RPA closes the operational gaps in Azbil's PLM systems

azbil

AUTOMATION® ANYWHERE

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Founded in 1906, Azbil Corporation is a major control and measuring instrument manufacturer headquartered in Japan. The company focuses on developing new forms of industrial automation and expanding its business in the environmental and energy fields.

CHALLENGE

Azbil introduced the product lifecycle management (PLM) package "Windchill" to share and manage product blueprints and component table data at all stages—from planning to disposal. To minimize customization expenses and verification work, the company decided to utilize 99% of the package's standard functions. This decision created functionality issues for the company's PLM systems resulting in operational gaps, errors, and compromised efficiency.

SOLUTION

To solve the interoperability issue, the technology standards team at Azbil began evaluating various Robotic Process Automation (RPA) solutions. However, Windchill's complex interface proved incompatible with most RPA tools.

The Automation Anywhere platform proved to be the only solution that bridged the gap between Windchill and Azbil's existing systems. Azbil was able to fully utilize Windchill and reap its efficiency benefits.

BENEFITS

50%
Reduction in processing time

200
Hours saved over 5 months

0
Data entry errors

0
Customizations to PLM package

Processes Automated
- Product lifecycle management
- User registrations and deletions
- Permissions
- Start and implementation of changes

Industry
Manufacturing

"We reviewed work operations to operate PLM systems at 99% of the package's standard functional usage rate. Most RPA tools could not handle the processing. Automation Anywhere was the exception."

—Mr. Seiji Kato,
Technology Standards Department, Department Manager, Azbil Corporation

STORY DETAILS

Once the technology standards team decided to incorporate Automation Anywhere, they began by conducting a partial implementation. The first project tackled with Automation Anywhere RPA was to improve the PLM solution's application process that used Excel forms. RPA streamlined and accelerated the work while eliminating errors.

The team went on to test other business processes. As a result, they learned that RPA could be used to automate data entry tasks in areas besides managing PLM systems, eliminating gaps between various packages and operations.

Over the span of 5 months, the company created more than 20 software bots to handle various tasks such as user registrations and deletions in PLM systems, granting permissions to review registration information, workflows for starts of changes, and workflows for implementations of changes. Some bots feature built-in continuity measures. For example, they're designed to restart automatically if they cease to operate due to defects in applications or network delays.

The company's operations team started developing internal corporate governance rules to standardize how the bots are used to ensure overall business safety.

By automating previously manual work, Azbil reduced the amount of time required for those tasks by 20% to 50%, accelerating their overall output and increasing efficiency.

THE FUTURE

The newly gained efficiency of the company's PLM systems inspired Azbil to consider future, horizontal expansion of automation. A cross-functional team has been created with members from the technology standards department, the IT department, and the business department to investigate RPA opportunities throughout the organization. The goal is to achieve even more significant enhancements to the quality and efficiency of the overall company operations.

"Five months after RPAs were officially deployed to production environments, we have achieved total time savings of approximately 200 hours and are no longer seeing data entry errors. The overtime work we typically saw concentrated in certain periods, such as the end of the year, has disappeared, and we believe the bots are absorbing the fluctuations in workload."

—**Mr. Takashi Mishima,** Technology Standards Department, Technology Standards Group, Deputy Manager, Azbil Corporation

February 2021

AUTOMATION
ANYWHERE