FLEXLINK®
a **coesia** company

"Each part name change took us 20 minutes to complete manually – Fujitsu RPA does it within five. That means we can deliver products more quickly to our customers and provide better service."

Per Siesing
Product Development Manager
FlexLink

FlexLink wanted to automate time-consuming and monotonous admin tasks. It turned to Fujitsu RPA which has made two key processes faster and more accurate.

At a glance
Country: Sweden
Industry: Factory Automation
Founded: 1980
Website: flexlink.com

Challenge
FlexLink was reliant on a huge number of mundane and repetitive admin tasks performed by highly skilled engineers. It wanted to explore the possibility of automating these manual tasks to speed up processes and reduce errors.

Solution
The company identified two key processes, part name changes and supplier reporting, to form the basis of an RPA pilot. It chose Fujitsu as its RPA partner based on its experience and access to its Center of Excellence in Copenhagen.

Benefit
- The part name change process, which previously took 20 minutes, now takes five

- Supplier reports which took two hours to create can now be generated in just 15 seconds

- Highly qualified engineers no longer spend time on repetitive data entry and can focus on higher value tasks

- The risk of human error has been eliminated

shaping tomorrow with you

FUJITSU

Customer

FlexLink is a leading factory automation expert, which provides smarter, safer, and more innovative solutions at lower operating costs. For over 35 years, its solutions have enabled manufacturers, machine providers, and system integrators to take control of production efficiency. The company has more than 1,100 employees in 31 countries as well as a global network of strategic partners.

Products and Services

- Fujitsu Robotic Process Automation

Automating monotonous tasks

FlexLink depends on numerous administration-intensive business functions in the realms of planning, logistics, HR, payroll, and product development. The issue was that these low complexity, monotonous tasks were being carried out by a highly skilled workforce. The company wanted to introduce a smarter way of handling repetitive, but critical processes.

"Our employees are largely well-qualified engineers so to burden them with maintaining our part name database or supplier reports is not ideal," explains Per Siesing, Product Development Manager, FlexLink. "We knew there must be a way of automating these tasks and freeing up our employees to focus on higher value objectives."

For example, FlexLink had one worker dedicated full-time to managing and confirming part descriptions across multiple sources, including SOLIDWORKS CAD software and Microsoft Office. It chose this process as the pilot for its automation project – the next step was finding the right technology and the right partner.

"It was a chance meeting between our COO and Fujitsu at a networking event that sparked our interest in Robotic Process Automation (RPA), which seemed like the ideal solution," adds Siesing. "We then evaluated the market and decided that, based on our initial impressions and the fact that it had a dedicated RPA Center of Excellence in Copenhagen, Fujitsu was the right partner for the job."

RPA to the rescue

RPA uses software to emulate the way FlexLink employees work to deliver the automation of repetitive and mundane rule-based tasks without disrupting business operations. Having identified the part name process as the first pilot, Fujitsu and FlexLink began by mapping each step of the process and translating these into something that a program can understand. As functionality was developed and tested, a series of workshops then followed to present the work.

"It was a collaborative, step-by-step approach that took six months to complete. It was perhaps a little too ambitious for our first project because it connected to so many applications and software, which made it tricky to roll out," continues Siesing. "However, it now enables product updates for thousands of catalog items and ensures the replacement of article names in all affected applications, as well as assuring that each name change is updated in the applications and CAD drawings."

After beginning the first pilot, FlexLink was keen to add RPA to a second, simpler process: supplier monthly reporting, which extracts and inputs data from PDFs, timesheets, email, and Excel. Because this process was less complex, Fujitsu was able to complete the development within two months.

"Fujitsu created a robot that picks up reports, creates mail, and distributes reports on the right day, with the right content, to the right recipient," says Siesing. "It avoids the risk of human error, where we might accidentally send the wrong report or enter incorrect numbers."

Fast, efficient, accurate

These two initial pilots have shown FlexLink that RPA can play a major role in its operations, especially as the amount of admin continues to increase. By automating repetitive tasks, it not only frees up internal resources but it also removes the potential for mistakes.

"It is quicker, more accurate and removes the burden of monotonous work. To make sure our product names are aligned across all applications and databases is thousands of hours of work – all of which can now be done without human intervention," comments Siesing. "Each part name change took us 20 minutes to complete manually – Fujitsu RPA does it within five. That means we can deliver products more quickly to our customers and provide better service."

Furthermore, for the supplier reporting process, the time required has fallen from two hours to just 15 seconds, saving even more valuable time. Moreover, both RPA pilots guarantee consistency of data across all applications so users and customers can rely on accurate information.

"Fujitsu has provided us with a structured model for taking on RPA projects. We have been impressed by its professionalism and the RPA knowledge available at its Center of Excellence. It all added up to a smooth experience," concludes Siesing. "We now have high hopes that we can introduce RPA solutions more widely within the business – for example, our warehousing and distribution involves lots of manual interactions, which we could automate."

FUJITSU

Contact a representative: info@se.fujitsu.com