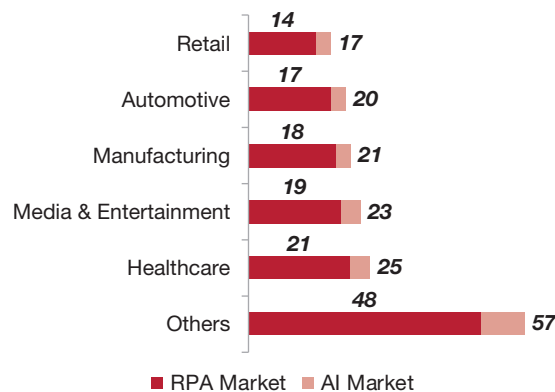


# Adoption of RPA in Asia – Myth or Reality?



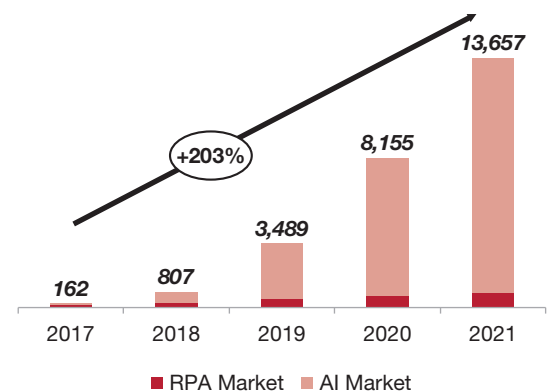
Worldwide, the adoption of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) in different industries is gathering pace as enterprises recognise the efficiencies and productivity gains from intelligent automation. The global RPA market size is expected to reach US\$5 billion by 2024 growing at a CAGR of 61.3%. RPA comes with the promise of up to 45% automation of work activities and US \$2 trillion savings in global workforce cost. In Asia Pacific, the RPA market size is estimated to be USD \$2.9 Billion by 2021 and is projected to grow 203% by 2021.

**Intelligent Automation Industry Size**  
Asia Pacific, USD \$M



Source: *The RPA Market Will Reach \$2.9 Billion by 2021, Forrester (2017)*

**Projected Intelligent Automation Market**  
Asia Pacific, USD \$M



Source: *TechNavio.com Global Artificial Intelligence Market 2017-2021 (2017)*

Robotic Process Automation, simply automates complex, rule-based processes across multiple systems that mimic the way human beings process information<sup>1</sup>. It allows flexibility to work on a 24/7/365 basis in many of the daily operations in particular on the repetitive process of handling massive data in the accounting & the finance functions across varies industries.

<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/audit-assurance-services/publications/assets/pwc-emerging-technology-v8.pdf>

To align factors at every level, so that the value of RPA may be maximised, PwC shares insights from selected clients (in media, retirement solutions and retail sectors) on some critical questions to consider when introducing RPA at scale.

### ***What were some of the initial concerns around RPA and how did your team manage it?***



**Media company:** Instead of focusing on the fears of disruption, the focus was on automation relieving tedious routine tasks and empowerment of employees through time savings. PwC did a demo which helped to manage concerns.



**Retirement Solutions Company:** The team welcomed the introduction of this technology, as in the past, we encountered challenges to keep junior team members occupied with transactional and manual tasks. Skepticism was managed by engagement with the teams through training, testing and piloting the process.



**Luxury Retail Company:** Explaining the value proposition of the RPA in a positive way was key. We communicated that this frees up people's time to invest in upskilling, allow us to scale and employee to work on more cognitive part of the job to create value. We explained that this is not about headcount or cost reduction. This is about digital finance which positions the business for the future. Overall, both management and employee welcomed it.

### ***Was RPA part of your innovation strategy?***



**Media company:** We always look for process improvement opportunities and after seeing the RPA trends and demo by PwC, we strongly believe bringing RPA is the way to go.



**Luxury Retail Company:** Yes, it started two years ago when we started thinking about integrating technology and robotics in shared services to increase its value proposition. We showcased this to President, CFO, CIO and other senior management and since seeing is believing, it led to realisation that RPA is the next thing.

### ***What led you to invest in RPA with confidence?***



**Media company:** We did two proof of concepts (PoC) which helped us to identify savings of working hours. After completion of two PoC, we gathered confidence to expand RPA into other realms.



**Retirement Solutions Company:** From the pilot run, we saw that time to market had reduced. The estimation of the time savings from the pilot run was approximately 800-1000 manhours/month. This evidence allayed the uncertainties and propelled us to invest in RPA with confidence.



**Luxury Retail Company:** We did a proof of concepts (PoC). Cost of entry is low enough, it is fast and not much time is needed to demonstrate results. The key is also the open-mindedness of senior management. They understand that IT is a strategic partner to business and that we have to be agile in this space.

### ***What were the expected benefits when you were considering introducing this technology?***



**Media company:** We track savings in RPA in different processes as there was considerable OT in manual processes. The benefits we are seeing are in time savings and in increase in quality of work, as the people are now freed up to take up more complex and analytical tasks.



**Retirement Solutions Company:** In addition to the short term capacity boost, the added benefit of the RPA was redeploying people into other value added tasks thus minimising staff turnover.



**Luxury Retail Company:** We were expecting elimination of human error, increase in accuracy, faster and lower cost benefits. Secondly, it relieves employee frustrations of executing transactions and thirdly, business can grow without increase in headcount. Therefore, RPA fits the bill of "better, faster and smarter."

## How do you see RPA propagate through your company?



**Media company:** We are still in the initial stages of RPA in finance. Once we get more clarity on cost of implementation and how RPA can link between different systems, we can consider moving into other operations. Some education has to be done to roll out RPA as process is not standardised and work patterns in other processes can be altered.



**Retirement Solutions Company:** We are onto our second RPA project. While continued adoption of RPA is welcome, change management process has to mature.



**Luxury Retail Company:** RPA has spread quickly through the company. Eight offices in Asia Pacific offices have complete buy-in and now Europe and the US is starting to implement RPA. Now RPA is part of innovation fund and while RPA started in Finance, now it is propagating in Legal and HR. We are also embarking on RPA assessments to come up with roadmap to apply to other areas such as Tax, Procurement and Supply Chains etc.

## What does this suggest for your adoption of RPA?

As companies face choices on selecting the right technology to solve an operational issue, managing the transition is critical. Managing the disruption of traditional models and processes, through engagement and communication with employees is key to managing the concerns. Focusing on the improved outcomes through measurable indicators such as time saving and increase in quality of work (or reduction in errors) are positive empowering messages for employees. Redeploying people to higher value added complex tasks is investing in people, process and technology and this a winning value proposition for any business in any sector.

Is RPA part of your strategic innovation agenda and are you embracing it with confidence? What measures are you taking to manage the transition and build the multi-faceted capabilities of the firm that drive value?

## Want to explore your RPA strategy? Contact us.



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