Where has it been done before?

Efficient account reconciliation

Following the implementation of RPA technology, which included automated execution of applications using advanced business rules and standard processes, the organization's SSC has been able to reduce the effort in account reconciliation by 30 to 40%.

Order management optimization

In order management, RPA technology automates the creation of quotes, as well as the creation and cancellation of orders. Where 800 FTE work can be done with 50 robots, this reduces average handling time from 30 to 10 minutes and reduces costs by 80%.

Period end close cycle time reduction

A global brewer improved their closing cycle significantly reducing from 5 days to 3 days to close. They achieved this by automation of the period end close process, including automated verification of all output reports. 72% of all closing processes have been automated.

Open item management

The company used RPA to close out nearly 50,000 outstanding payment items in the ERP system without human interaction. This helped complete 91% of the open items in just three days, instead of three months.

Customer queries management

A financial service organisation implemented RPA to manage receipt and response to customer queries, resulting in a 80% FTE savings, a reduction in turnaround time from 8 hours to 1 hour and an error rate of 0%.

Talk to us now about

Strategy: how you can benefit from the use of RPA to improve operations, innovate, or grow

Shared Services and Outsourcing: How you can restructure your shared services operating model or BPO relationship to include RPA

Process: how you can integrate RPA as part of an optimized end to end processes

People & Change: what it means for your teams and people, and what the opportunities are

Risk & Cyber: how you can assess and mitigate risks

Benefits: what benefits your organisation expect and how quickly

So the question is not IF, but WHEN the new era of automation will have full impact on your organisation

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Robotic Process Automation in Shared Services

How RPA applies to Finance, HR and Procurement

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What is RPA?

Robotic process automation (RPA) is the application of technology that enables computer software or a "bot" to perform processes in areas such as Finance, Procurement and HR, emulating human behaviour.

The "bot" is able to capture and interpret existing applications for processing a transaction, manipulating data, triggering responses and communicating with other digital systems. Down to its simplest form, this would mean that when a "bot" has finished working on a file, it could email it to a human with a note saying what tasks it has performed and what follow up tasks are required. Bots therefore become part of the team.

RPA sits alongside existing IT infrastructure. It does not require a heavy IT investment or additional infrastructure, in fact, it can even be desktop based.

Fast Facts

- RPA **employs a variety of tools for grabbing digital data,** which can include screen scraping, digital image recognition, or the ability to access a server or be linked to a website.
- It makes use of rule engines similar to those found in business process management tools.
- **It is considered a virtual workforce** controlled by the business operation teams.
- **RPA does not disturb underlying computer systems.** A "bot"accesses the existing systems and programs in the same way a person would.
- It provides an **on-demand** solution and **removes backlogs, provides a no added cost scalable solution** and requires less investment and ongoing management than outsourcing.

Robotic process automation is:

Configurations that automate manual, repeatable tasks

Algorithms that solve specific problems

Software 'robots' that plug into, and access, existing business software

Workflow enabled end to end interaction that includes follow ups?

Robotic process automation is not:

A humanoid robot

Something that can entirely replace humans

Something that replicates human cognitive functions... yet

Purely just another cost play

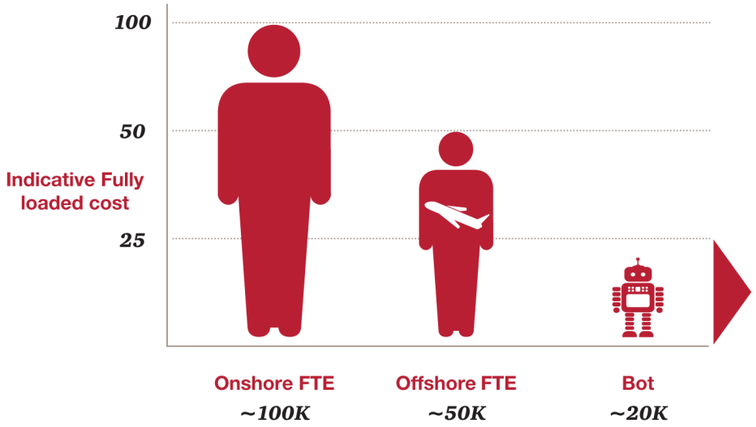
How do I apply RPA to business services functions such as Finance, Procurement and HR?

RPA Solutions can be applied to a multitude of cross functional processes across any industry. Within the Finance function, RPA has successfully been implemented to manage Procure to Pay and Order to Cash processes (e.g. AP, T&E, Cash Allocations, Management and External Reporting, Accounting/Close). As the maturity of RPA evolves it can start to be applied to solve queries and undertake analytics.

What can it do?	What enablers does it need?
• Automate activities in Finance, Procurement, and HR	• Training
• Read contracts and apply contract terms	• Electronic documents
• Continuously check if transactions are still 'in compliance'	• Structured Data
• Send and receive messages	• Rules-based processes
• Compare records or tables across multiple applications	• Reprogramming when circumstances change
• 'Learn' how to respond to events or occurrences	• User access rights across applications
• Apply cash and net intercompany transactions and payments	• Programming on how to deal with events or occurrences
	• Re-design of processes to efficiently apply the 'bot'

What benefits can it bring?

Cost comparison



Why RPA?

RPA can quickly deliver benefits such as high ROIs

1. Cost Savings – Technology arbitrage (significant cost reduction)
2. Productivity – 24/7 with high-speed (1 robot can replace 2-3 resources)
3. Accuracy – Improve quality with 100% accuracy on automated cases
4. Scalability – Scalable automations, witl the ability to manage peaks and trough
5. Compliance – Robots follow defined rules and have same rights as humans
6. Security – Data protection and audit trail proved

Typical CFO/Finance Controller Questions

I am already with a BPO, what does this mean for our relationship with them?
BPOs are familiar with RPA and it is worth while discussing how those benefits can be realised. Many BPO contract include gain share provisions which will enable the sharing of RPA benefits. When renegotiating contracts make sure RPA is included.

How much time and effort will it take to implement RPA?
Typically a proof of concept RPA project will take 4-6 weeks to build and implement.

How much IT involvement will RPA implementation require?
It is important that IT is fully across the implementation of RPA, however the level of IT involvement does not need to be high. RPA should be business led, with IT support.

Will I require retained headcount to manage the bots and other activities?
RPA will not fully replace all human roles. The aim of RPA is to free up time for staff to focus on higher value tasks. Resources in the form of a virtual control room would also be required to make adjustments to the bot as required.

Have many other companies are already implemented RPA?
While RPA is relatively immature across higher value processes, many companies across industries have already implemented RPA across core Finance processes (e.g. Accounts payable, Cash application). Apply cash, Net intercompany transactions and payments.