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Intelligent automation makes work more human

Coates, Australia's leading equipment solutions provider, partnered with Tecala to build an intelligent automation solution that could relieve its accounts payable (AP) team from being buried under the mountain of invoices that were coming in daily from over 4,000 suppliers.
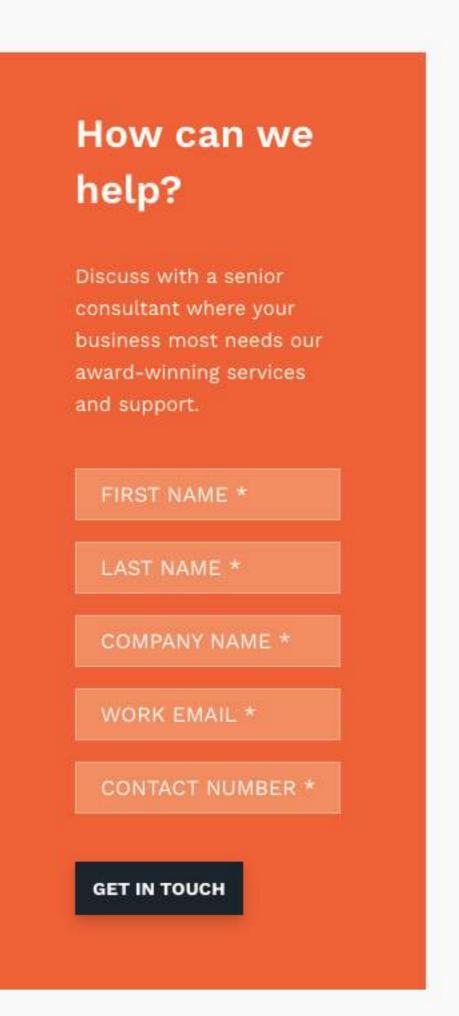
The solution combines robotic process automation (RPA) with AI-powered optical character recognition (OCR) to create a digital worker that assists the AP team around-the-clock – saving thousands of hours that can now be re-routed to more fulfilling and value-adding work.

Prior to introducing the intelligent AP solution, the Coates Hire AP team was responsible for processing around 27,000 supplier invoices every month, over and above other business-critical activities. They were managing this workload manually – monitoring emails, opening attachments, classifying documents and keying invoice data into the ERP platform.

With such a large volume of invoices to process, the team challenged with:

- Data entry errors
- Payment delays, which impacted supplier relationships
- The additional cost of hiring temp staff to assist during bottlenecks
- Burnout and poor employee retention

Pieter and his team began researching whether intelligent automation could solve these issues.

How can we help?

Discuss with a senior consultant where your business most needs our award-winning services and support.

FIRST NAME *

LAST NAME *

COMPANY NAME *

WORK EMAIL *

CONTACT NUMBER *

GET IN TOUCH

The solution

Tecala had the opportunity to recommend an intelligent automation approach that combines UiPath's robotic process automation (RPA) technology with AI-powered optical character recognition (OCR) capabilities from ABBYY. Kicking off the project with a Proof of Value process, we were quickly able to showcase how user-friendly and beneficial this technology can be.

After securing executive buy-in and taking AP staff through a change management process to ensure they understood the advantages of automation from the outset, Pieter and his team worked closely with us to build a new intelligent accounts payable solution.

The new RPA robot – or digital worker as we like to call it – now works 24/7 to

- Monitor the AP email inbox
- Open attachments and classify which documents are invoices
- Decipher invoice content and extract relevant data (such as PO numbers and total amounts)
- Transfer all relevant invoice data to the ERP system

"Being able to experience the proposed solution on a smaller scale allowed me to see the benefits in action. It also made my job a lot easier when it came to convincing the executive team to invest in the project!"

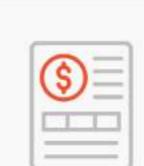Pieter Le Roux, National Shared Services Manager, Coates Hire

The results

In the first 145 days:

91,000 emails
were processed

87,000 invoices
were processed directly into the ERP

Only 10,000 rejections
(mostly duplicate invoices)

2,900 human work hours
were saved