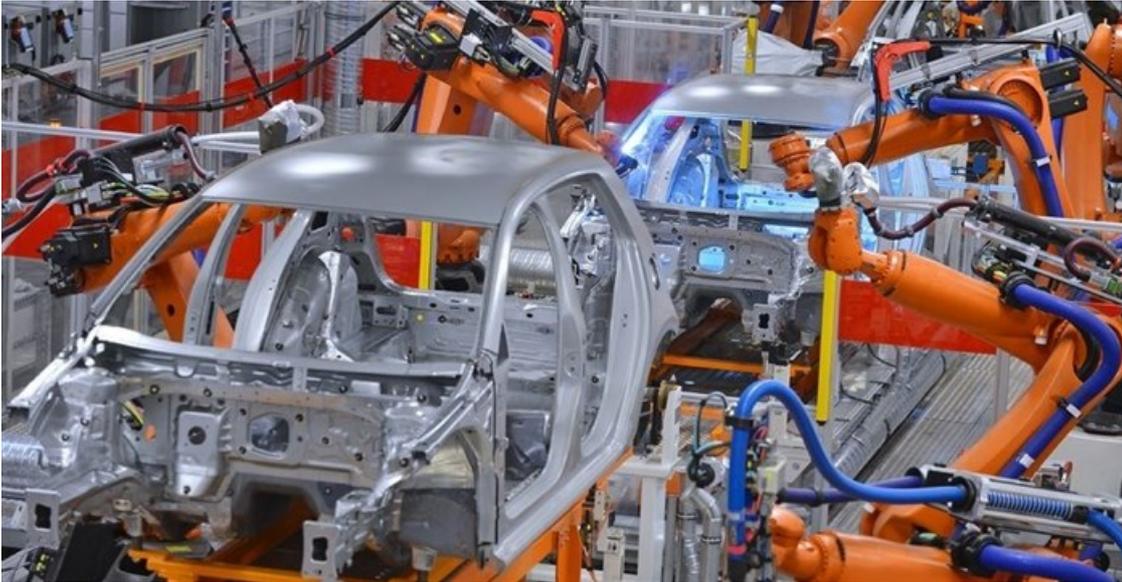


Automating business processes to boost productivity in South Africa

 By [Kerry Hope](#)

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Despite the grim economic predictions, South Africa's enterprise software market is growing. While [Standard & Poor's](#) has predicted that the South African economy will grow by only 0.8% in 2016, [Gartner](#) expects 2016 IT spending in South Africa to reach \$26.6 billion, an increase of 5.1% from 2015. [IDC](#) also believes that South African organisations will invest more this year in automation initiatives to streamline costs and improve flexibility.



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Automation is being used by agriculture, banks, utilities, mining companies, manufacturers and healthcare organisations across South Africa to increase efficiency and reduce costs. Following are several examples of how South African organisations across different industries are implementing automation projects to save time and money, while improving the quality of customer service.

Banking - Manual processing is costly and slow, and can lead to inconsistent results and a high error rate. Many companies have enhanced their front-end operations with digital solutions. Internet banking, for example at Standard Bank, offers consumers convenience while reducing labour costs and improving data accuracy.

Government - Smart meters are being used to measure household utility usage [in Johannesburg](#), eliminating the need for meter readers while improving data accuracy and speeding up payments.

Automotive - Robotics are replacing many of the manual tasks on South Africa's [automotive assembly](#) lines, reducing labour costs, improving product reliability and safety.

Mining - South African mining companies are [using sensors](#) to detect methane and rock movement; fuel pipelines have been fitted with sensors to monitor leaks.

Healthcare - Healthcare organisations are using radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags to monitor their equipment inventory, reducing over-purchasing and equipment rental costs, increasing equipment utilization, and reducing equipment loss.

Manufacturing - South African bulk wine producers have ordered [automation technologies](#), valued at the price of R18 million, from Germany to improve plant production efficiencies.

Agriculture - [Fruitlook allows](#) farmers to build up a long-term database of growing parameters, enabling them to compare different orchards or vineyards as well as trends for different seasons. It also allows farmers to benchmark themselves against each other and identify ways to improve production efficiency.

Whether it's automation in the way of robotics on the manufacturing floor, or automation features which eliminate manual process, or automation features that provides data on mobile devices, businesses need robust and versatile application development and integration platforms. And those that can work together make automating business processes even easier and more cost effective. Those businesses that automate in order to improve business productivity are most likely to thrive, especially during an economic downturn.

All automation projects should include predictions of improvements in business productivity up front to show the full business benefit. As business productivity improves and costs go down, IT can meet its full potential as enablers of new cost efficiencies and business excellence.

ABOUT KERRY HOPE

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