



9

# SYSTEMS THINKING

PRACTICES FOR SMARTER  
*AUTOMATION LEADERSHIP*

---



# SYSTEMS THINKING

✓ Seeing the **whole**, not just parts and how shifts in one area **IMPACTS** others.

👉 The **Future of Jobs Report 2025** flags it as a FAST-RISING core skill.



## **SYSTEMS THINKING leaders :**

- ✓ Understand how automation **impacts the whole**, not just the part
- ✓ **Avoid quick tech fixes** that create long-term headaches
- ✓ Make **smarter decisions** about where and how to automate
- ✓ See **downstream effects** before they happen
- ✓ Keep people, performance, and processes **aligned**



## Real world RPA AUTOMATION

*Accounts Payable Invoice processing*

👉 **Looked simple:** automate repetitive tasks

👉 **Reality?** Complex, interconnected, up/downstream effects

Exactly where **SYSTEMS THINKING** became critical...

Let's look at some lessons learned.



1

## Check what's connected



### Invoices lagging after a launch?

**CONSIDER:** It might **not be a bug**. Vendors may not have been looped into how the new bots work.

**Lesson:** Sometimes it isn't broken technology; it's **misaligned people**.

**Challenge:** Map who wasn't included

**Why it matters:** Root clarity



2

## Look for repeat loops



**Automation can make things faster.**

**BUT:** If the **same problems** keep bouncing back to vendors or ops teams, you haven't solved them. You have just shifted them.

**Lesson: Faster doesn't imply smoother.**

**Challenge:** Surface patterns across cycles.

**Why it matters:** Sustainable flow



3

## Slow down judgements



### Assuming it's a tech delay?

**CONSIDER:** It could be strict rules or messy inputs, or thresholds no one flagged.

**Lesson:** Don't jump to blame. Trace the trail first

**Challenge:** Audit before assuming fault.

**Why it matters:** Judgement discipline



4

## Watch for delayed impact



**Auto-approvals work fine on Day 1**

**BUT:** Two weeks later, stakeholders are stuck with rigid logic that won't bend.

**Lesson:** Design and build for both now and later.

**Challenge:** Stress test for future use.

**Why it matters:** Future impact



5

## Scan for up/downstream effects



### **Bots cleaned up one task**

**BUT:** Suddenly vendors are pinging procurement nonstop.

**Lesson:** Trace consequences across teams.

**Challenge:** Follow the impacts across silos

**Why it matters:** Cross-team alignment



6

## Spot the bigger pattern



**If every automation stalls, it might not be the tools.**

**CONSIDER:** It might be how change lands across teams.

**Lesson:** If it keeps happening, it's not random, it's systemic.

**Challenge:** Zoom out across rollouts.

**Why it matters:** Change fluency



7

**Steer the change.  
Don't just hit send.**



**A flawless rollout doesn't mean people adopt it**

**CONSIDER:** Until they feel clarity and value, it won't stick.

**Lesson:** Rollouts need buy-in, not just instructions.

**Challenge:** Test for clarity before the launch.

**Why it matters:** Human adoption



8

## Welcome multiple perspectives



**An AP analyst may notice what the bot keeps missing**

**CONSIDER:** What details the project team overlooked.

**Lesson:** Those closest to the work often hold the feedback loop.

**Challenge:** Ask who is closest to the signal.

**Why it matters:** Hidden insight



9

## Balance action with reflection



**Go-live isn't the end.**

**CONSIDER:** If you skip the “what did we learn?” moment, the next project brings the same pain.

**Lesson:** Reflection isn't optional. It has to be a strategy.

**Challenge:** Block time to review with intent.

**Why it matters:** Adaptive learning



# Comments

Which practice could you strengthen?

What other insights can you share?

Find this helpful?





**I drive continuous leadership growth, guiding individuals through every stage of their career journey.**

**Let's Connect on Your Personal Career Journey.**

Rekha Jillella

| [RekhaJ@RuReady.fyi](mailto:RekhaJ@RuReady.fyi)

