Realizing the Benefits of RPA in Human Resources (HR) Use Cases

Based on real user reviews of UiPath

"The automation Cloud Platform has definitely helped reduce the time it takes to create automation. It brings a lot of things together. It's easy to use for clients and customers. It makes it easy to bring different disciplines together. I don't need to think about my code, or how to..."
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Introduction

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is finding strong uptake in Human Resources (HR) management. HR operations involve many repetitive, process-intensive workflows like employee onboarding, payroll, and time tracking. These have traditionally been manual in nature. As such, they are quite suitable for robotic automation. This paper reviews the advantages of RPA in HR based on user experiences with the UiPath RPA solution, as described on PeerSpot. It also looks at the qualities that an RPA solution needs to satisfy the requirements of process automation in HR. (Note: Organizations referred to as “large” in this paper employ more than 10,000 people. A “small” organization has fewer than 500 employees.)
RPA Use Cases in HR

PeerSpot members are proving to be very inventive with RPA solutions in the HR field. Process automation is the main theme of their use cases. For example, an RPA Service Owner uses UiPath for process automation in a global business center of a global mining and manufacturing company. He employs RPA to automate HR processes such as personal-data sync between SAP and local payroll systems, and automatic administration of external consultants. Figure 1 shows a simple example of how such process automation works with RPA in a multi-step business process.

An RPA user described how people in his organization are finding ways to automate the reporting functions in Workday Human Capital Management (HCM) software. He said, “We need people to run Workday reports pretty much daily, and that gets updated in the systems that we have. Therefore, our HR and finance people are all working with Workday, as

Figure 1 – RPA automates manual steps, often in groups, to speed up business process workflows.
people incorporate these big management systems, trying to find new ways to automate them.” An RPA Developer at a large tech services company automates HR-related processes that need update validation before they proceed to the next level.

“We automate processes across a number of different agencies,” said another RPA Developer. He added, “We automate whatever use case they determine. We tend to focus on the financial management side, but we have other areas that we’ve delved into, such as HR and general data pulls for executive dashboards.” An Enterprise Improvement Manager at a financial services firm with over 500 employees described the scale of such projects. His team has automated 35 HR processes.

**Payroll, travel and attendance**

Payroll, travel, and workplace attendance, three staples of HR management, were cited by PeerSpot members as use cases for RPA. An Oracle ERP Consultant at a tech consulting company with more than 5,000 employees, for instance, is automating the HR process for payroll and pay slips on Oracle JD Edwards. He said, “We used UiPath for the scanning of attachments and uploading/attaching them in the Oracle system automatically. Previously, we used to take a day or two in doing so. Most of the daily human errors are minimized.” The processes included automated internal requests with automatic reconciliation. RPA enabled them to implement automatic correction of master records.

A Senior Software Developer at a large tech services company discussed how his team used RPA to automate the penal-
ty system of transportal services, where the penalty on a no-show user is calculated. He commented, “Every user is intimated the monetary value of a no-show. This is then intimated through the mail, and also, the list of such users is sent to the payroll department to debit the penalty from the monthly payroll.” This use case involved Windows Server 2012 and PowerShell scripting in addition to UI automation using UiPath.

Shared services processes

An Associate Director at a large government agency uses UiPath to automate twelve shared services processes across finance, HR, and procurement areas. As he put it, “These processes are run at a high frequency and are required to be captured on two different platforms. We have implemented this solution to stop entry clerks from having to do the same job twice, on two different platforms.”

Onboarding

Employee onboarding is a good candidate for RPA, given how labor-intensive and repetitive it can be. This was the case for a Web Developer at a large government agency. She said, “At Forest Service, we have a massive onboarding season. Because our primary mission is to combat forest fires, we have a huge intake of firefighters that we hire every season. Because of that, there’s a lot of onboarding material that needs to be processed through HR, literally tens of thousands of people in such a short amount of time. I can see, potentially, RPA being able to help with some of the manual work that we do.”
How an RPA Solution Benefits HR

PeerSpot members have discovered an extensive set of benefits from the use of RPA in HR. The technology helps them save time. Batch processing is another benefit that members discussed in their reviews. Staff retraining opportunities are also beneficial, as is the ability to monitor processes as they run.

Driving efficiencies

For some users, RPA is a driver of efficiency. A Lead Associate at a consultancy with over 1,000 employees mentioned that his team puts UiPath to work “looking externally at how we can enable the government to identify efficiencies and improve effectiveness.” Internally, the solution helps them see “how can we drive efficiencies within HR and finance, with everything that a big corporation can do.”

Saving time

“It has saved time and brought efficiencies to our company,” said a Strategic Project Manager at a large tech services company. A Senior Manager at a equivalently-sized financial services firm echoed this sentiment, stating, “We’re able to handle some of our tax and HR processes, the volumes of the documents, or new hires at a tremendous speed compared to how we used to do it manually in the past.”

“We were able to decrease the processing time ... to one minute and four seconds.”

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The Oracle ERP Consultant had a comparable insight. He noted, “It has improved the work process of a task that used to take two days and is now done during the breaks of the employees. This means employees can do other tasks.” A Senior Software Engineer at a large tech services company further highlighted this advantage of RPA by claiming it saves time, cost and manual efforts by automating business processes.

The government Associate Director was able to quantify his time savings benefits. He shared, “We were able to decrease the processing time of one of the processes from fifteen minutes, under certain assumptions, to one minute and four seconds.” In another example, he said, “One of the calculations that we have done to determine the time we have saved is for one type of process. It used to take seven thousand person-days each year but now takes only one hundred and sixty person-days a year.”

He also offered the insight that RPA has eliminated a lot of human errors because the processes are now done based on preset values, activities, and rules. He elaborated, saying, “Exceptions are properly handled and the robot will take the information from the source system, which is fundamentally correct all of the time.” Specifically, as he noted, “The robot only needs to capture the data as it is from the source, and copy it to the destination, and this eliminates the errors. When humans are in the middle of the process, mistakes can happen.”
Enabling batch processing

“UiPath can batch process a lot of the hands-on, manual work that nobody wants to do,” explained the government Web Developer. She considered this to be the solution's best value. She suggested a best practice, however, which is to create standardized processes. As she said, “Just having formalized documentation about what the end-to-end process should be is key. Once that’s standardized, then it’s a lot easier to leverage UiPath for automation.”

Scheduling and monitoring processes

RPA offers process owners new workload scheduling capabilities. A Director at a small tech vendor noted that UiPath’s Orchestrator has valuable scheduling functions. He said, “With an unattended robot, you can schedule it and have it running autonomously.” Automating HR processes with RPA also makes them easier to monitor, according to the government Associate Director. He said the “design capability in Studio is great. The way that you can monitor the robots within Orchestrator is helpful. Together, the aggregated features add value to the day-to-day operations of the business.”

Retraining staff

Liberating employees to do different work is one the main selling points of RPA. HR users are realizing this benefit, with the financial services Enterprise Improvement Manager remarking, “Currently, 10 FTE [full-time employees] of work has been moved to robots (nearly 10% of operations). The staff has been retrained from operations into RPA development roles.” An additional benefit arose because RPA “improved consistency and cost-effectiveness of those processes.”
What makes for a good RPA solution in HR? As PeerSpot members shared, their preferred RPA toolset is based on an open platform that facilitates integration. An RPA Developer at a government agency acknowledged this feature by saying, “The platform is open, and we can connect it to other technologies. We connect it to SAP using the SAP Connector. We are also using intelligent OCR technology to read receipts.” Figure 2 shows a simple representation of this capability. Users also want strong design capabilities, paired with ease of use and ease of bot management. Data quality and analytics features are also sought-after in HR RPA.

Figure 2 – Users prefer RPA solutions that integrate with a wide variety of systems that support HR processes
Design and ease of use

An RPA solution should be easy to use. This includes having a feature set for process design. To this point, the financial services Senior Manager commented, “I like the layout and design of the Studio using the RPA framework. It makes sense to me. It's very easy to get started.” Ease of use figured into the opinion of the government Web Developer. She said, “Having looked at other RPA software, I think UiPath is the most user-friendly. At the same time, it's robust enough to customize and get into the source code. It's accessible, but also has enough features for more hands-on developers to be able to do what they need to do. From the two that I've seen, it was the more user-friendly one.”

Other users who acknowledged the importance of ease of use included:

• “The UI -and the back-end platform are very easy to use.” – Head of Automation at a large insurance company

• “It is very easy to use, and you still have a lot of possibilities to modify what you are trying to do and achieve.” – Senior Admin Automation Engineer at a large engineering company

• “When it comes to RPA, the scalability and adaptability with minimum inputs provided are paramount. UiPath is easy to use with minimum inputs given, and that's the best part of UiPath as an RPA tool.” – Senior software developer at a large tech services company

“I think UiPath is the most user-friendly.”
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Simple bot management

PeerSpot members who use RPA in HR want simple bot management capabilities, including a choice between attended and unattended robots. As an RPA user put it, “The most valuable features are the unattended bots.” He then specified that “initially, we are going to be looking at a number of attended bots in a pilot phase for our HR internal operations personnel. We are going to come in and try to remove tasks from their daily lives, such as ten minute tasks brought down to five seconds, or we could just completely eliminate them, making them unattended.” An RPA Developer similarly noted, “The differentiation between unattended and attended bots is valuable, as well as being able to do portions of a process that are unattended coupled with portions that are attended. We can get human interaction, all within the same product.”

Data quality and analytics

RPA generates data. The better it can be managed and analyzed, the better the overall RPA process will run. A Senior Admin Automation Engineer at a large engineering company acknowledged this reality, stating, “We hear from the process owners that they are very happy with the lead time and data quality, which keeps getting better.” The tech services RPA Developer had a comparable opinion, commenting that “Cognitive analysis is the most valuable feature because it helps to launch our automation smartly with many integrations.”
Conclusion

Human Resource management favors RPA because its many manual workflows can be speeded up and made more accurate through the use of software bots. As users on PeerSpot described, they have saved time in HR with RPA while re-assigning staff to more valuable work. The qualities that define a good RPA solution for HR include strong design features and ease of use. Data quality also counts, as does simple bot management. RPA in HR is still relatively new, so it’s likely this area of business management will continue to explore and innovate with RPA, discovering many new efficiencies and advantages as the technology continues to evolve and improve.
About PeerSpot

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The Internet has completely changed the way we make buying decisions. We now use ratings and review sites to see what other real users think before we buy electronics, book a hotel, visit a doctor or choose a restaurant. But in the world of enterprise technology, most of the information online and in your inbox comes from vendors. What you really want is objective information from other users. PeerSpot provides technology professionals with a community platform to share information about enterprise solutions.

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About UiPath

UiPath has a vision to deliver the Fully Automated Enterprise™, one where companies use automation to unlock their greatest potential. UiPath offers an end-to-end platform for automation, combining the leading robotic process automation (RPA) solution with a full suite of capabilities that enable every organization to rapidly scale digital business operations.