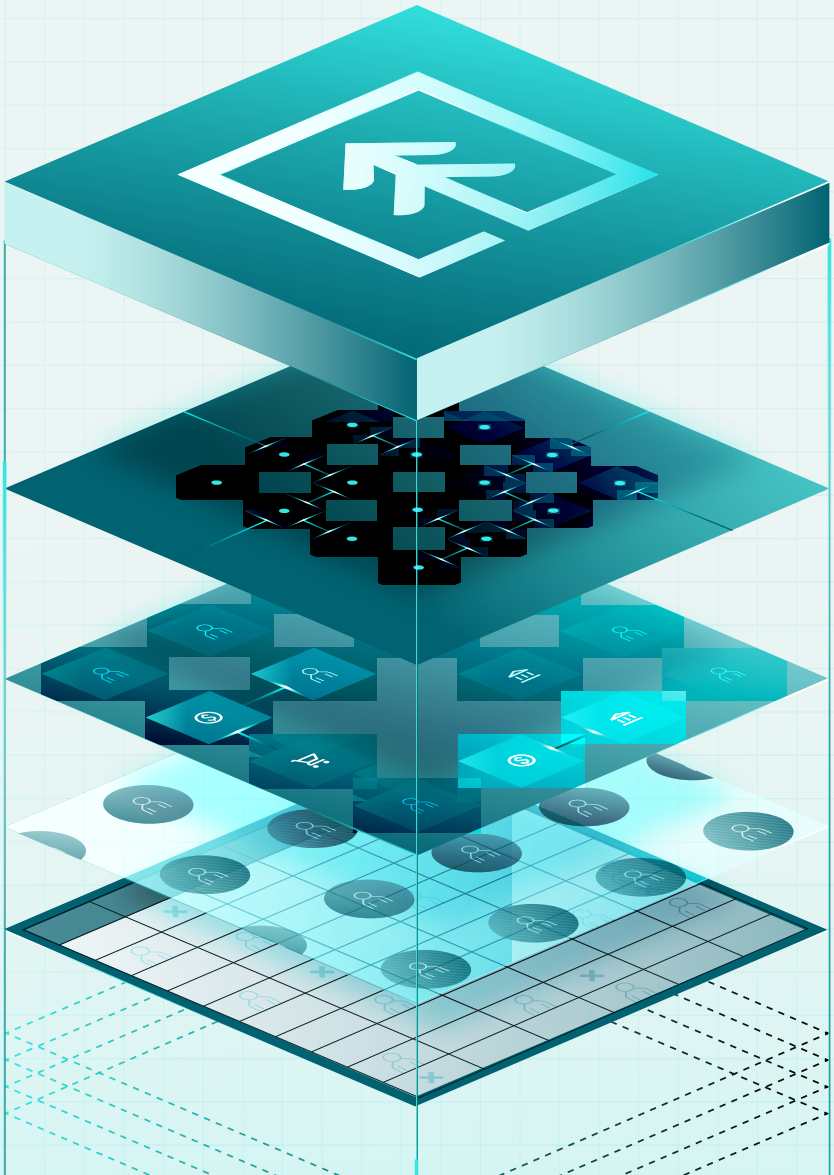
Redwood

THE JOURNEY TO AUTOMATION FABRICS

A practical guide to automating IT and business processes



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Why read this guide?

Learn how automation fabrics are driving better business outcomes in leading enterprises and ways to mature automation within your own organization for greater efficiency, productivity, profitability and innovation.

Why assess your automation capabilities now?

Remaining stagnant in your operations is not an option. Sticking with outdated systems hampers productivity and constrains your ability to innovate. As your competitors accelerate their own automation journeys, you might miss opportunities to take the lead and capture new market share.

Yet, assessing and devising a plan for automation maturity feels like a heavy, and sometimes overwhelming, lift. Your organization has probably relied on the same technology for years, maybe even decades, and you've invested time and resources in setup and customizations that are working. But in this hyper-speed world, you can't ignore the gap between your infrastructure and system capabilities and what is now — and will soon be — required. How much longer can you run modern complex processes through systems older than some employees?

THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAITING

If you've been getting by without advancing your solutions, especially workload automation, until now, consider how much time your staff spends on routine tasks. Month-end financial close, customer billing and other mundane processes drain valuable resources and limit potential gains. In fact, studies show that **nearly 40% of IT teams' time is spent on repetitive, manual tasks**, leaving less room for innovation and strategy. Your IT team's monotonous grind is not just an inconvenience — it's a barrier to progress.

Source: Smartsheet

The magic of an automation fabric

What end-to-end automation does for business functions

FINANCE
- Streamlines processes (close, budgeting, forecasting)
- Reduces errors and processing times

SALES AND MARKETING
- Enables effective lead management and prospect segmentation
- Drives higher engagement and conversion rates

MANUFACTURING
- Improves production efficiency and quality control
- Reduces downtime and optimizes resource utilization

SUPPLY CHAIN
- Enhances visibility and coordination
- Supports better demand forecasting and reduced costs

CUSTOMER/SUPPLIER
- Automates order processing and invoicing
- Develops higher customer satisfaction and lifetime value

HUMAN RESOURCES
- Speeds up mundane processes like onboarding and payroll setup
- Allows for more focus on cultural initiatives

DATA MANAGEMENT
- Handles complex and high-volume data tasks like ETL
- Provides more reliable insights for decision-making

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
- Reduces the burden to manually perform routine maintenance tasks
- Supports faster deployment of new applications and services

Imagine a time when your business processes are truly autonomous. As each process runs, your systems analyze data, make informed decisions and predict future outcomes. Your workflows are self-learning, continually improving based on new data and past experiences. Grey areas and exceptions, which once posed significant risks, are now managed seamlessly by systems that adapt in real time.

This level of sophistication is called an **automation fabric** — an intelligent, self-healing and resilient layer of support that props up your entire organization's IT and business processes and propels you toward unparalleled efficiency and innovation.

It's the future of enterprise operations, and you must rise to meet it by building a strong, flexible foundation now.

Real-world results of automation fabrics

Here are a few examples of the outcomes Redwood Software customers experienced with an organization-wide automation layer.

Manual | Automated

ORDER-TO-CASH

BEFORE: 22% AUTOMATED
AFTER: 100% AUTOMATED

CUSTOMER

Fortune 500 industrial supply chain company

RESULTS

- Reduced total process time from **36 hours to 6 hours**, despite spanning 120 systems and interfaces
- Allowed company to offer guaranteed next-day delivery to customers

Before Redwood	After Redwood
Add sales order (ERP)	Import/process sales orders
Route to finance for credit check (website)	Check credit status
Start delivery fulfillment (shipping) and generate tracking number (logistics system)	Trigger delivery fulfillment (shipping) and generate tracking number
Post transfer order to update inventory (ERP/ warehouse management)	Post transfer order to update inventory in ERP/warehouse
Run billing to create customer invoice (ERP)	Run billing to create customer invoice and transfer to accounts receivable
Transfer billing data to accounts receivable (ERP)	
Send invoice and tracking number to customer (CRM)	Send invoice and tracking number to customer
Process incoming payments and match to sales orders (ERP)	Process incoming payments and match to sales orders
Post clearing document to mark sales order as paid (ERP)	Post clearing document to mark sales order as paid (ERP)

RECORD-TO-REPORT

BEFORE: 22% AUTOMATED
AFTER: 100% AUTOMATED

CUSTOMER

Fortune 200 global manufacturing firm

RESULTS

- Reduced financial close process from **78% manual to 0% manual**
- Enabled the company to eliminate additional compliance reviews

Extract per plant code	Generate extract per ERP system
Calculate provision amount	Combine plant code with GL/CC/PC and create JE
Identify and associate plant code to GL/CC/PC	
Populate JE template	
Create and attach supporting doc	Create and attach supporting doc
Upload and validate JE	Validate JE
Route for approval	Route for approval
Post in ERP	Post in ERP
Upload provision and archive	Archive

Foster an automation-first culture

The right tools and technologies can get the engine started, but real movement requires a cultural shift.

The thought of organization-wide automation can evoke fear and uncertainty, as some people will infer that it could make human contributions obsolete. To successfully advance, you need to foster a culture that embraces automation as a means of enhancing the impact of individuals' contributions.

If you're already undergoing a cloud or ERP transformation, you understand that technological change requires a radical shift in mindset. The same is true for automation. Just as sticking with archaic practices will hinder progress and innovation, so will team misalignment and distrust.

3 building blocks of a culture that drives automation success

01. Strong organizational structure

You should have channels and processes in place for easily allocating resources and responsibilities.

02. Clear and frequent communication

Transparent and consistent messaging about company goals and the benefits of automation will alleviate fear and build trust.

03. Agreed-upon values

Your whole team can get behind automation when they know it empowers them to generate more strategic, creative and fulfilling work.

What processes should you aim to automate?

Consult the table below to think about the systems and metrics you'll need to audit and amend for your uses cases.

PROCESS What are you automating?	SYSTEMS Which tools are involved?	PERFORMANCE METRICS How do you know it's working?
Demand-to-fulfillment	Supply chain management (SCM) software Warehouse management system (WMS) Demand planning tool Transportation management system (TMS)	Fill rate Order fulfillment cycle time Inventory accuracy Customer satisfaction score
Hire-to-retire	Human resource management system (HRMS) Applicant tracking system Payroll software Learning and development platform	Time to hire Employee retention rate Onboarding time Employee engagement score
Incident-to-resolution	IT service management (ITSM) software Help desk software Customer support software Incident tracking system	Incident resolution time First-call resolution rate Number of incidents reopened Mean time to resolution (MTTR)
Meter-to-cash	Meter data management (MDM) system Customer information system (CIS) Billing and invoicing software Payment processing platform	Time to issue bills after meter reading Rate of first-time bill processing Days sales outstanding (DSO) Estimated vs. actual meter readings
Order-to-cash	ERP CRM Billing and invoicing software Payment processing system	Days sales outstanding (DSO) Invoice processing time Error rates in order processing Revenue cycle time
Plan-to-produce	ERP Manufacturing extension system (MES) Supply chain management (SCM) software Production planning tool	Production cycle time On-time delivery rate Inventory turnover Cost per unit produced
Procure-to-pay	ERP Procurement software Supplier management system Accounts payable automation tool	Purchase order cycle time Supplier lead time Cost savings Policy compliance rate
Quote-to-cash	ERP CRM Billing and invoicing software Configure, price, quote (CPQ) software	Quote generation time Conversion rate from quote to order Cycle time from quote to payment Revenue growth
Record-to-report	ERP Financial reporting software General ledger system Data consolidation tool	Time to close books Accuracy of financial statements Audit compliance rates Report generation time

Where do you stand for each process?

Click here to take the automation maturity assessment →

Defining automation maturity

Automation maturity represents the extent to which your organization has developed and integrated automation into its processes, systems and culture.

✓ CHECKLIST

To mature your automation, you must have

- ✓ Aligned goals
- ✓ Buy-in from leaders
- ✓ Modern infrastructure
- ✓ Defined values
- ✓ Stakeholder support
- ✓ Humans and machines

Click here to take the automation maturity assessment →

Embedding automation into your daily operations to its fullest potential requires an awareness of how to advance the ways you apply it — how to mature over time. The concept goes much deeper than automating a few tasks here and there. It's a cohesive, strategic approach that permeates every level of your operations and requires technological sophistication, scalability and efficacy.

Task automation

To mature, you must start somewhere. In this case, it's with automating individual, repetitive tasks to save time and reduce error. Many organizations begin with data entry, report generation or routine communications.

Process orchestration

The next consideration is how you'll coordinate multiple automated tasks across your tech stack and various departments. The goal of orchestration is to create end-to-end automated processes that enhance efficiency.

Exception management

A mature automation strategy also incorporates identifying, handling and resolving anomalies in your automated processes. Effectively managing exceptions is vital for adapting to the unexpected without disruption while still meeting SLAs.

Tool integration

Whether your automation tools are siloed or unified significantly impacts your ability to properly implement an automation strategy. Tools that speak well to each other facilitate consistent data flows and cohesive, cross-functional operations.

Key elements of automation maturity

While you can assess automation maturity at the organizational or departmental level, the truest picture arises when you drill down even further. Every process or use case has its own level of maturity, and you've likely matured in some areas and not in others.

Manual to autonomous:

Conceptualizing automation maturity

While there isn't necessarily a destination in the maturation journey, it's important to measure your progress.

Experts and technology leaders define the stages of automation maturity differently, but they all take into account the **type and number of processes you've automated** compared to the total pool of those you could automate and **how well you're automating.** Below is the model we'll use.

Automation maturity stages

	TASKS	PROCESSES	EXCEPTIONS	CONTROL
STAGE 01 MANUAL	Majority manual	Fully manual orchestration	Completely manual	Fragmented by person
STAGE 02 SILOED	A few automated in each process	Mostly manual orchestration	Completely manual	Fragmented by person
STAGE 03 MANAGED	Some automated in each process	Mostly automated orchestration	Some technical exceptions automated	Fragmented by team and tool
STAGE 04 CONTROLLED	Majority automated in each process	Fully automated orchestration	Most technical and some process exceptions automated	Single point
STAGE 05 AUTONOMOUS	Rare manual tasks	Fully automated orchestration	Most automated	Single point

KEEP IN MIND

Until now, you could have believed — like many other business leaders — that implementing any amount of automation would be sufficient to keep pace with modern demands. While isolated automations can increase efficiency and save time, they fall short of driving the core outcomes you count on to thrive and scale.

The realization that you have work to do can be frustrating and overwhelming, but remember that not being in stage five doesn't mean you're failing! Look at what you're doing well, and aim to do more of it.

Evaluating your automation strategy

Growth is propelled by awareness, so the next step is to verify your stage.
We recommend doing so by evaluating the following.

3 components of automation

Your current tech stack

INFRASTRUCTURE AND APPLICATIONS

Primary technologies that support your current operations

Gaps or outdated systems that need upgrading

Your strategic transformations

MODERNIZATION INITIATIVES

Strategic projects to modernize your IT landscape

Opportunities to leverage new automation technologies

Your operations

MANAGEMENT AND PROCESSES

Method of IT service management

Type of automation solutions and level of integration

Use our convenient assessment to determine how you're doing in each area and discover recommendations for improvement.

Take assessment →

The path to the next stage

Whether you're taking a DIY approach or employing the help of a third party to accelerate your maturity journey, you should have a clear project plan.

YOUR STAGE	YOUR NEXT STEPS
STAGE 01→02 **MANUAL TO SILOED**	☑ Identify and automate low-complexity, high-ROI tasks within one top-priority business function. ☑ Build automations with a modular approach and keep configuration reusability in mind. ☑ Create notifications and automate error checks and escalations. ☑ Test and monitor new automations closely.
STAGE 02→03 **SILOED TO MANAGED**	☑ Expand automation planning to other departments. ☑ Widen the scope of automations to more complex or business-critical areas. ☑ Establish real-time monitoring and alerting for all automations. ☑ Align automation scheduling with business calendars.
STAGE 03→04 **MANAGED TO CONTROLLED**	☑ Develop a common framework for workflow automation and map out end-to-end workflows. ☑ Identify common configurations and task automations to build an automation production line. ☑ Align automation operations with service management to meet OLAs and SLAs. ☑ Set up an automation Center of Excellence* with representatives from multiple teams and functions.
STAGE 04→05 **CONTROLLED TO AUTONOMOUS**	☑ Adopt a modern workload automation platform designed for SaaS and low-code/no-code development. ☑ Connect all servers, applications and environments across your IT infrastructure to support end-to-end automations. ☑ Extend your solution's power using its extensive integration catalog and/or custom API integrations. ☑ Drive innovation by encouraging experimentation with new automations.
STAGE 05 **AUTONOMOUS +**	☑ Implement self-healing systems that can detect and resolve issues without human intervention. ☑ Leverage your preferred scripting languages to develop advanced automations. ☑ Expand beyond internal processes to improve partner and customer experiences — e.g., MFT. ☑ Quickly adapt processes using data, trends and exception-based scenarios.

*** WHAT SHOULD A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE DO?**

An automation Center of Excellence (CoE) should document and steer your long-term automation strategy. This key group will define principles and processes for automation design, centralized governance, continuous improvement, expertise development and automation opportunity identification.

Your automation prescription

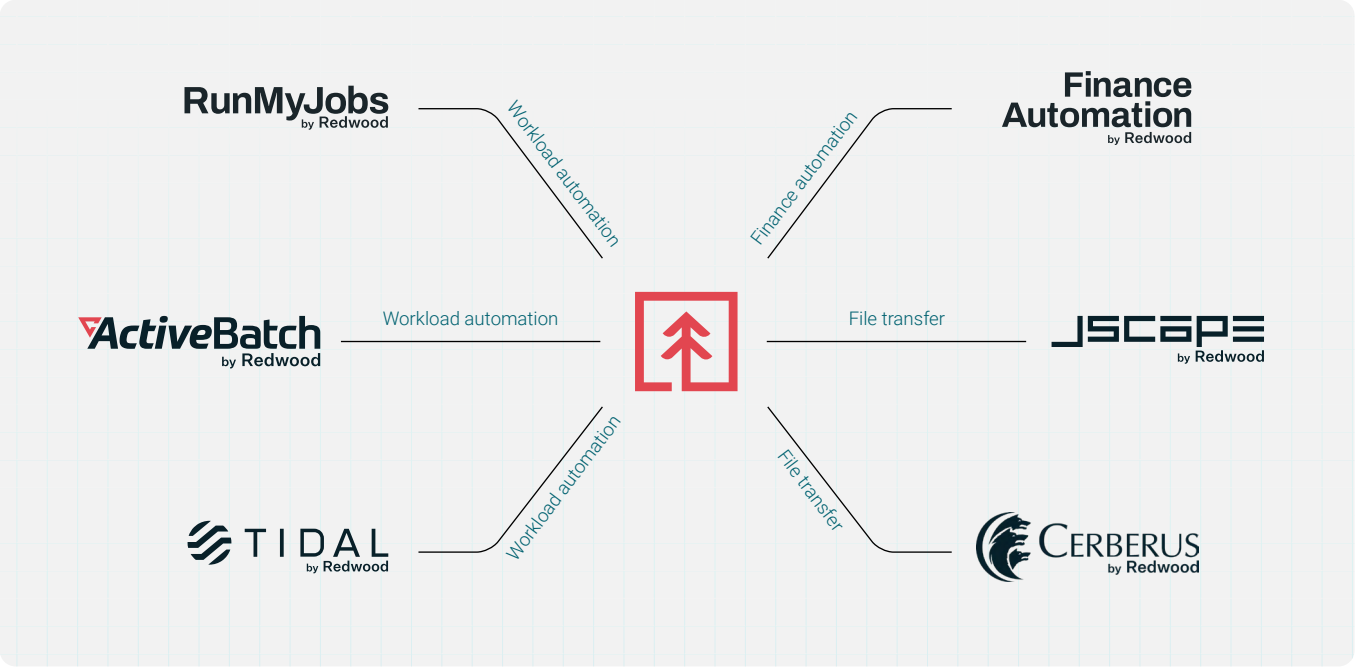
Redwood Software's suite of automation fabric solutions is built to get you to the highest level of automation maturity so your organization can become best-in-class.

We understand that every company's journey is unique, which is why our workload automation and managed file transfer products offer the flexibility to integrate with other platforms and systems of your choice in a way that's scalable.

Whether you're working with an old tech stack, in the midst of a migration or building on a new stack, Redwood provides the most comprehensive coverage for automating with SAP and non-SAP tools and processes.

By partnering with Redwood, you get not only a set of composable automation tools to manage your complexities but the expertise to help you get to the next stage — and beyond.

We'll help you choose the products that will work best for your company size, needs and goals. Click a Redwood logo to learn more about our products.



Take the first step toward building an automation fabric

Let's have a conversation → or Take assessment →

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