficiency

However, businesses are expecting to significantly increase the number of processes that are digitized or automated over the next 12 months – on average, businesses are projecting growth rates of 20%.

Much of the acceleration is driven by those in the first three phases of the adoption curve. These organizations plan to increase the number of processes automated by 30% over the next year vs. only an 18% increase among those in the final two stages of process automation.

Percent of Processes Automated as of June...



Automation is also key to meeting customer satisfaction goals, something that a third of businesses are still struggling with.

More than one-in-three companies (36%) across regions are having difficulty meeting customer satisfaction goals. Nearly all (92%) acknowledge that effective use of process automation and digital transformation is key to addressing this aspect of their business.

92%

of business leaders across regions agree that to survive and flourish, companies must enable digital channels and process automation in the workplace.

Moving forward:

Organizations overwhelmingly agree that business process automation must be embraced to address new, immediate business realities as well as to ensure long-term survival. This is not an easy road. Those who are most effective at overcoming barriers and

rallying their teams to embrace change will be well-poised to win in the future.

Interested in learning more about how to emerge strong from the current environment? K2 can help.

www.k2.com/HarrisPoll



About K2 Software, Inc.

K2, a leader in intelligent process automation, enables enterprises to speed time-to-market and simplify the creation of modern process applications, automate workflows and transform their businesses. More than 4 million users in over 84 countries are using K2 to take control of their business processes, increase visibility and improve operational efficiency. Learn more about K2 and its vision [here](#).

About The Harris Poll

The Harris Poll is one of the longest-running surveys in the U.S., tracking public opinion, motivations and social sentiment since 1963. It is now part of Harris Insights & Analytics, a global consulting and market research firm that strives to reveal the authentic values of modern society to inspire leaders to create a better tomorrow. We work with clients in three primary areas; building twenty-first-century corporate reputation, crafting brand strategy and performance tracking, and earning organic media through public relations research. Our mission is to provide insights and advisory to help leaders make the best decisions possible.

