

„In the Automation Inspiration Workshop, the Fujitsu experts demonstrated that the processes must first be optimized and clearly defined to make automation fast and cost-effective.“

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Fujitsu conducted an Automation Inspiration Workshop on WIKAI's premises. The workshop focused on automating processes in the Shared Accounting Services department.

At a glance

Country: Germany
Industry: Metrology
Year founded: 1946
Website: en.wika.com

Challenge

WIKAI planned to automate processes in its Accounting Shared Service Center by introducing robotic process automation (RPA) in order to relieve employee workload. The company also wanted to increase transparency in applications, their economic benefits and technical possibilities.

Solution

Fujitsu conducted an Automation Inspiration Workshop to introduce the participants to the subject matter and technological aspects of business process automation. Existing processes were analyzed with regard to their qualitative and technical suitability for automation, including ROI evaluation.

Benefit

- Evaluation of economic benefits of automation scenarios, based on financial, qualitative and human factors
- Examination of important aspects, such as ROI, compliance and employee satisfaction
- In-depth analysis of selected business processes, including calculating a comprehensive business case
- Involvement of all participants and demonstration of technological possibilities by jointly creating an initial robot prototype

Customer

WIKA has been a recognized partner and skilled specialist in all metrology tasks for more than 70 years. The company turns innovative technologies into new, powerful products and system solutions. Product reliability and a willingness to meet all market challenges have helped WIKA reach a leadership position on the global market. The WIKA Group's 10,000 employees work to further the development of pressure, temperature, force and fill level measuring technology as well as flow measurement, calibration and SF6 gas solutions.

Products and Services

Delivering an Automation Inspiration Workshop on process automation, including:

- Introduction to RPA
- Setting ROI targets
- Process evaluation and process screening
- Developing a business case and a road map
- Documenting the selected process
- Introducing workflow design and architecture
- Developing a software robot prototype
- Demonstrating an expanded road map

Reducing employee workload with process automation

WIKA operates an Accounting Shared Service Center in Germany, which is growing rapidly in terms of the number of processes and companies. The center's approximately 25 employees handle an average of 3,325 processes involving all areas of the company's finance department. This includes many recurring support activities, such as coordinating between the general and subsidiary ledgers, checking creditworthiness and importing payment data. All these activities are subject to strict financial reporting and compliance requirements. Despite this rapid growth, WIKA continues to rely on qualified specialists internally. To relieve employee workload, processes have been extensively optimized and automated for years now. For this very reason, the company wanted to take additional steps to increase automation. Robotic process automation (RPA) was identified as one of the possible tools to achieve this goal. However, the economic, qualitative and technological benefits needed to be investigated prior to introduction.

"It was difficult for us to assess the financial processes with regard to the sensible and, above all, profitable use of RPA. We therefore decided to conduct an initial workshop in order to evaluate suitable processes with an RPA pilot run, led by Fujitsu. In choosing a service provider, we were won over by the well-structured cost parameters and the fact that we didn't have to commit to specific software or licenses," explains Caroline Juszcak, Head of Shared Service Center Accounting at WIKA.

ROI evaluation, compliance and employee satisfaction

In conducting an Automation Inspiration Workshop, Fujitsu helped WIKA's managers resolve all unanswered questions relating to process automation and to take significant steps forward in meeting the set goals. The people and decision-makers involved played an active role here. One key objective of the workshop was to transparently evaluate the overall benefits of automation scenarios, based on financial, qualitative and human factors. The focus was on examining the return on investment (ROI) as well as meeting compliance requirements and employee satisfaction.

First, the participants first received an in-depth introduction to the RPA technology. The consultant team addressed the attendees' specific expectations and shed light on the contribution that RPA makes to cross-system networking as well as the technology's specific benefits. The consultants also described the general procedure that needs to be taken to allow the automation potential of processes to be purposefully evaluated. Twelve-month as well as three-year goals were then jointly

defined. More than 30 business processes were subsequently checked, filtered and prioritized according to different criteria. The primary criteria here were execution frequency, the particular personnel expenditure and the automation potential. The possible qualitative improvements in terms of compliance as well as employee and customer satisfaction were also examined.

Hands-on demonstration of technological potential based on the WIKA process

Together with the attendees, Fujitsu and Automation Anywhere created an individual pilot software robot so that the attendees could familiarize themselves with the RPA technology and understand how it can help optimize processes at WIKA. The process of searching for credit information, including order review, was used as an example. In the end, the target process could be largely automated using RPA. This made it possible to cut the time needed to handle the pilot process example from twelve minutes to only two. In addition, Fujitsu provided a detailed evaluation of all other processes and consolidated all data into one complete business case.

Honest conclusion

Despite the positive results obtained in the pilot process, the Fujitsu experts came to a different overall conclusion: WIKA could obtain a positive ROI only by adding other use cases. The main reason for this is that many of the processes had already been greatly optimized in the past and were fully supported by IT systems. The remaining processes in the Shared Service Center were characterized by less frequent execution and a short process runtime.

"We would have very much liked to further deal with the new technology and introduce RPA. Together with Fujitsu, however, we recognized that WIKA is already in a good position where the financial department is concerned, and RPA would not produce a positive ROI in this area alone," Caroline Juszcak concludes.

Since individual processes show a positive ROI, automating them in a suitable overall concept would indeed pay off if additional divisions and regions were included. Economic benefits of an RPA platform would certainly be achievable by further automating processes with longer execution times.

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