FUJITSU

Media Backgrounder
Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

May 2018

Overview

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) has generated a significant amount of media attention and customer demand, thanks to its ability to deploy fast and unobtrusive software robot technology to automate many day-to-day business processes. RPA enables organizations to reduce cost and increase efficiency by unburdening employees from monotonous, repetitive tasks, while at the same time enhancing customer satisfaction by avoiding delays or human error.

RPA can be applied to a wide variety of tasks, from simply submitting invoices for payment processing after scanning for Purchase Order numbers, to cross-checking against a supplier database. It is in evidence in Service Desk implementations, enabling the self -service capabilities. Software bots can also take on more complex tasks, for example those involved in processing an insurance claim, including the digitization of handwritten text, and even incorporate elements of machine learning, for example in helping decide whether or not to honor a claim. Actually, the use cases for RPA are limited only by the imagination of an organization, as there are countless possibilities for reducing errors, accelerating tasks and improving the customer experience. And, with a single virtual worker able to do the workload of between three and 15 humans, RPA projects are largely self-funding, and cut back on mundane tasks that employees find repetitive and frustrating, allowing them to focus on value-added tasks.

These wide-ranging possibilities mean that four out of five members of the C-suite now view automation as a foundation for their operations strategy and almost all (98 percent) enterprises now have an automation agenda[1]. But despite the high level of interest and the technology's potential, the majority of organizations are currently not deriving significant value from their RPA deployments. In fact, according to a recent report[2], between 30 and 50 percent of RPA projects initially fail.

Reasons for failing RPA projects

In some cases, this is due to the relatively low entry costs which result in projects that have not been effectively integrated within the organization as a whole. Others have successfully undertaken initial deployments but struggle to scale them in the absence of clear and effective operating and governance models, and the lack of the right resources and skills to execute an automation roadmap. And even more are held back by the automation dichotomy: they want automation to drive long-term quality and agility but are under pressure to deliver immediate cost reduction to justify further investment.

How to succeed with RPA

To be successful, RPA must be incorporated into a business' wider transformational strategy. As it means essentially to embed a virtual workforce at the heart of the organization, Fujitsu's approach engages business leaders from the outset to co-create the whole transformation process.

A proven RPA methodology is then deployed to identify the monotonous, repetitive processes that are easy targets for transformation and to create a short-term roadmap. The next step is to design and implement the new virtual workers – Fujitsu's technology-agnostic approach ensures the best possible fit for each customer. Then it is time to run pilot projects to help test the concept and prove the business case. This process is designed to help customers access benefits that not only demonstrate the success of RPA projects, but also contribute to building a realistic business case for expanded deployment.

Co-creating RPA solutions with Fujitsu consequently allows customers to quickly reap the benefits: the deployments are strategic and well thought out and can scale easily. What is more, they also unlock short term value by identifying quick wins that deliver improvements in efficiency while also building long-term value in terms of increased agility and reduced costs.

RPA as a Service

To enable customers to get started easily and scale when required, Fujitsu has introduced 'RPA as a Service' (RPAaaS) – which includes all the elements needed to deploy, scale and maintain RPA implementations, including deployment services, maintenance and operation services and support for governance. It is available in multiple deployment models to suit every business – from the scalability, security and cost-per-use flexibility of a SaaS implementation, through to a fully managed service deployed on-premises for those industries and organizations which need to retain more control. Furthermore, Fujitsu takes full responsibility for the success of each RPA project by committing to key SLAs, ensuring that customers can easily demonstrate the benefits achieved through automation.

Fujitsu has recently worked with Finnish media company MTV, part of the Bonnier Enterprise, to address the strategic issue of declining advertising revenue through a RPAaaS deployment. MTV wanted to reduce costs by automating certain standard processes, such as randomly selecting customer feedback for review, data entry, and invoicing. Fujitsu recommended RPA to automate clerical processes using software robots or artificial intelligence (AI) workers for consistent and efficient operation. The benefits achieved from the program have been considerable, with a 70 percent reduction in costs associated with one specific process, more productive, less frustrated employees who are able to focus on value-added tasks and a reduced reliance on third-party consultancies. MTV also benefits from simplified management, as RPAaaS delivers robust operation and flexible scaling to a predictable cost, with Fujitsu responsible for future scaling and maintenance.

Fujitsu's RPA Center of Excellence

In April 2017 Fujitsu announced the creation of a new European Center of Excellence (CoE) for Robotic Process Automation (RPA), managed from Fujitsu's offices in Copenhagen, Denmark. The CoE is spearheading the development of new services to accurately handle repetitive tasks, identify and resolve hidden process bottlenecks, and optimize processes, helping Fujitsu customers to accelerate their digital transformation by leveraging robotic automation to perform everyday administrative tasks in areas such as customer support, human resources and accounting.

Fujitsu and RPA

- Fujitsu's RPA strategy entails partnerships with leading global RPA vendors to enhance its digital business transformation offerings:

    o Fujitsu recently concluded an agreement to sell RPA vendor UiPath's enterprise RPA software platform.

    o Fujitsu has announced a collaboration to deliver Blue Prism's market leading RPA offering to enterprise clients across a wide range of industries. Through this collaboration, the companies intend to support the creation of a framework for customers in Europe, North America, Japan and beyond to launch, operate and entrench, and grow their RPA-related activities. They will do this by applying Fujitsu's AI and other cutting-edge technologies to Blue Prism RPA software through joint planning, proposals, and proof of concept creation for solutions, building on Blue Prism's proven record of delivering large-scale enterprise systems around the world.

    o Fujitsu is also partnering with automation software and solutions provider Kofax and will collaborate on new market development activities.

    o By combining the RPA offerings and expertise provided by Kofax, UiPath and BluePrism, combined with Fujitsu's AI *Zinrai*, plus other leading-edge technologies, implementation know how, cloud and integration services, etc., Fujitsu is in a position to globally provide optimized digital business transformation offerings with focus on robotic process automation.

- Fujitsu's RPA offering will provide customers with an optimized innovation process by enabling the holistic automation of enterprise activities, as opposed to the individual automation of operations.

- Fujitsu Simplifies Robotic Process Automation Deployment with Pay-as-you-go Service: http://www.fujitsu.com/fts/about/resources/news/press-releases/2018/fujitsu-simplifies-robotic-process-automation-deployment.html

- Fujitsu Digital Workforce Technology: http://www.fujitsu.com/us/about/resources/news/press-releases/2017/fai-20170115-04.html

- Fujitsu partnership in Digital Workforce innovation: http://www.fujitsu.com/us/about/resources/news/press-releases/2017/fai-20170517.html

Notes to Editors
[1] According to a 2017 HfS Research study: The State of Automation and AI
[2] According to a report from Ernst & Young: Get Ready for Robots

Online resources

- Read the Fujitsu blog: http://blog.ts.fujitsu.com/
- Follow Fujitsu on Twitter: http://www.twitter.com/Fujitsu_Global
- Follow us on LinkedIn: http://www.linkedin.com/company/fujitsu
- Find Fujitsu on Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/FujitsuICT
- Fujitsu pictures and media server: http://mediaportal.ts.fujitsu.com/pages/portal.php
- For regular news updates, bookmark the Fujitsu newsroom: http://ts.fujitsu.com/ps2/nr/index.aspx

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