NICE

Case Study

Environment Agency

Environment Agency

Automation Works Wonders with a Public Sector Legacy Infrastructure

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Public sector

ON THE NICE SOLUTION

WEBSITE

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations

LOCATION

Sheffield, UK

"Automation has helped us to improve the speed and accuracy of our permitting service."

David More, Senior Advisor
Environment Agency

BUSINESS NEEDS

• Processing efficiency
• Accuracy
• Back office productivity
• Employee satisfaction

NICE RPA SOLUTIONS

• Desktop Automation

ABOUT ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

The Environment Agency is the environmental regulator for England. It is responsible for major industry and waste, flood risk mitigation, treatment of contaminated land, water quality and resources, fisheries, inland water navigations, conservation, ecology, and supporting sustainable development.
The Environment Agency is the largest of 33 agencies and public bodies that make up the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). It employs about 10,600 employees in locations across the country.

THE IMPACT

Reduced AHT from more than 60 minutes to less than 7 minutes
• Reduced procedural failures and re-work
• Reduced public complaints
• Vastly improved data quality for compliance and enforcement activities
• Productivity gain

Case Study

THE CHALLENGE

The Environment Agency works with businesses and other organizations to manage the use of resources, increase resilience to flooding and coastal erosion, protect water, land and biodiversity, and support sustainable growth. As such, the company is regularly seeking ways to improve the way it operates as a regulator. In 2007, the Environment Agency established the National Permitting Service (NPS), which reviews and issues permits to those undertaking activities in England that may impact water quality, water resources, major industry or waste management. The service was established to provide fast, expert, cost-effective, customer-focused service. It currently issues around 12,000 permit decisions per annum. The NPS employs >450 people, with approximately 50 FTE of this number involved in completing a range of key administrative tasks and support, including checking that applications are complete and fees paid, updating legacy permitting systems (vital for billing income), electronic document management, administratively issuing permissions as well as more complex and individualized tasks like determining lowerrisk permit alternatives. The service is also operating an IT ecosystem of both modern digitally transformed applications, alongside legacy permitting tools, from as far back as the early 1990s. This means that key administrative tasks are not always user friendly and that connectivity for any process automation is challenging.

THE SOLUTION

The Environment Agency determined that automation of certain processes had the potential to generate significant productivity gains that would enhance its service. The regulator chose to incorporate automation into the workflow for the administrative issuing of permits, as the administrative handle times for the service range from 45 minutes to several hours, dependent on the type of permit. The process has relatively low volume, but very high complexity and back office effort. The Environment Agency determined that the NICE Robotic Process Automation (RPA) solutions had the flexibility and capability to meet its requirements.

THE DEPLOYMENT

The NICE Desktop Automation solution was implemented for all 68 NPS desktop stations within its centralized administrative function within its National Permitting Service. Integration with the legacy Citrix environment was particularly challenging for connectivity reasons, but this was overcome in collaboration with NICE and its partner, Capgemini. Capgemini also ensured access to key build and live service support for the NICE product.
The RPA solution provided the user the ability to launch a robot (using their user credentials) that automatically opens up applications, locates relevant documentation, reconciles details, updates applications and legacy systems, and creates all necessary documents for email despatch to the applicant and consultees. In just a few months the speed, accuracy, and efficiency of permit and licence processing has been transformed, with RPA reducing the time spent on each from hours to minutes. 8-10 robot issued permissions to 1 manual is now the norm.

THE BENEFITS

- Staff spend less time interacting with outdated legacy IT.
- A significant productivity gain with reduced average handle time for processing water resources permits from 65 mins to less than 7 minutes.
- More accurate permits, greatly reducing the volume of subsequent procedural failures and re-work.
- Reduced complaints from the public
- Improved data quality in legacy permitting systems used during compliance and enforcement activities.

About NICE RPA

NICE has been setting industry-wide standards in Robotic Process Automation domain for over 20 years. NEVA is NICE's innovative, fully integrated AI-powered automation platform. It unlocks the full power of RPA, combining the best of attended automation with the advantages of RPA and AI-based process discovery grounded in real data and insights. It enables intelligent process optimization while unleashing employees' potential to ensure exceptional customer experiences. We develop and manage our automation suite from a single platform, hold the largest scale automation projects in the market, and are known for driving digital transformation across the enterprise.

www.nicerpa.com

NICE

Make experiences *flow*