



Seeing the RPA potential

In 2016, Telstra Global Finance Services wanted to improve quality, minimise rework, eliminate manual processes, speed up cycle times, and to step up their internal and external customer experience across accounting, revenue management, and credit management teams.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) was in the early stages of adoption in Australia – and Telstra Global Finance Services were keen to understand the potential to enable improvements in efficiency.

KPMG teams with technical and finance process knowledge and insights worked collaboratively with Telstra to identify the potential to streamline processes and implement automation, to enable Telstra to set up an Automation Enablement Team for Finance.

The team identified a number of processes that had potential for RPA. KPMG helped to define an RPA strategy and an operating framework that enabled Telstra to embark on their journey independently.

The focus was on assessing process efficiency and effectiveness, eliminating activities, and making other strategic system changes within the IT eco-system, prior to building automation tools. Telstra then began to scale the development process, with 85 tools built within 18 months. A culture of continuous improvement is now in place.

These tools have made a significant contribution to improving cycle times and quality, and reducing costs – the outcomes Finance wanted to deliver. The Automation Enablement Team has also developed tools for other functions beyond Finance – they support the platform, and functions now build tools themselves using the platform.

Building trust, showing understanding, and collaborating were vital to ensuring the strategy was appropriate and embraced. Understanding the changes to contracts and vendor activities, and the way employees worked, was key to realising benefits. The project revealed the importance of integrating the tools into the workforce as 'digital co-workers'.

Automation continues to be a key enabler in simplifying operating models and ways of working. As Telstra scales up shared services to drive efficiency and effectiveness, automation will continue to be leveraged across Finance and other functions.

While many organisations across Australia are still understanding what RPA can deliver in Finance, with Telstra's confidence to be an early adopter, coupled with KPMG's insight and experience, it was possible to be a pioneer as well as harness the benefits.

We know how to exploit technology.

