

State of the RPA Developer Report 2021



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Introduction



Last year, we published the first annual State of the RPA Developer report. Our goal was to truly understand who RPA developers are and answer questions such as:

- **What is the profile of an RPA developer?** What's your educational and professional background and how did you come to RPA?
- **How satisfied are you with your job,** your impact, and your career prospects? What do you particularly like about this career?
- **Are there things you wish your employers would do** to make you happier, more productive, and more fulfilled?

We learned RPA developers are eager to learn, are proud of their field—and are very satisfied with their chosen careers.

But what impact has this past year had on RPA developers? Have the challenges of 2020 led to opportunity or frustration? We dug deeper and are happy to report that despite a global pandemic, we see not only continued satisfaction, but increased optimism for this growing field.

And new this year, we also explored how student RPA developers are learning about and educating themselves about RPA. Check out the new section at the end of the report that takes a closer look at those who are just entering this field.

To everyone who participated in this year's survey: A sincere thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts. We'd love for you to share the report with your peers in the RPA community. And for HR managers and C-Level executives looking to build RPA programs—we hope this serves as a resource to help you better understand how to hire and retain talent in this growing field.

“

I love that we are unshackling people from mundane, repetitive tasks, and allowing them to tackle problems that actually require their immediate attention.

Ashwin A.K, RPA Developer, Speridian

Methodology

The results in this report are from an online survey UiPath fielded via organic email and social media from April 5 - 26, 2021.

1,011

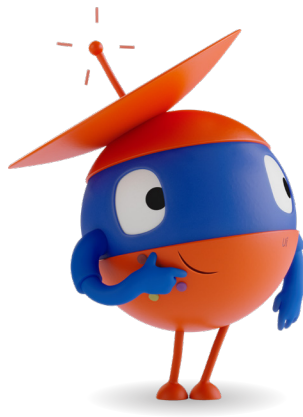
Robotics Process Automation (RPA) professionals responded.

Their job titles included:

- RPA developers (63%)
- RPA consultant (9%)
- RPA lead/manager/director (9%)
- Solution architect (6%)
- RPA specialist (5%)
- Student (5%)
- Business analyst (3%)

Note: Because of rounding, some percentages may not add to 100%.

Key findings



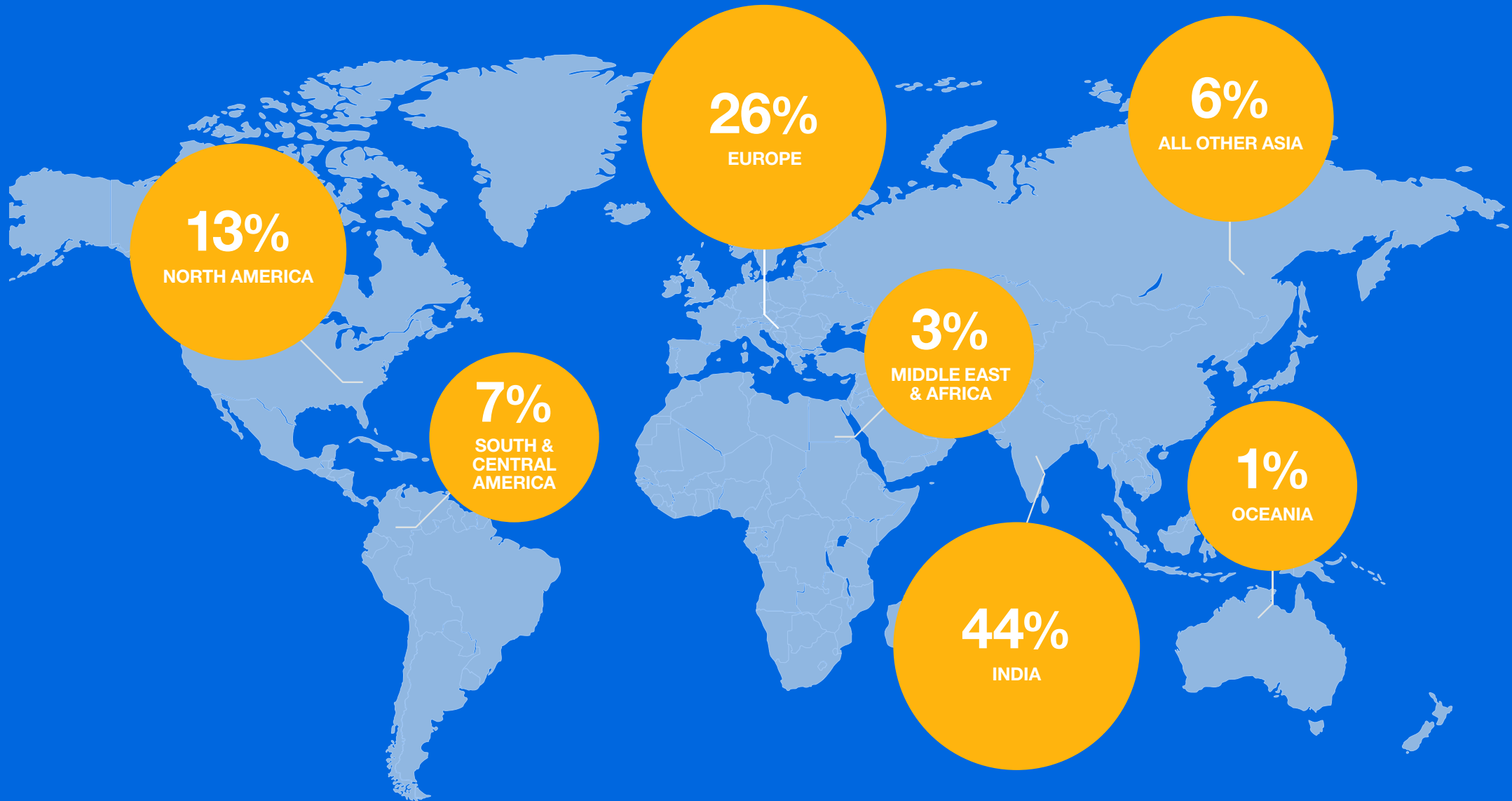
01. **RPA is a fast-growing and desirable field that is relatively easy to transition into.**
The vast majority (92%) of RPA developers think the RPA industry has a high potential for growth over the next 5 years. And we are seeing signs of this growth: 77% expect their organization will hire more RPA developers in the next 12 months up from 70% last year. Not only is RPA attracting talent that's new to the workforce, but it's also something seasoned professionals are interested in as well. Two thirds of RPA developers come from other professional fields, most commonly software development. Half of RPA developers report it was easy to transition into their role.
02. **RPA is a diverse software development field.**
59% of RPA developers think RPA is more diverse than other software development fields—and our data shows signs of gender and age diversity, too. 20% of the RPA developers who responded are women and half are over the age of 30. 52% of RPA developers have at least 5 years of work experience. 31% have at least 11 years of experience.
03. **RPA developers report a high (and increasing) level of job satisfaction.**
97% of RPA developers report being satisfied with their career. This is in line with what we saw last year, but this year we see even more enthusiasm. 63% of RPA developers report being very satisfied, up from 51% last year. RPA developers are proud of the work they are doing—and they feel valued. 84% of RPA developers feel valued by their organization, up from 80% last year. 88% think their job as an RPA developer will have a positive impact on their next career move compared to 83% last year.
04. **Even though satisfaction with the field is high and developers want to stay in the field, many are looking for new jobs or are open to new opportunities.**
80% of RPA developers are looking for new jobs or are open to new opportunities, but the majority of these job seekers (75%) want to remain in the field. Why are they looking to make a change? The top reasons include the desire to advance their career (78%), increase their salary (78%), and learn new skills (76%).
05. **Like many fields, RPA developers shifted how they worked this year.**
85% started working from home, and most are still doing so (as of April 2021). While 90% of RPA developers want to continue working from home at least some of the time, those who are new to this arrangement have faced a few challenges, including difficulty unplugging (47%), collaboration (46%), and distractions (40%).



Who you are

As we saw last year, there is a lot of diversity in survey respondents in terms of geography, ethnicity, industry focus, and company type and size. But there were commonalities as well. You're highly educated and tech- and RPA-skilled. And, while most of you are relatively new to RPA, you're likely to have years of other professional experience to draw on.

Geographic presence

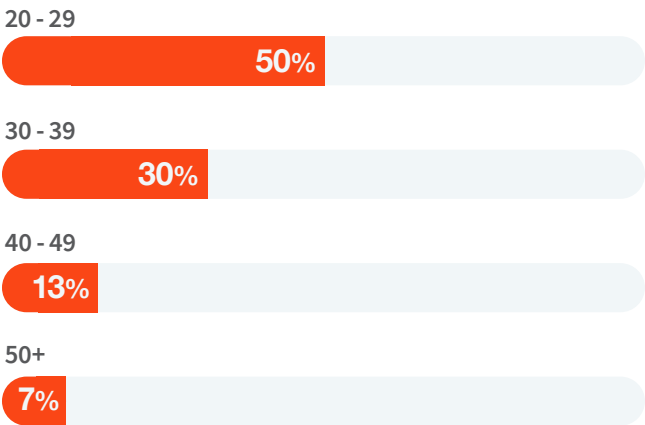


Who participated?

WHO YOU ARE

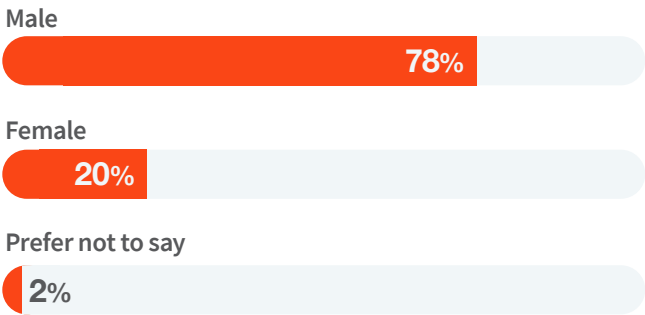
Age

About half of RPA developers are between 20-29; about half are over the age of 30.



Gender

RPA developers are predominantly male. That said, 20% of respondents were female, which is more diverse than other software development fields as reported in Stack Overflow's Developer Survey (where only 8% were female).

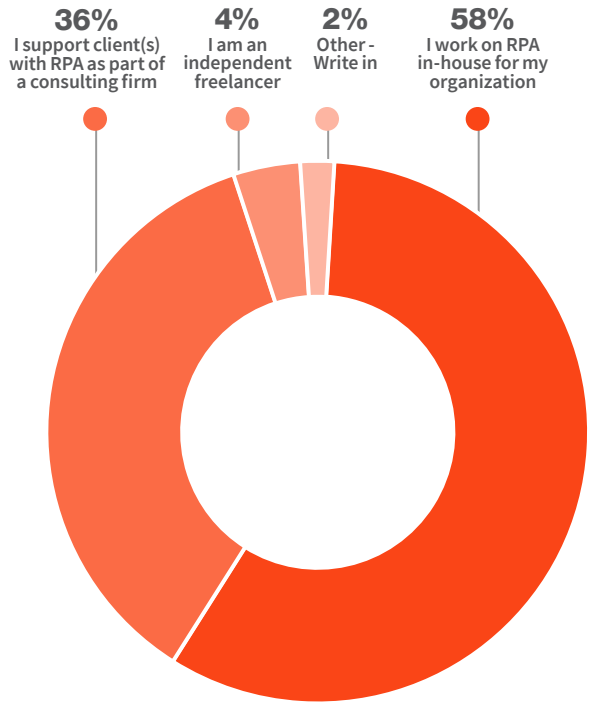


Who participated?

WHO YOU ARE

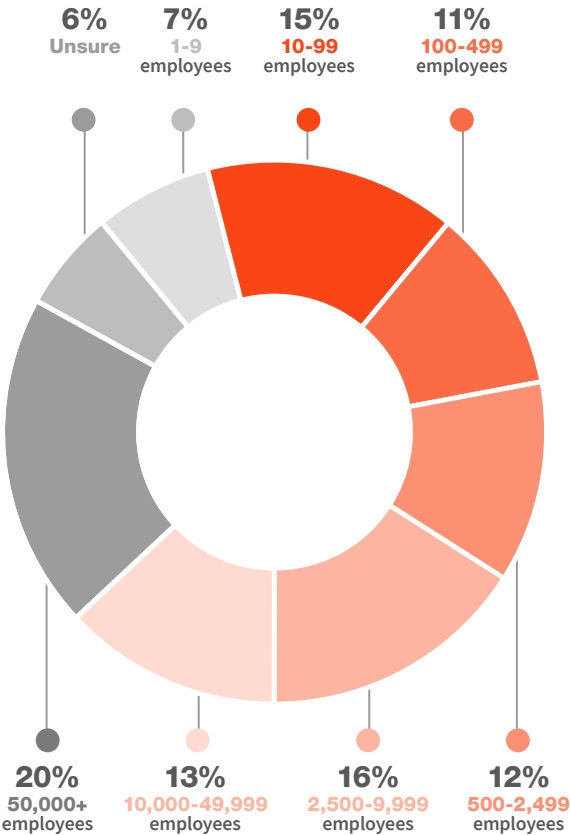
Type of company

While the majority work on automation in-house, one-third work for a consulting firm.



Number of employees

A third of respondents work for companies with at least 10,000 employees.



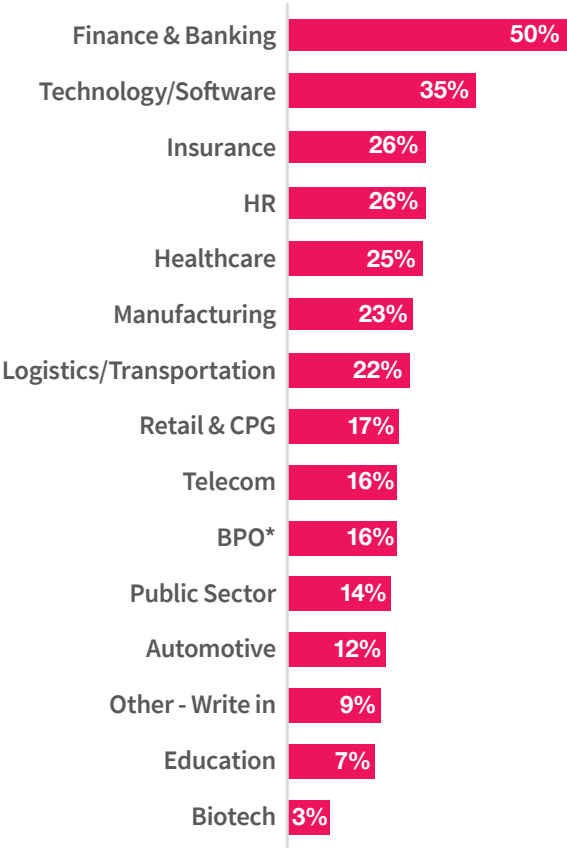
Who participated?

WHO YOU ARE

Industry focus

Developers are creating automations for a wide range of industries, led by Finance and Banking.

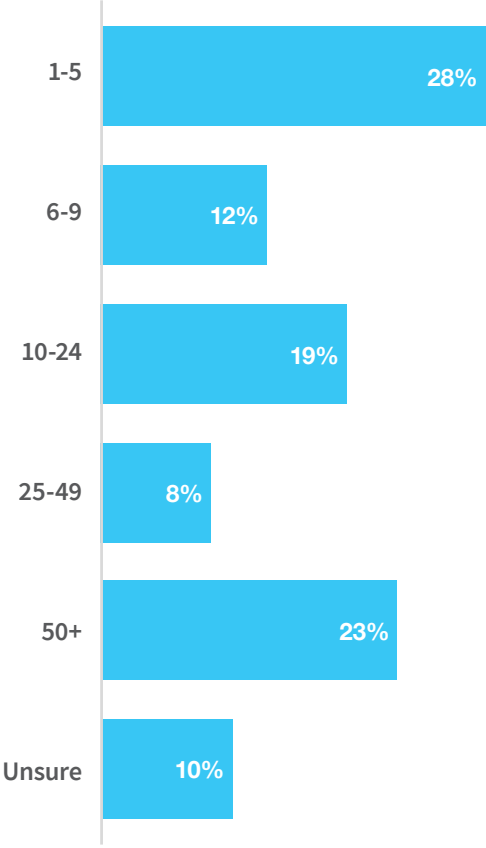
Respondents could select more than one option.



**Business Process Outsourcing*

Number of people who work in RPA

Almost a third of respondents work in organizations that have at least 25 people who are working in RPA-related roles.

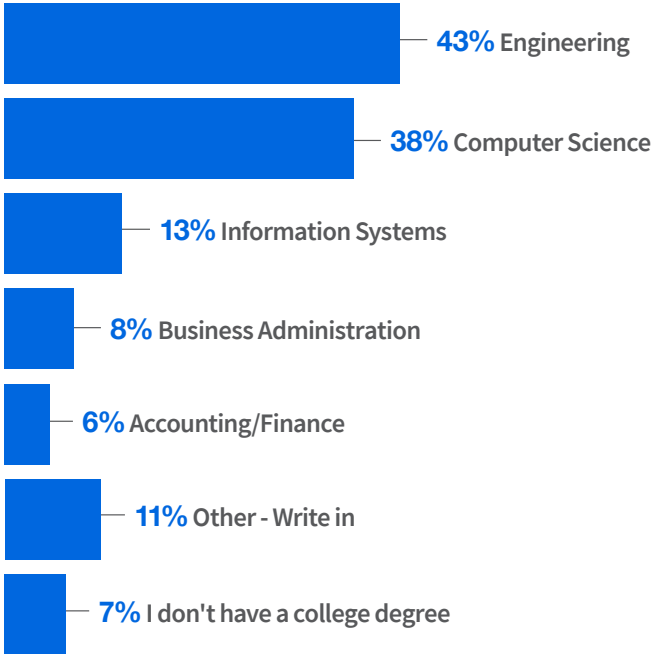


Who participated?

WHO YOU ARE

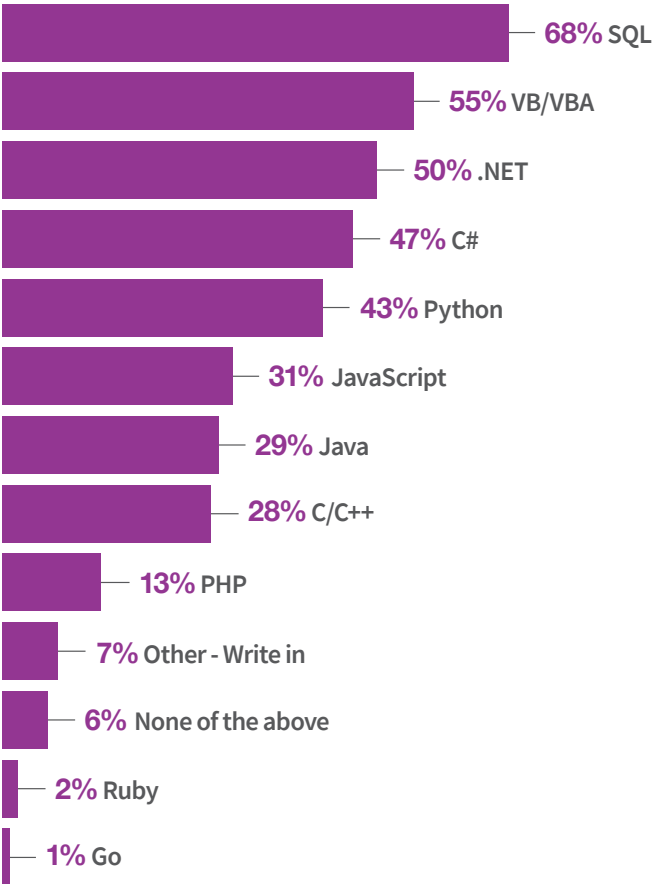
Education

The majority have college degrees in a technical field, most commonly engineering and computer science.



Programming languages

On average, developers know an average of 4 languages, with SQL being the most common. Only 6% indicate they don't know another language.

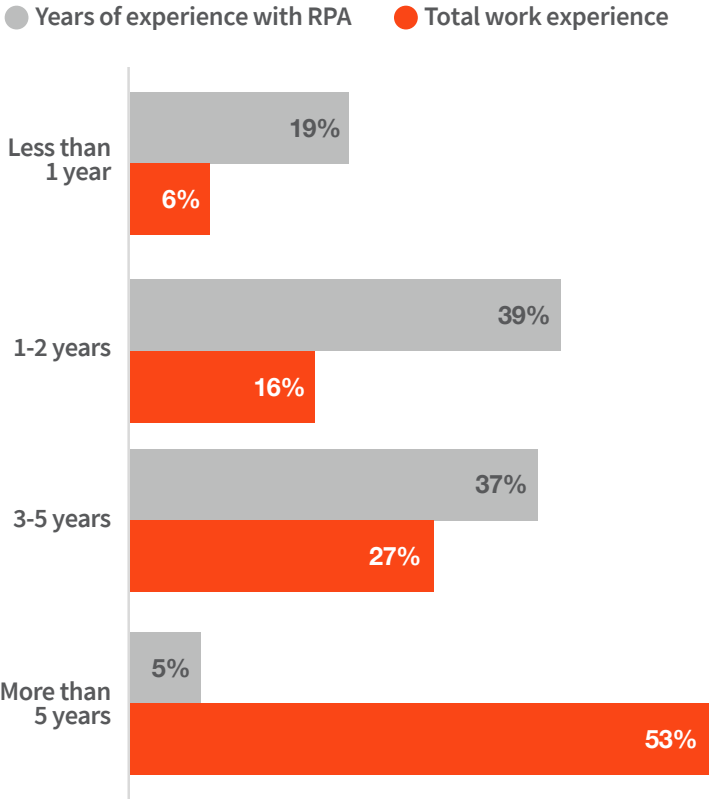


Who participated?

WHO YOU ARE

Years of experience

Half of RPA developers have at least 5 years of work experience. This indicates that it's a desirable field both for recent graduates as well as experienced professionals.



“

I like how RPA reduces human effort and gives employees more time back. I also like learning about many new technologies and implementing them in my automations. There's no limit to your creativity.

Naveen Chatlapalli, Solution Architect, Ashling Partners

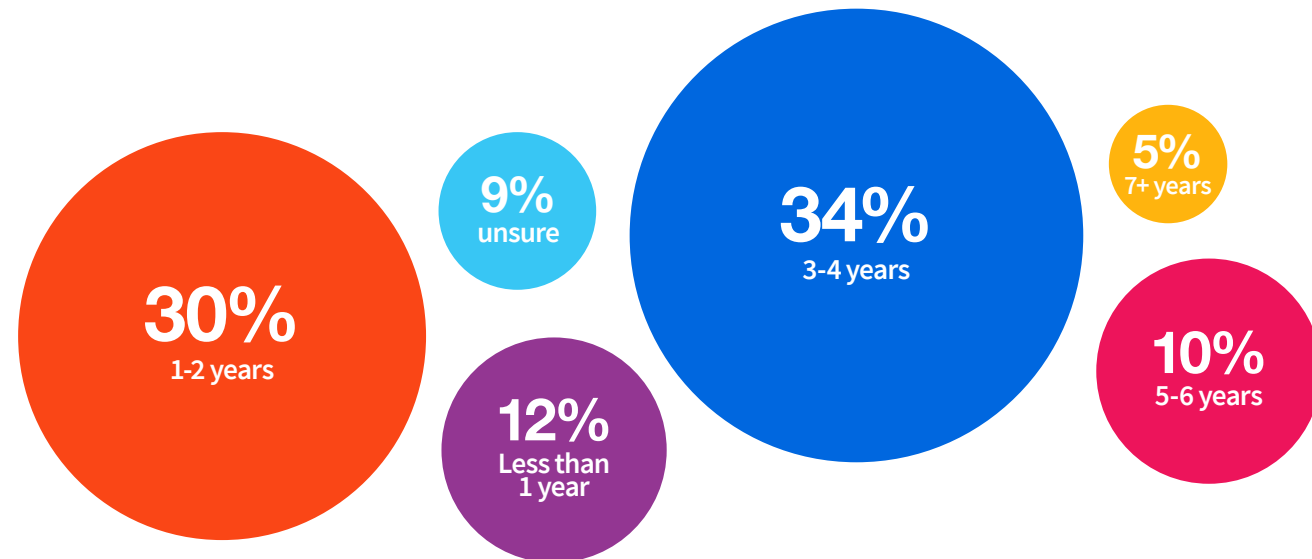


Who participated?

WHO YOU ARE

Organization's experience with RPA

RPA is still new in many organizations. 42% work for organizations that have been using RPA for up to 2 years.



“

It was fun taking four rote tasks and creating a robot to do the same thing in 30 minutes that previously took four people 30 to 40 minutes each to do.

Ronald G. Butler Jr.,
CAD/PLM System Engineer, ACCO Brands

“

I like that RPA gives me the ability to take a really boring or time consuming process that people don't like doing and give them an automated solution—which frees them up for more interesting and exciting work.

Michelle Pike, Systems Analyst, Alphabet GB Ltd.



Job satisfaction

The vast majority of RPA developers report being satisfied. What makes this such a desirable field?

You reported high satisfaction last year—and it's even higher this year

JOB SATISFACTION

You're highly satisfied with your career

97% of RPA developers report being satisfied with their career. Even more impressive: This year, 63% report being very satisfied, up from 51% last year.

Very satisfied



Somewhat satisfied



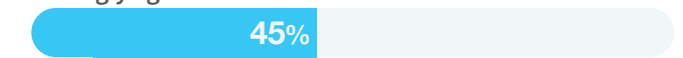
Not satisfied



Your organization appreciates you

85% agree “my organization values the work I do as an RPA developer,” up from 80% last year.

Strongly agree



Agree



Neutral



Disagree



Strongly disagree

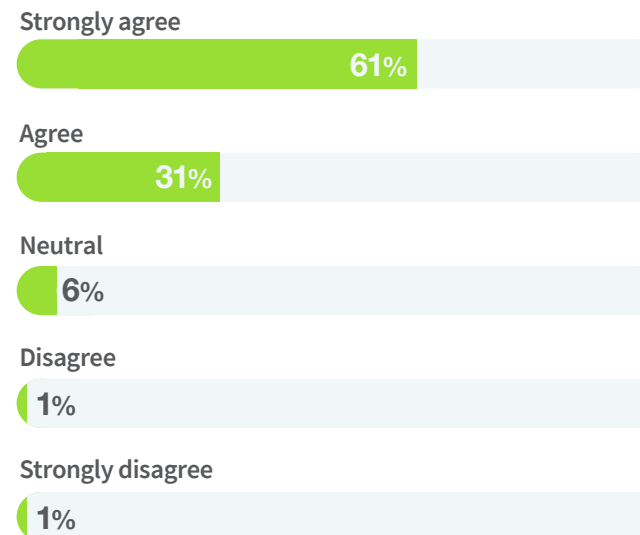


You believe
you're in a high
growth field
that will have a
positive impact
on your career

JOB SATISFACTION

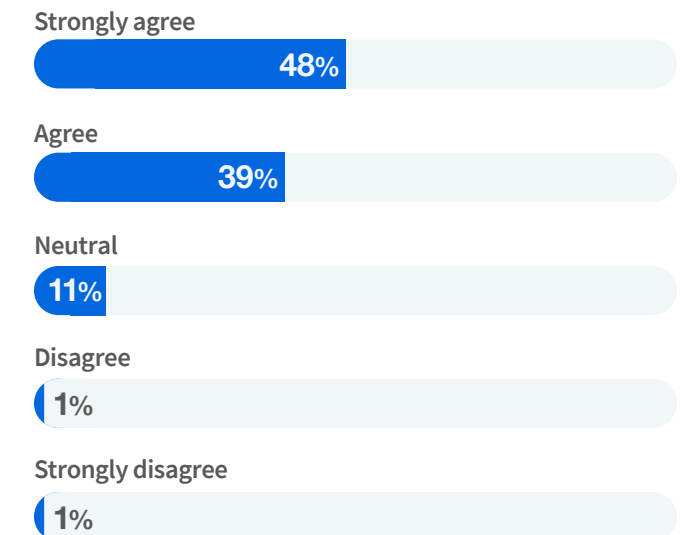
The RPA industry has a high potential for growth

Just as we saw last year, more than 90% agree “the RPA industry has a high potential for growth over the next 5 years.”



And this field will help you in your career

87% agree their “job as an RPA developer will have a positive impact on their next career move,” up from 83% last year.



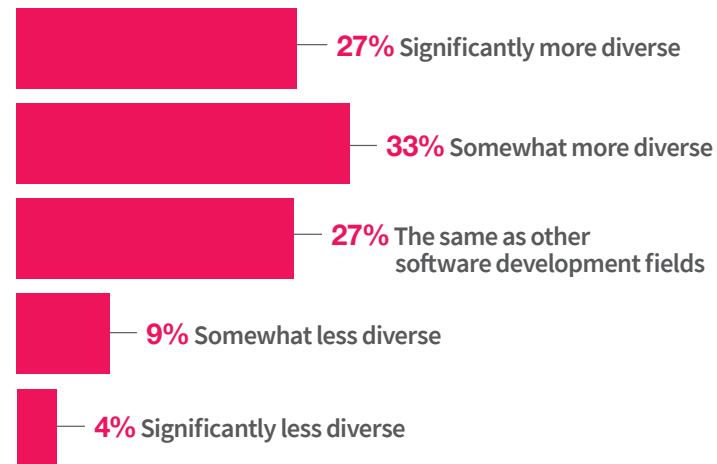
You're proud of your industry

It's more diverse than others in software development and you believe the work you do will have a positive impact on society.

JOB SATISFACTION

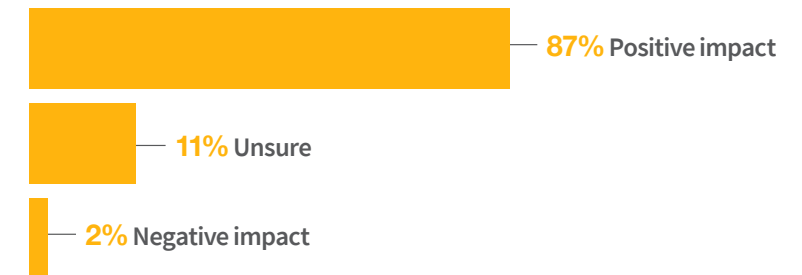
RPA is a diverse field . . .

86% think RPA is at least as or more diverse than other software development fields.



. . . And it will have a positive impact on society

87% think RPA will have a positive impact on society.



“

I have created many automation projects for clients and helped them replace tedious jobs with just a click. The best part is when they are amazed and happy to see the work that you have brought to them.

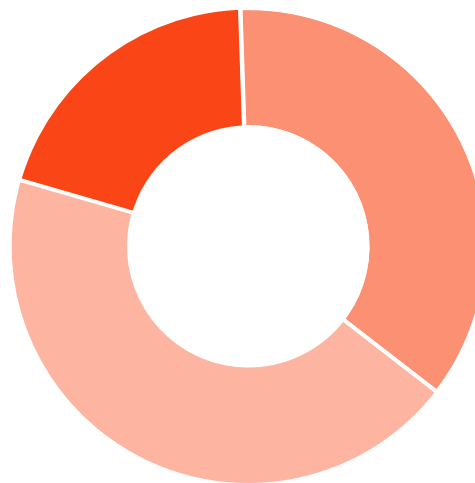
Somya Jain, IT Analyst, Tata Consultancy Pvt. Ltd.

Even though many of you are open to new job opportunities, you want to stay in RPA

JOB SATISFACTION

The majority of you are open to a new opportunity

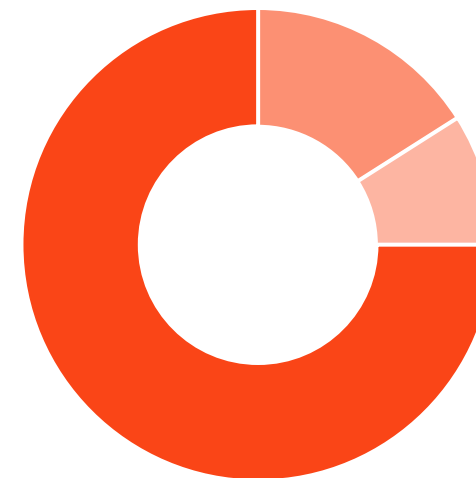
Compared to last year, we see a slight reduction in those who are actively looking for a new job, but we see an increase in those who are open to opportunities.



- 20% I'm not interested in a new job
- 36% I'm actively looking
- 44% I'm not actively looking but open to new opportunities

Even those looking for a new opportunity plan to stay in RPA

Of those looking for a new job or open to new activities, 75% want to remain in RPA development, up slightly from 70% last year. This is yet another indication developers are happy with their chosen career.



- 75% I'm looking for a job as an RPA developer
- 16% Unsure
- 9% I'm looking to change my career

If you are looking for a new job, you should have ample opportunities

JOB SATISFACTION

There will be many RPA job openings in the coming year

The RPA job market is expected to be hot. 77% expect their organization will “definitely” or “likely” hire more RPA developers in the next 12 months, up from 70% last year.

Definitely



Likely



Not likely



Unsure



Those who are hiring can attract new developers if they focus on the right things

When those who are looking for new opportunities are asked why they are looking, three things top the list: opportunities to advance career, increased salary, and opportunity to learn new skills.

Opportunity to advance career



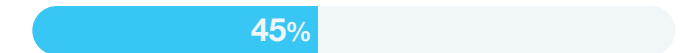
Increased salary/compensation



Opportunity to learn new skills



Better work-life balance



Better cultural fit



Other - Write in



None of the above

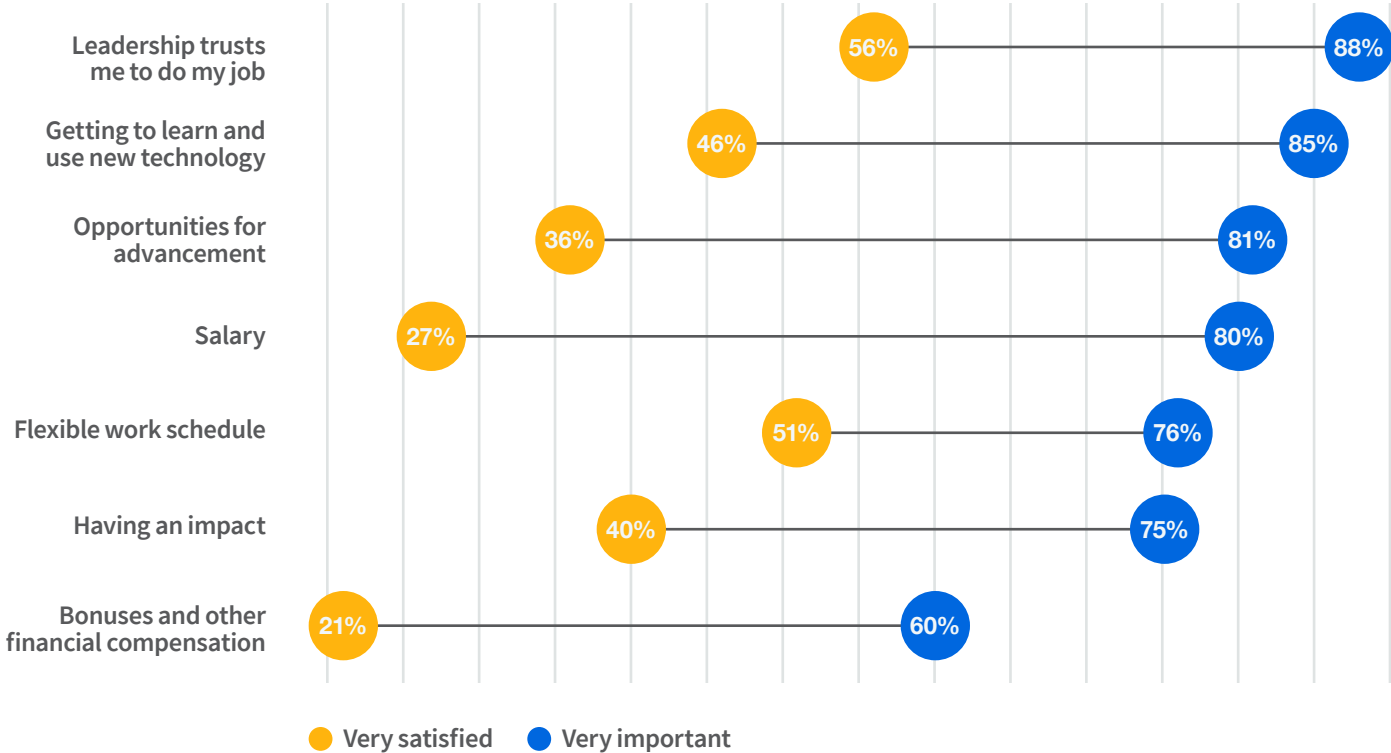


And for those who are hiring or trying to keep top talent, you can focus on salary and opportunities for advancement

JOB SATISFACTION

RPA developers are least satisfied with their salary and opportunities for advancement

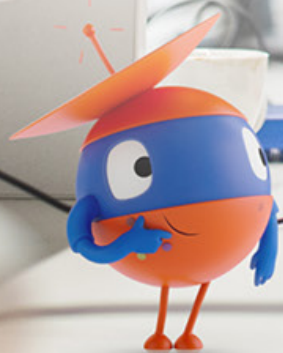
To give us more clues on how organizations can better support their RPA developers, we evaluated how important and satisfied RPA developers are in key areas. We see similar areas of frustration: RPA developers want more when it comes to salary and opportunities for advancement.





Life as an RPA developer

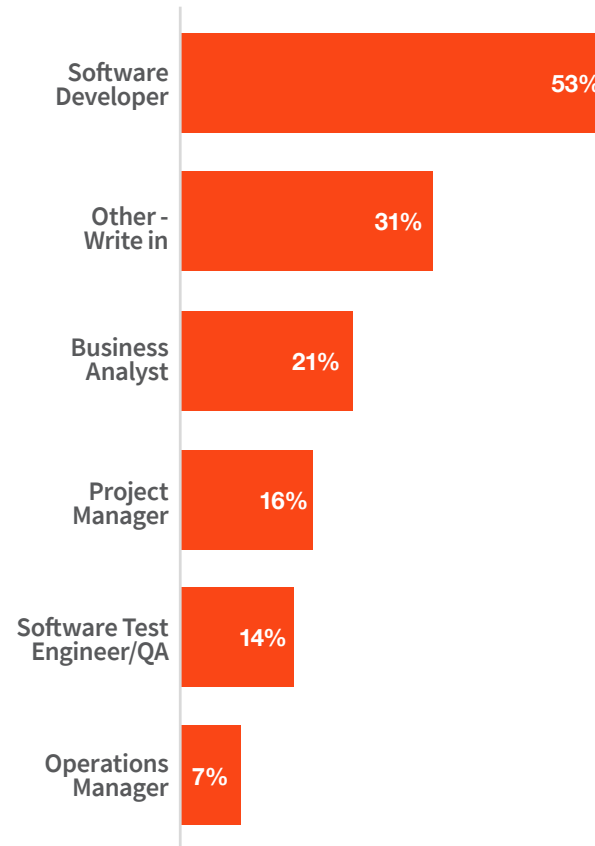
Job satisfaction is high and the industry is growing, but what does it really feel like to be an RPA developer?



You come from a range of industries and you report it's a relatively easy transition into your role

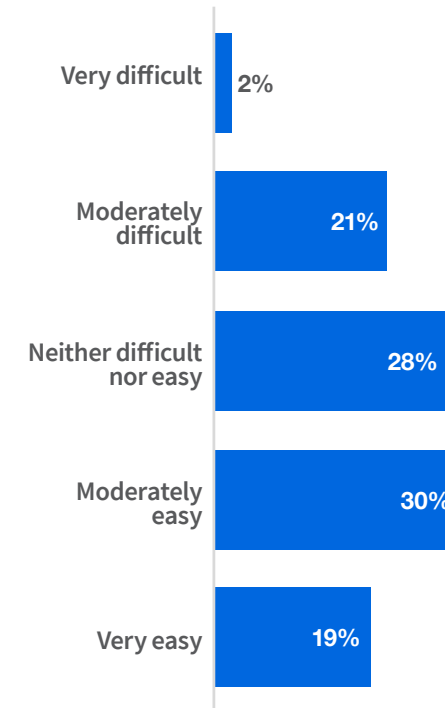
Previous roles

Only 35% say RPA is their first professional role. Of those coming from another role, it's most common for RPA developers to come from software development, but there is no one clear path.



Ease of transition

Regardless of their previous role, almost half indicate it was an easy transition to RPA. Only 2% say it was very difficult.



We asked you:

Which current leader in technology or business are you most inspired by?

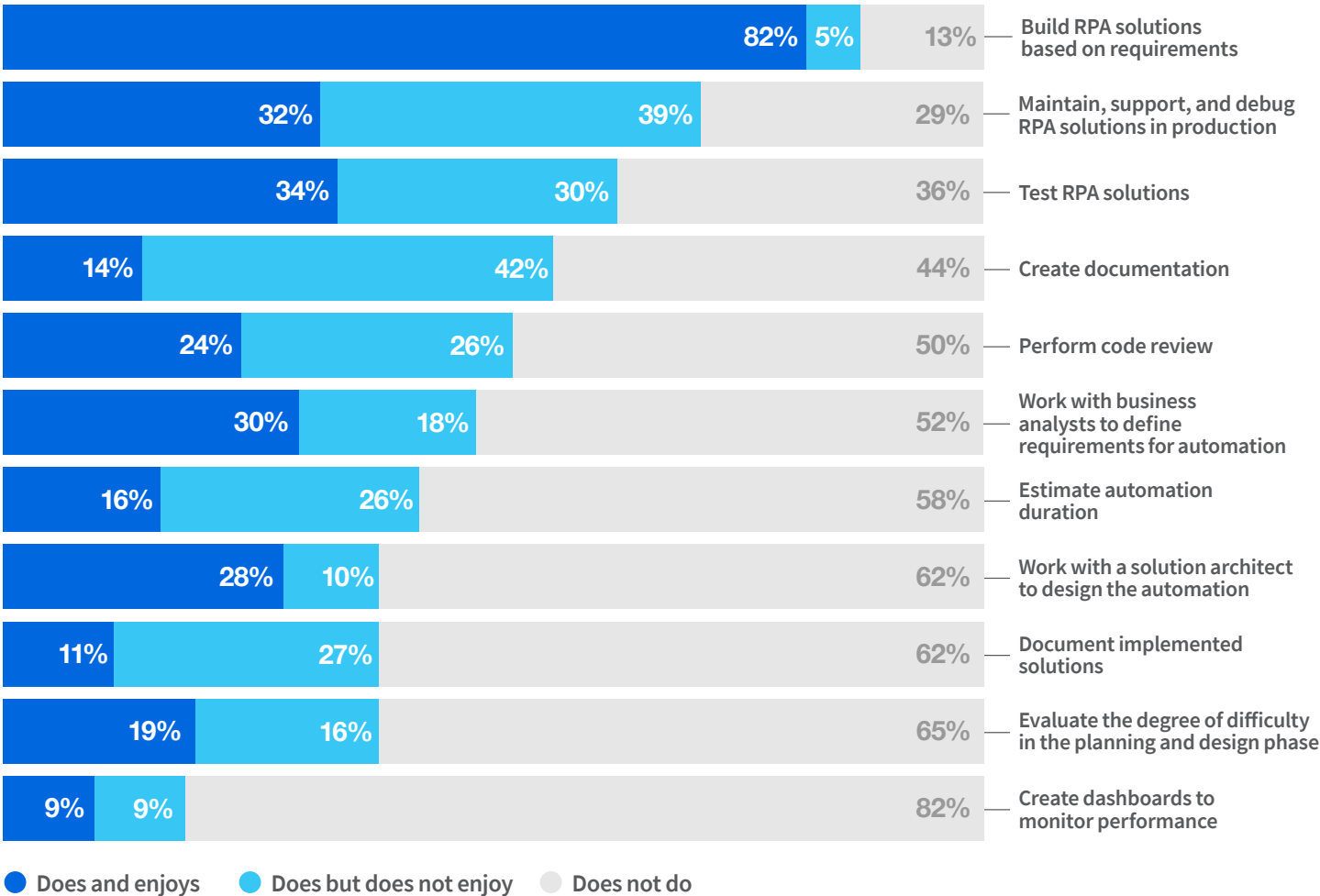
01. **Elon Musk**
02. **Daniel Dines**
03. **Bill Gates**
04. **Ratan Tata**
05. **Satya Nadella**

Your favorite activity is the one you do most often—building automations

But there are parts of your job you don't enjoy as much.

You work on a variety of tasks every week

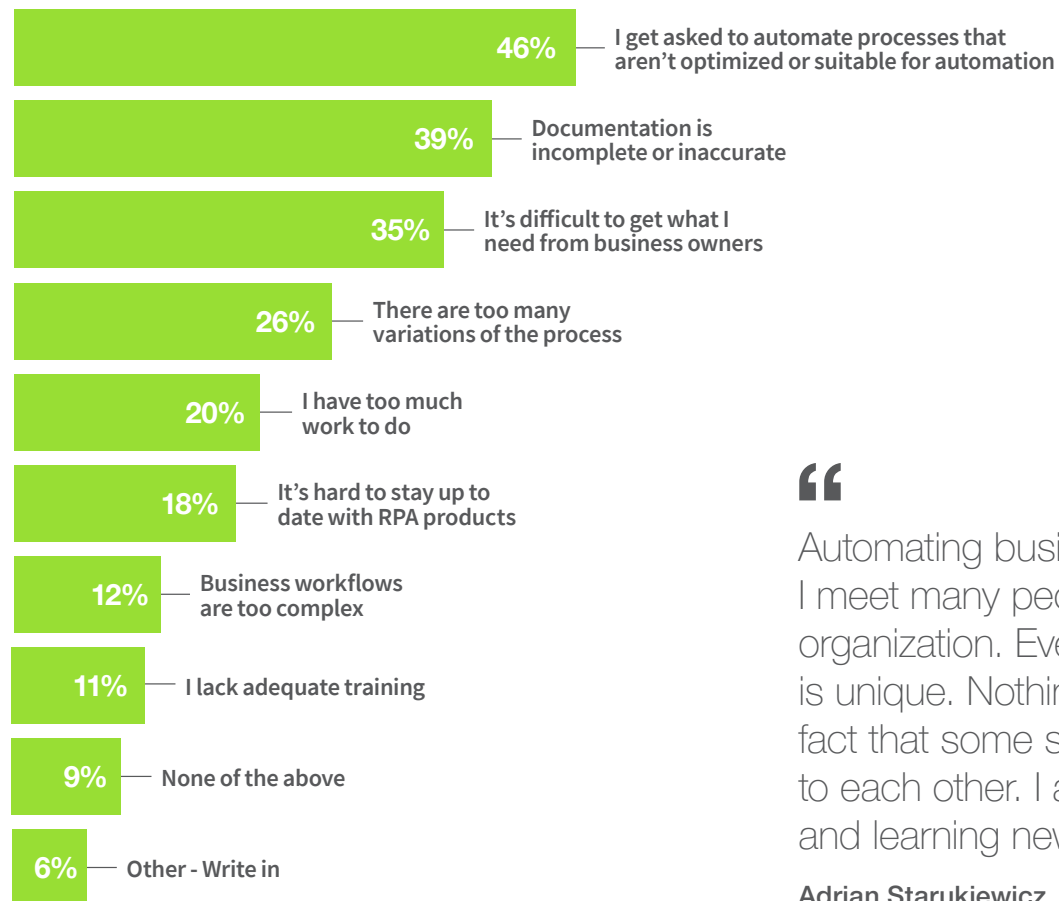
While building automations tops the list for activities you enjoy, your least favorite activities are creating documentation, documenting implemented solutions, and estimating automation duration.



But that's
not your only
frustration

You're frustrated for several reasons

You don't like being asked to automate processes that aren't suitable for automation.



“

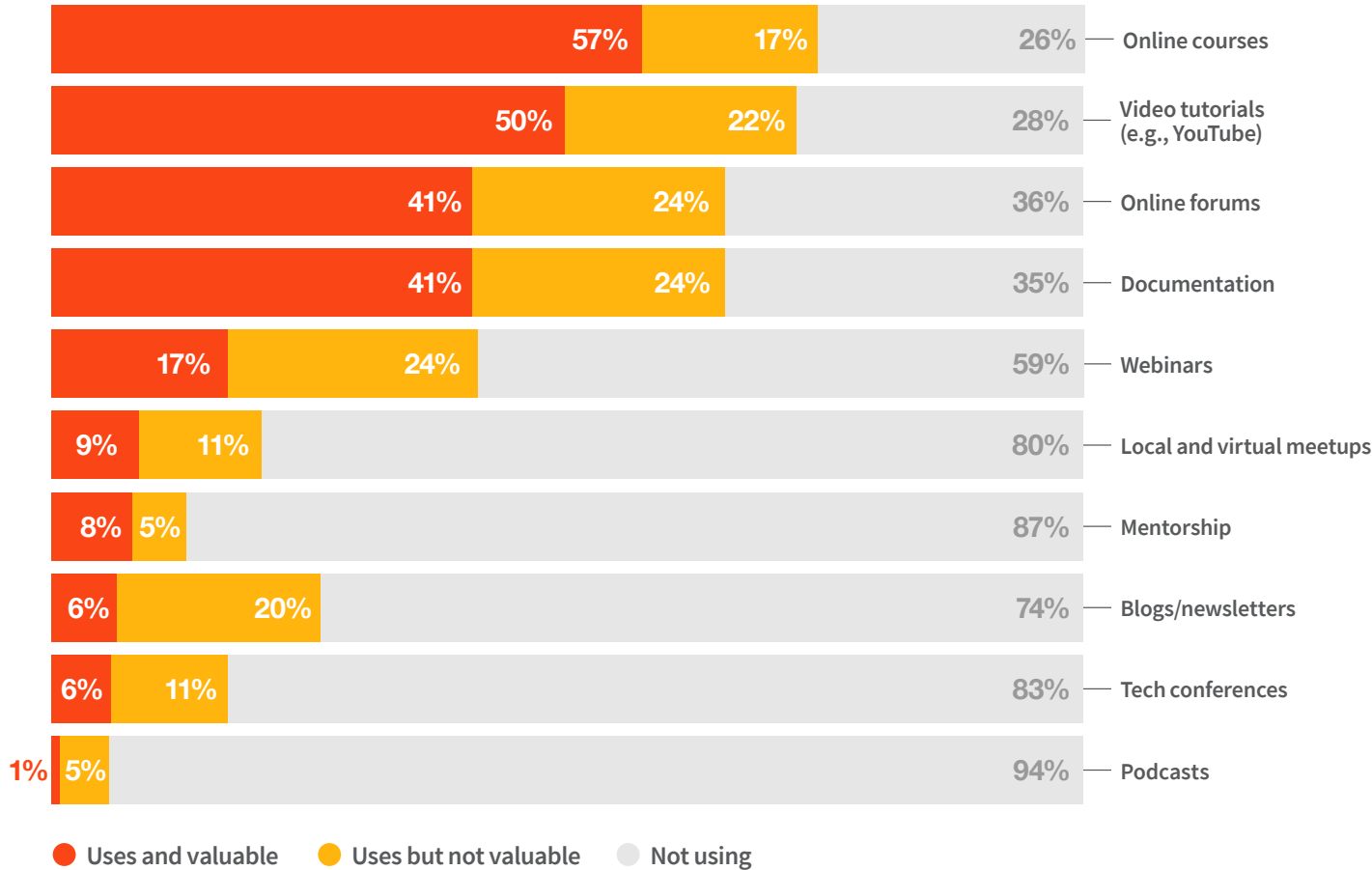
Automating business processes is great. I meet many people from across the organization. Every day is different and this is unique. Nothing is repetitive despite the fact that some solutions may be similar to each other. I am constantly developing and learning new solutions.

Adrian Starukiewicz, RPA Developer, Warta S.A.

You're
educating
yourself in
an average
of 4 ways

Online courses continue to be the main method for RPA developers to learn

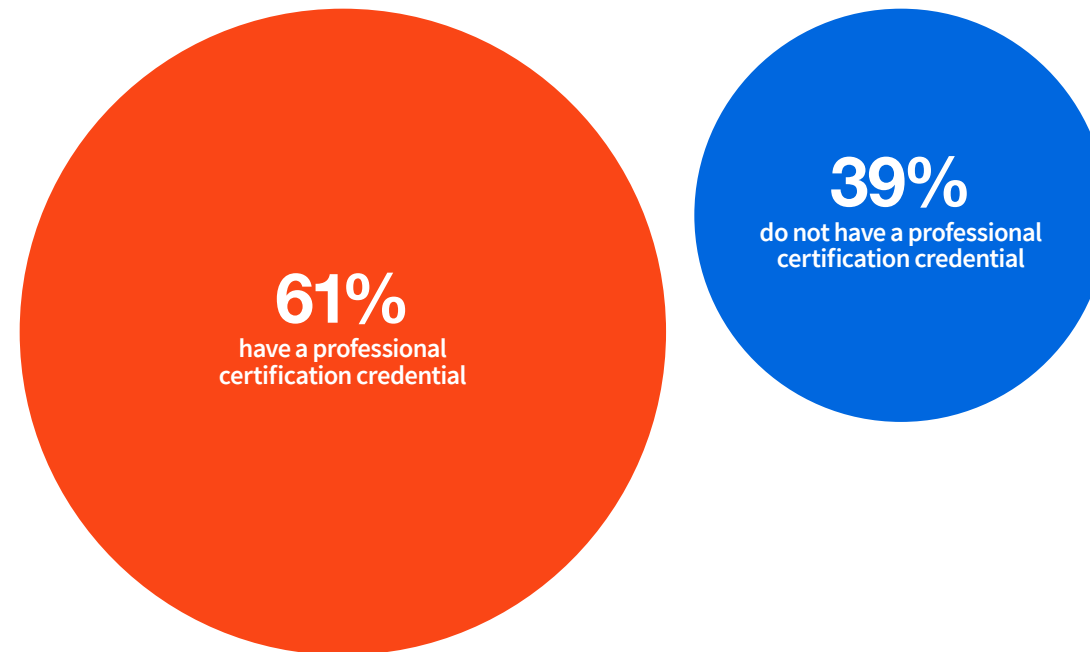
While lots of opportunities exist for RPA education, the most common—and most valuable—ways RPA developers are using are online courses and video tutorials.



Many of you
are formalizing
your education
and getting a
professional
certification
credentials

Certifications are common

3 out of 5 have a professional certification credential.



55%

of surveyed developers said they want to get the new UiPath Advanced RPA Developer certification in the next 12 months.



Work from home

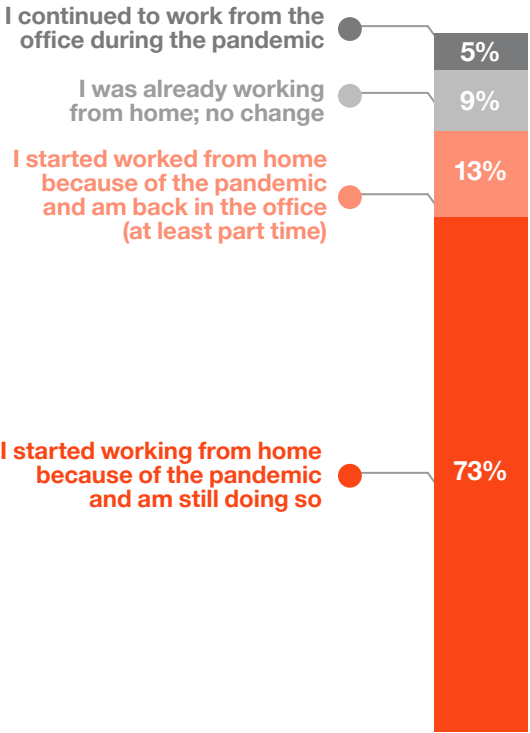
The vast majority of RPA developers started working from home during the pandemic. What has this experience been like—and what do developers hope the future of work will be?

Most of you
want to continue
working from
home in some
capacity

WORK FROM HOME

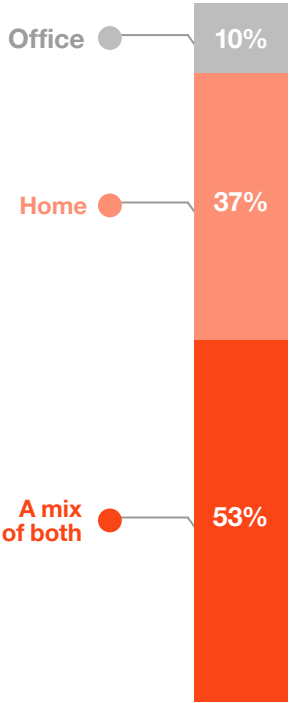
The vast majority started working from home this past year

85% started working from home during the pandemic—and most are still doing so.



Working from home is preferred

If given the choice, 90% would like to continue working from home at least part of the time.



While most welcome the shift, it's not without its frustrations

WORK FROM HOME

Work from home has its challenges

Those who were new to working from home were challenged in a few ways, including finding it difficult to unplug, collaborating and dealing with distractions.

It's difficult to unplug

47%

Collaboration

46%

Too many distractions

40%

I don't have the right space or equipment for working from home

33%

Loneliness

30%

Childcare

16%

Other - Write in

4%

RPA developer prefer synchronous collaboration

RPA developers prefer to collaborate in real-time, with both audio and video calls topping the list.

Audio calls only

43%

Video calls

41%

Email

6%

Other - Write in

5%

Slack

5%

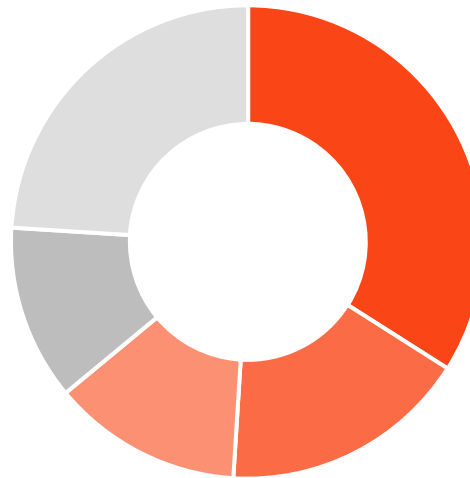


You are working
at all times of
day—and from
every room in
your home

WORK FROM HOME

Many of you are energized in the early morning

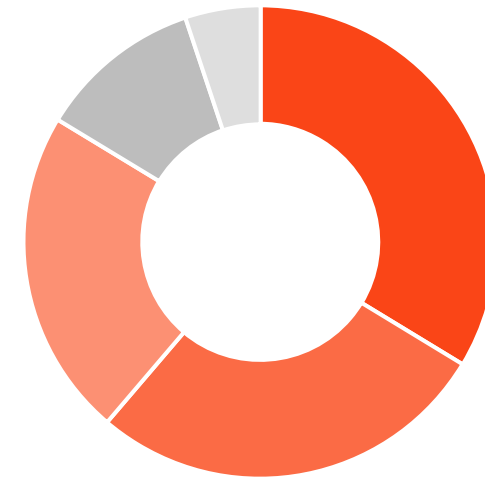
While a third of you are most energized in the early morning, 24% of you report your ideal time of day varies.



- 34% Early morning
- 17% Late morning
- 13% Afternoon
- 12% Late evening
- 24% It depends

Currently, only about one-fourth of RPA developers are working from an office space

The most common place RPA developers are working is the bedroom. Only 11% of you move around your home when you work.



- 33% Bedroom
- 27% Office
- 22% Living/common room
- 12% I move around
- 5% Kitchen/dining room



Spotlight on students

New this year, we wanted to learn from those who are potentially entering the RPA job market: students. We're tracking some interesting trends from around 50 student respondents and will continue to extend our research next year.

Spotlight on students

SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENTS

26%

of respondents identified as female.

While we don't yet know if this is a trend, this is higher than the 20% we saw from survey respondents overall.

82%

of those who were surveyed are considering a job in RPA after they graduate.

The top reasons for this include interesting technology, meaningful work and the ability to make an impact.

3 in 5

students think RPA is more diverse than other software development fields.

100%

of students surveyed believe RPA has a high potential for growth in the next 5 years.

The most common ways students are hearing about RPA is through **college courses/presentations and friends/peers.**

Students are most likely to educate themselves by **watching video tutorials and attending online courses.**

Afterword

Many thanks to the 1,000+ respondents who took the time to make your voice heard in this year's report.

We conduct this annual survey to uncover what life is like for RPA developers—and provide you with information about what this profession looks like for others on a similar path. Our goal is to track where the profession has been, where it is today and, most importantly, where it's headed.

If you found this report valuable, we'd love for you to share this report with other developers, anyone who might be interested in learning more about this emerging field, and those who hire RPA talent.

Have feedback to share on the contents of this report or ideas about what you'd like us to cover in future surveys? **We'd love to hear from you—don't hesitate to drop us a note.**

[Join the UiPath Community at community.uipath.com](https://community.uipath.com)

Teresa Wu

Director of Product Marketing, Community
teresa.wu@uipath.com

About UiPath

UiPath has a vision to deliver the Fully Automated Enterprise™, one where companies use automation to unlock their greatest potential. UiPath offers an end-to-end platform for automation, combining the leading **Robotic Process Automation** (RPA) solution with a full suite of capabilities that enable every organization to rapidly scale digital business operations.

To learn more about what these trends mean for those who hire RPA developers, read [What Business Leaders Need to Know about RPA: 6 Key Takeaways](#).

