



of 80% to 20%. Overall, I believe that the greatest efficiency potential for RPA lies in the middle and back office.

Another topic that I believe will be of great importance in 2019 is cybersecurity. Last year the topic was often the focus of public attention because in recent years consumers have been conditioned to pass on more and more personal data to companies, which has often led to privacy violations. In 2019, data security requirements will become more stringent as data volume and sensitivity multiply. Against this background providers will be increasingly obliged to strive for transparency in data storage and processing. Security concepts should be rethought due to increasing networking and amount of data.

Overall, it should be noted that we are seeing more of the above technologies working in combination. Examples to mention are cybersecurity systems that are self-learning and networked and can therefore adapt to new threats.

In my view, a technology that is considered to have high potential but still lacks market maturity is blockchain. What makes blockchain so special is that it solves fundamental problems in dealing with sensitive information and monetary values. The technology is known for its transparency, security and efficiency. If you take a closer look, however, you will notice that while there are numerous application scenarios, the technology is rarely used.

Many weaknesses still need to be addressed, including scalability and difficult integration into existing systems. As a result, it will be some time before blockchain technology becomes the standard. It is advisable to study possible application scenarios now, even if it will still take several years for the technology to become relevant.

To what extent do you think European services companies are prepared for digitalization?

My impression is that European companies from various industries have taken advantage of the challenges and opportunities resulting from technology trends and are currently in the midst of digital transformation. From my point of view, it is important that companies prioritize the application of new technologies. However, this does not mean that every new technology can offer companies added value. In many cases it is still too early for the introduction, because there is a lack of acceptance or the technology has not been sufficiently tested.

Nevertheless, it is important for companies to continually look at how they can benefit from technology trends and use them profitably for new business services offerings.

What should companies bear in mind when implementing their digitalization measures?

I am convinced that there is no way around intensively dealing with new technologies in order to remain competitive as a company, whether or not the management has an affinity for digitalization. It is particularly important that interdisciplinary teams within the company are formed specifically for this purpose.

The expansion of data analysis and stronger networking of the company's own data is especially relevant. Another success factor is increasing software development capacity. Flexible business and service processes, planning, and know-how are the ingredients for success of a digitalization strategy. ■