Ahead of the Curve: Why Do So Many Automation Projects Fail?

Understand the root causes of automation underperformance—and the design, evaluation, and implementation practices that build more resilient, effective operations.

LUNCH AND LEARN

Thursday, July 2, 2026 | 12pm ET

Thank you for attending!


Russ Meller


Alan Erera


Matthew Hobson-Rohrer


Juergen Baumbach

Upcoming Course Calendar
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Audience Perspective

When warehouse automation projects disappoint, where do you most often see the root cause?

1. Technology
2. Design assumptions
3. Software integration
4. Facility infrastructure
5. Operating organization
6. Other (please list)

Please briefly list your experience in the Chat.

Automation Project Assessment Metrics

- Operational cost targets (not met)
- Investment required (grows)
- Operation performance and flexibility (severely constrained)
- Timeline (delays)

Root Causes of Automation Project Failures

- Lack of design for the “unhappy path”
- Unproven technology or proven technology misapplied
- Software/system failures
- Change management

Best Practices to Avoid Root Causes

- Being real with performance expectations
  - Short-term and long-term
- Digging deep on the automation
- Employ system design best practices:
  - Consider the full range of product
  - Avoid single points of failure
  - Size buffers based on variability
  - Simulate early
- Use realistic timelines

Discussion Questions

- What portion of automation projects failing to meet goals is truly technology failure versus technology being applied to the wrong operating problem?
- What design assumptions are most likely to break once the system moves from PowerPoint to daily operation?
- Who owns end-to-end integration, and how do we know all systems will work together under real operating conditions?
- What should leaders require before approving the design and business case?
- What must be true about the building, systems, people, testing, and ramp-up plan before the operation is ready to go live?

Connect with Us on LinkedIn

linkedin.com/in/russellmeller

Russ Meller

linkedin.com/in/alerera/

Alan Erera

linkedin.com/in/hobsonrohrer/

Matthew Hobson-Rohrer

linkedin.com/in/juergen-baumbach-5344a2b/

Juergen Baumbach

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