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BUSTING THE BIG AUTOMATION MYTHS WEBINAR

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Amar Narayan [00:00:02] Good morning. And a big thank you. And welcome for joining us today. My name is Amar Narayan and I head up Accenture's intelligent automation work that we do across health and public sector clients within the UK and Ireland. I'm joined by three fellow guest speakers today. Firstly, James Merrick-Potter from the Government Automation Taskforce at the Cabinet Office. Hayley Addison, the product owner of the intelligent automation garage of the Department for Work and Pensions and Mark Jennings, the strategy consulting lead for Accenture's Health and Public Services Group in the UK and Ireland. So just before we get going. A quick bit of housekeeping, Accenture fully respects competition law. So this will be a frank and open discussion today. And we won't be agreeing on any aspects of competition, topics that will be avoided or price or price related data. Strategic planning or marketing information and any agreement among competitors. So that's what's not on the agenda today. So what is today going to be about? Well, today is all about breaking through the mythology that has been built up around automation and as a result is stopping its adoption at a time when arguably it has never been more important. So kick start with James. Will headline the reason the government sees automation as an imperative. Mark will then talk to the big problems technology operations and finance team seen as the blockers to a greater adoption of automation. Then we will systematically bust these myths. I will introduce a new approach towards motion that overcomes today's issues and varies organization to the next wave of technology and operational challenges. Hayley, will it show that this is all just isn't theory and outline how the Department for Work and Pensions approached and implemented automation in this way? Oh, then briefly talk to the critic who first step to more effective automation, the discovery stage, and offer up any health that we can for government departments. They're setting elements, James. I will finish up with a Q&A session. You can register a question at any time during the webinar. Just follow the instructions on the webinar screen. So let's get started. So how did James.

[00:02:25] Thanks a lot Amar. I just wanna say a few words about the importance of automation for government and in particular touch on some of the things we're doing in the centers to help drive this forward. So I guess first I'd like to just touch on why we're while we're focusing on automation, what we're doing, what we're going to get out of it. What we're trying to drive today is that we've made lots of progress in government already. There's lots of excellent examples of of almost fully automated services and lots of really excellent examples within departments of whether using automation to drive improvement and drive operational betterment. You gonna hear about all those later from DWP, but there are many other bits of government that are done really good. Good work. However, it's still in pockets. It's still relatively piecemeal, it's relatively disjointed. And we are not mature in relation to other parts of either sectors, other industries and subsidies productivity gap. There's likely exists between the public and private sector in relation to automation and the adoption of automation technologies. And so we think there's a huge opportunity to try and close that and to do more work in this space to really accelerate the benefits and the potential that we can derive from it. And we think that more effort century is needed just to coordinate that and

bring it together and make sure we're helping departments really properly think through the impact, implications and challenges that come with automation, because there's obviously a price. There's obviously a huge benefit that it can be could be driven. But we need to make sure we're doing it in a considered and careful way. I think, secondly, it's worth talking about well, we hope to achieve through automation. We think automation will deliver the service. And we see automation really as a key to transforming civil service over the next few years. We think it will deliver improved services to the public. We think it will that have increased productivity within departments and in the staff and the work that we do. We think overall deliver better outcomes or it'll enable better outcomes throughout the system. Fundamentally, automation is will be something that helps free up our staff from routine tasks. And when I was there, their efforts to be increasingly targeted to where I can make the most difference and support the most vulnerable in society. So much I work at the moment, it's on relatively low value tasks or activity, things that we could automate and we could use machines to do better, enabling us to really focus on the things that are important to the humble touch when it comes to duration with Covid-19 and really, well, well, that's meant for, I think, your automation. And it hasn't fundamentally changed our ambition or our scope away or we want to get to with it but what I think it has changed is the speed with which some of these principles and processes are being revisited. There is much more appetite for innovation and change, I think, than there was a few months ago and the recognition that things need to move quickly and must be much more responsive to the situation as it evolves. And crucially, automation is something that frees up our people time. People's time supports them in doing their work in newer, better ways and delivering better service. And what could be more important, there's merit in supporting our people and supporting the public. It's a really difficult time for everybody. And I think we can do to help ease the burden and make things a smoother and slicker, the better. So I think it's something that's really helped to sharpen the focus on the possibility of automation and push us towards thinking bigger than what we could do. That's it. There are we recognize there are lots of things, lots of hurdles still to jump over. And there's lots of barriers, not least some of the myths that surrounded by automation also and automation and the things that people often think of as being reasons not to do it or reasons not to do it with quite large-scale ambition. So let me have I was imagining that consulting is frustrated. It's just health and public services. Mark, we'll talk more on these big automation barriers and start to bust the myths that are putting some major limitations on the scale. Ambition, automation today.

Mark Jennings [00:06:18] Thank you, James. And thanks to all of you for your time and attendance on this webinar. I'm Mark Jennings. I lead on strategy and consulting for Accenture's work in health and public service for the UK and Ireland. James has talked about the aspiration that automation can drive significant benefits for UK government over the next spending review period. We believe in that possibility, but we also think that automation needs to be done differently. This to have a positive business case and be transformational rather than adding layers of complexity. We called this webinar busting the big automation myths. There are three myths in particular that we want to tackle today. The first is that automation is about removing headcount from your organization and robots take jobs. The second is that automation doesn't have good return on investment. And the third is that automation is by definition a tactical sticking plaster that increases technical debt. Layers on top of legacy. I.T. calcifies it's in place and just adds cost and complexity to your I.T. estate. Myths generally have a basis, in fact, and these are no exception. Automation in particular, robotic process automation has been done badly for years, getting genuine, positive return on investment from each stand-alone automation is nigh on impossible. It has to be a very low hanging fruit in terms of high volume, low complexity work with immediate opportunity for cost takeout. In most instances, that cost takeout is assumed to come from headcount reduction. We are doing this webinar because based on the work we have done with public sector clients over the last few years, we are convinced there is a better way. That is what we want to present today. First, I should just take a moment to define what we mean by automation.

I define it as addressing the gap between the department's current I.T. state and the capabilities that can now be deployed to provide more efficient and effective service. It includes a whole host of technology components, such as chat bots, artificial intelligence, optical character recognition, robotic process automation and custom code. It's about taking any process that is currently excessively slow, error prone, labor intensive, or can simply be done better and improving it through the use of technology nowadays disposal. when most organizations think of filling that gap between the I.T. they have now and what is possible, they have a two speed approach in mind. There is the strategic roadmap with I.T. done properly in inverted commas. And then there are a few separate automation, quick wins to get the automation, quick wins to have a positive business case. They are done as small local implementations and without the scalability or resilience, such as consistent logging, error handling, dev ops, automation, maintainability that are associated with strategic I.T. Adding such elements per automation would ruin any chance of payback. Payback is hard. So automation's has done cheap because they've done cheap. They are often, frankly, a mess. This is a vicious circle. And it stops automation from being anything but as messy, sticking plaster. We think you have to approach automation in a completely different way. You need a strategic capability for automation. Well, automation is need to be built according to software engineering, best practice, be highly scalable and resilient and in such small modular components that you "A" get extensive reuse over time and "B" and frankly, doesn't matter as and when you swap out individual components because the sunk investment in each is very low. Doing automation like this does not give you a positive business case on automation, one, two, or possibly even three, but it reduces the marginal cost of each automation over time. And in particular, it reduces the marginal cost of scaling your automation's. Looked at from an organizational level, business case gets better the more automation we deliver. And these automations are not a collection of sticking plasters. They are building up into the components of a highly adaptable strategic I.T. capability. We call this digital process on demand. In the next section of this webinar, I'm always going to explain in more detail. This view of automation reinvented. Hayley then talk about how this approach has been applied in practice at the DWP. But just before I handover to Amar, I want to address the first myth that automation is about taking jobs and reducing headcount. You come to that view when you regard employees as cost rather than assets. Over the last five years, Accenture has used automation to increase capacity in our own households and business by 40 percent. That's 40 thousand FTD. We didn't cut headcount. We did more with what we have. We think there is a similar possibility for government, whether it be increased tax yield, shorter hospital waiting times or people back into work faster. That can be a huge payback around a focus on outcomes in the public sector. Focus on the human potential, not the human cost. Payroll is largest component of the service organizations budget and therefore long-term reduction in public sector cost will have to involve a future workforce that is smaller relative to the outcomes it delivers. At a macro level, the aging civil service workforce suggests that huge amounts of additional capacity needs to be found and soon. The Institute for Government reported that in this year, over 40 percent of central government workforce is over 50, up from 33 percent in 2010. A strategic approach to automation, combined with a strategic approach to the right future workforce and cost bases for government services, is required. With that, I will hand over to Amar for the how.

Amar Narayan [00:12:13] Thanks, Mark. So we've heard that today's automation can deliver to the government's ambitions or the public sector's needs. Well, here is a new approach that we think it focuses on simplicity and not spaghetti. It uses the concept of single building blocks for each have a specific job. That function focused, self-contained and can be deployed in a virtualize platform. So how would it work? Well, let's take an example of processing an airplane. Well, the blocks might look like this. You might have a block that's able to read data from a claims document. You might then have a second block that's able to, using that captured data, process it on a legacy system. You may then have a third and fourth block their reach responsible for sending notifications to the customer. Maybe in a semester, say their claims

being received, maybe a letter that's providing details of the next payment details and their obligations. We might then also have a block that's able to anonymize data so that we can capture real time analytics and spot any trends. We equally might have a block that's able to create and allocate a task for a human agency, whether a specific case, details or complexities that require human intervention. So once we build an automation in this way, how do we deal with scale and volume? And what happens if that scale fluctuates at different points in the year? Well, ideally, the automation should sense this. It should be able to automatically increase its capacity and decrease it based on the demand. They should be able to intelligently schedule that work with a laser, focus on achieving it, hitting SLA. It should constantly scale up or down to meet these demands, and it should also reuse and replicate the building blocks. With everything being created on demand only what it's needed and is open is not. And the cost structure around this should also be reflected that you should only pay for the automation that you use instead of having a massive overhead. And the building blocks themselves, right? Well, they can be rapidly reconfigured to new automation's because they standardized and is centralized in the cloud and because the books are reusable and because they are dissolvable. The business case for this whole approach ends up being very strong. But you need a critical mass of building blocks. And this will increase your functional capabilities over time. And whilst the initial investment return will be modest for the first few automation's, you can see it will just increase exponentially, as you do say. So how would I survive the scenario where a citizen called to find out the status of their claim? The classic progress checking telephone call? Well, the blocks that will have to use the same technology. So in this case, we'll need something that can deal with voice input. So maybe a voice print block that is able to authenticate people based on their voice and maybe a natural language processing block that's able to understand and converse back with voice. Well, again, take the same approach. You identify the relevant building blocks, working out the new ones that you need to build on, the ones that you already have. And once you've built those new ones, you simply integrate them with the platform. Once you do that, you get all of the same benefits. The platform intelligibly scales the process to work all in real time. If the demand diminishes the platform, utility scales down. Lifting automation doesn't need to be needed as a tool anymore. It can be decommissioned in seconds, dissolved instantly and or without incurring any cost. This ability to scale up and scale down and decommission without incurring any cost doesn't create any technical debt and it doesn't create any technical spaghetti. We are simply making the most of what is already there and using robust software engineering principles and the agility of the cloud for doing this. So how many more blocks, but I need if I was going to enable self-service, for example, enabling automation of an address, free telephony. Well, we actually don't need that many more blocks. We can reduce the ones we've previously built. The only new block we need is the update address wall. So, again, building that new address, one, deploying this into the platform, integrating it. You get your instant scalability. You get your instant intelligent scheduling, and you get this instant pays. You consume model. So we're now at a position, again, where we've been able to show reduce not great I.T. spaghetti and not create that by simply reusing the things that we've got and having it scaled in the way that transport. So what if we take the same approach to look at something that was more transformative and more strategic? So maybe driving efficiency for a cause at which we typically see it most organizations where typical targets are, you know, reduce annual calls, reduce the number of Havana , reduce the number of amount of call waiting time and call handling time.c Whilst kind of at the same time increasing and improving the number of first call resolutions and improving the sales experience. So this probably doesn't feel like a typical automation candidate. But. What I'm hoping to talk through is demonstrating that when you have a platform that scales up and scales down, it's always you go the things you could start doing with that become much more feasible. For me the best answer? The best way to resolve this, this problem is answering two questions at the best possible way you can, really understanding why someone actually telephoned you in the first place. And secondly, understanding the story, the complete story behind that telephone call both before and after.

So if we could understand the core content, if we could understand and see the full case details of all of the actions, all of the data, everything that led up to that telephone call, we start to get a much better understanding of not just the reason why that call. What they also on that telephone call, but why it happened in the first place. And we can really start understanding how that telephone call fits within the end to end customer. Now, if we could do that for one telephone call, that would be good. But if you want to get real data driven inside. I wouldn't want to just won this one, except, of course. Why would we not run this on 100 percent? Of course, that all occurred last year so that we get a truly pay driven insight approach. Well, how would we do this? Right. Because that's that's usually years. Right. Months or years worth of work and months of years worth of investment. Well, you can use the same approach. We simply need to identify the blocks that we need. And once we've identified those books that we need, we build them and we deploy them. And by deploying them in the platform, we get to a point where we get instant scale. We get that instant intelligence scheduling. And that means. And combining it with the pay as you go pays you consume based model. This becomes a very cost effective but also a very large scale type of operation that you can run. So how would this translate into some real actions and what would a high level design potentially? Well, the first thing we would focus on is having the building blocks that are able to understand that call intent. Now, that's going to require some A.I. or API's to effectively retrieve the voice recordings in the first place and then speech to text and potentially natural language processing to then really understand and work out why someone has actually made that telephone call. Once we've got that, we'll also be able to look at doing it, then try to understand the cool context. So not just what they said they want to do on a telephone call, but their whole history. When did they first make that claim? Did they submit their evidence in time? How many telephone calls have they had before or after that? So really, at a macro level, using the data they already have in all your organizations to really understand all of that debt detail and then combine that with any other relevant cool information. So was it a credit particular time? Was it a particular point where legislation had changed or something had gone out? But getting all of that data and you might just think they already have. But being able to pull that out, harnessing it quickly and from a scalable platform that is able to do that without changing any of these systems can give you real data driven insight. And all of this would be on demand. So when you want to look at these all of last year's coup, we run the automation it analyzes all of the data. And once it's no longer needed, it stops. There's no more cost. And based on that data and based on the insight, we can get a true understanding of what? Value we could actually get from this inside. So we might find out that 60 percent of core reductions could happen just by folks on Tuesday as a or automated progress checking, for example. We might find that we could reduce it by a further 30 percent if we were to make some self-service processes. We could also probably get some insight that potentially and with first call resolution will be to improve or to make more parts of a complex process. And maybe you had to reduce further operational savings by by reducing by 10 percent. And all of this will be based on giving agents more time to deliver a better service, all of these things that we'd be doing to do the. So what if we implement rule face? How great would it be if we were able actually to then measure whether any of those things that we've implemented based on that data driven insight were actually successful? Well, we could quite easily dust off that code, right and those modules and deploy again. So we would run it for the first time and get our stats and our baseline overall. This is this is how that the call had legs and the repeat calls will happen so far, which then implement a bunch of changes and one that whole bit of code again. And then we could see. From your perspective, whether the impact we were expecting has actually happened. And again, if we then change something else, there's nothing stopping us from running this again. So I hope you find this useful. I'm now going to hand over Hayley Addison who's the product owner intelligent automation carage at a Department of Worker Pensions who talk through how real life hands on experience of having such a platform and implementing things in the same way that I've talked about has really made a significant difference to deployment of recommendations. And hopefully will really

change that perception of how automation can work. Thank you.

Hayley Addison [00:23:51] I'm Hayley Addison, the DWP intelligence automation product owner, DWP have had some new first hand experience of some of the topics that have been covered so far on this webinar. In 2017, we were tasked with creating a DWP, intelligent automation capability. And to do this, we had to overcome some really big obstacles and we had to take a real innovative and pioneering approach. When I saw the title of this webinar, I could really relate the myths that Mark and Amar have just been boasting were really real for us. When we started our journey in our early days, automation couldn't scale to meet our daily caseloads. This meant that we were constantly having to prioritize against varying business needs and volumes that changed on an almost daily basis. And even if the automation could have scaled, we just weren't confident in the technology being robust enough at that point. We saw a real danger that we could end up with robots on physical machines and various cupboard's, which would have been a nightmare to try and manage from a security aspect business continuity and live service maintenance point of view. So as a result, in the very early days of our journey, we used automation in a rather controlled and cautious way. Yet we were conflicted. We could really see some of the challenges around successfully implementing and running automation vote. We also recognize the huge potential it had for DWP. We needed an approach that would enable us to deliver business benefits while it's not conflicting against an existing IT state. We set about building our own automation platform that has since grown into a product known as the Intelligent Automation Garage, the intelligent automation garage is underpinned by many of the principles that Amar talked about earlier, such as being a tool kit of reusable building blocks that operates on a virtual cloud based platform. And our operations are driven by intelligent scheduling. This means that automation are on demand and we can reconfigure these rapidly. So this means that we can create a decommissioned is really quickly. So how did we build our platform? The model that a Marshall Dahlia is pretty much plug and play. This model didn't exist in 2017 when we began our work. So we built our own. We did it in four stages. First, we demonstrate it a business case to prove that automation and people can actually work together. Then we transitioned our initial automations to the cloud to realize the speed, agility and cost benefits that that brings. Then we industrialized to enable us to deliver large numbers of automation at scale and at peace. Now we're in transformation mode, supporting the DWP digital strategy and roadmap and helping to deliver strategic transformation to our customers and staff. So what does this all mean for DWP? Well, we've certainly boosted some of the big automation myths. We now scale rapidly. We've gone from eight to 37 automations in less than two years. And because of our modular approach, we're building and implementing these new automations in weeks rather than months. We're processing really high volumes of cases on demand, automation's of processed over six million cases in the last two years. And we're processing these on a much faster basis. We're freeing up thousands of business hours to our agents by automating the high volume, repetitive tasks. This means they have more time to spend on decision making in complex cases. Our business case remains really strong and it continues to grow. We're not just seeing economies of scale from automation. We're also ensuring value for money in our intelligence, automation, operations and infrastructure. For example, you just implemented intelligent scheduling, which means that we can half the running costs of each of our animations. We're now helping drive the DWP digital agenda by starting to harness the power of the AI and machine learning. This will help DWP deliver intelligent automations that assist to teach transformation and help to enhance the customer journey an experience but arguably the greatest benefit of our approach to automation are being felt as we navigate the current Covid-19 environment. Like every organization, we've had to accelerate homeworking, respond with new set of customer demands, and ensure that business as usual is maintained for the most vulnerable people in society. And the intelligent automation garages really played a part in that for DWP because of our virtual cloud platform. We transition the intelligent automation garaged to remote working in 24 hours with no disruption to any of our services. We've built and deployed

12 new automation's to meet the specific demands that Covid has brought and we built these days. And so far, we've processed over half a million new Covid specific related cases, and we haven't missed a single SLA in terms of processing over the last few months. None of us have any real idea what the new normal might mean post Covid-19. But we can be sure that for DWP it will mean more claims, more payments and more need for that human support in the most complex of cases and situations. I think that intelligent automation will continue to play a really key role as we navigate these times ahead. Thanks for listening. Let me hand back to Amar. Now he's going to briefly touch on the vital first step for any successful automation, scooping and quantifying the business case.

Amar Narayan [00:29:33] Thanks, Hayley. In our experience, the most robust automation strategies start with a controlled first step and not to leap into the unknown. The DWP got this first stage right. They didn't find the first light processes towards my plan for a scaled platform and got that connectivity spot on. Scaling from there was much more straightforward. Because of that solid foundation. But many automation strategies fall at the first step. Organizations don't involve I.T. and business from day one can choose the wrong processes or try to take on too much too soon. And they never get past stage one. They sensibly want to take small steps. But if they're in the wrong direction, the automation journey ends too soon. The new automation approach I've outlined is a leap forward, but is it a leap into the unknown? Well, hopefully Haylie will have reassured me that it's not the value the carriage is bringing DWP has proven its building block approach can be reused across the public sector and beyond. But as budgets become tighter, productivity even more critical. And citizens more expect him, you cannot afford to take big risks. We are very conscious that the approach we outlined puts more cost upfront and delays near-term payback in preference for better long term results. So far stretch the analogy we're saying build the transport, plan the route, and then you'll have far further and faster to be able to go. So we can help with this. We can help you work out if this approach is right for you. Help you work out if this is technically achievable and help you by not charging you. To help answer that question. Our intelligent automation specialists can spend time with your leadership, I.T. and business operations teams to focus on three core areas, firstly, value. Do you have a potential pipeline of automation's that would support a business case for strategic automation investment? Viability. How easily can you be securely connected to the cloud and utilize the benefits of a Scale and On-Demand platform? And velocity. How can you accelerate unlocking greater value from automation? Well, if this would be of interest, really happy to discuss. And happy to help. Please do reach out. Well, let's get on some questions. There's been quite a few in the session, and so what have time to go through with more? But what we will do is anything that we can't answer right now. We will respond back and a team will do that. If there's any questions as well that you think of outside of the session, please do just drop us an e-mail or e-mail is going to be on that on the backside.

Amar Narayan [00:32:24] Let's get to the first one. And so the first one we have is for Hayley and the question relates to, well, what kind of automations are you considering or delivering now that you wouldn't have been able to imagine doing two years ago?

Hayley Addison [00:32:40] OK, thanks so much. So I think one day to really start the journey, as is most organizations, some intelligent automations can be seen as tactical or short term. Wealth is still going to be a need for that type of automation, particularly in response to the call of a pandemic. Actually, we're moving into a new world of the department around strategic transformation. Now, some of those transformation goals will obviously be impacted by Covid-19 an ever changing, if you like, both the intelligence automation garage is in a really strong place now support DWP on some of those strategic priorities. So to give a few examples, we will be a key enabler for other digital services and teams across DWP to enable some of the road map and journeys that are planned around customer self serve customer view, providing insight back to staff in the departments around our customer base, and also some really exciting stuff that we're currently working on using some new technology source, new graph, database technology, etc., which will actually help support

another strategic focus for DWP around fraud and error source. Some really exciting stuff on the cards. And it's only because of this sort of platform, the scale, the flexibility and the agility that we've got, that we're able to put ourselves in this position of now supporting our business areas on a more strategic journey.

Amar Narayan [00:34:17] Thanks, Hayley. Go on here for James. James you mentioned that Covid-19, hasn't necessarily changed the automation priorities but rather a renewed focus on them. What role do you think public sector automation needs to play in the economic recovery post Covid?

James Merrick Potter [00:34:34] It's a difficult question in terms of the economic situation, because the overall economic situation, I think in terms of where we're expecting it to look like the focus is going, will improve service and services more generally. I think we've heard from everyone so far that there is a very we don't know what the new normal looks like. We know it's quite different to what we've seen over the last five, 10 years. I think the status quo has been completely shattered and whatever we may be into is going to be something that we have to think fairly agilely about doing things quickly or easily and more inevitably. And I think intelligent automation and those nation of public services really can play a very strong role in that, because it's going to fundamentally mean redesigning and re delivering huge numbers of the things that we do or have done over the last few years. We can't rest on our laurels. It's going to relatively good success at the scale we were working at. We've now got a whole different set of challenges to focus on. We've got new demands. We've got new services, entirely new product lines, as you talked about, with some of the cable lines. They're coming through intangible dimensions to be one of the key enablers to allow us to address that, because we're not only needed to hire thousands of people to deal with huge, well, huge volumes. Nor would we want to because that isn't really going to deliver the best service to get those people focused on the social challenges, the vulnerable people we're working with and people who are increasingly difficult positions the result of this. And we're also trying to take people's efforts and focus on that rather than some of the more mundane, repeatable, automatable things that we certainly some things on.

Amar Narayan [00:36:14] Thanks for that. Mark, you take this one, and if you can only invest in a handful of Lego blocks, and which ones would you choose?

Mark Jennings [00:36:24] I think some are so I think there are some absolutely core components that you need for all of these upscale transactions. So, for example, the ability to have standard logging, standard error handling right when the automation fails, have it restarts at a consistent point. Those are almost kind of part the plumbing of the platform. So you build those blocks first that are you know, they're there now in the platform. But they weren't obviously when DWP were starting? And then there are some key block around the very core functions you need for most automation services. So things like the ability to access particular high volume legacy systems, things like the ability to send estimates notifications or send letter notifications to your customers. If you build those once and do it in the right way, you can then reuse those across most of your automation's. It's really about trying to identify those really high volume touch points in process, create those blocks that you can then reuse as often as possible across different functional automations.

Amar Narayan [00:37:32] Thanks for that. We've got one more for Hayley, and would you wish you had known at the start of the journey or done sooner?

Hayley Addison [00:37:42] OK, and probably something that we were aware of at the start of our journey, but maybe underestimated slightly, was around the setting up of our life service to support our automation function and product. I think it's really key to to be aware that you have to have a fully functional life service and maintenance team and structure and process to support. And it's not to be underestimated. It's like any other digital service. You need the full service right around and the full service support. You need to be plugged in to yours organizations, incident and change management processes and tools. It's not something that can

be done stand alone. You absolutely need to be proved hooked into your IT state. And I think what we were expecting probably a little bit taken aback by in the early days was the fact that even if our code was and fine and all was good, if there was an issue, a change in incidents on one of the other applications that our processes interact with, that obviously had an impact on our service. So you absolutely need to have your your eye on everything that is going on across your IT state and make sure that you're plugged in to everything that that's going on in the change space to which can be quite a big task that an organization the size of DWP in an organization as complex as DWP. But you have to get to that balance of knowing what you need to what is going to potentially impact you and where you spend your time from a life service and service management point of view in terms of impact in the right way to changes across the department and understand in what could be an absolute blocker for you, what may or may not impact. And just making sure that you have your eye on on everything that's going on across the wider state. It's something that we do very well now. I'm happy to say, but I think it's just it's it's something that I think we could probably, as we did underestimate in the early days of our journey.

Amar Narayan [00:39:50] Thanks. I think we've got potentially chance, maybe a couple more , I've got one more for James. And so each public sector organization is at a different stage and able to mention journey. How does central government need to change to support those taking their first steps while also helping others navigate the technical and ethical and legal challenges of more advanced automation?

James Merrick Potter [00:40:12] Thanks. There's a lot to unpack in that. I'll talk about the central government challenge rather than the one percenters. I think there is. There are two speeds to this. So within central government, I think what we need to do is drive the central machine is to get is to kind of coordinate the momentum. We've seen some really, really industrious pockets of progress across government and digging a hole, one of the flat that was flat. I did a huge amount of really innovative work. But to be honest, the government is not worth it. There are other pockets of really good expertize, but we are collectively in the same place for all the different stages of maturity. The levels of ambition, levels of appetite, wildly different between departments. Not least because the levels of opportunity are quite different as well. One of the things that we're doing at the moment. One of the things you've done the last six, six months is create the government has mentioned task force in the central cabinet office to stop brigading some of the thinking around this is starting to uncover some of the water opportunities, start to map out the areas of potential and try to understand more what system is doing. As we've said, there is lots of efforts, but it's not necessarily coordinated. We are now putting that putting that into a more centralized approach which put some standards, controls, governance, direction, ambition, strategy around it that will start to create the opportunity for regional stability and of coordination that we've not had to date. I think that will that will help shift things over. There was a lot more we could do and what we said the next year or two in the wider public sector. I think a lot of this is about uncovering what's happening and we've seen over the last two or three years that causations I've had with lots of organizations. Everyone's dealing with this in scientific ways and means, dealing with the challenges that the way that services work. And they're all thinking about this and no one's not thinking about this literals at different stages. And the more we can do to help get conversations going to compare and real progress with people who are struggling to help people bussell these nets, I think that this recession is entirely right I think the kind of picking into some of those preconceptions, I think a lot of people are stumbling around. It's a it's a really powerful thing. The more we can talk about it, the more we can show the potential, the more we can stop plotting a route for me to be, the better this will be. And I think Senator Dorgan has a good role in pushing that agenda and promoting it. We can't make people do things we think we would never want to down on some of the business as much as they do. But we can we can help people see what's around, what is happening and help incentivize this in a better way.

Amar Narayan [00:42:48] Thanks, thanks. I

think we've got one. Time for one last one. Say, Mark, I'll let you take this one. Say, assuming he had a well documented process, what kind of timeframe from first engagement, sending something like what you would expect.

Mark Jennings [00:43:03] Thanks. So we have a slightly nuanced answer that one should expect. Right. So I guess first thing to say, certainly we know with the DWP experience, the first thing that we had to build was the platform. And so, you know, there is a good six months of effort, at least in terms of building a platform on which then you could you could do the automation's. Right, with that platform in place and with that platform reusable across other parties. It's really about then the time it takes to create the the functional elements of each individual automation. And again, how long it takes for those depends on how much reuse you've got from previous automation. So the whole point, the process is to reduce the marginal cost of marginal time, to automate as you go through successive automations typically and have a rule around, you know, looking at things that can be done in, say, two to three months as being suitable chunks, if you like, to release as part of each automation. So, you know, doing a number of blocks that mean it's realistic that you can, you know, put those together and have something material live within two to three months. Once you've got the platform in place, it's realistic.

Amar Narayan [00:44:14] Brilliant, I think we'll just squeeze this last one in just before we say thanks. So I think I can pretty say this one say if we've already started on an automation journey and want to change our direction to be more like an intelligent automation garage. Will it be hard for us to restart and adopt this approach? So the short answer is absolutely not. I think what what you know, for organizations that have already started on that journey, there's so much learning that you did and so much experience. And some of that will be will be painful. And certainly you've been through that in the garbage when you first start off without that kind of platform in place. So if anything, then moving to a sort of a platform based on some of the approach that we've talked about actually becomes an easier transition because a lot of the things that were challenging, you know, they kind of go away. Right. And all of the investment you've done in building automations in that way becomes much more much more tangible. So let's say from a platform perspective, the whole idea of it is, is it to be plug and play? But there's a you know, there's a bunch of other accelerators that we haven't talked about, say your actual development cycle becomes a whole lot more quicker and you'll absolutely notice the benefits and maintenance right and scaling things up. So, yeah, absolutely. I think I don't think there's ever a certainly not a barrier of entry to sort of move to this this kind of strategic approach and that's hopefully what we're trying to reduce. So we'll leave it there. I'll jump back to just saying a big thank you for everybody giving us their time today. And a special big thanks to all of our excellent speakers today. I hope we close down some of the automation myths and was able to show you how a new approach can can very much lead to transformative stuff using automation. So thanks again. Have a great day and goodbye.